

M I C H I G A N



**COMMUNITY
SERVICE**

COMMISSION

MCSC News

**Building a culture of service by providing vision
and resources to strengthen communities through
volunteerism**

November 2008

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In the News

Free Resource: Service-Learning in Out-of-School Time

If you're thinking about adding a service-learning component to your youth program or would like to enhance existing youth volunteer activities with more intentional learning outcomes and opportunities for structured reflection, then LEARNS has a tool for you.

The latest edition of *Youth Impact*, created by the LEARNS partners for youth-serving national service programs, is titled "Beyond the Classroom: Service-Learning in Out-of-School Time," and outlines the key steps to designing and implementing a successful service-learning project in any setting.

The publication is available for download at http://snipurl.com/beyond_the_classroom.

Youth Impact: Enhancing Your Program with Web 2.0 Tools

Are you confused by blogs, wikis, or RSS feeds? Do you not quite understand the hype behind Facebook or MySpace? Do you wonder if any of these tools will help you as a volunteer or program manager?

In a recent edition of *Youth Impact*, titled "MySpace and YouTube and Blogs, Oh My! Enhancing Your Youth Program with Web 2.0 Tools," key Web 2.0 technologies are explained and ideas are offered on how volunteers and programs can put those technologies to good use.

Social media and networking will become increasingly more popular in the near future. Engage more of your participants and volunteers by appealing to them through their favorite web-based tools. To read the latest edition of *Youth Impact*, visit <http://nationalserviceresources.org/learns/learns>.

Flint Included in NCCC Targeted Cities Campaign

Flint, Michigan has been included in the National Civilian Community Corps' Targeted Cities Campaign. The NCCC Targeted Cities Campaign is an effort to target urban areas to expand project presence, enhance recruitment and alumni outreach, and build increased awareness of national service in general by committing NCCC teams continuously over a three-to-five-year period.

There are two key components to the Targeted Cities Campaign which include community service projects and program outreach and recruitment. Through these components, NCCC teams hope to provide expanded support to select communities with compelling and unmet needs; increase awareness of national service opportunities and resources to stakeholders in diverse communities, foundations, and social service organizations; and provide a framework for local/regional recruitment and partnerships.

Program Stories



Service-Learning and ServiceNation – A Day of Action Indeed!

Tina Doepker, an art teacher at Grogan Elementary in Southgate, Michigan, knew she wanted to engage her students in ServiceNation’s Day of Action following an informational email from the district’s grant coordinator.

“I was immediately inspired by the thought of so many people across the country working together on one special day to make a difference in the world,” she says.

The Southgate Community School District has been a recipient of a Learn and Serve – Michigan school-based service-learning grant for over six and a half years. Service-learning is integrated throughout the district’s K-12 curriculum, even in Doepker’s art classes at Grogan Elementary.

Doepker thought ServiceNation’s September 27th Day of Action was the perfect opportunity to unite students with a service opportunity – which turned out to be creating art for The Manor, a local nursing home. She looked at her K-5 curriculum and determined where she could incorporate pieces of her proposed project into their lessons. Then, through discussions with her students, they discovered how art can have an impact on people and the importance it has on all our lives. Thanks to a grant, Doepker was able to purchase the necessary supplies to create framed pieces of art.

Over 300 students helped create eight images to be presented to The Manor, with students creating wooden frames, sketching images, and finally painting them. On Saturday, September 27th, the official Day of Action, several students delivered the art to The Manor and were greeted by a reception thrown by the home’s residents. Grogan Elementary was one of thousands of Day of Action projects throughout the country and made up some of the hundreds of thousands of volunteers who engaged in a project.

Doepker hopes the frames can become stationary at The Manor, and seasonal artwork can be rotated in, keeping the home’s hallways bright and colorful. She also says the partnership they created to display Grogan Elementary’s artwork is just the beginning as they aim to expand their efforts in the future.



Big Brothers Big Sisters Michigan Capital Region Exceeds National Averages in Quality Measures

Every month, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America releases a performance report. This past October that report brought good news to Big Brothers Big Sisters Michigan Capital Region.

According to the report, which documented data for the first eight months of 2008, BBBS Michigan Capital Region was one of only seven Big Brothers Big Sisters agencies in the country to exceed the national average on three important match quality measures.

Ed Hagan, Executive Director of BBBS Michigan Capital Region, says their organization has always been monitored monthly so they’ve had an inkling they were doing well with their match quality measures. But now, thanks to this specific report, they are able to gauge their efforts based on agencies throughout the U.S. and recognize they’re exceeding national averages.

“Throughout this year, Big Brothers Big Sisters efforts have been trying to shift attention away from *what we do* to *what we achieve*. More emphasis has been placed on quality measures and this report is the first time those measures have been explored,” Hagan says.

This report is also related to Big Brothers Big Sisters efforts to become a web-based management system which helps agencies such as the Michigan Capital Region measure their efforts and map them on a year-to-year basis.

Hagan says he believes there are a few reasons why BBBS Michigan Capital Region has seen success in exceeding national averages on match support, match retention, and average match length.

He says the success started with the idea that it all stems from match support. He explains, “The more we’re talking to these matches, the more we can offer assistance, and the more we can identify needs and issues.”

That means setting monthly goals of making contact with 98 percent of their match contacts and being diligent in communication with those contacts. This translates to extensive work conducted by BBBS Michigan Capital Region staff.

“This report is really important because it shows our staff that they’re doing a fantastic job. I wish I could express properly the amount of effort it takes to meet these levels. Their efforts are paying off and I’m really proud of them,” Hagan says.

He also points out that mentee parents can be proud because they know their youth are in effective and meaningful mentoring relationships; volunteers can be proud because they’re receiving support from BBBS Michigan Capital Region staff every step of the way; and BBBS donors can be proud because their donations are making a difference and impacting those most in need.

To find out more about BBBS Michigan Capital Region’s efforts, visit www.bbbs.org/mcr.



Engaging in Service – Beyond the AmeriCorps Commitment

For Mark Coury, most of his time spent during his year of service with Michigan’s AmeriCorps entailed those associated with the Downriver CARES AmeriCorps program and The Guidance Center located in Southgate. That included working for The Guidance Center’s Youth Assistance Program with first-time juvenile offenders and leading a weekly decision-making group. Mark’s Downriver CARES AmeriCorps program efforts also included weekly service projects conducted within the Detroit community.

But for another portion of Mark’s AmeriCorps service commitment, it entailed making a trip to America’s Gulf Coast to assist with hurricane clean up in Biloxi, Mississippi.

Mark made the trip in April 2008 as part of a Michigan’s AmeriCorps Alum expedition, which included other AmeriCorps members from the state and throughout the country. Michigan’s AmeriCorps members often make trips to locations other than their designated service sites, whether it is at the annual Russ Mawby Signature Service Project, or helping with disaster relief in various states throughout the U.S. Mark answered this particular call to service following an email from his Downriver CARES AmeriCorps supervisor.

“I went on the Gulf Coast trip as a way to make the most of my year of service. While I can not say which service work is more important, I do believe it is a good idea to serve in different capacities so that you become well-rounded,” he says.

During Mark's trip to Biloxi, he performed two main tasks. One of those tasks included saving trees ravaged by Hurricane Katrina who were now facing significant erosion and loss of soil quality. The second task was building the local Kaboom Playground at a grade school in the area. Both of these tasks were well received as, despite Hurricane Katrina causing devastation nearly three years ago, there are still many areas of the Gulf Coast in need of significant rebuilding.

Mark enjoyed the commitment he made to participating in an "extra" service opportunity by visiting the Gulf Coast and believes it made him a better Michigan's AmeriCorps member.

"The trip reminded me of how much I enjoy physical labor as part of service and the need for service. The trip taught me about the needs of the Gulf Coast and left me with a sense of accomplishment in helping out a worthy cause," he says.

Mark is now an AmeriCorps Alum who has been hired on full-time at The Guidance Center. He hopes to someday make another trip back to the Gulf Coast and continue his service efforts while there.

Volunteer Helps Girl in Foster Care Succeed

Submitted by Jennifer Chapin-Smith, Washtenaw Youth Mentoring Coalition and 2008 VIG Grantee

"Even though I'm extremely busy raising my own teenager and running a business, I made the decision I absolutely had to help a youth aging out of foster care by becoming a mentor. It only takes a few hours a month to make a big difference in a youth's life," says Susan Aitken.

Aitken volunteers as a mentor through The Village Initiative, a Washtenaw Youth Mentoring Coalition member-organization.

Although 25% of Michigan's youth aging out foster care end up homeless and 51% unemployed, Aitken helped her mentee obtain a driver's license, get an apartment, and land a job.

"I started mentoring Julia in April of 2007. So far, I have helped her obtain a birth certificate, coordinate with the state Department of Human Services to get her a computer and printer, convinced her guardian to okay a trip to a three-day conference on skills for 'aging-out' youth, and found some donated household goods and bedding for her move into independent living," Aitken says. "What's been the biggest surprise about mentoring is how I feel I have received far more than I have given. A few minutes on my part can make a huge difference in my mentee's life and bring a huge smile to her face. It's so worth it!"

Drs. Gary Anderson and Rosalind Folman of the Michigan State University School of Social Work wrote in 2004 that 27% of Michigan youth aging out of foster care end up incarcerated and 42% become teenage parents. A mentor's guidance and care can prevent a foster care youth from ending up as a statistic.

"Mentorship has provided so many opportunities for our youth in Washtenaw County. We're extremely lucky to have so many caring adults in our community who volunteer their time to help our youth," says Theresa Tran of The Village Initiative, a non-profit organization serving youth in foster care and the juvenile justice system.

Aitken's work is so remarkable that Michigan State Representative Alma Wheeler Smith presented her with the 2008 Washtenaw Mentor of the Year.

Opportunities

FUNDING

GTECH After School Advantage – A national community investment program to provide community agencies and public schools with state-of-the-art computer labs.

Funder: GTECH

Eligibility: Nonprofit 501(c)(3) community agencies or public schools that serve minority and at-risk children aged five to 15 and that house an after-school program in need of a computer lab.

Deadline: Open

Amount: 115 After School Advantage computer centers – each receiving an average of \$15,000 – are planned for 2008.

Contact: www.gtech.com/about_gtech/proposal_guidelines.asp

Community Improvement Project Assistance from Lowe's - dedicated to improving the communities we serve through support of public education, community improvement projects and home safety initiatives.

Funder: Lowe's

Eligibility: 501(c) (3) tax-exempt nonprofit organizations and public agencies in communities where Lowe's operates stores and distribution centers.

Deadline: Ongoing

Contact: www.lowes.com/lowes/lkn?action=frameSet&url=apps.bridgetree.com/funding/default.as

Do Something Plum Grants – Did you recently create a sustainable community action project, program or organization? Do you need \$500 to further the growth and success of your program? If you answered, "YES!", you are eligible to apply for a Plum Youth Grant. Plum grants are given out weekly.

Funder: Do Something.Org

Eligibility: Anyone under the age of 25.

Deadline: Ongoing

Contact: www.dosomething.org/grants

Teach Something Grants – Do you want to improve education in your community? Do Something and Tutor.com are offering \$500 grants for your ideas or projects that make a difference around education issues. Ten total grants will be awarded.

Funder: Do Something & Tutor.com

Eligibility: Anyone

Deadline: December 15, 2008

Contact: www.dosomething.org/programs/page/how-apply-teach-something-grant

Reader's Digest Foundation: "Make It Matter" Grants – "Make It Matter" is a new initiative of the Reader's Digest Foundation. The Foundation will give \$1 million to nonprofit organizations based on inspiring stories submitted by the public.

Funder: Reader's Digest Foundation

Eligibility: Anyone with an inspiring story about a nonprofit organization.

Deadline: January 1, 2009

Contact: www.rd.com/make-your-mark-make-a-difference/make-it-matter/article54800.html

The Volvo Adventure Environmental Project Grants – an educational program that rewards environmental activities and the decision-makers of the future.

Funder: Volvo

Eligibility: Community members ages 13 – 16.

Deadline: January 31, 2009

Contact: www.volvoadventure.org

AWARDS

State Farm Award for Service-Learning Excellence in Teacher Education

The National Service-Learning Partnership is pleased to join with the State Farm Companies Foundation and the International Center for Service-Learning in Teacher Education to honor teacher education programs that make a significant commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning in preparing teachers and school's leaders to use service-learning as an instructional strategy.

Nominations must be received by December 14, 2008. The 2009 honoree will be announced on January 28, 2009 and publicly recognized at the State Farm Awards Celebration at the 2009 National Service-Learning Conference in Nashville, TN, March 18-21, 2009. Visit www.service-learningpartnership.org for the application, instructions, and more details.

Calendar of Events

January 2009

National Mentoring Month – Nationwide Michigan Mentoring Month – Statewide

National Mentoring Month highlights mentoring and the positive impact it can have on young lives. This month-long outreach campaign focuses national and local attention on the need for mentors, as well as how each of us—individuals, businesses, government agencies, schools, faith communities and nonprofits—can work together to increase the number of mentors and assure brighter futures for our young people. For more information, visit www.mentormichigan.org.

January 19, 2009

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service – Nationwide

This national day of service is the perfect opportunity to honor Dr. King's teaching. This annual event encourages service projects to be planned all across the country, making the typical holiday a day "on", not "off". For more information, visit www.MLKDay.gov.

January 22, 2009

Thank Your Mentor Day – Nationwide

This annual day of recognition gives mentoring organizations the opportunity to encourage their mentees to thank their mentors for all that they do. Encourage mentees to write thank-you notes or provide other forms of recognition on this special day. For more information, visit www.mentormichigan.org.

February 9 - 15, 2009

Random Acts of Kindness Week – Nationwide

Contribute to your community, neighbors, friends, family, or a stranger during this annual week of kindness. For more information, visit www.actsofkindness.org/.

March 18 - 21, 2009

20th Annual National Service-Learning Conference: Growing Hope, Cultivating Change – Nashville, TN

The National Youth Learning Council and Volunteer Tennessee invite you to join them in Nashville for the annual Service-Learning conference. The conference is the largest gathering of youths and practitioners involved in the service-learning movement, drawing approximately 2,700 attendees from across the U.S. and at least 20 other countries each year. Through three days of general sessions, featured forums, and service-

learning projects, the conference engages participants in local, national, and global issues that service-learning addresses. For more information, visit www.nylc.org/conference.

June 22 – 24, 2009

National Conference on Volunteering & Service – San Francisco, CA

Mark your calendars to attend the largest gathering in the world of volunteer and civic leaders. At this annual event learn from volunteer and service experts from across the country, connect with volunteer leaders, nonprofit organizations, corporate and government partners, and be inspired by the City by the Bay and its innovative practices. For more information, visit www.volunteeringandservice.org.

About MCSC

The Michigan Community Service Commission builds a culture of service by providing vision and resources to strengthen communities through volunteerism. In 2007-08, the MCSC granted more than \$5.9 million in federal and state funds to local communities for volunteer programs and activities. The MCSC funded 19 AmeriCorps programs, 23 Learn and Serve programs, and 13 Volunteer Investment Grant recipients. The Governor's Service Awards and Mentor Michigan are also premier programs of the MCSC.