

## AmeriCorps State

Harvesters is a provides opportunities for AmeriCorps members to make a direct impact in the lives of Kansans in need. While serving at Harvesters, AmeriCorps members help recruit volunteers, educate and enrich the lives of food recipients through nutrition education classes, and help serve more people in need by growing relationships with new agencies in the underserved portion of the program's service area. These activities are more essential than ever as the demand for food assistance continues to grow. Harvesters serve 16 counties in Kansas. Their service area in Kansas includes: Washington, Marshall, Nemaha, Clay, Riley, Pottawatomie, Jackson, Wabaunsee, Shawnee, Jefferson, Osage, Douglas, Franklin, Johnson, Wyandotte, and Miami counties. Harvesters engages AmeriCorps members as specialists in specific areas of Harvesters' Kansas operations. The members focus on community outreach allows Harvesters to increase the number of food drives in the community, increase the number of volunteers to sort food, educate and enrich the lives of food recipients through nutrition education and hands-on food preparation lessons, and helps serve more people in need by growing relationships with new agencies in the underserved portion of their service area.

The youth of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City come from the most disadvantaged circumstances -- unstable families, poverty, violence, and exposure to serious risk factors. Their Club membership gives them a safe place to go before and after school, encouragement to stay in school, access to personal computers and controlled guidance on the Internet, improved attitudes toward the opposite sex, and the ability to resolve conflict without resorting to violence. AmeriCorps members provide direct service delivery in the area of youth development and supplemental education activities at their Wyandotte County Unit. AmeriCorps members promote awareness of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Kansas City and AmeriCorps partnership services; interact with and inspire youth in an array of educational, cultural and recreational activities; tutor Club members after school, assist with homework, and help Club members complete their power pages and get parents actively engaged in Power Hour.

## AmeriCorps VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA members serving at Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters helped expand the organization's annual Bowl for Kids' Sake campaigns. As a result of their efforts, the statewide campaign raised \$118,000 more in 2014 than in 2013, a 12 percent increase. These additional funds help KSBBBS provide underserved children throughout the state with positive mentoring relationships. VISTA also created a partnership between Crawford County Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters and Sigma Alpha Epsilon, a new fraternity at Pittsburg State University. Through the partnership, more than half of the fraternity's members applied to be Big Brothers. Once the fraternity members are approved as Big Brothers, the number of boys, ages 5 to 17, on the agency's waiting list for mentors will be drop by half. Sigma Alpha Epsilon also plans to hold a fundraiser for Big Brothers Big Sisters later in the year. During 2014, the first year of its VISTA project, Kansas Big Brothers Big Sisters provided 5,818 children with mentors.

Washburn University of Topeka supports nearly 40 AmeriCorps VISTAs throughout Eastern Kansas. Overall, in 2014, their program recruited over 3,000 volunteers and solicited over a quarter million dollars in cash and in-kind donations. In 2014, their program with the Kansas African American Affairs Commission allowed the VISTA member to target low-income African American communities in Kansas to improve their levels of civic engagement and economic stability through participation on the KAAAAC Equity Advisory Committees, and develop ongoing programming around their chosen Equity Index Area of Impact. Ten community members in each of Kansas' four Congressional districts were needed to form the Kansas African American Affairs Commissions' Equity Advisory Groups to determine the scope and length of the projects that would be done in their communities to address equity. VISTA member successfully recruited 65 committed volunteers who are currently working statewide on many community building initiatives.

## AmeriCorps NCCC

The Department of Wildlife and Parks mission is to conserve and enhance Kansas' natural heritage, its wildlife and its habitats, and in partnership with an AmeriCorps NCCC team, the Department of Wildlife and Parks was able to continue this mission. The NCCC team supported this partnership and mission by staining and repairing the gutters of the four cabins that the team resided in. Corps members also constructed two bathroom doors, four winter pipe covers for the cabins, and four shelving units. In addition to the construction of those items, Corps members also maintained over eight and a half miles of horse riding trails. When not working on the trails, members removed metal, glass bottles, tin cans, and miscellaneous trash throughout the park, resulting in 10 bags of recycling, 10 bags of trash and one load of scrap metal. Perry State Park is at a great location between Topeka, KS, where the state capital is located, and Lawrence, KS, where Kansas University is located. Many members from those areas visit Perry State Park. With the help of NCCC, Perry State Park has been cleaned up, trails have been repaired and the Park has become more welcoming due to these initiatives.

An AmeriCorps NCCC team was assigned to Wichita Habitat for Humanity (WHFH) to help with the construction of three habitat homes. WHFH has served over 200 families in Sedgwick County, Kansas by offering affordable homeownership opportunities through new home construction and rehabilitated homes. Corps members participated in the following construction activities: framing, roofing, hanging drywall, installing sheetrock and trim, interior and exterior painting, hanging cabinets and doors, and laying flooring. Along with constructing 3 homes, the NCCC team assisted with bringing the WHFH warehouse up to standard. At the warehouse, Corps members assembled several large steel shelving units and made five hanging shelving units. Corps members helped the Wichita community in several ways in addition to constructing homes by working at the Habitat Restore, the Habitat sponsored discounted furniture shop and assisting with the community event, Love Wichita. During the event, Corps members assisted community members with cleaning empty lots on several streets that would be used to build houses on the property.

## Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

Kansas Neurological Institute (KNI)'s Foster Grand Parent program has celebrated 47 years of programming in Kansas. In 2014, Foster Grandparents served 93 students at the Institute, Head Start, and local schools. Ninety percent of people living at Kansas Neurological Institute are classified as having a profound intellectual disability and require support 24 hours a day. In 2014, surveys concluded that 99 percent of students in the program had more freedom from abuse and neglect and were able to sustain a family-like relationship with their Foster Grandparent.

Of the students participating in Head Start, 94 percent of the students matched with a Foster Grandparent were reported to have increased social skills. And of the students served by Foster Grandparents in the local schools, 100 percent of the students showed improved social skills and a higher interest in learning.

For the past decade, the Foster Grandparent Program at Kansas Neurological Institute has provided nearly 100,000 service hours to their community per year.

## Senior Corps RSVP

Twenty RSVP volunteers with Saline County RSVP provided leadership in planning and implementing the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for the 2014 tax return filing season. The volunteers planned and provided volunteer training, set up the service sites, served as site supervisors, greeters, screeners, preparers, quality reviewers and e-filers, and mentored ten additional VITA volunteers, including college students, who were mobilized by RSVP. The dedicated crew wrapped up the 2014 filing season having 1009 federal and 1002 state returns accepted; with an aggregated refund amount of \$1,086,895. The refund amount averages out to \$1,363 per client. Over 1,000 low to moderate income taxpayers were served during this time, who saved a minimum of \$85,756 at an average minimum charge of \$85 per tax return.

## Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The Mental Health Association of South Central Kansas sponsors the Senior Companion Program. One senior client named Sherry was a victim of self-neglect, giving away money that was needed for necessities, putting her at risk of losing her apartment. Thanks to Senior Companion volunteer Pat, Sherry is now following a budget. The companions met through a partnership between Mid-Kansas Senior Outreach and SCP, a partnership that has led to Senior Companions helping more than 40 seniors with physical illness and mental illness such as grief, self-neglect, isolation, exploitation, depression, anxiety, alcohol abuse, drug misuse, and bipolar disease.

## Volunteer Generation Fund

United Way of Franklin County, with the help of skill-based volunteer support, held a fundraiser for Hope House, an emergency relief organization that provides basic necessities to individuals and families. With help from the community and local publicity, this pancake breakfast event was attended by 100 people and raised \$5,300 and nonperishable food donations for the organization.