



Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties

'BUILDING BRIDGES' AMERICORPS*VISTA PROGRAM

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A Program of Community Services Consortium

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Training News</i>	2
<i>In My Own Words...</i>	2
<i>From the Field</i>	3

Mission of AmeriCorps*VISTA

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



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RECRUITMENT BOOM FOR 'BUILDING BRIDGES'

The economy and the national call to service from President Obama generated huge interest for AmeriCorps*VISTA programs across the country. *'Building Bridges'* was no exception. Our program received triple the amount of applications this year for the 11 positions that were available. 66% more than we have had in any previous year. The abundance of applications was both a blessing and a hindrance for host sites. Most had so many strong, qualified applicants that it was extremely time consuming to review and interview all that would be eligible. But some really appreciated the increased interest. Lori Burton from Albany Partnership for Housing and Community stated, "It was nice this year to have some variety in our applicants. We haven't always had that option. We talked with several well qualified people and were able to make the selection that would best match our organization."

The new VISTA members are coming from all over the country to serve in Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties. Members are moving from Florida, Ohio, Minnesota, Montana, Indiana, Washington and, of course, Oregon. The *'Building Bridges'* program has never experienced this level of geographic diversity within a team. In response to the amplified interest in the program, Tom Cope stated, "It is an exciting time for VISTA and our program. We look forward to welcoming our team to Oregon and supporting them in their service." Look for the new *'Building Bridges'* team in your community in late August.

CALLING ALL VISTA PROJECTS!

'Building Bridges' is now recruiting host sites for our December 2009 placement. The program has the ability to sponsor 5 more VISTA positions across Linn, Benton and Lincoln counties. All of the projects must address the mission of VISTA, which is to help move people out of poverty, and also focus on the core principles of anti-poverty issues, capacity building and sustainable solutions. Some examples of projects are: Implementing a volunteer program, conducting outreach/marketing for an organization, doing resource development activities, and designing new programs. For more information or to receive an application please contact Tifani Erpelding at terpelding@csc.gen.or.us or 541-758-2641.

NEW HOST SITES FOR 2009-2010

Albany InReach Services
Albany Partnership for Housing and
Community Development
CSC Santiam Wilderness Academy
CSC Youth Garden Project
Project Action
Jackson Street Youth Shelter

Lincoln Commission on Children and
Families
Linn-Benton Housing Authority
Linn County Sheriff's Department
Parent Enhancement Program
Strengthening Rural Families

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

Linn County

Alix Stinnett

Albany Partnership for Housing and Community Development

Pamela Patterson-Lunsford

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

Gerry Perrone

TRAINING NEWS

The 'Building Bridges' Team was recently invited to attend a Spring Retreat with the Clara Barton VISTA Corps. Five members were able to attend.

It was a jam-packed three days at the Aldersgate Retreat Center in Turner, OR. Topics included visioning for the future, developing strong resumes, and information on the education award.

Thank you to Maighie Fitzgerald and the Clara Barton VISTA Corps for inviting us to attend. We look forward to next year!!

Group picture. L to R: Tifani Erpelding, Amy Everhart (back), Mario Flores (back), Shawn Cardwell, Lisa Nolan (front), Angie Dahlke (middle).



Lisa Nolan, Amy Everhart and Angie Dahlke working with a CBVC member on creating a game! It was a funny sight!



Mario Flores working on his game!



Shawn Cardwell working on a project!

We had a really nice training space!



IN MY OWN WORDS...

*Submitted by: Pamela Patterson-Lunsford- AmeriCorps*VISTA with OCWCOG*

Of all the people I know, the ones I have the most abundant respect for are those who give significantly of themselves, often in a volunteer capacity. They work with Peace Corps, for instance, spending time in another country to make a difference, or with Medical Teams Northwest, offering health care regardless of ability to pay. I used to wish I had any kind of medical experience so that I, too, could answer the call to duty when disaster struck. As much as I craved to have volunteerism a part of my life, I never realized I could. A single mom at 38 years old, just now finishing school, how could I possibly have anything to offer? The people that volunteer, the shining stars of what it means to be humanitarian, are energetic youth, or fully established doctor types. They have resources and/or a freedom from responsibilities that enables them to fly off on an hour's notice or to dedicate years of

their life to helping others. What could a single mom, used to clipping coupons and applying for scholarships, do to help? It wasn't until a career fair at OSU that my definition of who can volunteer was challenged. Wandering the rows of non profits, I spotted a sign that read: AMERICORPS ...*Ameri what?* I asked myself. I had never heard of it before. My curiosity motivating me, I stepped up to find out exactly what it was. The volunteer explained to me that AmeriCorps is a national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. It was founded as *Volunteers in Service to America* in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993. He must have recognized the glazed look in my eyes because he then recapped to say, "AmeriCorps, it's like Peace Corps only here in the USA".

FROM THE FIELD: Stories from Our Communities

The Boys and Girls Club of Corvallis 9th Annual Celebrate Kids Breakfast

Written by: Amy Everhart, VISTA Member

The Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis had its 9th annual Celebrate Kids Breakfast on April 30, 2009. This event serves as our biggest fundraiser of the year. OSU Men's Basketball Coach Craig Robinson, a former "Boys Club" member, was the keynote speaker for this year's event. Robinson spoke about what it means to "BE GREAT," and how the Club and its supporters help to shape local youth. The program also included a video featuring Dr. Bryce Cleary, Chris McGowan, Shannon Reich, and three local Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis alumni who shared how the Club has influenced them to become well-rounded, successful adults. Boys & Girls Club of Corvallis Athletic Director Don Wonsley spoke about how the Club shaped him as he was growing up and why it is so important to him now to work at the Club.

We had the highest attendance ever at this year's event,

with 458 attendees. Prior to the Breakfast, the Club had 100% staff and board giving. Between pre-event direct asks, the Breakfast, and our post-event mailing, our 2009 annual campaign has raised \$220,000 to date: 88% of our \$250,000 annual campaign goal. Thanks to a facilities endowment and program sponsors, all of the money raised will go toward providing vital programs and services to the youth of Corvallis. Thanks to everyone who helped make this event a success!



Guest Speaker Coach Craig Robinson, OSU Men's Basketball Coach. Picture featured in the Corvallis Gazette Times and was taken by Casey Campbell.

CSC Head Start Presents Facility in Newport at Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Written by: Shawn Cardwell, VISTA Member

On May 28, 2009, active children and community advocates from all over Oregon culminated almost 7 years of planning, fundraising and building for CSC at the opening of a new site for Head Start classes in Newport.

As the AmeriCorps*VISTA member for Head Start during 2009, my job was to reach out to the community and invite them, ask them to help support the event, and to make sure they knew a little more about Head Start before they left.

Over 50 members of the Head Start community attended and more than \$1000 was raised within the community to support the event and Head Start in the future. Furthermore, almost all that attended walked away with my new *Friends of CSC Head Start* brochures, and recently have welcomed the first, albeit long-time Friend, Dean-Stephen Kauffman.

This was a great event for me because there are so many

who have gotten involved with the building since its inception, and while sending out invitations I had to really dig into the project and notice all the individuals it took to root a project as grand as this. Every contributor is important to a community and to a business, and it takes a lot of time and practice to make sure they all feel appreciated. I am thankful for this experience and to all who made it successful!

CSC's Newport Head Start Building



**Congratulations AmeriCorps*VISTA Members!
Thank You for Your Service to Our Communities!**