

Spring 2018

THE VISTA  
**REVIEW**

*A Publication of AmeriCorps VISTA*

A large American flag is shown flying on a tall pole, set against a backdrop of a cityscape at sunset. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and pink. The flag's stars and stripes are clearly visible. In the foreground, there are some dark silhouettes of trees and a building.

**THE  
IMPACT  
EDITION**



Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 

Since 1965, AmeriCorps VISTA members (Volunteers in Service to America) have brought their passion and perseverance where the need is greatest: to organizations that help alleviate poverty. Each year, over 8,500 AmeriCorps VISTA members serve as catalysts for change, living and working alongside community members to advance local solutions.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Our New CEO	3
Video Contest	4
Career Corner	6
Unbroken: The Story of Dominic Gonzalez	7
We Don't Know We Are Heroes Until We Have To Be	8
Impact of AmeriCorps VISTA	10
<i>Free</i> Tear-out Poster	12
Be an AmeriCorps VISTA Ambassador	13
Journey of a Lifetime	14

## QUESTIONS OR CONTRIBUTIONS

 [vistaoutreach@cns.gov](mailto:vistaoutreach@cns.gov)

 Visit our website at [AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA](http://AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA)

### *Visit our Outreach Hub*

Help us spread the word about AmeriCorps VISTA by visiting our new "Outreach Hub". Here you'll find the latest marketing materials in digital and print to show your VISTA pride and help us spread the word!

**[NationalService.gov/VISTAOutreach](http://NationalService.gov/VISTAOutreach)**

# Our New CEO

## Barbara Stewart

Dear AmeriCorps VISTA Family,

As the new CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, I am thrilled to work with you in support of our nation's best anti-poverty volunteer program: AmeriCorps VISTA. Each and every one of you are part of a 50+ year legacy of advancing community-driven solutions to our nation's most pressing issues: poverty, inequity, and lack of access to basic services. The work AmeriCorps VISTA members and sponsors perform to help build the capacity of nonprofit organizations and local governments cannot be underestimated. Last year alone, our 8,500 VISTA members generated \$206 million in cash and in-kind resources to support local efforts to overcome poverty. That's more than double every dollar invested in the VISTA program. After decades of volunteering and leading a small foundation, I recognize the importance and extraordinary impact of nonprofits and volunteers to make a difference in the lives of Americans. Our small but mighty agency has an important responsibility to support the success of the American people, and I am excited to be at CNCS to help strengthen service and volunteerism throughout our country.

Sincerely,



Barbara Stewart, CEO



*Barbara Stewart was unanimously confirmed as Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service by the U.S. Senate on February 7, 2018, after being nominated by President Donald J. Trump.*

*With more than 25 years of experience in the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, Stewart brings strong management skills, operations experience, and a passion for service to her role at CNCS. As a senior vice president at JPMorgan Chase, Stewart was responsible for strategy development, personnel, budget, and operations management. Throughout her career in the private and public sectors, Stewart has built strong teams, managed budgets with fiscal responsibility, motivated staff to perform their best, and created and led programs to deliver results.*



# GO WHERE YOU'RE NEEDED.

 video contest

*Watch our new video.*

## *Where did you go?*

Calling all AmeriCorps VISTA members and alumni! We need your help to promote our new tagline: "Go Where You're Needed", by creating and posting a short video showing us how you "went where you were needed".

Whether you go across the country or across town, in cities or in rural communities, AmeriCorps VISTA members go where their skills, talents, and passion are needed: to help organizations and communities overcome poverty. Our new tagline captures the personal and professional journeys VISTA members take during the course of their service year, and the transformative power of community development in action.

## *How to Participate*

- 1** Create a video no longer than 1 minute– in your own words and your own style– capturing your personal and professional journey as an AmeriCorps VISTA member. How did you answer the call to "Go Where You're Needed?"
- 2** Upload your video to your YouTube account (make sure it can be viewed by the public and is not unlisted), and send an email with a link to your video to [vistaoutreach@cns.gov](mailto:vistaoutreach@cns.gov).
- 3** Make sure you use **#IamVISTA** and **#GetThingsDone**.

## *Rules*

Videos should be no longer than 1 minute.

Videos must include AmeriCorps VISTA branding (polo, poster, etc.)

Videos should be creative and engaging and include no offensive language or symbols.

Videos that use copyrighted multimedia such as: music, scoring, and images, will not be considered.

You have until 11:59<sup>pm</sup>, ET on Sunday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018 to submit your video.

Videos will be judged by a panel of AmeriCorps VISTA staff and alumni, based on the following categories: technical merit, creativity, connection to community, and relevance to theme.

The winning video will be featured on AmeriCorps VISTA's social media channels (Facebook and Twitter) and the homepage of our website, and will receive VISTA gear.



LinkedIn may not be your go to social media platform, but if you are looking for employment, it is smart to create a profile and actively use this tool. With over **500 million members worldwide**, LinkedIn provides companies with a virtual way to present themselves and helps job seekers find listings and connect with peers and employers. Here's how you can enhance your profile so employers will take notice of you.

## 3 Ways to Leverage Your VISTA Experience on LinkedIn

- 1 Follow AmeriCorps VISTA on LinkedIn to get updates on career fairs, job announcements, career search tips, and more!
- 2 Put your Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) status on your profile to make sure federal hiring managers can find you! Remember, NCE only begins after you've successfully completed one year of VISTA service.

*"I currently have Non-Competitive Eligibility (NCE) status for federal hire, valid through [MONTH/YEAR]."*

- 3 Add your AmeriCorps VISTA service to the "Experience" section of your profile. Whether you're currently serving or an alum, list 3-5 accomplishments from your VISTA service.



# Unbroken

## *San Antonio Native, Dominic Gonzalez, Defines An Unbreakable Spirit of Service*

My work as an AmeriCorps VISTA member serving with San Antonio's Department of Human Services as a research and engagement coordinator has provided me with a better understanding of the challenges facing the families we serve. The compassion cultivated in my service is also influenced by my personal experience with poverty, when I came to rely on the very services I used to provide. While battling epilepsy after college, I wound up living at a homeless shelter where I was once employed. My former colleagues became my service providers.

I was homeless for 16 months. While living at the homeless shelter and becoming healthier, I volunteered to wash and fold blankets in the shelter's industrial laundry room for a stipend of \$10 a day. At the end of my evening shifts, I would push about 800 blankets to a gated courtyard where a staggering number of homeless people were lined up to claim them. Each day, the soiled blankets would be reclaimed, counted, washed, and redistributed without question.

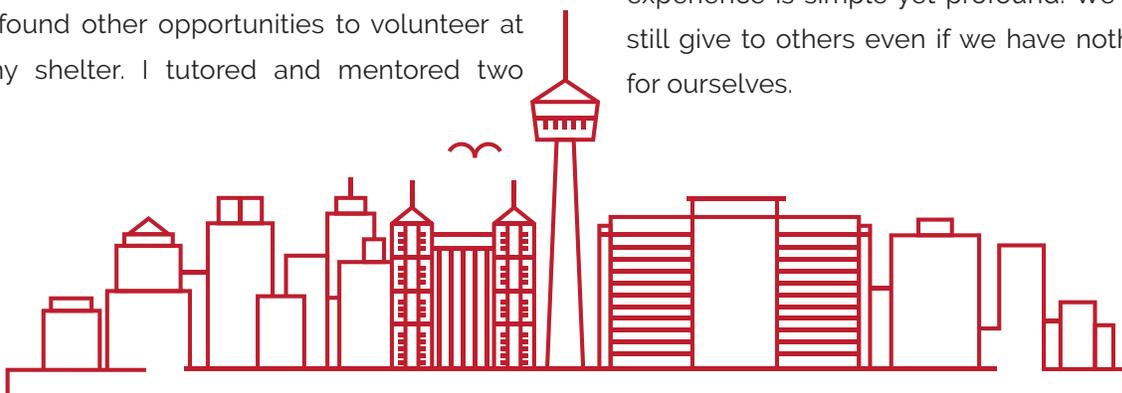
I found other opportunities to volunteer at my shelter. I tutored and mentored two

homeless high school students (who both graduated from high school that spring); helped people write resumes; took disabled men on their errands and doctor's appointments; and assisted the staff in completing day-to-day tasks.

**"The takeaway from my experience is simple yet profound: We can still give to others even if we have nothing for ourselves."** -Dominic Gonzalez

I had been living in my new home for just a couple weeks when I was selected as an AmeriCorps VISTA member to support one of America's most comprehensive education programs: Head Start. I was merely looking for an opportunity to work but what I found instead was an opportunity to serve my country and get my career back on track. For this, I am humbled.

After my service year, I intend to enroll in a Masters of Public Affairs program. I dream I will one day open a charitable residence that helps homeless teenagers graduate from high school, attend college, and choose a career. The takeaway from my experience is simple yet profound: We can still give to others even if we have nothing for ourselves.



# WE DON'T KNOW WE ARE HEROES UNTIL WE HAVE TO BE

By Khadija Carr  
AmeriCorps VISTA Program Associate and Alumna



The wind picked up speed, the rain started to pour, the houses began to shake, and the hours felt like days. September 20, 2017 was a day like no other. In the aftermath of two major hurricanes, Irma and Maria, little remained of the world 3.4 million Puerto Ricans knew. Nonetheless, communities immediately took action in mitigating human and environmental recovery needs, changing everyday people into everyday heroes.

The nine AmeriCorps VISTA members from Sagrado Corazón University were among the action-oriented, designing and implementing disaster relief services. Most notably, they were key to the workflow of the "Sagrado Contigo" (Sagrado with you) initiative, a solidarity hub with services including student psychological and spiritual counseling, advice regarding federal and public assistance, employment information, and a donation and distribution center.

VISTA member David Lugo describes his work in the donation and distribution center as "an experience like no other." While there are several approaches to disaster relief, Lugo "learned that the suffering of the people you assist is imprinted into you" and highlights the necessity for "something more, a human touch: empathy and compassion...we were standing together with them."



Likewise, VISTA member Yaira Castellón was motivated by the sight of appreciative faces and being of service to others. In conducting a census in the area, an 84-year-old man from a low-income neighborhood close to the University was

spotted alone, without water, power, or food. "I will never forget him, we gave him groceries and personal hygiene products and put a tarp on his destroyed home. He was very grateful. We still monitor him to make sure he has the basic supplies he needs. We overcame a lot of challenges, and I am grateful that as a VISTA I was able to help others," Castellón said.

The efforts of the VISTA team became the core of the solidarity hub, further expanding Sagrado's reach. In visiting four rural towns, VISTA member Génesis Medina provided services in Yabucoa, her hometown. She notes "We had to rely on a lot of planning and organization, since we didn't have power or a working communications system. Nevertheless, when I saw gratitude on people's faces, I knew I did the right thing."

Sagrado Corazón University President Gilberto Marxuach-Torrós acknowledges the hard work and dedication of Sagrado's community during these challenging times. "The true heroes of these initiatives have been our students, volunteers, and VISTA members. They have been all over Puerto Rico assisting people and distributing goods. The VISTA members structured, organized, and engaged teams that the

Solidarity Hub needed to accomplish our goal and help as many people as we could," said Marxuach-Torrós.

Through the combined efforts of the VISTA team and Sagrado members and students, the project's many achievements include: over 578 volunteers recruited; over 38,000 individuals benefited; 8,269 families aided; 78 towns impacted; 64 non-profit and community-based organizations across Puerto Rico leveraged 184 donors, and 10 alliances with public and private government entities.

## "Puerto Rico will rise again."

Hurricane Maria emphasized the necessity for an emergency and recovery plan.

The lessons learned from the past four months demonstrate that the people of Puerto Rico have the will to recover and with the support of groups and alliances like Sagrado's VISTA members. Puerto Rico will rise again.

*In response to the 2017 Hurricanes, more than 4,000 national service members supported disaster relief efforts in Texas, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands with hundreds continuing to serve more than seven months later.*





# AMERICORPS VISTA IMPACT

In **2017**, here are some of the things we accomplished together:

AmeriCorps VISTA members mobilized

# 800,000+

volunteers, who collectively volunteered more than **8 MILLION HOURS** of time.



AmeriCorps VISTA members generated

# \$206 MILLION

in cash and in-kind resources to support local efforts to overcome poverty.

That's more than **DOUBLE** every dollar invested in the program.



As a result of AmeriCorps VISTA members' efforts, more than

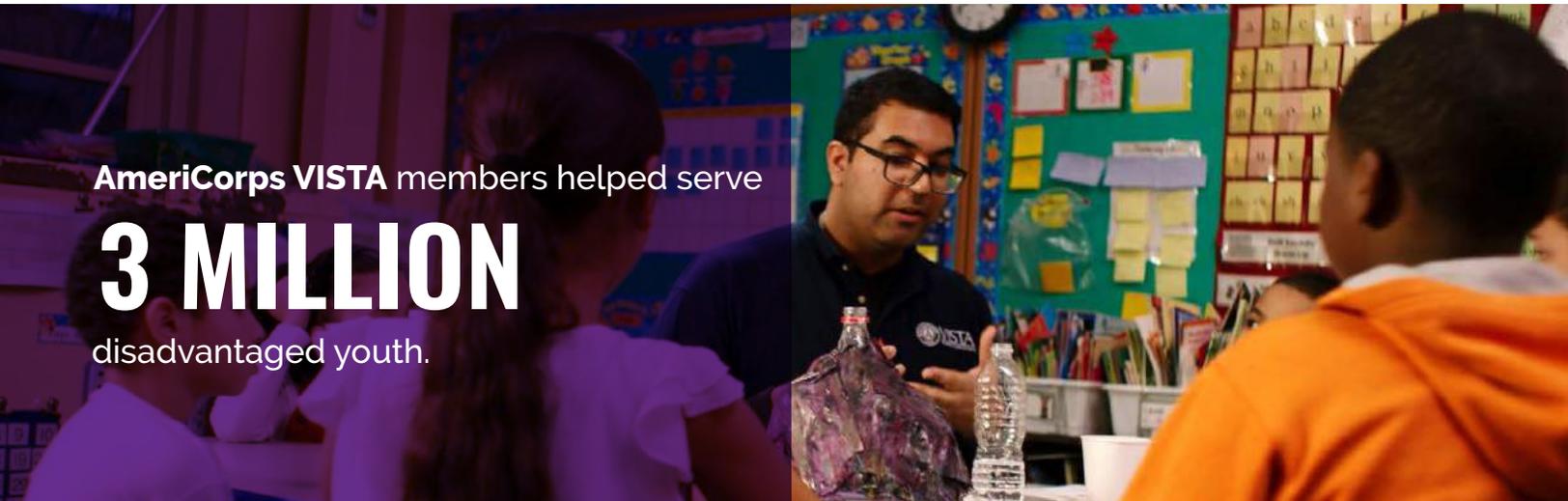
# 140,000

veterans and military families received assistance last year.





**VISTA**  
Volunteers in Service to America



AmeriCorps VISTA members helped serve

**3 MILLION**

disadvantaged youth.

### By the Numbers

8,500+ Members Serving Per Year

4,500+ Locations Across the U.S.

220,000 Members Since 1965

### Responding to the Opioid Crisis



Nationwide, AmeriCorps VISTA has 80 active projects that address opioid addiction and recovery with 102 actively serving members.

### Breakdown by Main Focus Area



46.4%

Education



23.5%

Economic Opportunity



23.6%

Healthy Futures



To download our latest impact infographics, visit [nationalservice.gov/vistaoutreach](https://nationalservice.gov/vistaoutreach)



Turn page for  
**Free**  
tear-out poster

America needs you. Start here.

**GO WHERE YOU'RE NEEDED.**



**JOIN AMERICORPS VISTA** at [AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA](https://AmeriCorps.gov/VISTA)

NEW

AMERICORPS VISTA

# Alumni Ambassador Program

Calling all VISTA alums! Help us build awareness about AmeriCorps VISTA by creating an event to share your service story with student groups and community organizations.

Get started in 3 simple steps.



SIGN-UP &  
REGISTER YOUR EVENT



RECEIVE YOUR KIT



RECRUIT

## Alumni Ambassador Kit\*

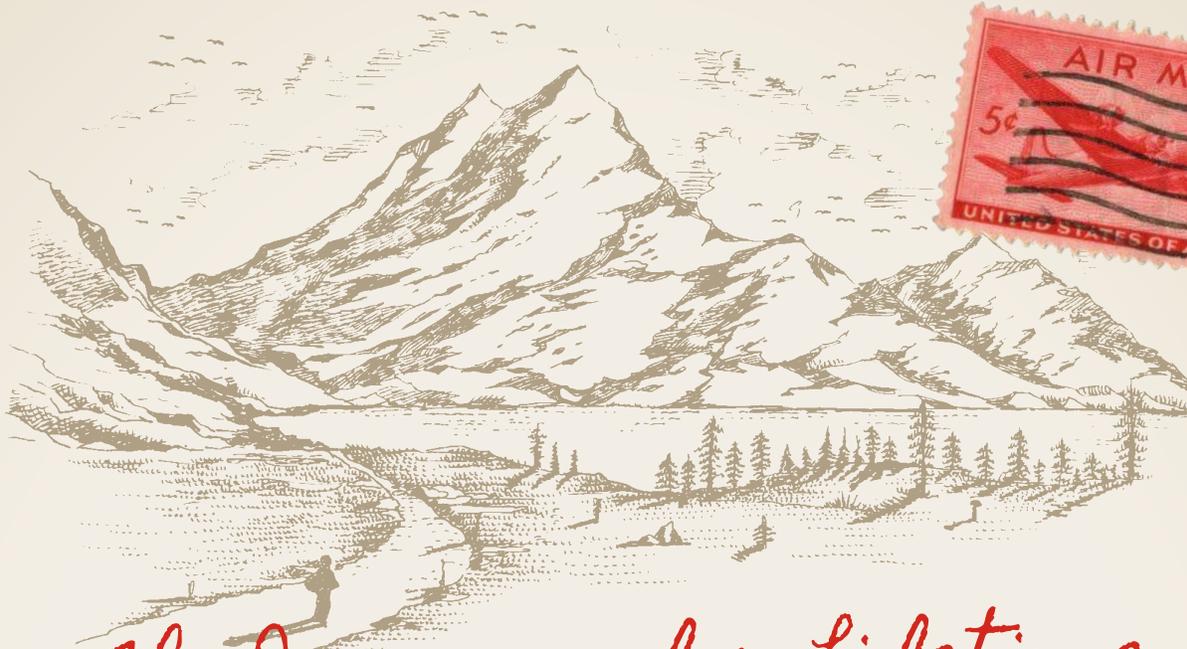


Everything you need to get out and spread the word.

\*Restrictions apply

**SIGN UP**

at [NationalService.gov/VISTAambassador](https://NationalService.gov/VISTAambassador)



## The Journey of a Lifetime

After 50 years, returning to the site of my VISTA service.

- By Elaine R. McIntyre

On June 21, 1966, I arrived in Fairbanks, Alaska in response to President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. As one of the first groups of VISTA members, I was assigned to Mountain Village, a Yup'ik Eskimo community where Roselyn, my co-VISTA, and I would live and serve for the next twelve months.

Once there, we settled into our one-room, shed-like house and determined how to best use our time and skills. While sent there for work, we soon discovered that every day was an opportunity to learn from the locals such as: preparing fish and game for meals, carrying water, picking berries, and adjusting to the cold in the winter and the mosquitoes in the summer.

Our first order of business was from the village council, developing adult education services. Before we knew it, opportunities were flooding in. We helped establish a small library, assisted in fundraising for town

hall repairs, and aided individuals in GED completion.

As we built rapport in the community, the impact and scope of our work broadened. We led two new interest groups in the existing 4-H Club, organized and supervised the youth-led village newspaper, and inadvertently became the after school program for many children. I taught piano lessons to several children and encouraged others to play the ukulele and guitar.



Getting ready for the women's dog sled race

The year 2016 marked the 50th anniversary of my AmeriCorps VISTA service. In June of 2017, to celebrate this milestone, my husband, Roselyn, and I traveled to Mountain Village to see just how much things had changed. Since 1966, the population has doubled to about eight hundred. Nearly everyone now carries a mobile phone and some have e-mail addresses; in our time there, the only communication was a ham radio in the office of the postmaster. There is now indoor plumbing and electricity in the homes and many own TVs. All-terrain vehicles (ATVs) travel the few streets, and we saw several people driving pick-up trucks, unlike the boats, sleds, and snowmobiles from our memory. Particularly memorable, there is now a high school in the village where previously high school students had to travel miles to attend school.

Going back to visit was a wonderful experience for Roselyn and me. Many things were unchanged—the salmon were abundant, so nearly everyone was catching, cutting, drying, and smoking for the winter's food supply. The people were as friendly as I recall, and we found about twelve people who remembered and welcomed us.

My journey back to Mountain Village was a reminder of the wonderful, eye-opening, life-changing opportunity I was given by VISTA, a window into a different culture.



*Learning how to make seal skin mukluks*



*Singing with the kids*



*Me and kids in front of VISTA house*



*51 years later*

## STAY CONNECTED WITH AMERICORPS VISTA

 [facebook.com/amicorpsvista](https://facebook.com/amicorpsvista)

 [@amicorpsvista](https://twitter.com/amicorpsvista)

 [nationalservice.tumblr.com](https://nationalservice.tumblr.com)

 [@amicorpsvista](https://in.linkedin.com/company/amicorpsvista)

 [@nationalservice](https://instagram.com/nationalservice)

 [@nationalservice](https://snapchat.com/add/nationalservice)

## VISTA CAMPUS

Search for trainings, forums, and many other resources:

 [vistacampus.gov](https://vistacampus.gov)

## OUTREACH HUB

Order brochures, download logos, and much more at:  
[nationalservice.gov/vistaoutreach](https://nationalservice.gov/vistaoutreach)

## CONTRIBUTE TO THE VISTA REVIEW

Send us your questions, comments or ideas  
for a story to:

 [vistaoutreach@cns.gov](mailto:vistaoutreach@cns.gov)

Visit our website at [amicorps.gov/vista](https://amicorps.gov/vista)



Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 

The Corporation for National & Community Service  
250 E Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20525  
1-800-942-2677