



Employee Appreciation Celebration



The mission of the Corporation for National and Community Service is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering.

August 16, 2016

CEO AWARD—TEAM

State Profiles Data Team (Lee Spencer, Stuart Shave, Melissa Merens, Sarah Reynolds, Kelly Daly, Carla Ganiel, Sean French, Benjamin Ballerstein, Tamika Becton, Joseph Breems, Terry Grant): This cross-agency team annually produces the State, County, City, and Congressional District Profiles and other resources that tell the story of and make the case for CNCS. These reports are shared widely with elected officials, stakeholders, the media, and the public. The CEO, the Office of Government Relations, the Office of External Affairs, the Office of Field Liaison, State Service Commissions, and other partners use this information to communicate our agency's reach and impact. In addition to showing all dollars, members, programs, and service locations for any geographic area, the State Profiles have more than 400 impact snapshots. This team also produces special data reports, such as the data on leveraging of non-CNCS resources that found our programs generated more than \$1.26 billion in outside resources last year – more than our annual federal appropriation. The team has empowered our field to be able to run State, City, County, and Congressional reports 24/7 as part of a larger focus on engaging with elected officials. The team is implementing the principles of transparency, open government, and continuous improvement to advance CNCS and our mission.

CEO AWARD—TEAM

OFL Social Media Team (Lora Grady, Erin Balleine, Alyssa Bostian, Elizabeth Hite, Terry Gunnell, Leslie McLain, Neill Minish, Shireen Tilley): In early 2014, the Office of External Affairs launched a joint pilot initiative with the Office of Field Liaison to guide state office staff in using agency-approved social media accounts to promote and amplify the important work being done by CNCS, our partners, and our grantees at the local and national level. Of the 30 state office staff who participated in the initial pilot, a core group have become dedicated social media users who create strong content for their state-based Twitter, Facebook, and Flickr accounts. They actively promote developments in other states as well as their own, creatively amplify national initiatives, and serve as mentors and role models for their peers. This group has distinguished themselves by fully integrating social media use into the management of their core work. Collectively, they have implemented social media as a tool for managing grantee relationships, created unique connections with state and local officials, promoted agency initiatives and provided next-level amplification for CEO visits and senior leadership activities in their respective states. This group is the engine that drives the External Affairs state social media team of more than 80 CNCS employees forward, and their eagerness, work ethic, and follow-through from day one have enabled the success of this initiative.

“What service can do: the sense of common purpose that it cultivates; the opportunity to join our fellow Americans to work together for something other than just ourselves—for something bigger, for the common good.”

~ President Barack Obama

“Service also connects us with our neighbors and provides a chance to use our skills for the common good.”

~ CNCS CEO Wendy Spencer

CEO AWARD—TEAM

Disaster Services Unit (Kelly DeGraff, Chad Stover, Jennifer Murphy, Katrina French): In 2016, the Disaster Team has responded to and supported 21 Disasters, deploying over 1,100 National Service Members. From forest fires and floods to hurricanes and tornadoes, national service members have provided critical support to millions of Americans affected by disasters. Leading and coordinating such a large-scale effort requires a talented and dedicated team. The Disaster Services Unit (DSU) provides expertise, support, training, and leadership to coordinate our disaster services. Working in partnership with State Service Commissions, local governments, nonprofits, and faith-based organizations, the Disaster Services Unit ensures that this highly visible part of national service family runs like a well-oiled machine. Whether marshaling resources to respond to fast-breaking disasters, negotiating mission assignments to keep boots on the ground for the long haul, or training volunteers to be ready for future disasters, this small-but-mighty team is a prime example of how we lean in and chase problems. Disasters can happen anytime and anywhere, and this team has had more than their share of late nights and long weeks helping those at their greatest time of need. As the Volunteer West Virginia Director said recently, “Words cannot express my gratitude for the support of the DSU. The Disaster Services Unit is exceptional. My sincere thanks for the service you have provided to West Virginia.”

CEO AWARD—INDIVIDUAL

Michelle Royall: An AmeriCorps NCCC Alum, Michelle demonstrates an extraordinary level of leadership that has enhanced the image of the Corporation and AmeriCorps NCCC in times of disaster and nurtured a team environment that has increased the performance of all around her. Recent disasters in South Carolina and Louisiana involved nearly 400 members each. Her coordination improved the response effort. Michelle goes beyond her primary responsibility of finding housing for Members to ensure success. During a time when housing resources were scarce and survivors and teams were moving daily, Michelle would juggle upwards of 20 reservations each day while simultaneously participating in leadership and coordination calls. She identified needs and provided guidance to senior leadership to ensure all AmeriCorps NCCC and FEMA Corps stakeholders were supported. Michelle's experience, insight, leadership, and collaborative spirit elevates AmeriCorps NCCC's work performance, gives the program a consolidated and concise message for external partners, increases efficiency, and makes the work environment more pleasant.

PROGRAM

Welcome & Overview.....Charles Davenport

Guest Speaker

Gina Cross, Acting Director, AmeriCorps NCCC
Corporation for National and Community Service

Appreciation & Speech.....Wendy Spencer

Guest Speaker

Daniel Smafield
Personnel Security Program Manager
Corporation for National and Community Service



CNCS Awards Ceremony

Willis Greene Community Service Award

Presented by.....Asim Mishra

Unsung Hero Award

Presented by.....Kim Mansaray
Shar'ron Walker-Tendai
Jennifer Veazey
Jonathan Ottke
Erin Dahlin

CEO Award

Presented by.....Wendy Spencer

Closing.....Charles Davenport

Reception (MLK Suite & Rooftop)

AWARD DESCRIPTIONS

Willis Greene Community Service Award

The Willis Greene Community Service Award is named after a former CNCS employee who gave back tirelessly to his community. It is presented to an employee who personifies this commitment by making significant contributions to community service off the job. Individuals who demonstrate an exceptional commitment to community service are eligible for the Willis Greene Community Service Award.

Unsung Hero Award

The Unsung Hero award honors job-related achievements. It is presented to individuals or teams that personify the spirit of the Corporation's commitment to service. Individuals and teams who have overcome extraordinary challenges or implemented unusually innovative and effective projects in support of national and community service are eligible for this award.

Chief Executive Officer's Award

The Chief Executive Officer's Award is granted at the sole discretion of the CEO and recognizes extraordinary contributions to furthering the Corporation's purposes.

UNsung HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Karen Talbot: During the past year, Karen developed and launched multiple high-profile projects involving key partners the involvement of various departments at CNCS headquarters. Much of her work this year focused on launching projects where the AmeriCorps VISTA members would be serving out of mayors' offices across the country, including Resilience AmeriCorps, Cities of Service City Hall AmeriCorps VISTA project (Love Your Block), the NYC Mayors Office AmeriCorps VISTA project, and the NYC Mayor's Office Operation AmeriCorps VISTA project. During this time, Karen was also an active member of the monitoring workgroup and invited to be part of the monitoring training team, where she received high praise for her contributions. A former Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program Director, Karen brings a unique perspective to our agency. And her work ethic and positive attitude seldom waiver, even when juggling multiple priorities and advancing timelines. Karen's professionalism and passion for national service contributes to CNCS's mission.

UNSUNG HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Erica Rice: Erica's efforts as a member of Office of Accountability and Oversight staff was key to improvements highlighted in an OIG Performance Audit of CNCS's compliance with the Improper Payments Elimination And Recovery Act of 2010 (IPERA) for FY 2015. One of the key deficiencies the OIG noted was that CNCS's risk analysis of its non-grant programs and operations did not take into account nine specific risk factors mandated in OMB's IPERA guidance. Erica reviewed the reporting of the results of those tests to ensure that CNCS's analysis comprehensively addressed the OMB risk factors. Moreover, Erica completed that review and added the risk factor analysis under a tight. Erica's efforts were critical in ensuring that CNCS does not need to further assess the risk of improper payments in its non-grant operations until FY 2017, making future assessments more efficient. In addition, Erica took on a project to design, execute, and document a process under which CNCS can make the quarterly mandated reports on any high-dollar-value improper payments discovered as part of CNCS's IPE-RA testing. The processes and documentation Erica has developed will allow CNCS to make efficient assessments of whether there are reportable high-dollar-value improper payments as CNCS moves to the full scope of its annual IPERA testing.

AWARD WINNERS

Willis Greene Community Service Award

Norma Martinez, AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region

Ericc Powell, AmeriCorps VISTA

Unsung Hero Award

Melissa Allen, OFL New Jersey State Office

Loretta Asafiev, Office of Human Capital

Erin Blobaum, AmeriCorps NCCC Pacific Region

Frankie Coombs, Administrative Services

Jill Graham, AmeriCorps State and National

Allison LePage, Office of External Affairs

Elizabeth McDonald, Budget Office

Julie Nash, OFL Nebraska State Office

Matthew Payne, AmeriCorps NCCC

Erica Rice, Risk Office

Karen Talbot, OFL New York State Office

CEO Award—Individual

Michelle Royall, AmeriCorps NCCC

AWARD WINNERS

CEO Award—Team

Disaster Services Unit (DSU)

Kelly DeGraff
Jennifer Murphy

Chad Stover
Katrina French

Office of Field Liaison (OFL) Social Media Team

Lora Grady, Office of Field Liaison HQ
Erin Balleine, OFL Missouri State Office
Alyssa Bostian, OFL Washington State Office
Elizabeth Hite, OFL New Hampshire State Office
Terry Gunnell, OFL Texas State Office
Leslie McLain, OFL Texas State Office
Neill Minish, OFL Arizona State Office
Shireen Tilley, OFL New Hampshire State Office

State Profiles Data Team

Lee Spencer, Office of Information Technology
Stuart Shave, Office of Field Liaison
Melissa Merens, Office of Information Technology
Sarah Reynolds, AmeriCorps NCCC
Kelly Daly, AmeriCorps VISTA
Carla Ganiel, AmeriCorps State and National
Sean French, COO Immediate Office
Benjamin Ballerstein, Office of Program Coordination
Tamika Becton, Senior Corps
Joseph Breems, Office of Research and Evaluation
Terry Grant, AmeriCorps NCCC

UNSUNG HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Julie Nash: Julie enhances the image and credibility of CNCS through quality interactions with customers as well as creating an environment that promotes extraordinary teamwork that leads to superior work performance. In October 2015, Julie stepped in to serve as the Acting State Program Director while her colleague in the North Dakota/South Dakota office (Jill Deitz) took extended leave to care for her terminally ill mother. It is no small feat to take on two additional states, while still having your own to cover, but customer service to our grantees never missed a beat. Julie jumped right in and treated all the North Dakota/South Dakota grantees as if they were her own. She even took on the job of training two new RSVP Project Directors during this period. Somehow Julie still found the time to check in with her coworker daily to provide support and friendship in her time of need. Jill is grateful that she was able to rely on a great colleague like Julie during her absence so she could care for her mother. Julie is an exemplary example of the teamwork that takes place at CNCS every day.

Matthew Payne. Matt has advanced the AmeriCorps NCCC brand many years due to his vision and creative ability. His skill has allowed him to fill a need within AmeriCorps NCCC for a more modern look and feel to our online and social media presence and graphics. This falls outside of Matt's job description, yet he pursues it happily and enthusiastically. Working with the Office of External Affairs, Matt has also taken the initiative to refresh and modernize the AmeriCorps NCCC public website, making it clearer to visitors unfamiliar with AmeriCorps NCCC and explaining the application process. The website now has a refreshed look with streamlined information that enhances AmeriCorps NCCC's credibility with the public and future Members. Matt has also volunteered to take the lead for the decor of the new headquarters building and uses his talents to help implement the vision of senior leadership. Matt brings passion to his work every day, has increased the spirit of teamwork in NCCC and the agency, and sets a great example for others.

UNSUNG HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Allison LePage: Allison was instrumental in launching an initiative to guide state office staff in using agency-approved social media accounts with the Office of Field Liaison and the Office of External Affairs in early 2014. This collaboration reinforces the Office of External Affairs' focus on strengthening branding practices and making more people care about the work our programs do.

Allison developed guidelines for the pilot, oversaw the initial two-day training for the pilot group, which included 30 staff from 15 state offices. In the 18 months since its debut, the social media initiative has now grown to more than 80 employees, representing 30 state offices. These staff look to Allison as their social media guru and she is passionate and proactive, ready to help anyone at any time — even nights and weekends. She leads a lively and substantive weekly call for the group, provides timely and helpful written updates on upcoming events, and plans new trainings to make sure the group has the latest info on pertinent tech developments. Allison's passion and her commitment to those she works with truly make her an Unsung Hero who has garnered measurable results for CNCS.

Elizabeth McDonald: Elizabeth led the effort to address an audit finding which required a significant alteration in the Corporation's fiscal structure. Specifically, she reduced the number of object codes in Budget by eliminating duplicate, unused and misnamed codes. During the process she simplified the agency's fiscal coding. This required collaboration with Procurement as well as CGI, our Momentum contractor. With her customary patience and good humor, Elizabeth tenaciously pursued this problem until the finding was eliminated and she achieved this result with only minimal supervision over a prolonged period. Finally, in addition to her audit work, Elizabeth worked with Human Capital and OIT to ensure their continuity of operations after multiple staff departures.

WILLIS GREENE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Norma Martinez. Norma, a Member Support Specialist from the Pacific Region Campus, epitomizes selfless and tireless service to several established organizations in the greater Sacramento area. Over the past four years, she has contributed hundreds of hours of faithful service to St. John's Shelter for Women and contributed her time and talent to organize and prepare meals for hundreds of women in crisis. In addition, Norma has secured vast amounts of food donations and recruited volunteers to benefit the shelter. Norma has also volunteered at Options for Recovery run by Volunteers of America where she has participated in grounds beautification and infrastructure improvement to better serve those in rehabilitation. And she participates in the Fair Oaks Fitness Challenge, which raises money to fight childhood obesity and works with young people to promote healthy lifestyles. She leads by example and is determined in her efforts to improve the lives of those less fortunate around her. Norma also invites and encourages staff to participate in service projects. Her passion for community service is contagious and she is a force of pure goodness. Without a doubt Norma's selfless efforts have led to positive change in the community and through the lives that she has touched.

WILLIS GREENE COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD

Ericc Powell. Ericc, a former AmeriCorps VISTA member and leader, joined the training staff in 2009 when AmeriCorps VISTA's membership increased 50% thanks to the President's Recovery Act. His service as a temp hire led to a full-time position after he rose to master the challenge of training future VISTA Leaders. Over the years, Ericc has served with Habitat for Humanity Metro Maryland and has been on the Board of Directors since September 2011. He volunteers on construction sites as a Crew Leader and serves with the Habitat Interfaith Committee, which gathers different faith groups around service and affordable housing. His dedication has led to four self-funded trips to El Salvador to work with Habitat's Global Village program, and he volunteers in the group's ReStore discount home improvement center. Ericc also serves as a Deacon and Moderator of the Board at Montgomery Hills Baptist Church. A marathoner and avid athlete, Ericc also travels to Chicago every October to volunteer for three days at the marathon exposition and on race day. Driven by his passion for volunteering and service, Ericc is someone who makes the world a better place to live.

UNsung HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Jill Graham: Jill serves in a key role for the AmeriCorps State and National grant review processes. Her position as a Senior Program and Project Specialist encompasses the critical responsibility of planning and assembling an infinite amount of macro and micro details for the grant application review process (GARP); as well as the delicate role of liaising several units with the AmeriCorps Program Office. She stepped into this role in the midst of the high-demand, deadline-driven process, so it required Jill to hit the ground running. Not only did Jill offer quality improvements and feedback on materials and procedures, she also managed to stay highly responsive in the midst of a time-intensive process and demonstrate a willingness to collaborate whenever possible. Jill also demonstrated leadership during the resolution of unexpected conundrums and roadblocks encountered in GARP. These challenges were not easy, as many of these resolutions required her to resolve problems and engage in some "difficult communications" in which she demonstrated an openness and clarity in her responses--both in person and by email. Through it all, Jill maintained a finesse and mutual respect that significantly improved and preserved a more positive working relationship between units. Jill commitment to results and accountability, and constructive and collaborative approach is greatly appreciated.

UNsung HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Frankie Coombs: Moving is never easy – moving an entire federal agency is harder. While employees were focused on packing and cleaning up their own spaces, Frankie had to see the big picture, and his service smoothed the transition to our new headquarters. For weeks before the move, Frankie assisted all departments and many staff members with whatever they needed to improve the transition. His dedication and outstanding customer service skills leads Frankie to go above and beyond what is expected. He arrives early, stays late, and even sacrifices time off to ensure projects are completed on time and no one is left in need. Frankie does this while maintaining a cheerful attitude, even when asked to perform tasks that are clearly not his responsibility. Frankie’s warm-and-friendly personality and “do unto others, as you would have done to you” attitude leads to collaboration and draws out the best in his teammates. “Patient,” “professional,” “resourceful,” “flexible,” and “respected” were just a few of the adjectives coworkers used to describe his service and his demeanor. Like a true unsung hero, his work may have only been seen by a few but was truly appreciated by all. Frankie's positive attitude, friendliness, and work ethic sets the bar for everyone at CNCS.

UNsung HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Melissa Allen: Melissa is a former AmeriCorps VISTA member and Team Leader and AmeriCorps NCCC alum with a quiet strength and incredible work ethic that disguises her accomplishments. She is an extraordinarily dedicated and knowledgeable Program Officer who has emerged as the top field expert in Criminal History Check (CHC) policies and procedures. Melissa has contributed to several special assignments related to CNCS’s Criminal History Check policy where her involvement has benefited the agency. In addition to providing support to her peers, she asks thoughtful questions and offers valuable insight to the development of new NSCHC tools and policy. The role the entire OFL NSCHC team has played serving as intermediaries between the field and headquarters this year has been invaluable, and Melissa has excelled in that often thankless task. Melissa’s commitment to ensuring the NJ State Office is a cohesive team, that grantees understand and implement an intensive CHC process, and that fellow colleagues receive expert technical assistance related to CHC and cost disallowance, make her an unsung hero.

UNsung HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Loretta Asafiev: Loretta is a valuable member of the Office of Human Capital Personnel Operations Team that provides recruitment, staffing, and classification advisory services to the Department of the Chief Operating Officer, and provides advisory services related to the NFC personnel/payroll system, WebTA, leave donor/bank program, and leave administration. Loretta consistently demonstrates a “what’s in it for we” attitude and serves as a positive influence and role model. For instance, over the past year, Loretta managed a project to ensure all agency position descriptions were scanned to the shared drive, drafted a Debt Management standard operating procedure, and served as the project manager for realignments and movements within the Department of the Chief Operating Officer. She took a leadership role with OHC’s leave audit contractors, served as the point of contact with NFC regarding Debt Management and WebTA administration, and managed a number of reports and analytics for OHC. Loretta also facilitated training for AmeriCorps NCCC timekeepers and coordinated meetings with agency leadership regarding the Employee Viewpoint Survey. Loretta routinely helps colleagues across the country troubleshoot and resolve payroll, time and attendance, processing, staffing, and system challenges.

UNsung HERO AWARD –INDIVIDUAL

Erin Blobaum. Erin masterfully led the Cross-Campus APDT’s and DRDPs on development of a revolutionary standardized 3.5-week Corps Training Institute (CTI). This was the first successful attempt to make all campus training uniform and streamlined, and brought training and staffing efficiencies to the process. Her model was a game changer that can be duplicated at every other campus. Erin’s oversight, training development, and implementation save vital staff time and resources. She implemented nationally standardized times and titles, and created an automated CTI scheduling system using Microsoft Access, Excel, and Outlook. This scheduling system would be the envy of NASA for its level of detail and precision, and creates enormous savings by preventing unnecessary overtime and compensatory time obligations. She also was largely responsible for the successful John Muir Education Team partnership that helps Corps Members get their high school diplomas. In addition, Erin incorporated new online American Red Cross Disaster Services Training, further leveraging automation to create cost and time savings. She is constantly looking for cutting-edge technology and training to apply to our Campus mission. Erin is a leader among her peers and is a force multiplier whose innovation and ingenuity allow the Pacific Region Campus to use its limited resources to achieve great and far-reaching accomplishments.