

# National Service Impact in Kansas

## AmeriCorps

As part of a Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks initiative, the Kansas Outdoor AmeriCorps Action Team will leverage 65 AmeriCorps members across 24 state parks and wildlife areas during the 2013-2014 program year. These members will restore, develop and mitigate the loss of environmental resources; deliver environmental education programs for schools, civic groups and local government groups; respond to disasters and assist in the emergency management and the restoration process after a natural disaster. During the 2012-2013 program year, AmeriCorps members performed many duties, including: disaster response, cleaning up dead trees from years of drought and replacing trees due to flooding, conducting more than 300 environmental projects in 25 state park areas, delivering 196 education programs to more than 8,800 people, and building, re-routing and maintaining 82 miles of trails.

## AmeriCorps NCCC

The City of Junction City and the Helland Park Community Committee were committed to establishing a natural park on land donated to Junction City. AmeriCorps NCCC members cleared and established two miles of new hiking trails and cleared 15 acres of 22,000 pounds of underbrush. The local community has greatly benefited from this project, as citizens now have access to natural walking trails. The city's local high school, within easy walking distance, now uses the park as a biological study area and exercise path for students with disabilities.

## AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA member Johnna Godinez, along with Washburn University's Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy VISTA project in Topeka, raised \$1,600 for the Kansas Youth Leadership Forum, \$9,500 for the Empower Me Challenge, Disability Mentoring Day and a Student Advocacy Conference, \$5,000 for the Kansas Youth Leadership Forum, and \$1,300 for the Justin Cosco Scholarship. Johnna's fundraising supports programming which encourages youth to seek employment training and leadership opportunities, refine life goals, secure access to resources, and mentoring opportunities. AmeriCorps VISTA member Janet Sutton along with Washburn University's Dress for Success raised \$7,360 while utilizing a committee of six board members. As a result, there has been an increase from 22 to 38 women using the Career Center, and five volunteers have been recruited to provide resume writing and employment preparation.

## Senior Corps

RSVP volunteers in Finney County assisted and counseled 1,057 seniors—low-income, non-English speaking or disabled individuals—in preparing their 2012 tax returns. Many individuals are unable to afford a tax preparer or do not understand the tax forms. As a result, some may send incorrect information or opt not to file a tax return, which results in lost refunds. Certified RSVP Tax Volunteers are required to complete the Tax Counseling for the Elderly Standard of Conduct code and basic, intermediate, and advanced tax courses. Compared to last year, RSVP volunteers helped 36 percent more clients file timely and accurate tax returns. The returns generated \$314,781 in refunds for seniors, low-income, non-English speaking or disabled individuals in Finney County.

## Volunteer Generation Fund

In 2013, the Kansas Volunteer Commission and the Volunteer Generation Fund strengthened the volunteer infrastructure in the state of Kansas. A total of \$188,059 was granted to 16 volunteer-connector organizations and other organizations to help expand their efforts in recruiting, managing and supporting Kansans who serve in high quality volunteer roles. To maximize the impact in participating communities, this investment leveraged more than \$200,000 in local resources. In addition to financial support, the Kansas Volunteer Commission delivered 11 volunteer management trainings to more than 480 individuals throughout Kansas. Topics included implementing a volunteer engagement initiative, effective tactics for volunteer recruitment, principles of supervising volunteers, and keeping volunteers engaged over time.