

One Year CAN Make a Difference!

Full-time members receive a living allowance, health insurance coverage, training, and may be eligible for child care assistance. Upon successful completion of 1,700 hours of service, members receive an educational award of \$4,725. The YES AmeriCorps program runs from September through July. Applicants for the YES AmeriCorps program must be at least age 17 with a high school diploma or equivalent; a citizen, national, or lawful permanent resident; and must demonstrate a commitment to community service.

Call us to find out how you can become a YES AmeriCorps member.

Call us today!

YES AmeriCorps
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La Crosse, WI 54601

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YES AmeriCorps is administered by Workforce Connections, Inc. www.workforceconnections.org

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AmeriCorps Update

Summer 2008

Happy Retirement, Pat!

Pat Nugent has spent most of his life in service to his country, including 28 years in the military, two years as a YES AmeriCorps member, and one year as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. Most recently, Pat served as the YES AmeriCorps Program Coordinator from August 14, 2006 to May 9, 2008. It is with extreme gratitude that we wish Pat a heartfelt thank you for all his years of service to our community and our program and wish him a happy retirement.



Welcome, Katie!

It is our pleasure to announce that Katie Groves accepted the position of YES AmeriCorps Program Coordinator on May 5, 2008. Katie is a former YES AmeriCorps member, having served from 2004-06. She recently graduated from UW-La Crosse with a Master's in Education – Professional Development degree. Welcome, Katie! We look forward to serving with you!



Our Mission

YES AmeriCorps members strengthen our communities by helping youth experience success, assisting in public safety, reducing hunger, promoting literacy, expanding volunteer services, and... Getting Things Done!

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Getting Things Done!!!



YES AmeriCorps Hosts MLK In-Service

On Friday, January 18, 2008, YES AmeriCorps members spent time at Franklin, Coulee Montessori, Roosevelt, North Woods, Summit and Hamilton Elementary Schools in La Crosse and Maplewood Elementary School in Sparta presenting in-services to 600 students on the life and work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Pictured at left, John Elliott reads a story about Dr. King to a group of students at Sparta's Maplewood Elementary School.

Earth Day Disaster Presentations

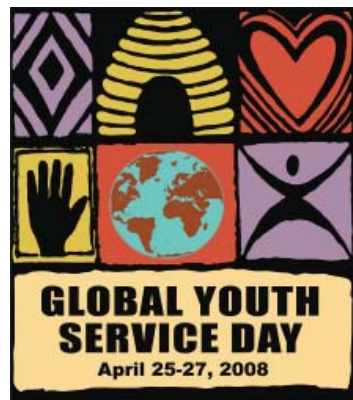
In mid-April, YES AmeriCorps member Erin Fiser, serving with the Red Cross as a Community Disaster Educator, presented disaster preparedness information to approximately 460 students at North Woods International School, Coulee Montessori School, Hintgen Elementary School and Logan Middle School.

In addition to sharing information on tornado, flood and lightning safety, Erin also discussed the importance of making a family disaster plan and building a family disaster kit. Nice job, Erin!



Global Youth Services Day

On April 26th, in celebration of Global Youth Services Day, YES AmeriCorps members and 45 youth and adult volunteers braved the inclement weather to serve at the South Side Community Garden, Kane Street Community Garden, Habitat for Humanity ReStore, YMCA Community Teen Center, Coulee Montessori School, and City of Holmen. Following service, all were invited to an indoor picnic. Thanks, everyone!



Here Are Today's Top Ten AmeriCorps Reflections as Seen on David Letterman! Amy Bendel, YES AmeriCorps Member

10. Sharing laughs with my co-worker, and those famous high-fives where we cannot make the "slap" sound.
9. A guidance counselor talking to a student and saying "shard" instead of should.
8. Being able to work with the entire 9th and 10th grade classes on a career based website.
7. Making new friends in the AmeriCorps program that will last a lifetime.
6. Being able to serve at the Easter Seals Camp for our AmeriCorps retreat in the fall.
5. Being able to serve and go to school full-time.
4. Having a winter and spring break just like the old high school, middle school, and elementary school days.
3. Weekly Friday meetings where my fellow members "check-in".
2. Serving from 11:00-3:30 every day.

And today's top reflection!

1. Having my sister along side of me this year in AmeriCorps. Oh, what a joy!

Service Reflection By Nick Wilhelmy, YES AmeriCorps Member

We all want to make the world a better place. Actually finding a way to do that is a different challenge. Anyone can talk about what they would like to do to make things better, and we can always hope that someone else will do it for us, but it truly is a challenge to actually take action and truly make the community around you a better place (and it's worth saying that "raising awareness" can only do so much).

AmeriCorps is my way of taking the required action to improve my community. After college, I decided that I would like to dedicate some time to help the people around me who aren't as fortunate as myself, and may not have the same advantages that I've been blessed with. AmeriCorps is a great way to fulfill that goal, because it already has a standing in the community, and gives each of its members different opportunities to reach out to the community and serve the country.

AmeriCorps is not a vacation. Like every challenge, there are moments of frustration, dissatisfaction, and disappointment. However, the knowledge that what you're doing is truly making a difference in the lives of the people in your community will always eclipse any downside that comes with the program. I'm very proud of my service with AmeriCorps, and I hope that it's only the beginning of my service to others.





My Ladder
By Ka Chor Vang, YES AmeriCorps Member

Life is like a ladder
 Everyone has to climb
 Everyone has to fall
 Everyone grows each time the ladder gets higher

As I climb my ladder
 I learn every time I fall to never give up
 I learn to be passionate
 I learn to be helpful
 I learn to believe
 I learn to support others

I learn what it takes to be an AmeriCorps member
 I learn what I can do for my community
 And what my community can do for me
 I learn life on a ladder isn't hard if I take one rung at a time

Now Recruiting for Members for the 2008-09 Program Year

YES AmeriCorps is now recruiting for full-time, half-time and quarter-time members for the 2008-09 program year. The program will begin on Tuesday, September 2, 2008 and end on July 31, 2009.

Full-time

1,700-hours (approximately 40 hours per week), 11-month commitment.
 \$11,400 living allowance paid out in biweekly stipend checks
 Health insurance if eligible
 Childcare if eligible
 Forbearance of student loans
 Training provided
 \$4,725 education award upon successful completion

Half-time

900-hours (approximately 20 hours per week), 11-month commitment.
 \$6,035 living allowance paid out in biweekly stipend checks
 Forbearance of student loans
 Training provided
 \$2,362.50 education award upon successful completion

Quarter-time (student teachers, student interns, and community volunteers)

450-hour commitment
 \$1,250 education award upon successful completion

*Note: Student teachers need to complete a service-learning project. Student interns need to complete a final summary report.

National AmeriCorps Week – May 11 – 18, 2008

Twenty YES AmeriCorps members and staff attended the Serve Wisconsin state-wide end-of-year event at Devil's Lake State Park on May 14, 2008. Members from throughout the state worked side by side with Serve Wisconsin staff, Wisconsin National and Community Service Board members, representatives from the Department of Natural Resources and other volunteers to help remove invasive species such as garlic mustard, box elder and sumac from the park grounds.

2008 YES AmeriCorps – Betty Zube Communitarian Recognition Recipients

The 2008 YES AmeriCorps-Betty Zube Communitarian Recognition award was renamed this year to honor an outstanding former member of YES AmeriCorps, Betty Zube, who passed away in August 2007. Betty served two years with YES AmeriCorps at the Vernon County Unit on Aging. This year's recipients received awards during National AmeriCorps Week. They are as follows:

Kris Yager, YES AmeriCorps 2006-07, for outstanding service to the youth entrepreneurial project through Juneau County Economic Development Corp, Camp Douglas, WI.

Jackie Diozsegi, AmeriCorps VISTA - Wisconsin Campus Compact, for outstanding service to Western Technical College, La Crosse, WI.

The Family of Betty Zube, YES AmeriCorps 2004-06, in memory of her outstanding service to Vernon County Unit on Aging, Viroqua, WI.

YES AmeriCorps wishes to thank these fine former members for their service and congratulates them on this recognition.

South Side Elementary School Bike Ride

For the last seven years, YES AmeriCorps has assisted "Mrs. W" at the South Side Elementary School in Sparta with their annual student bike ride. This year, fifty-three 2nd and forty-five 3rd graders participated. This tradition was started in spring of 2002 as a member-led meeting and has continued ever since. This year's event was held on May 23rd, and once again we had great weather!

YES AmeriCorps would like to thank Speed's Bike Shop for loaning bikes and helmets to our members for the day! Thanks, Milt and Rose!



Mat Michaels, a second year member with YES AmeriCorps, tries out a 3-wheeler at the annual bike ride.



YES AmeriCorps Team Creates CERT Training Manikins

When a request came from the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) trainers for lightweight disaster training victims, Betty Ottesen used the opportunity to fuel her member-led team meeting. As an accomplished seamstress, Betty gathered up sewing room scraps, saved packing materials and used clothing to construct 4 adult and 2 child manikins.

Betty invited Brenda Hanson, Coulee Region Public Health Consortium and a CERT instructor, to speak

about those organizations and how the disaster manikins will be used in Mass Casualty training. Also at this meeting, Betty taught members simple clothing repair techniques, calling the topic Fiber Restore. YES AmeriCorps members then had the opportunity to practice those skills by sewing on the hands, feet and faces of the disaster manikins.

South Side Community Garden

Last year, YES AmeriCorps took over the coordination of the South Side Community Garden, located on Benora Lee Court, behind Gundersen Lutheran Hospital in La Crosse. This community garden is a collaborative effort between Hamilton Elementary School, YES AmeriCorps, Gundersen Lutheran Hospital, the City of La Crosse, and the La Crosse Community Foundation.



YES AmeriCorps member Grace Maass will coordinate the garden this summer. Volunteers are welcome to help. Please call Linda at (608) 785-7003. All are welcome for harvest distribution.

Bread Crumbs

By Matt Elsen, YES AmeriCorps Member

Always available to listen

Math worksheets

Energy found that I didn't know was left

Ropes course!

I can't be found in team

Capacity for caring

Outside of comfort zone

Ready to help

People encountered

Service



YES AmeriCorps Team Building

On April 4th, the YES AmeriCorps team spent the day at UW-La Crosse's Ropes and Challenge Course. The morning initiatives, facilitated by Lisa Radtke, were designed to enhance team building, encourage trust, and practice problem-solving skills. Members had an opportunity in the afternoon to experience the high elements such as the catwalk, multi-vine, power pole (Pamper Pole), giant swing, and zip line.



Every Morning By Kari Olson, YES AmeriCorps Member



Every morning I wake up, I put a smile on my face, and I head off to work. I prepare myself because I know that every day at Summit Elementary is a new day. I know that I should expect the unexpected. I know that my students will teach me many new things throughout the day, and I know that I will have a blast teaching them. Summit Elementary students and staff have welcomed me into their school with open arms. They have made me laugh, made me cry, and taught me a lot about myself and about life.

Although I have lived in the La Crosse almost my whole life, I had no idea how financially unstable many members of this community are, especially within the boundaries of my service site school. I have been introduced to a lifestyle that I was very unfamiliar with. It has made me tremendously appreciate what I have and the opportunities I have been given throughout my short life, and it has motivated me to work hard so that my students can have those same opportunities.

I have a strict belief that I have the power to make my day. If I go to work crabby, I will remain that way. If I go to work tired, I will have a hard time staying awake throughout the day. Most importantly, if I go to work with a positive attitude and the desire to work hard, then I believe I will. Because of this, one of my favorite parts of my job is to walk down the hallway from the staff lounge to my first class in the morning. Along this walk, I get to greet many of the students that I will work with throughout the day. Throughout the hustle and bustle are students preparing for another day of learning. They are taking off their jackets, unpacking their book bags, and sharing stories with friends. As I walk down the hallway, I try to greet every student that I know by name, and those whose names I do not know, I share a simple good morning. The excitement that I see in the student's faces reminds me each morning that I serve a purpose at my service site and that I am having a positive influence in my student's lives.

My favorite part at my service site thus far continues to amaze me each and every day, and it reassures my choice to dedicate my career to the education field. Nothing has ever fascinated me more than to watch students learn. The look on their faces when they comprehend something new is amazing. The "ah ha" look of excitement that is revealed when a new concept is grasped is one of the most beautiful things in the world. However, what really makes me go weak in the knees is when the student that just experienced the excitement of understanding something new turns to me and says, "Thank you, Miss Olson!"