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Subject: Nevada Volunteers Newsletter - November 2009
Date: November 23, 2009 1:20:06 PM PST
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Nevada Volunteers Newsletter - November 2009

MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Thanksgiving is a great time to acknowledge and thank those individuals and companies whose generosity has kept the doors of Nevada Volunteers open during the last half of 2009.

This support helped us launch the largest AmeriCorps portfolio in the history of this commission. \$1,544,492 in AmeriCorps grants were awarded in September by Nevada Volunteers, supporting 249 AmeriCorps members throughout Nevada. To read about how these programs are helping your community, please click here:

http://www.nevadavolunteers.org/news_details.asp?newsID=69

The following businesses and community members, representing Nevada statewide, rallied around Nevada Volunteers to keep AmeriCorps going:

Barbara Urriola, Bitfocus, Inc., Blackfire Real Estate Investors, Brandi Johns Copywrite, Ink., CDI Studios, Deanna Ackerman, Deanna Heller, Erika Urriola IGT, Julie Smith, Kohn Colodny, LLP, KPS/3 Marketing, Krista Lee M. L. Kenefick, LLC. , NV Energy, NV Nonprofit News, Pat Homeyer Rush Lambert, Inc., Sandie Barrie, Wells Fargo, UnitedHealthcare; Anonymous donors

This rally of statewide community support was designed to give the state of Nevada more time to make up the \$365,000 appropriation for the 2009-2011 biennium that was lost at the end of the last budget session.

That \$365,000 has been used as match to bring in more than \$7 million in federal and private funding. For every \$1 the state invested, there has been a return of more than \$19 in federal and private funding.

To date, we have been awarded \$32,000 from the State of Nevada, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). While we are extremely grateful for that funding, it still leaves us far short of the match funds needed.

As the Holiday Season approaches, we thank you once again for your clear desire to keep AmeriCorps in Nevada. We thank the volunteers who make Nevada a better place for us all. We look forward to our continued work together to restore the necessary match funding from the state to ensure the future of AmeriCorps in Nevada.

Yours in Service,
Shawn Lecker-Pomaville, CEO

COLLEGE STUDENTS HELP WITH NEW INITIATIVE

Nevada Volunteers' newest initiative to encourage Nevada's college students to get involved in their communities is off to a great start! Fifty-seven students, spread across six campuses statewide, have begun work on student and community surveys to assess needs as well as expectations and challenges surrounding engaging students in volunteerism and service-learning. "An important part of our initiative is to hear directly from college students about what motivates them to volunteer in their communities and what needs they see in the community," said Jo Ella Barrie, the Nevada Volunteers Higher Education Initiative Coordinator. "We are asking our work group participants to help us identify ways to increase opportunities and awareness about volunteering."

Jo Ella along with Janet Wright, Volunteer Development Manager with Nevada Volunteers, began recruiting students and connecting with campus staff late last summer after receiving congressionally-directed funding for the project. With the help of AmeriCorps*VISTAs assigned to the project at various schools, five separate work groups are active. Krystal Woolam who is based at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and Natalie Minev, based at the Volunteer Center of Southern Nevada, are the VISTAs working with the two student groups in southern Nevada. One group consists of 8 students from Nevada State College in Henderson, and the second group is comprised of 25 students from both UNLV and College of Southern Nevada. In the rural north, Great Basin College in Elko has 4 student participants while Western Nevada College has 8 students in Carson City and Fallon. University of Nevada, Reno has the second largest group at 12 students. Mike Lee, our VISTA in Reno, is helping Jo Ella facilitate the Northern Nevada student groups.

When initial assessments are complete, each service-learning workgroup will develop projects specific to their campus and community that are designed to increase student engagement and/or awareness of service-learning and volunteer opportunities. "This is a pilot initiative that is brand new for Nevada volunteers, so we are not sure exactly what the outcomes will be," Jo Ella Barrie said. "We are anticipating that there will be great energy and ideas from these highly motivated groups of students, which will raise awareness about ways for students to volunteer and allow campuses to create or strengthen partnerships with community agencies to address needs."

A pilot advisory committee has also been formed in the Reno area composed of business and civic leaders in the community to gather feedback and generate local support. The committee members will not only advise the local student groups where appropriate, but they will offer suggestions about direction for this initiative beyond the initial year. Developing those next steps to continue making progress on the state's campuses will ensure that the work of these creative and passionate students will continue to make a difference in campus communities in coming years.

On a related note:

The 21st Annual National Service-Learning Conference will be held in San Jose, California from March 24-27, 2010. It is the largest gathering of youth and practitioners involved in service-learning in the United States. As many as 2,500 attendees are expected. Highlights will include nationally acclaimed speakers, a Service-Learning Showcase and College Fair, an Administrators Academy, as well as an exhibit hall and forums. For more information call (800) 366-6952 or go to: www.nylc.org/conference.

AMERICORPS MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Celinda Pena, Luz Community Development Coalition

Nevada AmeriCorps member Celinda Pena was born in San Isidro, Cabañas, El Salvador. Her family relocated to Las Vegas in 1993 when she was 4 years old. After graduating from Desert Pine High School in 2007, she began classes at UNLV and joined AmeriCorps to serve through the United Way of Southern Nevada program. After completing a successful first year, Celinda decided to serve a second term and signed up as a Luz Community Development Coalition AmeriCorps member in October 2009. She is currently the volunteer coordinator at Luz where she recruits and manages a diverse group of volunteers that serve a number of area nonprofit organizations. Many of her volunteers are college students.

"I joined AmeriCorps because I really wanted to gain experience within the community and provide service. I've always enjoyed reaching out to others and AmeriCorps seemed like it would give me many great opportunities to do just that. I signed up for a second year of AmeriCorps because I enjoyed how I was able to make a difference during my first year of service. AmeriCorps has opened so many doors for me and given me a chance to learn in order to successfully

further my life and my goals.”

“Being an AmeriCorps member is very important to me. I have a chance to reach out to others and help them better their lives. I've always had a passion to help others improve themselves. After AmeriCorps, I want to be a Human Services Counselor for at-risk youth. My national service gives me lots of opportunities to practice.”

Celinda is presently a junior at UNLV majoring in Human Services Counseling. We hope that her national service experience and the 2 AmeriCorps Education Awards she's earning will help her to graduate successfully and head toward graduate school.

Nevada Volunteers is proud to spotlight Celinda's enthusiasm and to recognize her for making a difference in Las Vegas.



WHAT'S AMERICORPS DOING FOR NEVADA?

For the 2009-2010 grant year, Nevada Volunteers has awarded **\$1,544,492** to support **249 AmeriCorps members** serving **63 Nevada agencies** through **5 programs** statewide.

Last year, **229 AmeriCorps members** provided **194,958 hours of service** in **15 Nevada counties**. According to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, the value of **194,958 hours** is worth **\$3,947,899.50**

AMERICORPS. GETTING THINGS DONE FOR NEVADA!



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