



Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties

# 'BUILDING BRIDGES' AMERICORPS\*VISTA PROGRAM

Volume 3, Issue 2 April 2009

A Program of Community Services Consortium

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Training News</i>	2
<i>In My Own Words...</i>	2
<i>MLK Day</i>	3
<i>Winter Splash</i>	3

## A NEW PROGRAM YEAR TO START IN AUGUST

Congratulations! We are pleased to announce the host sites selected for the 2009-2010 Program Year. Thank you to everyone who helped facilitate the selection process. VISTA members will start in mid August.

### Host Sites for 2009-2010

- Albany InReach Services
- Albany Partnership for Housing and Community Development
- Community Outreach, Inc.
- Community Services Consortium—Santiam Wilderness Academy
- Community Services Consortium—Youth Garden Project
- Corvallis Daytime Drop-In Center
- Jackson Street Youth Shelter
- Lincoln Commission on Children and Families
- Linn-Benton Housing Authority
- Parent Enhancement Program
- Strengthening Rural Families

### Mission of AmeriCorps\*VISTA

*To start, strengthen, or expand programs, systems or services that help people move out of poverty.*

### 'Building Bridges' Staff:

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### Community Services Consortium

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## VOLUNTEERISM ON THE RISE

It has been a busy year in volunteerism in the 'Building Bridges' program. More community volunteer hours (8,751 hours) were generated between August to February than in the first two years of the program in total. Organizations are extremely thankful for the influx of volunteer service. Helen Higgins with the Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis stated that her organization was able to maintain the same level of programming for the youth and not lay-off staff, even in the current economic climate, because of the support from volunteers. The volunteer program at the Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis is managed by Lisa Nolan, a VISTA member with 'Building Bridges'. In addition to supporting the volunteers, Lisa is working to make the Volunteer Coordinator a permanent position. Lisa stated, "Volunteers are extremely important to the work we do at the Club. The kids in our community depend on the Club and without the volunteers we would not be able to meet their needs."

## GETTING THINGS DONE FOR OUR COMMUNITIES!

**Here is what the VISTA members have been doing in the community!**

*# of Volunteers Recruited: 727 community volunteers*

*# of Service Hours Performed by Volunteers Recruited: 14,269.5 hours*

*Total \$ Amount of Financial Resources Generated: \$1,161,968 in cash & non-cash resources*

Data from July 14, 2006 to February 28, 2009



**'Building Bridges'  
VISTA Members  
2008-2009**

**Linn County**

**Alix Stinnett**

Albany Partnership for Housing and Community Development

**Pamela Patterson-Lundsford**

Cascade West Council of Governments

**Benton County**

**Amy Everhart**

Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis

**Amy-Rose Simpson**

Community Services Consortium

**Angela Dahlke**

Community Outreach, Inc.

**Lisa Nolan**

Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis

**Mario Flores**

Corvallis Public Schools Foundation

**Rebekah Hickey**

Community Services Consortium

**Lincoln County**

**Shawn Cardwell**

Head Start of Lincoln County



**Advisory Council Members  
2008-2009**

**Dan Sundseth**

**Dean-Stephen Kauffman**

**Mike Gibson**

**Danee' Cliver**

# TRAINING NEWS

Self reflection and team work was the focus of our latest training and team building day. In February, the 'Building Bridges' team welcomed Maighie Fitzgerald from the Clara Barton VISTA Corps to facilitate our event.

The day was intermixed with activities analyzing who we are and where we came from and team building skills meant to challenge our traditional views about working together. We created life maps, did personality assessments, built balloon castles and ended with the Electric Maze.

Creating life maps! Life maps are a reflection of what made you who you are. They include items from the past, present or future.



Part of the team during the Electric Maze. The goal is to get the entire team across the maze in a specific pattern without talking to each other. It was a challenge, but the team accomplished the goal.



A balloon castle created by Mario Flores, Amy Everhart and Tifani Erpelding.

Thank you to Maighie Fitzgerald for creating a great training for the team and thank you to the 'Building Bridges' Team for actively engaging in the event.

# IN MY OWN WORDS...



*Submitted by Angie Dahlke- AmeriCorps\*VISTA with Community Outreach, Inc.*

The year before I decided to become an AmeriCorps\*VISTA member I sought a more simple life after, what felt like, too many years of solely concerted academic and employment pursuits. Settling with a low key job at a corporate bookstore I quickly found myself burdened by what I thought would be a simple and honest job. Large, irresponsible corporate chains continue to become more prevalent in our society, and their number one goal; to increase profits. Unfortunately, providing a fair and beneficial service is not always a priority towards this end. These practices, along with problems of distribution and fair standards, exacerbate poverty and injustice. I want to be part of a society that meets the demand for basic human needs like sustainable food, respectable

treatment, and fair pay for everyone. AmeriCorps provides me the opportunity to work with individuals that share similar values and concerns. Although this experience has brought challenges of its own, it has also been the simple experience I was looking for. I believe helping can be as easy as being mindful of the individuals and situations I come in contact with each day. I find hope in the choices I can make, with others, to work towards a healthier society for everyone.

# FROM THE FIELD: Stories from Our Communities

## MLK Day of Service

Written by: **Tifani Erpelding, Program Coordinator**

It was cold, blustery January day, but that didn't stop the *'Building Bridges'* team from doing some community service. The VISTA members joined a number of other volunteers



Tifani Erpelding and Angie Dahlke work together to pull a stubborn weed.

at MLK Park to help Corvallis Parks and Recreation with necessary maintenance of the park grounds. Our day consisted of pulling Scotch Broom with the help of a weed wrench.

MLK Day is one of the community service days where VISTA members can participate in direct service activities. Thank you to Amy-Rose Simpson, VISTA Member, and the

Corvallis Commission on Martin Luther King, Jr. for organizing the day of service.



L to R: Lisa Nolan, Amy Everhart, Tifani Erpelding, Rebekah Hickey and Alix Stinnett pose briefly for a picture on the hill.

L to R and Front to Back: Angie Dahlke, Lisa Nolan, Rebekah Hickey, and Tifani Erpelding walking up to the starting area.



## Winter Splash at Albany Partnership for Housing and Community Development

Written by **Alix Stinnett**

My first grant, how exciting! Hit the "submit" button and cross the fingers. This was also my first funded grant for Albany Partnership for Housing and Community Development (APHCD) during my AmeriCorps\*VISTA year. When I received the news that my grant was funded I was utterly blown away. The amount was more than had ever been in my personal bank account and funded not only part of the program that the request was for but the full amount of the project. We requested \$8,000 and received \$15,000.

It was decided that I would put on a Winter Splash event in early December to introduce the Wal-Mart funding and gather together residents of APHCD's properties for a celebration, more-or-less. I found myself two weeks before the Winter Splash with \$172.00 in food and prize donations. The night came. The time came. A few board members trickled in and by the time that Winter Splash was

supposed to start there were seven of us. I felt my cheeks start to get flushed. All of this work for seven people to show up? A few minutes later a half a dozen residents of APHCD property came in. I sighed a little. Then more residents came and soon there was a room full of kids and their parents. The Wal-Mart representatives stepped in with a giant check.

The night was a hit. Food was eaten, a coloring contest was well received, Board Members were engaged in conversation with Wal-Mart representatives about APHCD, music was played, and I had a chance to personally hear the stories of the residents of APHCD, the people that I am indirectly serving during my AmeriCorps\*VISTA year. For the first time since I started my year of service I was able to see the impact of what I was doing and put a face to those I was serving.

### Now Recruiting Members for the *'Building Bridges'* Advisory Committee!

We are searching for a former VISTA member or a former Site Supervisor who is interested in supporting our VISTA program. The commitment is around 2 hours each quarter for meetings and additional time to review applications in the Spring. Please contact Tifani Erpelding if you would like more information.