



DPI VISTA Monthly



Jane Grinde
Project Director

AUGUST 2008

**Ruth Anne
Landsverk**
Family Education
Coordinator

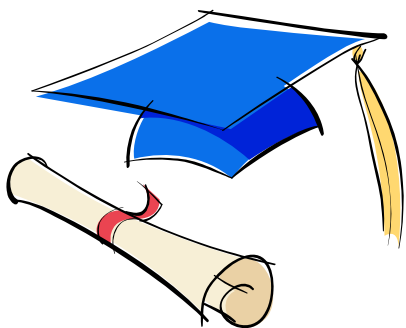
Kindness in words creates confidence.
Kindness in thinking creates profundity.
Kindness in giving creates love.

Betsy Prueter
VISTA Leader

Diane Krumm
Program Assistant

LAO-TSE

LIFELONG SERVICE: BECOMING AN AMERICORPS ALUMNUS



By Betsy Prueter

Twelve of you, come mid-August, will finish your VISTA service and move on to jobs, graduate school, or more service. You will all officially become AmeriCorps Alumni.

We certainly hope that you will continue to serve in other capacities throughout your lives whether that is with another year in AmeriCorps, through your local church, community non-profit, or in the public schools. We hope that the lessons you learned in VISTA and the experiences you had have inspired you to always be mindful of the challenges and realities of poverty.

As you enter your post-VISTA life, keep in mind that there are several resources available to help you in your job search or connect you to other alums across the country (and in your local community!

Official AmeriCorps Alumni website:
<http://www.americorpsalums.org/>

AmeriCorps Alumni Meetup Groups
<http://americorpsalumni.meetup.com/>

AmeriCorps Alumni on Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=23996685313>

VISTA on Facebook
<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=2420329608>

In closing, I wanted to mention a recent study published in May by the Corporation for National and Community Service on who benefits the most from AmeriCorps service. Most people assume it's those individuals and communities being served. However, this study cites the *AmeriCorps members themselves* as one of the largest beneficiaries of their own service investments. I hope that each of you has gained perspective, insight, and compassion from your year of service and will serve as lifelong ambassadors in your own communities for all national service programs.



Congrats to Cat Horzewski who recently accepted a position as Program Director at the YMCA of Greater Milwaukee!

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Be sure to send some birthday wishes!

Cathy Knott (8/17)

cknott@spartan.org

Renee Hinn (8/29)

hinn0023@uwn.edu



GRANT OPPORTUNITIES



VERIZON GRANTS FOR LITERACY

The Verizon Foundation is now accepting proposals from eligible institutions for Literacy Grants.

Deadline: November 1, 2008.

<http://foundation.verizon.com/grant/guidelines.shtml>

MINI-GRANTS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Ezra Jack Keats Mini-grant Program for Public Schools and Public Libraries supports educators, parents and children in their efforts to spread literacy and love of learning.

Deadline: September 15, 2008.

<http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/programs/minigrant.html>

RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE GRANTS FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Ronald McDonald House Charities Grants support programs that help children read, provide nutritious

after-school meals, offer life-changing surgeries, or help prevent life-threatening disease. Ronald McDonald House Charities Board of Trustees is most interested in national and/or international organizations that have a specific program related to children's health and well-being.

Deadline: September 8, 2008.

<http://www.rmhc.com/rmhc/index/grants.html>

ACCESS FOR EDUCATORS TO C-SPAN ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

The C-SPAN Archives Grants awardees are granted the videotapes of their choice from the extensive collection in the C-SPAN Archives for creative proposals for using the network's programming in the classroom or in research projects. Eligibility: middle and high school teachers, college/university professors.

<http://www.c-span.org/classroom/grants.asp>

NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION AND HOME DEPOT ANNOUNCE 2009 YOUTH GARDEN GRANTS PROGRAM

NGA awards Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs. In evaluating grant applications, priority will be given to programs that emphasize one or more of the following elements: educational focus or curricular/program integration; nutrition or plant-to-food connections; environmental awareness/education; entrepreneurship; and social aspects of gardening such as leadership development, team building, community support, or service-learning.

Deadline: November 1, 2008.

<http://www.kidsgardening.org/YGG.asp>

"INCREASE YOUR GREEN" SCHOOL COMPETITION

Do Something is inviting America's middle and high schools to reduce their carbon footprint this fall through the "Increase Your Green" competition.

Deadline: December 15, 2008.

<http://www.dosomething.org/increaseyourgreen>

HOOKED ON HYDROPONICS

When children and teens explore how to grow plants hydroponically (without soil), fruitful questions bloom, and these questions can lead to active investigations and problem solving. These studies may even lead to classroom business

opportunities or fuel student career interests. Not the least of the benefits is the joy of students harvesting a crop of their own incredible edibles or bounteous blossoms!

Deadline: September 15, 2008.

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants/HOH.asp>

TOMMY HILFIGER EDUCATION GRANTS

Tommy Hilfiger Corporate Foundation Education Grants support programs/partnerships that promote educational opportunities for diverse populations in the United States.

Deadline: October 1, 2008.

<http://www.tommy.com/opencms/opencms/corporate/foundation/aboutthefoundation.html/>

HEALTHY SPROUTS AWARDS

The National Gardening Association recognizes outstanding youth programs via the Healthy Sprouts Awards. The awards support school and youth garden programs that teach about nutrition and the issue of hunger in the United States.

Deadline: October 15, 2008.

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/healthysprouts.asp>

SCHOOL COUNSELOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

The American School Counselor Association's School Counselor of the Year program honors "the best of the best" school counselors. The award is granted to school counselors who are running a top-notch, comprehensive school-counseling program at either the elementary, middle, or high school level. Maximum award: expenses for award ceremony. Eligibility: U.S.-based practicing school counselors as of February 2008.

Nominations deadline: Sept. 5, 2008.

<http://www.schoolcounselor.org/content2.asp?contentid=544>

BARBARA BUSH FOUNDATION FOR FAMILY LITERACY

The Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy's grant making program for 2009 seeks to develop or expand projects supporting development of literacy skills for adult primary caregivers and their children. Maximum award: \$65,000. Eligibility: organizations with current nonprofit or public status that have been in existence for at least two years on the date of the application.

Deadline: Sept. 5, 2008.

<http://www.barbarabushfoundation.com/nga.html>

BEST BUY AWARDS FOR INTERACTIVE TE@CH PROGRAMS

The Best Buy te@ch program rewards schools for successful interactive programs they have launched with available technology. Winning te@ch programs focus on kids using technology to learn a standards-based curriculum, rather than on teaching students to use technology or educators using technology that children aren't able to use hands-on. Maximum Award: \$5,000. Eligibility: Accredited K-12 public, private, parochial, and nonprofit charter schools in the United States.

Deadline: October 12, 2008.

<http://bestbuyteach.scholarshipamerica.org>

NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER AWARDS

The National Schools of Character Awards program identifies exemplary schools and districts to serve as models for others and helps schools and districts improve their efforts in effective character education. Maximum Award: \$2,000. Eligibility: To be eligible, a school must have been engaged in character education for a minimum of three full years, starting no later than December 2006 for the 2009 awards. Districts need to have been engaged in character education for a minimum of four full years, starting no later than December 2005. Smaller administrative units that maintain a separate identity within a large district may apply in the district category -- for example, a school pyramid or cluster.

Deadline: Dec. 8, 2008.

<http://www.character.org/site/c:iplJKTOEJsG/b.3937991>

COMCAST GRANTS FOR DIVERSITY-ORIENTED PROGRAMS

The Comcast Foundation is awarding grants to maximize the impact of community investments so they yield tangible, measurable benefits to the neighborhoods Comcast serves and the people who live there. The Foundation's primary focus is in funding diversity-oriented programs that address literacy, volunteerism, and youth leadership development. Maximum Award: \$500,000. Eligibility: 501(c)3 organizations operating within communities that Comcast serves.

Deadline: N/A.

<http://www.comcast.com/foundation>

KIDS IN NEED FOUNDATION: TEACHER GRANTS

Kids In Need Foundation (formerly SHOPA) Teacher Grants provide funds for classroom teachers who have innovative ideas but lack the budget to bring them to life. Projects may qualify for funding if they make creative use of common teaching aids, approach the curriculum from an imaginative angle, or tie nontraditional concepts together for the purpose of illustrating commonalities. Innovation and merit account for 40 percent of the evaluation.

Deadline: Sept. 30, 2008.

http://www.kidsinneed.net/grants/grant_applications.php

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION: TEACHER RECOGNITION AWARD

The International Reading Association's Regie Routman Teacher Recognition Award honors an outstanding elementary-school teacher of reading and language arts who is dedicated to improving teaching and learning through reflective writing about his or her teaching and learning process.

Deadline: Oct. 28, 2008.

http://www.reading.org/association/awards/teachers_routman.html

AMA AND LEADER TO LEADER INSTITUTE: SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The AMA Scholarship is designed to provide nonprofit leaders with an opportunity to step out of the day-to-day, interact with peers across sectors, and develop practical skills they can apply immediately within their organizations.

Deadline: Dec. 15, 2008.

<http://leadertoleader.org/collaboration/ama/index.html>

FOURIER SYSTEMS: MATCHING GRANTS FOR SCIENCE TOOLS

The Fourier Systems Computing Science Exploration Grant Program provides an opportunity for teachers to receive science-focused tools for their classrooms to increase student learning in math and science.

Deadline: Jan. 1, 2009.

<http://www.nova1to1.com/science-grant/index.php>

GRANTS FOR FREE ACCESS TO SYLVAN DELL PUBLISHING SITE

Children's book publisher Sylvan Dell is reaching out to schools and school districts nationwide with grants that provide unlimited access to all 35 Sylvan Dell eBooks.

Deadline: rolling.

<http://www.sylvandellpublishing.com/ResourceGrant.html>

MINI-GRANTS FOR SERVICE-ORIENTED PROJECTS FOR YOUTHS

Pay It Forward Mini-Grants go to one-time-only, service-oriented activities that young people would like to perform to benefit their school, neighborhood, or greater community.

Deadline: applications accepted starting September 15, 2008.

<http://payitforwardfoundation.org/educators/grant.html>

NEA FOUNDATION STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS

The NEA Foundation Student Achievement Grants are provided to improve students' academic achievement by engaging them in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen knowledge of standards-based subject matter.

Deadline: Oct. 5, 2008.

http://www.neafoundation.org/programs/StudentAchievement_Guidelines.htm

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Lowe's Toolbox for Education grant program finances school-improvement projects initiated by parents.

Deadline: Oct. 17, 2008.

<http://www.toolboxforeducation.com>

PARTNERSHIPS FOR LIFE



By Ruth Anne Landsverk

You did it! You made it through your year of VISTA service (two, for some!). This has probably been a year like no other. Forevermore you can recall your year of selfless giving with a certain nostalgia and wistfulness, along with wonderment at how you kept food on the table AND paid the rent (more or less).

Even more awe-inspiring is the fact that many VISTAs say they feel as if they received more than they gave! Following, are a few, partnership “lessons learned” that some of our wonderful VISTAs have been heard to utter about their year of giving. My sincere apologies to them for this humble attempt to paraphrase.

1. “Those” are “Us.”

VISTAs will never be able to mutter “those parents,” accompanied by a roll of the eyes and a shake of the head. “Those” families were the very people you served, advocated for, and felt most at one with. The extended hand, the passing word of encouragement, the shared laugh; those are the partnerships VISTAs built every week in every school they served. VISTAs learned: We are Them.

2. You made change happen.

OK, not everything turned out as expected. On the other hand, a lot of good things happened that you never imagined could. For example, you got to talk to, work with, and serve real parents and real kids and make a real difference in their lives. You got to see young eyes light up and gray heads nod in understanding. Perhaps the greatest compliment of all: you got to see attitudes change.

3. It’s OK to try and fail, but it’s failure to not try.

You learned that after that wonderful parent meeting you set up for 7 p.m. the night of the 15-year snowstorm. The treats stayed untouched on

their nice, little plates; the speaker spoke nobly and sincerely to the three parents who showed up (the same three who come to every school event); and everyone helped put away the 65 folding chairs erected for the occasion.

Being a practitioner of effective partnerships, however, you learned that it is the **content** of the workshop that is important, not the attendance. Swallowing hard, you then prepared a short summary for the next school parent newsletter. You took heart from the fact that one parent mentioned how useful they found your article, and only imagined how many countless others read it, admired it, and learned something from it. Most certainly, they did.

4. Humility is greatness. You know what humility looks like. It looks like the teacher who still didn’t know what you did at the end of the year. It sounds like the school staff member who kept forgetting your name. If, indeed, “Life is a long lesson in humility,” as James Barrie, creator of Peter Pan, asserted, you are probably off to a good start.

It’s good to know, however, that humility is also regarded by the wise men of the ages as the parent of wisdom, when we are closest to being our greatest, and, what makes us real. It is also perhaps an essential ingredient in partnerships because we stand stripped of pretense and pride, and quit judging others. Only then, according to Albert Einstein, are we immune to being “shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods.”

5. Together, we can!

What can’t be done alone can be done with teamwork. Or, none of us is as smart as all of us. VISTAs not only learned this, but passed it onto the reams of people that they worked with: the Partnership Action Team, community groups, the school parent-teacher group, and lots of impassioned parents, teachers, students, and others. In the final analysis, teamwork is the critical ingredient to sustainability. The seeds of teamwork that you sowed this year will hopefully take root and flourish for families years from now, thanks to your hard work, perseverance, and faith in the goodness of your fellow man.

May the lessons learned during your year of partnerships hold you in good stead as you clamber onward. “Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting. So... get on your way.” – Dr. Seuss.

A VISTA THANK-YOU



In mid-August, eleven of our VISTA members will end their service. We'd like to take this time to thank each and every one of you for your service, your commitment, and your effort in partnerships in Wisconsin. We wish you the best of luck!

Melanie Brooks (07-08) served at Neeskara Elementary School and Parents Plus in Milwaukee.

Lacey Donatell (07-08) served with the Spooner School District.

Shanna Hammond (07-08) served with the Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center in Green Bay.

Cat Horzewski (06-08) served with Fritsche Middle School and the School for Urban Planning and Architecture in Milwaukee.

Lauren Jakubowski (07-08) served with the Business and Economics Academy of Milwaukee and Pulaski High School in Milwaukee.

Cathy Knott (07-08) served with Meadowview Middle School in Sparta.

Kelly Libert (07-08) served with Gebhardt Elementary School in Black River Falls.

Dan Tourdot (07-08) served with CESA 9 in Tomahawk.

Virginia Walker (07-08) served with Lowell Elementary School in Milwaukee.

Julie Webster (07-08) served with the Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center in Green Bay and Franklin Elementary School in Appleton.

Carolyn Wood (06-08) served with Adams-Friendship Middle School in Friendship.

THE VISTA CAMPUS RESOURCES FOR CURRENT AND FORMER VISTAS



<http://vistacampus.org/login/index.php>

The Corporation for National and Community Service has recently launched the VISTA campus. This online portal will allow current members and alumni to access resources, chat with other members nationwide, look for jobs, hear stories and testimonies of former VISTA members and share their own experiences. Current members can also participate in online tutorials to better prepare them for their service.

The VISTA Campus is an online learning community that all members (past and current) should consider joining. You will need to create an account (free of charge) to access the portal.

Visit:

<http://vistacampus.org/>

Select the "VISTAs" button to create an account
<http://vistacampus.org/login/index.php>



VISTA TO VISTA ADVICE



By Brittany Pensis

Brittany began her service in February 2008 and has offered to share her experiences as a new VISTA beginning her service.

My first day at my new site as a VISTA was both nerve-racking and exciting. While I had worked in the school before, I was still anxious to be there in a new capacity and unsure of what to expect. Even though I was armed with my work plan and energized from my Pre-Service Orientation, I was unsure of exactly where to begin or what to do first. Luckily, my first few days were filled with meetings and discussions with my on-site supervisor and other important people of interest.

In order to hopefully make your transition to VISTA-hood easier, or at least to allay some of your fears, here are my top five pieces of advice that helped get me through.

1. **Attend as many meetings as possible** - you may not understand all of what is going on, but you will learn a lot and will make your presence known
2. **Make the most of the meetings** - ask as many questions as possible and meet potential allies
3. **Learn about different funding sources** for potential projects - funds from the Principal's Budget, PTA support, and grants the school already receives. Also, there are grants for just about anything you can imagine if you take the time to look.
4. Don't be afraid to **ask for help** - delegating is important and works toward sustainability.
5. **Write down and save everything** you do from flyers to presentations to planning notes - you need it for your bi-weekly and quarterly reports, and it will help you plan for future programs and will be invaluable to whomever takes over your responsibilities after you leave.

Above all, know that whatever you may be feeling is normal and you will find your niche soon. And have fun!

WORDS OF WISDOM



Current VISTAs share some parting words of wisdom having reflected on their year (or years) of service.

1. Seek out feedback from your Supervisor. *Don't be afraid to ask how you're doing and how he or she feels you are meeting expectations.*
2. Performing indirect service means it is sometimes hard to gauge success. *But remember that what you are doing is capacity building and it is a vital part of fighting poverty.*
3. Participate in the VISTA Blog. *It's a good way to connect with other VISTAs and share successes and challenges.*
4. Schedule regular sit down meetings with Supervisor. *They will probably be very busy people. Make sure you carve out a weekly time to review your progress and plan for the future.*
5. Ask for the training/professional development that you need! *If you feel your service would be benefited from a particular workshop or training, ask the VISTA Leader! We are always searching for training opportunities.*
6. Remember that people have good intentions. *When you're frustrated, assume good will!*
7. Speak up and get things moving. *You're there to work with your site, but you're also there to be a catalyst.*
8. Learn your community. *It could very well be your biggest asset. Get to know the area and utilize what it has to offer!*
9. Budget effectively. *Living on a stipend can be tough and occasionally you might have to pinch pennies.*
10. Don't be afraid to try something new, you never know what might happen! *Nothing will change if you don't think outside the box and push yourself (and your site) to scale up.*



Save the Dates



THE “HEY! THAT’S A GOOD IDEA” CORNER

BY BETSY PRUETER

Each month I try to highlight some of the successes our VISTAs are having. This gives us a chance to celebrate and share promising practices! As a new feature, I am now suggesting what “Key” each practice might address.

AUGUST 16

Last day for August 07 start VISTAs

AUGUST 18-21

Pre Service Orientation, Chicago

AUGUST 22

First day for August 08 start VISTAs

AUGUST 22

Last day for August 06 start VISTAs

SEPTEMBER 10 AND 11

DPI VISTA Project Orientation (Madison)

SEPTEMBER 18 AND 19

Poverty Matters Conference (Appleton)
Register with Betsy

YOUTH AS PARTNERS IN CIVIC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE: Oct 31st-Nov 2nd



Did you know that recent estimates suggest that growing up in poverty costs the U.S. \$500 billion annually (3.8% of U.S.GDP) See *The Cost of Child Poverty State by State* at the end of the newsletter for more information.

1. **Shanna Hammond** successfully implemented a “Ready Set Summer” event at Howe Elementary School in Green Bay. The event showcased resources, camps, and scholarships from over 20 local organizations and agencies. **[Collaborating with the Community]**

2. **Robyn Krimke** is organizing a Book Swap for families at U.S. Grant School in Milwaukee. Students will be able to check out and return gently used books. Additionally, a workshop will be held for parents on how to build a home library. **[Parenting]**

3. **Michael Castaneda** is developing a comprehensive and detailed Sustainability Binder for the new VISTA. This binder not only contains timelines and personnel maps, but it is full of his own insights and advice for working at the school. **[Communicating]**

4. **Brittany Pensis** organized a Bulldog Boogie Bonanza event for families at Olga Brener Elementary in Shawano. This event was designed for families to gather resources to continue their child’s learning over the summer in creative and fun ways. **[Learning at Home]**

5. **Casey Gauthier** has been hard at work organizing Summer Story Time in the Park events for families in the Rhinelander school district. Families are welcome to attend as often as they like and can take home a free book. **[Learning at Home]**

WELCOME NEW VISTAs!



We'd like to extend a warm welcome to our new VISTAs who will begin their service this summer. We look forward to working with them to build strong family-school-community partnerships across the state.

Christina Briggs, Wausau Early Childhood Program

Penny Bruskin, Parents Plus, Milwaukee

Matthew Dolezal, Franklin Elementary School, Appleton (July start)

Brendan Gants, Parents Plus, Milwaukee

Roxane Hagedorn, Wausau School District

Renee Hinn, Lincoln Elementary School, Oshkosh

Stephanie Jung, Parents Plus, Milwaukee

Kelly Karls, Howe Neighborhood Family Resource Center, Green Bay

Kelly Martyka, South Madison Health and Family Center

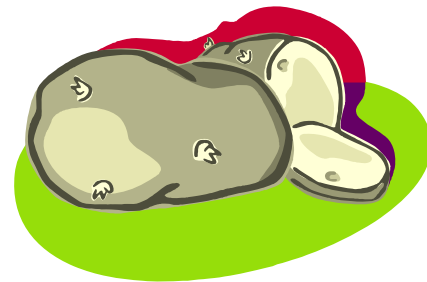
Chad Olle, Parents Plus, Milwaukee

Michelle Traxel, Spooner Middle School

Kim Yoder, Parents Plus, Milwaukee

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

POTATO SOUP



Submitted by Jane Grinde

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 large carrot (or more if you like) cut into small pieces
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 5 large potatoes peeled and cubed.
- 1/2 teaspoon Black pepper
- 2 teaspoon of chicken bullion dissolved in 2 cups of hot water
- 2 tablespoons Canola Oil
- 2 cups of warm milk (choose whether you want whole milk, 2%, 1%, or skim)

DIRECTIONS

Sauté chopped-up onion, garlic, and black pepper in canola oil (you can use butter instead or half butter and half oil) on medium heat in Dutch oven. Add cut-up carrots (peeled or scraped). Cook while you are preparing potatoes. Peel and cut up potatoes in cubes (about 1 inch) and add to other ingredients. Add bullion and water to cover the potatoes and increase heat to high. Bring to low boil and cook for about 20 minutes, until potatoes are soft. Add 1 to 2 cups of warm milk. I use 1%. It's ready to serve after you add the milk. If keeping on the stove, turn heat to simmer. Do not boil.

INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING
TO THE **SEPTEMBER**
NEWSLETTER? EMAIL YOUR
ARTICLES, RECIPES, OR
REFLECTIONS TO BETSY BY THE
END OF AUGUST.