

AmeriCorps State

More than 400 Kentucky AmeriCorps members helped to package 63,762 meals for the annual 9/11 National Day of Service and Remembrance. Many of the meals packaged through the service project were distributed to Kentucky families with the help of Feeding America-Kentucky's Heartland. A portion were included in a shipment of humanitarian aid to the Ukraine. The service project was combined with team-building training and was a part of Kentucky's celebration of the AmeriCorps 20th anniversary. During the two-day event, members learned about national service programs in Kentucky, met members from other programs, attended workshops and participated in the national swearing-in ceremony. Rep. John Yarmuth, D-Louisville, congratulated the 2014 AmeriCorps members at the ceremony in downtown Louisville and said the celebration recognized the impact of all members' extraordinary accomplishments. Kentucky AmeriCorps programs attending events included ATEAM, Build Corps, Disaster Services Corps, Economic Empowerment Corps, FRYSC Corps, Kentucky College Coaches, MoneyCorps, MSUCorps, PartnerCorps STEM, PartnerCorps School Turnaround, REACH CORPS, Senior Connections and UNITE Service Corps.

Operation UNITE's Service Corps AmeriCorps initiative provides before and after school math tutoring and healthy choices programs to address drug prevention and nutritional education. AmeriCorps members also serve as sponsors for anti-drug UNITE Clubs and recruit volunteers for school-based prevention programs and community service projects. During the 2013-2014 school year, 2,151 students were tutored in mathematics, and math test scores for these students increased 34 percent during the year. More than 2,330 students were taught the "Too Good For Drugs" and "Healthy Futures/Take 10!" curricula. Test scores for these students showed a 40 increase in drug education knowledge and healthy decision-making information. More than 3,200 students were provided one-on-one mentoring assistance, and AmeriCorps members recruited 2,097 volunteers for school-related activities. They contributed 12,363 volunteer service hours. For the 2014-15 school year, the UNITE Service Corps has placed 44 AmeriCorps members at schools in Bell, Breathitt, Harlan, Johnson, Knott, Laurel, Leslie, Owsley, Perry, Pike, Rockcastle and Wolfe counties, as well as the East Bernstadt Independent school system.

AmeriCorps VISTA

The Shaping Our Appalachian Region (SOAR) initiative was launched by Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear (D) and Congressman Hal Rogers (R-KY) to help meet the challenges in eastern Kentucky related to unemployment and poverty, and help the region develop and put into action new locally-oriented strategies to attack persistent challenges. Through a Corporation for National and Community investment of \$1.05 million, more than 50 AmeriCorps VISTA members will provide more than 100,000 volunteer hours over the next year to eastern Kentucky families and individuals in the areas of job creation and retention, youth engagement, education success, and health and human services. These AmeriCorps VISTA members recruit and manage volunteers, raise funds, and build the capacity of 16 local nonprofit and education organizations that tackle poverty and expand opportunity to 50 counties in rural Kentucky's Appalachian region.

With more than \$120,000 in grants monies and matching funds from a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant, as well as leveraging more than 170 community volunteer hours, AmeriCorps VISTAs based at Partners for Education and Grow Appalachia at Berea College have expanded existing educational services to reach more than 17,000 disadvantaged youth in Eastern Kentucky. Whether managing social media outlets, creating manuals for high tunnel construction, or putting in place database systems for more effective day-to-day operations, the nine VISTAs have made real change in the communities they serve.

AmeriCorps NCCC

An AmeriCorps NCCC team completed two major projects for the community of Elizabethtown. In partnership with the Lincoln Trail District Health Department, whose mission is to provide assurance of the public's health and safety through assessment, intervention, and preparedness, members engaged in the construction of a community walking and running trail around the Valley View Alternative School. The team prepared and laid gravel for the one-half mile trail, dug water control trenches and removed topsoil to make the trail stable and sustainable. Secondly, the team constructed 60 garden boxes for the beautification and health of the community; installing and preparing them for planting in three different locations around the community. Through the work of this NCCC team, Elizabethtown, an area comprised largely of veterans and their families from Fort Knox, gained a trail that can be used for walking, running and biking. This health-centered addition is coupled with the creation of the community gardens that ensure more locally grown vegetables will reach the tables of families throughout the community.

An AmeriCorps NCCC team in partnership with The Kentucky Department of Parks (KDP) helped to maintain two important sites in the state, Cumberland Falls and Carter Caves. The KDP works with volunteers and local park communities to develop trail-based opportunities to attract visitors to natural, historic, and culturally significant areas in Kentucky for outdoor recreation. At Cumberland Falls, the NCCC team worked with the Hemlock crew from the Kentucky Department of Forestry to help save 2,730 Hemlock trees from the invasive, parasitic insect species known as Woolly Adelgid. The team's assistance has more than doubled the crew's normal productivity and in doing so, has helped save twice the amount of trees than normal. At Carter Caves, the NCCC team renovated one of the park's most popular caves, "Cascade." The work that the NCCC team accomplished will last for years and will allow tourists to enjoy the trails and the caves. Each Member was awarded the highest honor that the state of Kentucky could offer; Kentucky Colonelship. Additionally, they received a certificate of appreciation from the Commissioner of Parks for the work the team accomplished.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

South Heights Elementary School in Henderson is proud to host four Foster Grandparent volunteers sponsored by Audubon Area Community Services, Inc. These dedicated Foster Grandparents, ranging in ages 79 to 88, provided 20 kindergarten and first grade students with 3,415 hours of service in the 2013-2014 academic year, offering assistance with reading, math, and spelling skills while encouraging and reinforcing socially acceptable behaviors. Their teachers reported that the supportive one on one attention from the Foster Grandparents was instrumental in 90 percent of the assigned students reaching their academic and behavior goals, thereby allowing them to progress to the next grade level.

Senior Corps RSVP

According to 2011 Census Data, Bowling Green -Warren County has 19,757 individuals living in poverty. With poverty comes issues of food insecurity and social support. Last year, RSVP volunteers with Community Action of Southern Kentucky served 2,213 hours delivering meals to home-bound individuals and working in food pantries. A total of 3,158 home-bound individuals received 4,406 meals that were prepared and/or delivered by RSVP volunteers. Another 932 military families received items from the American Red Cross food pantry where RSVP volunteers served. Four RSVP volunteers also served 391 hours at the Barren River Long Term Care Ombudsman Program and provided 1,848 visits to 2,541 seniors. Through these service assignments, RSVP volunteers support aging in place and meet critical community needs.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The goals of the Senior Companion Program, sponsored by the Bluegrass Community Action Partnership (BGCAP) in Kentucky, include keeping seniors living independently in their own homes and providing respite to caregivers such as family and friends. In 2013, more than 79,000 hours of in-home services were provided to senior citizens living in the 10 counties served by BGCAP. On May 23, 2014, 64 senior citizens who serve as companions to the elderly in Central Kentucky were honored by a recognition dinner held at the Frankfort Kentucky Country Club. Perhaps the most important result of this successful event could be seen in the smiling faces of the honorees—the Senior Companions who make this program work.

Social Innovation Fund

The Social Innovation Fund transforms lives and communities using limited federal investment as a catalyst to grow the impact of nonprofits with evidence of strong results. It harnesses the expertise of grantmaking intermediaries to identify, evaluate and expand effective nonprofits and engages funding partners to contribute nearly three dollars to every one federal dollar invested. As the Social Innovation Fund network grows programs that work in Kentucky, more people are able to overcome their most pressing challenges in the areas of economic opportunity, health, and youth development. The Social Innovation Fund is investing \$170,529 in expanding the impact of two nonprofits in Kentucky, selected and supported by two intermediaries. Brighton Center, a Financial Opportunity Center in Newport, Kentucky that uses Family Development Specialists to help families improve financial security, has seen clients experience an average wage increase of \$14,497 and an average increase in net worth of \$6,497.