



AmeriCorps: Changing Lives Through a Year of Service

If you ask AmeriCorps members to tell you about the children they've taught, houses they've built, or volunteers they've recruited, you won't just hear statistical data. You'll hear first-hand experiences about how communities are being strengthened, responsibility is being encouraged, and opportunities are being expanded.

Commonly described as the "domestic Peace Corps," AmeriCorps is a national service program governed by a federal agency – the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). The CNCS administers the program in partnership with State Commissions and national nonprofit organizations.

Since 1994, more than 500,000 citizens have become AmeriCorps members and have served millions of hours nationwide. Through AmeriCorps, individuals can serve with community and faith-based organizations, higher education institutions, and public agencies in many ways.

In the AmeriCorps*State program, members assist nonprofit organizations, such as Habitat for Humanity or the American Red Cross, with meeting critical community needs. Grants are awarded to nonprofits to recruit, train, and place AmeriCorps members in service assignments. AmeriCorps*State is managed by State Service Commissions, such as the Michigan Community Service Commission.

AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is for full-time members dedicated to the specific goal of reducing poverty in low-income communities. VISTA members serve with organizations, such as the Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative and the Michigan Prisoner ReEntry Initiative. The CNCS State Office, based in Detroit, oversees VISTA programs.

AmeriCorps*National (Direct) grants are given to national organizations, such as the National Aids Fund and Boys &

Girls Club of America, to run programs that will involve two or more states. The CNCS National Office administers National programs.

AmeriCorps*NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) is based at five campuses in Denver, Colorado; Sacramento, California; Perry Point, Maryland; Vicksburg, Mississippi; and Vinton, Iowa. Members spend 10 months traveling within their regions engaging in short-term service projects. They are often one of the first groups to respond to national disasters, such as hurricanes. Individuals apply directly to the CNCS National Office to join.

Across all AmeriCorps programs, members ages range from 17 to over 70 years old and represent a wide spectrum of other demographic characteristics. Members commit to a specific term of service (usually one year) to help meet the goals defined by each program.

Upon successful completion of their service, members earn an education award to pay for higher education, or to pay back qualified student loans. During their service, members may also be eligible to receive a modest living allowance, health insurance, childcare, and student loan deferment.

Did You Know?

- **75,000** AmeriCorps members serve every year with more than 2,900 national and local organizations.
- In 2008, AmeriCorps members recruited, organized, and supervised more than **2.2 million** community volunteers nationally.
- Since 1994, AmeriCorps members have earned more than **\$1.59 billion** in Segal AmeriCorps Education Awards to put toward their college education or to pay off student loans.



Michigan – Benefiting from AmeriCorps Member Service

In 2008-2009, more than 1,200 AmeriCorps members will impact Michigan and its communities through 367 nonprofits. These members help mentor youth, provide housing resources, assist medically uninsured residents with gaining affordable healthcare services, respond to local and national disasters and much more.

More than \$9.5 million in federal funds are invested annually in AmeriCorps programs in Michigan. These funds make critical differences in Michigan citizens having access to desperately needed services. In many cases, AmeriCorps members are implementing programs and administering services nonprofits previously might not have had the resources to offer.

“Michigan’s AmeriCorps members serving at Habitat affiliates recruit, train, and oversee an average of 5,000 volunteers each year,” says Jane Ray, AmeriCorps Program Director at Habitat for Humanity of Michigan. “This group of dedicated individuals is responsible for building over 125 decent, affordable homes for our partner families in Michigan.”

Did You Know?

- Since 2004, more than **16,000** AmeriCorps members have served in Michigan.
- AmeriCorps members in Michigan have earned more than **\$47 million** toward their college education or vocational training since 2004.

Michigan is home to three types of AmeriCorps programs – AmeriCorps*State, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and AmeriCorps*National. The Michigan Community Service Commission administers the AmeriCorps*State program known as Michigan’s AmeriCorps. AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps*VISTA members are currently serving in 70 of Michigan’s 83 counties.

Inclusion – The Active Engagement of People with Disabilities as Service Members in all Levels of National and Community Service

AmeriCorps programs offer participants significant opportunities for personal and professional growth through service to the community. While these opportunities are important to everyone, they can be particularly significant in the lives of people with disabilities. On a personal level, AmeriCorps provides participants with opportunities to learn about themselves and their responsibility to their neighborhoods and communities. Through service and interaction with other members, program staff, and volunteers, participants will discover the power each individual has to bring about positive change. Participants will also learn collaboration, communication, leadership, and other life skills. Professionally, AmeriCorps can help participants prepare for future employment by providing ongoing training and practical experience in a variety of fields. For individuals with disabilities, the chance to go out into the community and serve others can change perspectives – their own and those of others.

“AmeriCorps members represent the perfect blend of commitment to service and old-fashioned hard work. Their service to Michigan families will help all of us through these hard times, and I believe they will inspire a new generation to help others and give back to their communities.”

- Governor Jennifer M. Granholm

AmeriCorps*State

(Michigan’s AmeriCorps)

853 members*

18 grantees

266 service sites

Funding: **\$4,700,314**

Education awards earned:
\$2,219,531**

AmeriCorps*VISTA

214 members*

37 grantees

78 service sites

Funding: **\$3,403,730**

Education awards earned:
\$1,011,150**

AmeriCorps*National

185 members*

19 grantees

23 service sites

Funding: **\$1,396,523**

Education awards earned:
\$617,025**

*This figure represents the number of awarded positions available to be filled in the 2008-2009 program year (as of March 4, 2009).

**This figure represents the maximum potential value of AmeriCorps education awards that can be earned by AmeriCorps members serving in Michigan (as of March 4, 2009). The award can be used in any state to pay for higher education, vocational training, or to pay back student loans.



Michigan's AmeriCorps – An Initiative of the Michigan Community Service Commission

Ten members from the American Red Cross –Together We Prepare AmeriCorps program, supplied their service skills in response to the severe flooding experienced in Iowa in 2008. Red Cross AmeriCorps members receive disaster assistance training and are well prepared to answer the call to service when disaster strikes. These 10 members were asked to make a three-week commitment in Iowa where they put in 12-hour days, seven days a week. Three weeks is an incredible commitment to make when you're given 24-hour notice! Their main service duties included in-person meetings with families or individuals impacted by disaster to provide immediate shelter, food, and financial assistance. Red Cross AmeriCorps members' general service duties are to respond to local disasters; however, when disaster strikes they are often called to different locations across the country, depending on the circumstances surrounding the disasters.

Together We Prepare AmeriCorps is just one of 18 Michigan's AmeriCorps programs impacting lives every day. During 2008-2009, Michigan's AmeriCorps programs will place nearly 900 members in communities all over the state. In 2008, AmeriCorps members completed more than 500,000 service and training hours during their term of service. They not only provide direct service, but they also recruit volunteers to support the work of their service sites. In 2008, nearly 25,000 community volunteers were recruited,

placed, and/or supported by Michigan's AmeriCorps members. These volunteers provided a total of 165,561 hours of service.

Members with the **Camp Fire USA AmeriCorps Program** mentored 1,654 youth through after-school and summer programs in the Grand Rapids community. When

evaluated, more than 80 percent of the youth participants felt they "had a support system" and "learned a great deal" from the AmeriCorps members.

Did You Know?

In 2008, Michigan's AmeriCorps members:

- Trained **19,472** individuals in disaster relief services.
- Tutored or provided homework help to **3,138** students.
- Helped **3,415** children benefit from ongoing mentoring relationships.
- Built **32** new housing units for individuals.

Habitat Michigan's AmeriCorps Program members were trained to build decent affordable homes for those in need. In 2008, members helped 16 families in Kent County, 15 in Benton Harbor, and one in Williamston complete their homeownership training and move into new housing.

Huron Pines AmeriCorps, with the help of local volunteers, implemented erosion control projects in Missaukee, Grand Traverse, Presque Isle, and Cheboygan Counties. As a result, 19,831 linear feet of lakeshore and stream bank was positively impacted.

Members of **the readetroit corps** tutored 501 youth within the Detroit community. AmeriCorps members were often grouped with multiple young people to provide tutoring assistance and to serve as mentors.



Marti Boesen

Age: 27
Program: Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness AmeriCorps
Service Location: Gaylord
Focus: Homelessness

I have always loved working with people and volunteering in any way that I can. I joined the Michigan Campaign to End Homelessness AmeriCorps program to do just that.

This program fills a critical gap in services in the statewide effort to abolish homelessness. Members perform outreach activities, and assist individuals who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness to assess the barriers to housing, identify housing opportunities, and develop strategic plans. As part of my

AmeriCorps service, I act as a liaison in order to assist families to transition out of homelessness, and to aid youth aging out of foster care to access permanent housing.

In Otsego County specifically, I helped plan the Project Connect event for The Friendship Shelter. This event brought local service providers together in one place to provide services to the homeless and those who may be on the verge of homelessness. I also conduct follow-up care with clients of The Friendship Shelter who have received Homeless Assistance Recovery Program vouchers and connect them with available resources.

That is the most rewarding aspect of my AmeriCorps service – identifying resources for those in need and knowing I am making a difference.



Ben Gulker

Age: 26
Program: Mentor Michigan
Service Location: Lansing
Focus: Special Initiatives

It is safe to say that eventually I would like to work in a people-helping profession. My educational background - a degree in philosophy/religion with a minor in psychology from Spring Arbor University and a Masters in Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary - further illustrates that. I worked in retail, but upon discovering an available AmeriCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) position with Mentor Michigan, realized I could be devoting my time and effort to something much more rewarding.

As an AmeriCorps*VISTA with Mentor Michigan, I support four different efforts; all geared towards using mentoring as a poverty

prevention service. I provide indirect service, as do all VISTAs, meaning I don't run a mentoring program or support matches; I supply assistance to mentoring programs.

My day-to-day service duties consist of supporting, promoting, and growing MentorPRO, a web-based software system specifically designed for mentoring programs. I also identify mentoring programs in Michigan that are serving children of incarcerated parents and foster care youth and determine best practices and resources to help them work more effectively. Lastly, I help coordinate Mentor Michigan's *Men in Mentoring Campaign* which consists of promoting a male mentor recruitment toolkit and serving to facilitate partnerships to engage more males in mentoring in the state.

I wholeheartedly enjoy serving as an AmeriCorps*VISTA with Mentor Michigan. My service coincides with my personal values and is fulfilling the goals I have set for my career path.



Raymond Murry

Age: 22
Program: Michigan AmeriCorps Partnership
Service Location: Detroit
Focus: Tutoring/Mentoring

I serve, through the Michigan AmeriCorps Partnership (MAP) at the Clark Park Recreation Center (CPRC), in the same community where I grew up. I have a strong desire to make a difference in that community and share the opportunities I experienced with others.

The MAP is a collaborative program between the University of Michigan and community and faith-based non-profit organizations, primarily based in Detroit. MAP AmeriCorps members strive to address local human needs through direct service and program capacity-building activities.

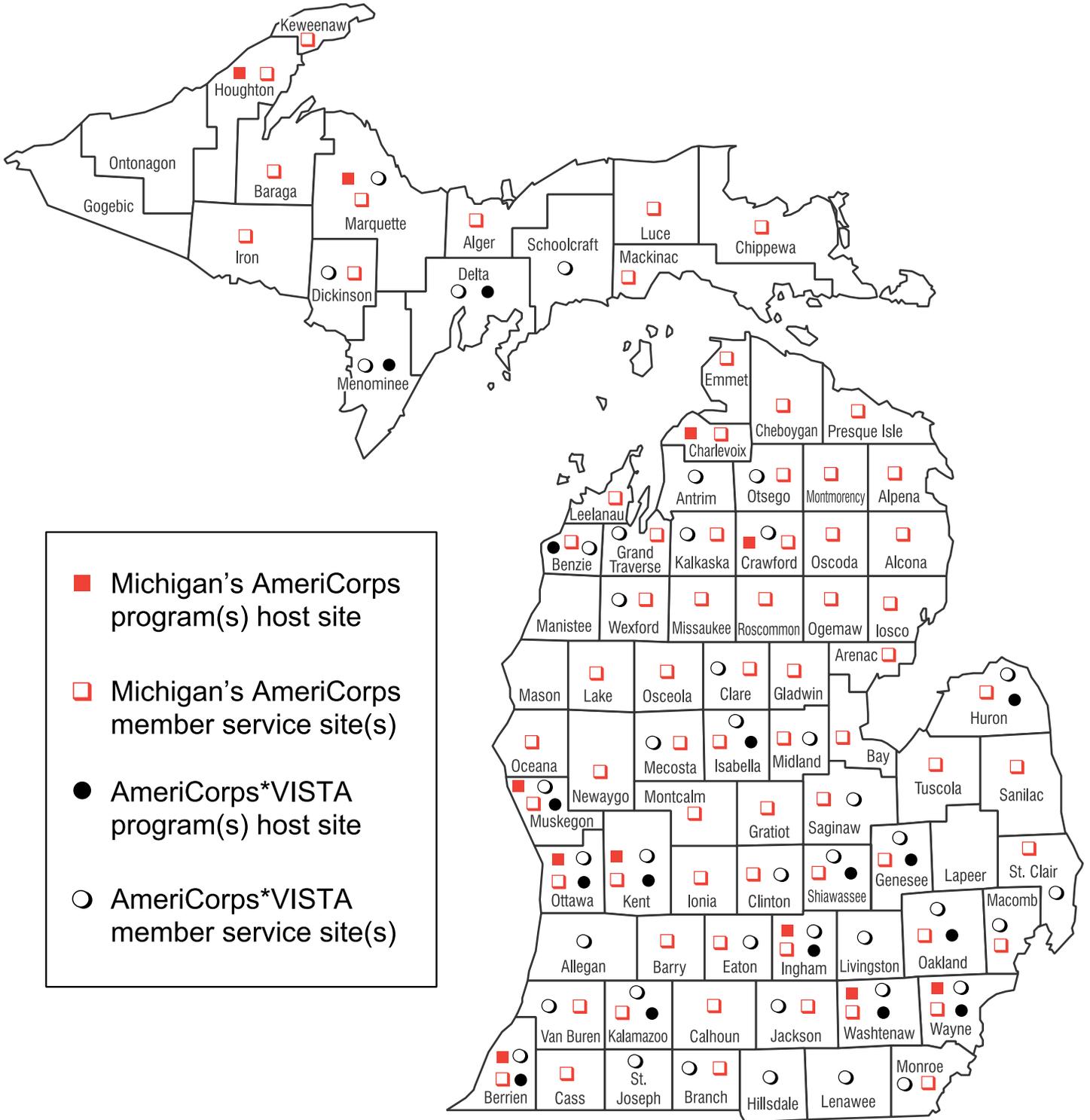
I am a second year full-time AmeriCorps member and through my service coordinate recreation activities for CPRC youth and run an

after-school tutoring program in collaboration with the Mercy Education Project. I also help train and supervise selected CPRC youth workers during the summer and winter program sessions and, not so long ago I was a CPRC youth worker myself!

Many people ask me why I chose to serve as a Michigan's AmeriCorps member. I could provide them with a careles answer, like "Because." But I instead choose to enlighten them with the following response:

"When I sit and listen to a young lady with an alcoholic mother who hurts her by poisoning herself, that's why I mentor. Knowing I can keep kids off the streets while learning a skill, that's why I coach sports. I clean, remove graffiti, pick up trash, listen to volunteers, give workshops, plant trees, sing, pass out skates, and monitor youth because it needs to be done. I do it because it makes me feel good. I do it because I can. I do it because I'm making a difference. I do it because I love to challenge myself."

Michigan's AmeriCorps and AmeriCorps*VISTA 2008-2009





AmeriCorps*State (Michigan's AmeriCorps) Programs

American Red Cross of Greater Grand Rapids
(Statewide)

Baraga-Houghton-Keweenaw Child Development Board (Houghton)

Camp Fire USA (Grand Rapids)

Charlevoix-Emmet County Intermediate School District

City Year, Inc. (Detroit)

Communities in Schools of Detroit (Detroit)

Good Samaritan Ministries (Holland)

The Guidance Center (Detroit)

Habitat for Humanity – Michigan (Statewide)

Huron Pines (Statewide)

Jumpstart for Young Children, Inc.
(Ypsilanti & Dearborn)

Marquette-Alger Regional Educational Service Agency (Marquette)

Michigan Campus Compact (Statewide)

Michigan Coalition Against Homelessness
(Statewide)

Michigan Primary Care Association (Statewide)

Michigan State University Extension (Statewide)

University of Michigan – Detroit Center (Detroit)

Volunteer Muskegon (Muskegon)

AmeriCorps*VISTA Programs

Allen Neighborhood Center (Lansing)

Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living
(Statewide)

Boys and Girls Club of Greater Flint (Flint)

Catherine's Care Center (Grand Rapids)

Child Abuse Council of Muskegon County
(Muskegon)

Child and Family Enrichment Council (Mt. Pleasant)

City Year, Inc. (Detroit)

Creston Neighborhood Association (Grand Rapids)

Detroit Parent Network (Detroit)

Discovery Zone/North Menominee County Community Schools (Menominee County)

Flint Community Schools (Genesee County)

Gladstone Area Schools (Delta County)

Greening of Detroit (Detroit)

Growing Hope (Ypsilanti)

Habitat for Humanity – Michigan (Statewide)

Heart of West Michigan United Way (Grand Rapids)

Humanity for Africa, Inc. (Grand Rapids)

Kalamazoo County Poverty Reduction Initiative
(Kalamazoo County)

Leaven Center (Lansing)

Life Services System (Holland)

Literacy Partnership of Southeast Michigan (Detroit)

Looking Glass Community Services (Laingsburg)

Metro Housing Partnership, Inc. (Flint)

Michigan Campus Compact (Statewide)

Michigan Community Service Commission (Lansing)

Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative (Statewide)

Michigan State University Extension North Region 4-H Programs (Beulah)

Mixed Greens (Grand Rapids)

Oakland Childcare Council (Oakland County)

Port Huron Housing Commission (Port Huron)

Power of WE Consortium/Ingham County Health Department (Ingham County)

Southwest Michigan Community Action Agency
(Berrien County)

The LEAGUE Michigan (Statewide)

Upper Peninsula Health Access Coalition
(Upper Peninsula)

Volunteer Centers of Michigan (Statewide)

Volunteers in Prevention, Probation and Prisons, Inc. (Detroit)

Youth Empowerment and Enrichment (Ann Arbor)



Interested in becoming involved in AmeriCorps?

Become an AmeriCorps member

Individuals interested in becoming an AmeriCorps member (State, National Direct, VISTA, or NCCC) can learn more about these opportunities at www.americorps.gov. Potential members may search available programs at my.americorps.gov. Each AmeriCorps program performs its own recruitment and selection of members; please contact programs directly.

Host a Michigan's AmeriCorps or AmeriCorps*VISTA program

Michigan's AmeriCorps

Organizations interested in sponsoring a Michigan's AmeriCorps program may contact the Michigan Community Service Commission. The Request for Proposals is typically issued each fall with the program year beginning the following fall. Please note that organizations are selected through a grant application process and must host a team no smaller than 10 full-time-equivalent members.

AmeriCorps*VISTA

Organizations interested in sponsoring an AmeriCorps*VISTA program should contact the CNCS State Office. AmeriCorps*VISTA project applications are accepted throughout the year. There are no minimum requirements for the number of VISTAs an applicant must request. The CNCS State Office will provide technical assistance during the application process. The length of the application process varies, but the average length of time is three to five months.

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