

2017 Michigan's AmeriCorps Regional Russ Mawby Signature Service Projects May 19-20, 2017



The 2017 RMSSP engaged 724 AmeriCorps members and community volunteers in service across Michigan.



Dr. Russell –“Russ”– Mawby is a tremendous advocate for youth and volunteer service. He spent the majority of his career leading the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in Battle Creek. Dr. Mawby is now chair emeritus and trustee of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. During his 36-year tenure, he served as a program officer, vice president, CEO, and chair of the Foundation. While serving as CEO and chair, Dr. Mawby was instrumental in convening a series of meetings leading to the formation of the Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC). Dr. Mawby was appointed to the MCSC on September 13, 2000, where he served as chair until 2003. To honor Dr. Mawby’s commitment to volunteerism, service, and AmeriCorps, it was only fitting that the service project be renamed the Michigan’s AmeriCorps Russ Mawby Signature Service Project.

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West Michigan (Grand Rapids)—May 19—130 members & volunteers



West Michigan AmeriCorps members spent the day serving at the Equest Center for Therapeutic Riding. The center provides horse riding therapy for individuals with disabilities. Additional members served at the Solon Township Hall, planting trees and completing landscaping projects. Along with 10 community volunteers, 120 AmeriCorps members came together to make these projects a success!

Project Highlights

- Picked up 150 bales of hay from a local farm and loaded them into a barn
- Cleared 5 pastures of manure and old hay
- Painted fences surrounding 5 pastures
- Trimmed shrubbery along 1 mile sensory trail
- Sorted 15 totes of donations
- Cleaned 100 horse boots, along with bridles, bits, reins, saddles, and other riding equipment
- Cleaned and set up classroom space
- Planted 4 trees and 3 bushes
- Weeded 1,000 square feet around township hall

Mid-Michigan (Lansing)—May 19—112 members & volunteers



Participants gathered at the Allen Neighborhood Center in Lansing for the project's kick-off, then split into 9 project site groups. 112 AmeriCorps members and volunteers served at two Habitat for Humanity sites, Peckham, Inc., Volunteers of America, Ingham County Land Bank, Village Summit, St. Vincent de Paul, REACH Art Studio, and Northwest Initiative/Riddle Elementary.

Project Highlights

- Prepared grounds for children's garden
- Pulled and bagged 70 garbage bags of weeds at two sites
- Painted new studio expansion at REACH Art Studio
- Sorted thousands of donation items at Volunteers of America
- Prepared meals to serve 200 people
- Built an accessibility ramp at a Habitat for Humanity home
- Spread 124 bags of compost at Ingham County Land Bank
- Packed 200 Ditty bags for homeless veterans and others experiencing homelessness

“This was one of the best, most fun, and most strenuous service projects. Loved it!”—West MI AmeriCorps member

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Flint/Tri-Cities (Flint)—May 19—115 members & volunteers



Flint's project focused on generating visible improvements on the Genesee Valley Trail. This trail is a critical asset to the Flint community, but is often perceived as an unsafe area. This year's project engaged 115 AmeriCorps members and volunteers, including program staff and community members. Project participants conducted improvement projects to bolster recent restoration efforts along the Valley Trail and in the surrounding communities.

Project Highlights

- Beautified and secured 6 properties over a 1-mile radius
- Removed debris from 1 mile of the Genesee Valley Trail
- Removed over 10,000 gallons of illegal dumping and approximately 700 additional pounds of bulk waste
- Removed debris along 2 miles of road
- Prepared 100 law enforcement appreciation bags
- Made 175 cards for children participating in summer programs to show support from the AmeriCorps community
- Engaged individuals representing 17 AmeriCorps programs across the state

Northern Michigan (Grayling)—May 19—160 members & volunteers



The Northern Michigan project consisted of eight projects in Grayling and its surrounding public land. 160 people, including 56 youth, partnered with the Department of Natural Resources. Projects included orchard pruning, directional sign replacement and installation, bird house building, fishing line recycling container construction, and tree planting. Service members also conducted a downtown clean-up and a hospital garden restoration.

Project Highlights

- Planted 120 plants in a pollinator garden
- Planted 3800 jack and red pines at two different wildlife habitat sites
- Built 20 bluebird houses and installed 13 along a bike path
- Collected trash at a local lake campground
- Pruned 55 acres of a local apple orchard
- Replaced 50 directional signs within a state forest

“It was nice meeting so many friendly, hospitable AmeriCorps members.” —Northern MI volunteer

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Upper Peninsula (Hancock)—May 20—117 members & volunteers



117 participants, including 56 community volunteers, gathered to restore and beautify Hancock Beach. AmeriCorps and community members stained and painted picnic tables, painted and cleaned the public restrooms, painted playground equipment, repaired horseshoe pits, and added and raked out new sand around the volleyball courts, beachfront, and the playground.

Project Highlights

- Removed 10 bags of leaves
- Painted 2 public bathrooms
- Stained 3 benches
- Repaired 4 horseshoe pits
- Painted 3 picnic tables and stained 17 tables
- Raked 20 tons of sand
- Restored public playground
- Engaged 40 youth in service

Southeast Michigan (Detroit)—May 20—243 members & volunteers



Southeast Michigan AmeriCorps programs partnered with Detroit's Department of Neighborhoods and the AmeriCorps VISTA team serving in the Mayor's office to support 15 service projects organized by neighborhood block clubs and community organizations. The project included beautification, board-ups, park clean-ups, clearing of vacant lots, and community gardening.

Project Highlights

- Removed 335 bags of trash
- Planted 80 new plants
- Boarded 3 houses
- Cleared 6 vacant lots
- Engaged 243 individuals

“This project will make the community safer and more enjoyable.” —SE MI AmeriCorps member