



SERVE ILLINOIS

Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Spring 2009

MLK Day Sparks 13,000 Volunteer Projects Nationwide

On January 19, 2009, President Barack Obama asked people across the country to volunteer in their communities to honor the 2009 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service. This year's number of volunteers conducting service projects was the largest that it has been since the King Day of Service was established 14 years ago. "Dr. Martin Luther King's was a life lived in loving service to others. As we honor that legacy, it's not a day just to pause and reflect – it's a day to act. And I ask the people to turn today's efforts into an ongoing commitment to enriching the lives of others in their communities, their cities and their country," said the President.



LVI Project VOCAL AmeriCorps Program Peace Mural.

Drive for coats and clothing, painting classrooms and murals, and much more. These projects were designed to enlighten, educate and empower the people of Illinois and beyond.

According to the official Martin Luther King, Jr. Day website, www.mlkday.gov, there were over 13,000 service projects performed across the nation, which is more than double the number of projects completed last year. For volunteers, this day was seen as a "day ON, not a day off." As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once stated, "Everyone can be great because anyone can serve."



President Barack Obama pitches in painting at the Sasha Bruce House, a place for at-risk teens which is sometimes used as a homeless shelter. Obama picked up a paint roller and painted some walls in the home. (Photo by Linda Davidson, Washington Post, Washington, D.C., Jan. 19, 2009)

The Serve Illinois

Commission and the Illinois Department of Human Services called upon all citizens of Illinois to volunteer their time and/or resources to honor Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Hundreds of AmeriCorps*State and AmeriCorps*VISTA Members have dedicated up to a year of service to communities throughout Illinois. Members spent MLK Day helping youth with homework, holding a Literacy Fair, educating children on the teachings of Dr. King, holding a Winter Warmth



UIC Project MORE AmeriCorps Program's Family Literacy Outreach event.

To learn more about the Serve Illinois Commission, AmeriCorps National Service or to find volunteer resources, visit Serve.Illinois.gov and get involved today!

From the Secretary



It is an exciting new year and we at DHS believe the wind is at our back for a season of new ideas, new energy, and times of change. This is a particularly exciting time as well due to the efforts of our State Service Commission, Serve Illinois, to raise the profile of volunteering in our state in 2009.

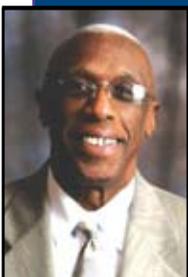
Last year we saw the development and launch of a new website, and broad networking goals to promote good volunteer management in AmeriCorps and other nonprofit volunteer programs. More recently, the Commission has promoted statewide collaboration on National Days of Service like Martin Luther King Day. With the recent inauguration of our new President, Barack Obama, we believe national and community service efforts will grow in their size and prominence in order to meet the increased demands on our community-based nonprofits and programs serving people in need.

The spring season, just around the corner, also brings with it a “Season of Service” with numerous volunteer events and opportunities following MLK Day in January. For college students, and even those much younger, many schools promote a “semester of service” and encourage or require that students participate in service-learning and other community service activities as part of their educational experience.

Whatever you or your organization choose to do this new year, it is important to note that communities with higher levels of volunteering tend to be healthier communities, and individuals that give back to society also tend to be healthier individuals. So be good to yourself and visit www.Serve.Illinois.gov today to learn more about the efforts underway in our state to strengthen communities through volunteerism.

Carol L. Adams, Secretary
Illinois Department of Human Services

From the Chair



Welcome to the first issue of Serve Illinois for 2009! As the newly elected Chair of the Serve Illinois Commission, it is my honor and privilege to follow in the footsteps of those commissioners who have gone before me, including outgoing Chairman Dave Lawrence. Thank you, Dave, for your service to our state in this capacity. Rosemary Keefe of Illinois Tool Works joins me as Vice Chair of the Commission beginning this year, and I am confident she will bring the utmost skill and professionalism to this role. I want to thank my fellow commissioners for their support and confidence in both Rosemary and my leadership.

We are committed to work in partnership with the Illinois Department of Human Services and Serve Illinois team to represent our great state and further promote volunteerism in Illinois.

Established in 1979, Illinois has maintained an office committed to volunteerism for 30 years. The Serve Illinois Commission strives to improve Illinois communities by enhancing traditional volunteerism in its variety of forms, and by supporting National Service programs, such as AmeriCorps, in Illinois. On a regular basis, Serve Illinois Commissioners and DHS/Serve Illinois staff help ensure that communication is maintained with individuals and organizations throughout the state that work with volunteers and volunteer programs.

Our outreach includes face-to-face meetings, presentations in various venues, professional training events, this newsletter and statewide email alerts. The recently launched Serve Illinois website, Serve.Illinois.gov, also includes much information about service. The Serve Illinois Commission desires the public’s participation and support in volunteerism and other service programming.

We encourage all our readers, whether elected officials, community leaders, or citizens to participate in service with our AmeriCorps programs or to perform a search at Serve.Illinois.gov to identify a volunteer opportunity unique to your skills and interests. Help the Serve Illinois Commission strengthen communities through these efforts, especially during these difficult economic times.

Thank you for your commitment to service.

Howard Lathan, Chair
Serve Illinois Commission
Associate Director, Chicago Area Project

National and Community Service Recognition Day 2008

National and Community Service Recognition Day (formerly AmeriCorps Opening Day) took place on October 16, 2008 in Springfield, Illinois.



Commissioners Rodriguez, Lathan, McCammon, Keefe and Lawrence at Recognition Day 2008.

This annual recognition celebration was hosted by the Serve Illinois Commission and staff. Nearly 700 AmeriCorps Members from across the state gathered to kick off the start of a new year of service. The event started out at the Prairie Capitol Convention Center in Springfield, where the Members participated in a service project to help the American Red Cross assemble educational materials.

Key speakers of the day included Patti Kurtz, former AmeriCorps*NCCC member, and Tom Caulfield of Parkland College, with emcee Jerry Lambert from *WICS TV20*. There were also guest appearances by Mayor Tim Davlin and State Representative Richard Brauer.



Commission Vice-Chair Rosemary Keefe leads the Members in the AmeriCorps pledge.

Escorted by the Springfield Police and Fire Department, the Members marched in a parade to the State Capitol. Along the parade route, Members collected canned food from community businesses and onlookers. At



AmeriCorps Members march to the Capitol Complex.

the Capitol, Members were sworn in with the AmeriCorps Pledge of service, led by Serve Illinois Commissioner Rosemary Keefe. By renaming the event to recognize all streams of national service, the Serve Illinois Commission and staff would like to invite all streams to participate in the event next year.



The mission of the Serve Illinois Commission is to improve Illinois communities by supporting and enhancing traditional volunteerism and community service and the administration of the AmeriCorps program.

Serve.Illinois.gov

COMMISSION MEMBERS

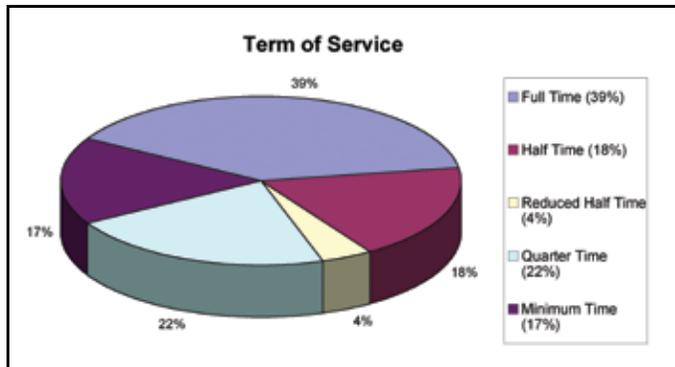
- Howard L. Lathan, Chair, Chicago
- Rosemary Keefe, Vice Chair, Lincolnshire
- Don Baden, Fairview Heights
- Andrew Barbeau, Chicago
- Dan Bassill, Chicago
- Julian Brown, Naperville
- Jocelyn D. Cheng, Chicago
- Ted Gibbs, Chicago
- Walter Grady, Chicago
- John Hosteny, Chicago
- Nancy Jameson, Carthage
- Chris Koch, Springfield
- Dave Lawrence, Savoy
- Terry Mason, Chicago
- Bob McCammon, Waukegan
- Arlan McClain, Dixon
- Sheryl McGill, Chicago
- Arlene J. Mulder, Arlington Heights
- Kelly Reffett, LaSalle
- Fred Rodriguez, Ph.D., Western Springs
- Jody Weis, Chicago
- Todd Stroger, Chicago
- James Tyree, Chicago
- Steven Wolfe, Wheaton

COMMISSION STAFF

- Kim Fornero, Acting Executive Director
- Lisa Hooker, AmeriCorps Program Officer
- Ebone Lott, AmeriCorps Program Officer
- Scott Niermann, Volunteer Programs Manager
- Scott McFarland, Resource & Information Manager
- Eden Lawson, Graduate Public Service Intern

Meet Our Members

The chart and table below provide information on Illinois' AmeriCorps*State membership for the Class of 2008-2009. The Serve Illinois Commission's 2008-2009 AmeriCorps*State portfolio includes the 22 programs and more than 800 total Members. To date, 2008-2009 Illinois AmeriCorps Members have given 183,315 hours of service.



Illinois AmeriCorps Class of 2008-2009
AmeriCorps Member Demographics

Category	Answer	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009
Gender	Female	72%	75%	77%
	Male	28%	25%	23%
Age	18-24	72%	68%	70%
	25-50	23%	28%	27%
	51+	5%	4%	3%
Educational Level Attained	High school / GED	25%	19%	23%
	Technical, apprenticeship, associate degree, some college	50%	51%	47%
	College graduate	19%	19%	20%
	Some graduate school or graduate degree	6%	7%	6%
Reason Members Joined	Community service	55%	50%	54%
	Explore interests	6%	7%	6%
	Earn money	8%	10%	7%
	Scholarship	24%	24%	23%
	Be part of national movement	5%	4%	4%
How Members Learned About AmeriCorps	Learn about other groups/ethnicities	3%	3%	2%
	Through friend, relative, AmeriCorps Member	48%	47%	48%
	Internet/TV/Radio	11%	11%	9%
	Recruited by AmeriCorps	6%	10%	11%
	Print media	19%	14%	16%
School	13%	12%	9%	

Compiled in January 2009 and based on 840 AmeriCorps*State Members across Illinois. These statistics are subject to continual change.

LeaderCorps Fall Conference

It was a fabulous November weekend when LeaderCorps Members met at the annual Fall LeaderCorps Conference at Eagle Creek Resort in Findlay, IL. The conference was held from November 12 to 14, 2008. Jeff Birdsall of Seattle, WA led the leadership training for the conference. For the first time, members of the AmeriCorps*VISTA program were brought to the LeaderCorps table, in addition to the many members of AmeriCorps*State and National programs.

In addition to a daylong leadership and project planning training, an election was held

where Shi Lynn Coleman from the LSSI Storybook Program was chosen as Vice President of LeaderCorps, Colleen Mato from City Year Chicago was named the Direct Days of Service Coordinator and Bridget Noonan from



Project YES! was named Secretary of LeaderCorps. Committee Chairs were also selected for the Days of Service, Alumni, and Marketing/Outreach Committees.

After the training exercises concluded and LeaderCorps business was settled, Members got right to work for the remainder of the conference. The task was to begin planning our two statewide days of service for 2009: Martin Luther King Day (January 19) and National AmeriCorps Week (May 9-16). AmeriCorps members from all over the state will seek to partner with other National Service and volunteer programs to collaborate on service projects that will strengthen Illinois communities.

To learn more about projects taking place during National Days of Service, visit the Serve.Illinois.gov webpage. Please find a volunteer opportunity today and help "get things done" for your community.

— Submitted by Bridget Noonan of AmeriCorps Project YES! and Erin Wethern of Illinois Campus Compact AmeriCorps*VISTA program.

MISSION

The mission of LeaderCorps is to connect AmeriCorps programs in Illinois through state, national and global days of service and to promote continued AmeriCorps alumni involvement.

spotlight

Foster Grandparent Recognized

Myrna Handel deserves special recognition and praise for her dedication and commitment in helping today's youth. After raising her two adopted children and being a foster parent to 23 children, the 69 year-old grandmother from Mt. Carroll, Illinois is still giving of her time to youngsters by participating in Tri-County Opportunities Council's Foster Grandparent Program of Western Illinois.

She volunteers six hours daily in Mrs. Gabriel's kindergarten classroom at West Carroll Primary School in Savanna, IL and helps children who need special attention in developing reading readiness skills, letter and number identification, and handwriting abilities.



Foster Grandparent Myrna Handel

Handel travels 21 miles a day to work one-on-one with children who need her special guidance and attention in order to improve their academic performance, their readiness to learn, and their self-confidence and attitude toward school. She also volunteers with the CASA Program and was chosen as the "2008 Rookie of the Year" representative for Carroll County. Through



CASA, Handel is a "Court Appointed Special Advocate" and is a friend to abused or neglected children in the court system and offers them comfort and support during very stressful times.

In October of 2008, Handel drove more than 200 miles and volunteered 40 hours of service with CASA. She also enjoys being involved in her church activities and spending time with her children and grandchildren. Handel is giving a valuable contribution to the lives of youngsters, and her loyalty and efforts are truly appreciated.

– Submitted by Sharon A. King, Foster Grandparent Program Director, Tri-County Opportunities Council in Rock Falls, Illinois.

East Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference Launched

The Illinois Volunteer Management Network (VMN), with the support of local volunteer leaders and the Serve Illinois Commission, has launched a new professional development event for the East Central region of the state. ***The East Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference, the flagship conference birthed out of local collaborations and the VMN, will be held June 11, 2009 at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois.***



With 19 local partners from Bloomington to Effingham, and Springfield to the Indiana border, this regional event is being developed with sustainability in mind.

Jody Littleton of Parkland College and AmeriCorps*VISTA member Becky Stroud will co-chair the event in June. More information will be available through *Serve.Illinois.gov* website and other Commission correspondence, or call us at 800.592.9896 with questions about getting involved.

Southern Illinois Volunteerism Conference Grows

Reaches over 180 volunteer and community leaders in its 12th year



With a nearly 40 percent increase in attendance from 2007 to 2008, the Southern Illinois Volunteerism Conference (SIVC) is taking off. October of 2008 brought one of the larger volunteerism conferences in the state to Mt. Vernon, Illinois, featuring capacity-building training opportunities to enhance the skills of volunteer leaders and managers in the public, private and particularly nonprofit sectors. The conference also seeks to provide professional development workshops for volunteers themselves. This year, SIVC was honored to be joined by Gary Renville, Regional Vice President of Hands On Network at the Points of Light Institute for a special session regarding volunteer management and infrastructure at the national level. Speaking at the General Sessions, SIVC keynotes were Dr. Ella Phillips Lacey of Carbondale and Mark Kiesling of WSIL-TV in Carterville. ***The 2009 SIVC conference will be held September 29th at the Holiday Inn in Mt. Vernon. Visit www.sivc.net for more details as they become available.***

Save the Date

ICOVA

May 14-15, 2009

Oakbrook Terrace

For more information, visit www.icova.org



LSSI AmeriCorps Member Reflects on her Year of Service

I helped organize and prepare for about 10 Storybook events during the year. The opportunity of the Storybook project had a seemingly uncomfortable edge to it, as I willingly prepared to enter the Illinois correctional facilities for the first time. Along with the tedious paperwork and mandated background checks, I became aware of the complex procedures, rules and regulations. Entering the prisons and interacting with the inmates, I found the male and female prisoners to be vulnerable and altogether human beings, much different from my prejudiced predispositions.

Some prisoners were illiterate or low readers who could only pick a book and send a message via audio tape. Others were so overwhelmed with guilt or emotion they couldn't speak. Some wept. Still others sang and read their books happily and animatedly to their children via audio tape. All could not seem to express their gratitude to us volunteers for bringing Storybook to them.

My AmeriCorps service also included providing educational support to children of incarcerated parents.

Each week, I worked with kindergarten and fifth grade students. I found these children were like other children and not like other children at the same time. They had special circumstances that effected their academic/social well-being, self-confidence and attention span. But they were also learning and growing with their peers, just like other students. One particular kindergarten girl I worked with really needed one-on-one attention. She would always climb up in my lap and show me what a good reader she was. She seemed affirmed in the support I gave her.

I designed "The Resource Guide of Williamson County" for visitors at the county jail. Throughout the summer, my supervisor and I coordinated this project and frequently visited the jail each week (during visiting hours) to present the Resource Guide and recreational items for the visitors' children and to all those interested. Much like Storybook, this endeavor to go to the jail also had an edge of discomfort. Nevertheless, we readily shared encounters with many single young mothers, wives and a wide range of family and friends who came to visit the jailed persons.

I found my year of AmeriCorps service challenging and meaningful, that I could not convey fully with words. I was challenged and changed from the inside out in my attitudes, work ethic, motivation and comfort levels as I was introduced to the world of the incarcerated. An unforgettable insight I attained during my service was the holistic impact of families with incarcerated loved ones. When a loved one does time, the family as a whole also serves time with them.

Overall, I am indeed highly esteemed to have been part of such successful ongoing service projects within Illinois. America's communities have within them great needs of which AmeriCorps can help improve. My final sincere thoughts remain that, as I consider this innate desire within me to continue community service, that I need these communities far greater than these communities need me.

– Submitted by Kelly S. Klingler, 2008 AmeriCorps Member and Jane Otte, AmeriCorps Program Director, LSSI Prisoner and Family Ministry Program, Marion, IL.



Children served through the Prisoner and Family Ministry AmeriCorps programs.



**Lutheran Social
Services of Illinois**

Isn't it about time for you to change the world?



Find a volunteer opportunity today!

Visit
Serve.Illinois.gov



Visit Serve.Illinois.gov

In addition to the searchable portal of over 46,000 volunteer opportunities statewide, Serve.Illinois.gov hosts a wide variety of volunteer resources that the Serve Illinois Commission hopes will assist in improving and promoting volunteerism and community service in Illinois.

Volunteerism Research and Publications

The website includes a growing collection of research and related publications that may help improve volunteer agencies and better inform those who manage volunteers. It is the Commission's intent that Serve.Illinois.gov can help bring new knowledge to those engaging Illinois volunteers in a variety of important and community-changing tasks across the state.

Volunteerism Network and Connections

Through the Volunteer Management Network pages and the Resource Links available on our website, the Commission seeks to keep volunteer leaders connected through regional meetings, conferences and web links to those in the field of volunteerism development and promotion.

Serve Illinois Calendar of Events

The new website includes an up-to-date calendar of Commission events and related volunteerism trainings and meetings throughout the state. This listing of activities and opportunities can be accessed from the homepage. If your agency has upcoming volunteerism or national service events that you would like posted to Serve.Illinois.gov, they can be sent for consideration to dhs.serveillinois@illinois.gov.

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Fax/Email to: 217.557.0515 or DHS.ServeIllinois@Illinois.gov

Upcoming Days of Service

March 31, 2009	Cesar Chavez Day of Service and Learning www.chavezfoundation.org/cesarchavez-day.html
April 19-25, 2009	National Volunteer Week www.pointsoflight.org/programs/seasons/nvw/
April 24-26, 2009	Global Youth Service Day www.gysd.org
May 2, 2009	Join Hands Day www.joinhandsday.org
May 9-16, 2009	National AmeriCorps Week www.americorpsweek.gov



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Illinois AmeriCorps Disability Outreach Project: Meeting the needs for AmeriCorps Members of all backgrounds and abilities.

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