



State of Illinois
Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor
Department of Human Services
Carol L. Adams, Ph.D., Secretary



SERVE Illinois

N E W S L E T T E R

A Prevention First publication

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January is National Mentoring Month

As the first of the baby boomers turns 60 this year, the entire generation is being challenged to, *Share what you know, mentor a child!*

The call has been issued by the Harvard Mentoring Project and MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership to mark the fifth annual National Mentoring Month in January.

The goal of National Mentoring Month is to focus attention on how mentoring benefits children, adults and society. A mentor is an adult who provides young people with support, counsel, friendship and reinforcement. Mentors may also serve as tutors for children learning to spell, read, write and do basic math, among other subjects. In Illinois, 12 out of 16 AmeriCorps*State programs, totaling 636 members, focus primarily on tutoring and/or mentoring. This month is dedicated to promoting the importance of mentors as well as the need to recruit volunteer mentors.

At the Tutor/Mentor Connection (T/MC) the focus is also on recruiting business, university and philanthropic partners to underwrite the staff infrastructure needed to support adding more volunteers within existing programs. Tutor/Mentor Connection is a program of Cabrini Connections at the Cabrini-Green housing development in Chicago.

“I hope that National Mentoring Month will encourage public and private sector leaders, traditional volunteers and potential donors to connect and share ideas via the Internet as well,” said Dan Bassill, founder and president of T/MC and also a commissioner with the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service (ICVCS). Bassill encourages stakeholders to share their ideas about different mentoring strategies through the T/MC Web site: msg.uc.iupui.edu/TMC/html/index.php.

In Chicago, the National Mentoring Month campaign is headed by Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Metropolitan Chicago, with the Community Resource Network (CRN) Volunteer Center serving as a main sponsor for local events. CRN’s Jocelyn Dionisio, also a commissioner with ICVCS, encourages volunteers who want to become mentors to contact CRN.



Find Out More!

Harvard Mentoring Project, www.hsph.harvard.edu/chc/wmy2006/index.html

MENTOR/National Mentoring Partnership, www.mentoring.org

Tutor/Mentor Connection, msg.uc.iupui.edu/TMC/html/index.php

Community Resource Network, 800.725.5314, www.chicagovolunteer.net

Illinois resources and connections, www.illinois.gov/volunteer; follow the “Volunteer Opportunities” link to search for volunteer centers and national service programs in your area.

Volunteer opportunities nationwide, www.1-800-volunteer.org

Want volunteer information? Go to www.illinois.gov/volunteer



Message from the Secretary

Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday has just passed, and we at DHS would like to congratulate the AmeriCorps members who performed outreach and service projects in honor of the late Dr. King. On Jan. 16, the MLK Day of Service, the following programs and their members took a "day ON, not a day off":

- **City Year Chicago** partnered with Rainbow/PUSH to help organize service-learning projects and promote their civil rights education and leadership development programs for grade school and middle school children.
- **Public Allies Chicago** partnered with the Southwest Women Working Together Amani House Transitional Shelter to provide various MLK Day activities for women and their families, and to challenge them to reflect on and commit to building stronger families and communities.
- **University of Illinois at Chicago's Project MORE** partnered with the Chicago Department of Children & Youth Services to promote family literacy and host literacy activities at four locations throughout Chicago.
- **Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville's AmeriCorps/East St. Louis** hosted a "Justice Talking" session about Dr. King's "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" and is helping to refurbish a homeless shelter for veterans.

These are just a few of the many activities that have taken place in recent weeks. They are prime examples of the variety and depth of services provided by AmeriCorps members in our state.

Community-Based Learn & Serve (CBLs) programs throughout the state have participated in a variety of events as well, such as:

- celebrating and advocating racial and ethnic diversity, tolerance, and peaceful conflict resolution.
- researching and educating others about Dr. King's life and the civil rights era through oral presentations and storytelling; mini monologues; essay contests; and reading, music and art projects.
- helping children create unity bracelets with their parents.
- enabling children to read and talk with senior citizens and nursing home residents in their communities.
- participating in MLK Day parades, candlelight marches and religious ceremonies commemorating Dr. King's life.

Danville Family YMCA's Teen REACH participants and parents will gather for the third annual "Taste of Culture," which is open to the public. **The Housing Authority of Joliet's Rising Stars Teen REACH** program (see also page 4 of this newsletter) is organizing the Spanish Center's U.S. Marine Corps Toys for Tots Room and cleaning toys in the day care center. The Rising Stars are also serving meals at the Morning Star Mission homeless shelter. Surely this is the type of service-learning that will impact these children's ethic of service throughout their lifetimes.

Let us remember the example shown by the children, youth and others involved with the CBLs and AmeriCorps programs in Illinois. As Dr. King said, "everybody can be great, because everybody can serve."

Happy New Year,

Carol L. Adams, Ph.D., Secretary
Illinois Department of Human Services

Message from the Chair



The past few months at the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service (ICVCS) have been quite busy for the staff, commissioners, and programs alike.

*October saw a record number of attendees – more than 500 – at the annual Opening Day Celebration in Bloomington, with several National Direct AmeriCorps programs joining our AmeriCorps *State programs to be officially sworn in as AmeriCorps members.*

In November, our staff was busy preparing the Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the fiscal year 2007 AmeriCorps*State grants. By the time you read this letter, the Commission will be in the process of opening and reviewing the proposals. On Dec. 8 and 9 in Springfield, and again on Dec. 15 and 16 in Chicago, we held a second national service "cross-streams" training on program and organizational sustainability, in conjunction with the Illinois Program Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Pictures and more information about these events can be found throughout this newsletter.

In October and November of 2005, ICVCS welcomed two new staff members: Scott Kimmel, Executive Director, and Lisa Hooker, Program Officer. Scott and Lisa are excellent additions to the ICVCS team and have much to offer the programs we seek to serve. We look forward to the leadership that Scott will bring to the organization and to the oversight of the Commission's programs and initiatives. Pictures and brief biographies of both Scott and Lisa are on page 7.

In the coming year, we hope to fill vacancies on the Commission and complete the state's Unified Service Plan. We look forward to updating you with this information in the future.

Happy New Year,

Dave Lawrence, Chair
Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and
Community Services



Join *Community Resource Network*,

Chicago Cares and a host of other Chicagoland nonprofit organizations in recognizing local unsung heroes through the Jefferson Awards. These awards are designed to complement a nonprofit organization's existing volunteer recognition program.

To learn more and to submit nominations, go to the "Sign up Form" at www.jeffersonawards.org/civic_engagement/chicago.html.

What are the

Jefferson Awards?

In 1972, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft Jr. and Sam Beard founded the American Institute for Public Service, a 501(c)3 public foundation, to establish a "Nobel Prize" for public and community service – the Jefferson Awards. Their mission was to encourage and honor individuals for their achievements and contributions through public and community service.

The Jefferson Awards are presented at two levels: national and local. National award recipients represent a "who's who" of outstanding Americans. On the local level, *Jefferson Awards recipients are ordinary people who do extraordinary things without expectation of recognition or reward.*

In the metropolitan Chicago area, local media partners are NBC5, the Chicago Sun-Times and Clear Channel. Local award winners will be selected by a panel of judges that includes representatives from area nonprofit organizations and media partners. Award ceremonies for the local winners will be held in Chicago.

The mission of the **Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service** is to improve Illinois communities by supporting and enhancing volunteerism and community service.

Commissioners, appointed by the governor, represent experience in local government, labor, education, older adults, public health, non-profits, business, volunteerism and national service.



COMMISSION MEMBERS

(Web address - www.illinois.gov/volunteer)

Dave Lawrence, Chair, Savoy

Jill Alfrejd, Gurnee

Daniel F. Bassill, Park Ridge

William Braden, Glenview

Phillip J. Cline, Chicago

Randy Dunn, Chicago

Laura Eilts, Chicago

Walter E. Grady, Crete

Howard L. Lathan, Chicago

Anne-Michele McMahon, Park Ridge

Dorothy Miaso, Chicago

Mayor Arlene J. Mulder, Arlington Heights

Kathy Havens Payne, Bloomington

Kelly Reffett, LaSalle

Frederick Rodriguez, Ph.D., Western Springs

Frank O. Sorenson, Macomb

John Stroger, Chicago

James C. Tyree, Chicago

Carmelo Vargas, Chicago

John Wilhelm, M.D., Chicago

John Hosteny, Ex-Officio, Chicago

COMMISSION STAFF

Scott Kimmel, Executive Director

Michael Gaines, Program Officer

Lisa Hooker, Program Officer

Scott Niermann, Training Coordinator/
Graduate Intern

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AT DHS

Steven Guerra, Director,
Division of Community Health and Prevention

Kim Fornero, Bureau Chief of the Bureau of
Community Based and Primary Prevention

Learn & Serve Highlights: Giving and Growing

Hurricane Katrina brought together youth, college students and adults in Kankakee to learn about philanthropy and help victims of the disaster. In late September, 35 Community Resource Center Teen REACH youth, six parents, five Teen

REACH staff and three Olivet Nazarene University student mentors participated in an interactive “Katrina Learn and Serve” evening.

The program included discussions and the lesson plan “Hurricane Katrina Relief - Power, Generosity and Leadership.” Participants shared a family-style meal while watching a video that was filmed and edited by youth in the I-KAN Regional Alternative Attendance Center (RAAC) to portray their three-year Learn & Serve project to develop a nature center in the open prairie behind the RAAC. After the video, the youth packed grocery boxes for the local Red Cross to distribute to Katrina families in Kankakee County.



The vocabulary word for the evening was “philanthropy.” Participants discussed the nonprofit sector, giving on different levels, the generosity of the American people and the ramifications of the hurricane. For their efforts, the youth received Red Cross “I’m A Hero” wrist bands.

Since 2003, students participating in the Housing Authority of Joliet’s Learn & Serve America program have learned to plan, plant, maintain and harvest a vegetable garden. “Our students have increased their knowledge of gardening and donated their harvest to the residents of the Easter Seals Group Home,” said R. Dale Evans, social services coordinator at the Housing Authority. “As they have learned that their efforts will have an impact, they have become more confident students and laid the groundwork for a lifetime of engaged citizenship.”

He added, “I grew up in Joliet public housing and never saw a vegetable garden, so I’ve enjoyed it – especially when you get that feeling that you have made a difference in the lives of others with your service.”

Learn & Serve America Celebrates 15th Anniversary

David F. Durenberger, former senator of Minnesota, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts received Congressional Founders Awards at the annual Learn & Serve America National Conference on Dec. 2, 2005. The senators were present to help celebrate the 15th anniversary of Learn & Serve America, and to encourage schools and community leaders to continue strengthening academic achievement and good citizenship in students through service-learning programs. In 1984, only 9 percent of high schools participated in service-learning; by 1999, a U.S. Department of Education survey found that 46 percent of high schools and 32 percent of schools overall offered service-learning.

“As Learn & Serve America turns 15, we can say with certainty that service-learning is good for young people, good for communities, and good for America,” said David Eisner, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). CNCS is the federal entity that administers Learn & Serve programs nationwide. Eisner noted that the Corporation’s five-year strategic plan makes the expansion of service-learning one of its key policy goals.

In conjunction with the Learn & Serve America National Conference, First Lady Laura Bush announced the results of a new federal study about teen volunteering, conducted by CNCS in collaboration with the U.S. Census Bureau and the Independent Sector. The study found that 15.5 million teenagers volunteered during 2004, contributing more than 1.3 billion hours of service. That translates into a rate of 55 percent, compared to the adult volunteer rate of 29 percent, as established by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Said Mrs. Bush, “I’m proud of this generation. I knew anecdotally that they were volunteering everywhere because I see young people volunteering wherever I go, but now this confirms it with the results of these studies.” A summary of the study’s findings and other statistical information is available at www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp.



December Cross-Streams Trainings a Success



More than 120 program managers and volunteer managers came together in December to learn how to sustain their programs, from tapping baby boomers to writing budgets. Together with the Illinois Program Office of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service (ICVCS) hosted upstate and downstate Cross-Streams Trainings on sustainability.

Each day-and-a-half event focused on four ingredients of sustainability: grant writing, fund development, leveraging volunteers and national service partnership opportunities. Three-hour sessions allowed presenters to address concerns unique to those in attendance and to have interactive exercises. Especially interactive were the grant writing and fund development sessions, where participants were asked to articulate their programs' specific fund-raising objectives and to analyze their program/organizational budgets with regard to required cash-match revenues.

They were then led through the preparation of a budget proposal for a grant. The volunteer leveraging workshop focussed on recruiting baby boomer volunteers, while the national service partnership opportunities session discussed faith-based and community initiatives, along with other national initiatives such as prisoner re-entry.

Each conference included breakfast and lunch, along with a casual evening networking opportunity with participants, presenters and new ICVCS Executive Director Scott M. Kimmel. A significant snowfall slightly complicated the logistics of the Springfield training, but it added to many interesting topics of conversation following the day's training sessions.

Both the Springfield and Chicago trainings had excellent turnouts among national service and volunteer managers from across the state, including program directors and site supervisors from AmeriCorps*State/*National/VISTA programs, Senior Corps programs, Learn & Serve America programs, and Volunteer Centers of Illinois. The Springfield training hosted around 50 attendees, while the Chicago session drew nearly 70 attendees.

Westside AmeriCorps Program

Hosts Health Fair

An elementary school in Chicago was the venue for a health fair in honor of "Make A Difference Day" on Oct. 22, 2005.

Make A Difference Day is a national

day of service, held annually on the fourth Saturday of October. The health fair, attended by more than 250 people, was organized by members of the Westside AmeriCorps team, part of PCC Community Wellness Center on Chicago's west side. PCC, along with three other local agencies, provided screenings for cholesterol, body mass index, asthma and blood pressure, as well as information on nutrition, exercise and other health topics. There were also healthy snack demonstrations and fun activities for children such as games and dancing.

PCC's Westside AmeriCorps program was established in 1997 to help forward PCC's mission of providing quality primary and preventive health care to those who lack access to medical care. During their training, AmeriCorps team members are educated about the community and about the services and procedures of PCC and other local social service agencies. They also receive health education. The Westside AmeriCorps program is divided into three service teams that support unique targeted populations:

- 1** high-risk pregnant women, new mothers and their babies;
- 2** individuals with diabetes or who are at risk for developing diabetes; and
- 3** children who have been diagnosed with elevated lead levels and/or asthma.

Through this outreach, PCC is able to provide ongoing community service. Members reach out to patients of PCC as well as to community residents through home visits; clinic visits; hospital visits; labor support phone calls; letters; group classes such as prenatal classes, nutrition classes and weight management classes; health fairs; and accompanying patients to appointments at other service providers.



Amara Brandt receives nutrition information from AmeriCorps members Kristen Eis and Reina Engle-Stone at the PCC Wellness Health Fair.

Opening Day 2005

A record crowd turned out for the annual AmeriCorps Opening Day celebration and swearing-in ceremony on Oct. 26, 2005, at the Interstate Center in Bloomington, Ill. More than 500 AmeriCorps*State and *National

members and program directors kicked off the upcoming year of service. The entire group was sworn in, with the chair of the Illinois

Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service, Dave Lawrence, leading the AmeriCorps Pledge.

Members networked with

state and national programs, some

of which had displays and handouts about their programs available for browsing. Sessions were conducted on topics that will benefit members throughout their service year, such as teamwork, communication, stress management (also known as avoiding "compassion fatigue"), conflict resolution, success through professionalism, and volunteerism. Keynote

speaker Richard Santana, a Southern California gang leader turned Harvard University graduate, inspired all in attendance and encouraged the AmeriCorps members by noting that a handful of individuals just like each of them helped him turn his life around and succeed.

Santana received a standing ovation from the crowd.



THE AMERICORPS PLEDGE

*I will get things done for America –
to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.*

*I will bring Americans together
to strengthen our communities.*

Faced with apathy, I will take action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity, I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.

Welcome New Commission Staff

Scott M.
Kimmel



Lisa
Hooker

Born and raised in the Saginaw Bay area of Michigan, Mr. Kimmel received a Bachelor of Science in business administration in 1980 and a Master of Arts in economics in 1981 from Central Michigan University.

He began his career in state government in 1982 as an analyst/demographer with the Illinois Bureau of the Budget and worked as an economic analyst in Governor Thompson's office between 1983 and 1988. Mr. Kimmel was the Chief Planning Officer at the then-Department of Professional Regulation between 1989 and 1991. He worked in the Division of Developmental Disabilities between 1991 and 2005, where he handled a wide range of responsibilities, but most enjoyed doing service and support reimbursement rate modeling.

Mr. Kimmel is married (Patti) and has one daughter (Gretchen), who is a senior in the photography school at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. He is a lifelong Detroit sports fan who is still hopeful that the Lions will win the Super Bowl during his lifetime, although he admits it's not looking good.

Ms. Hooker was born and raised in Jacksonville, Ill. She graduated from Jacksonville High School in 1985.

She began her career in state government in 1989 with the then-Department of Public Aid in the Office of Legislation. In 1993, Ms. Hooker continued to pursue her passion for the legislative field and began employment with the Illinois House of Representatives, a position she held until 2000. Ms. Hooker also worked in the legislative offices at the Departments of Insurance and Human Services. In 2003, Ms. Hooker switched gears and began working for the Department of Human Services' Division of Human Capital Development, where she expanded her knowledge of contractual and fiscal matters. She joined the ICVCS Staff in October 2005.

Ms. Hooker currently resides in Springfield with her three children.

Commission staff attended the Cesar E. Chavez training in Chicago on

Nov. 14 and 15. The training was facilitated by Cesar Chavez's granddaughter, Julie C. Rodriguez, who is director of programs for the Cesar E. Chavez Foundation. The training focused on Chavez's core values, including service to others, sacrifice, celebrating community and a preference to help the most needy. His core values are a perfect fit with the Community-Based Learn and Serve civic engagement philosophy. Chavez said, "We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community . . . our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own." Through the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service's Community-Based Learn and Serve grant, youth across Illinois are learning to serve their communities much as Cesar Chavez did throughout his life.



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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

- February 1 & 8, 2006 Volunteer Management Training, www.communityresourcenetwork.org/content/about_us/news_events/Default.asp?id=43
- February 9, 2006 ICVCS Commission Meeting, Chicago & Springfield
- April 4 – 6, 2006 AmeriCorps Leaders' Training, Monticello
- April 21 – 23, 2006 National & Global Youth Service Day www.ysa.org/nysd
- April 23 – 29, 2006 National Volunteer Week www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw
- May 6, 2006 Join Hands Day www.joinhandsday.org
- May 11 – 12, 2006 Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration (ICOVA), Oak Brook www.icova.org



SERVE Illinois is a publication of the Illinois Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service. Send articles for submission and suggestions to:

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