

AmeriCorps State

The Wisconsin Association for Runaway Services Direct Service Outreach to Runaways program engaged 26 AmeriCorps members in 2013-2014. Members had over 38,000 contacts with youth on the street and in areas where youth congregate, providing information on healthy alternatives. Ninety-five percent of the youth receiving services either returned home, or to a mutually agreed upon safe alternative, with ongoing support. Of these youth 98 percent did not run again. Community education was provided to more than 14,000 individuals, with 94 percent reporting enhanced awareness of runaway and homeless youth issues and services available. Runaway programs offer a unique, cost-effective approach by diverting youth from the juvenile justice system, residential programs and/or child welfare. Many of the programs utilize host homes at a cost of \$50-\$75 per day, compared to an average \$241 per youth spent daily in the juvenile justice system. This does not take into account the thousands of youth served by the program who are not sheltered, but instead return home or to a safe alternative, which is a huge benefit to communities. The program had an impressive 96 percent AmeriCorps member retention rate for 2013-2014.

The Easter Seals Wisconsin AmeriCorps Partnership program engaged 53 AmeriCorps members in 2013-2014. Members serve in a camp environment, providing care and services for individuals with severe and multiple disabilities who participate in recreational activities to improve functional independence and quality of life, reducing their sense of social isolation, while caregivers receive respite to reduce stress and improve their health and well-being, increasing their quality of life so they can continue to provide care in a community-based setting. A record high 1,568 campers were served in 2013-2014; 97 percent of parents/caregivers responding to a survey reported that camp helped to reduce stress and improve their health and well-being. One member coordinates camp programs for veterans with disabilities and their family members, who participate in recreational and family-building activities to increase their quality of life and improve family strength. A record high 191 veterans and family members were served in 2013-2014, with 97 percent reporting increased quality of life and improved family strength due to attending camp.

AmeriCorps National

College Possible Milwaukee, serving 3,000 high school and college students, is closing Wisconsin's degree divide and building a competitive workforce for the future. By 2020, 62 percent of jobs in Wisconsin will require a post-secondary education, but only 8 percent of low-income students nationally earn a college degree by age 24. College Possible Milwaukee's AmeriCorps coaches guide low-income students through all aspects of preparing for, applying to and enrolling in college, and support students all the way through college graduation. Ninety eight percent of College Possible students earn admission to college, and they are ten times more likely to graduate from college than their low-income peers. A 2013 Harvard randomized controlled trial confirmed the impact of College Possible's AmeriCorps-based program model, finding that students in the program had a significant positive increase in four-year college enrollment. By harnessing the power of national service, College Possible creates better futures for all Wisconsinites.

AmeriCorps VISTA

"The jobs most in demand in Wisconsin in the next ten years will require STEM skills and post-secondary degrees," states a report of Milwaukee's Public Policy Forum. To best prepare Milwaukee youth for the future, the University of Wisconsin Extension AmeriCorps VISTA project, serving Milwaukee County, developed a Pre-College 4-H STEM program for 7th and 8th grade youth. The program engages participants in STEM subjects and acquaints them with post-secondary education and career options. The program includes a Pre-College Institute that prepares low-income youth of color for higher education. The program contains workshops on financial aid and other relevant topics, and provides career information and a six-week enrichment class that emphasizes math and reading. Participating students also get the chance to visit five University of Wisconsin campuses. This year, 371 racially diverse students from Milwaukee County attended the Pre-College Institute and 28 students participated in a week-long academic college program at University of Wisconsin-Richland Campus. They took classes in the college science labs and experienced dormitory and student college life.

The AmeriCorps VISTA project at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction fosters family involvement in low-income schools and communities by implementing a research-based and sustainable process for partnerships that consist of the family, school, and community. Strengthening the family-school relationship helps children earn better grades, stay in school longer, and go on to post-secondary education. In the past three years, 37 VISTAs served at 34 low-income school districts across Wisconsin. As the result, 100 percent of the schools developed Action Teams for School-Parent Partnerships that enable low-income families to have a voice in their children's education. A committee of educators, parents, and community partners, the action team works together to engage all families and the community in productive ways to improve education. The actions teams will continue to operate following the closure of the VISTA project. This year, the Wisconsin schools that have an Action Team for Partnerships reported 60 percent of the parents attended parent-teacher conferences, an increase from previous years.

AmeriCorps NCCC

Today the University of Wisconsin Arboretum has grown to encompass 1,260 acres outside of Madison. The Arboretum's origins are strongly connected to AmeriCorps NCCC's predecessor, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which began planting and restoring native communities at the Arboretum. During their seven weeks of service the team helped remove invasive species such as honeysuckle and buckthorn in 175,000 square feet of the property and prepared areas for prescribed fires by making nearly 3,000 feet of fire breaks using brush saws and a wood chipper. The team removed cherry, spruce, box elder and juniper trees in an effort to restore the area back to their original prairie form. The team worked to clean seed from the plant material such as flower petals and stems and spread seeds over 19,500 square feet of land. In the Native Plant Garden, the team trimmed and removed last year's growth from 32,780 square feet to allow for this year's growth to begin. They cleaned and replanted approximately 900 pots and plants, to protect the native habitat from a newly found invasive worm species. They also replaced 10 informative and directional signs in the Native Plant Garden.

During the spring of 2014, three organizations within the Dodgeville community partnered to receive the assistance of an AmeriCorps NCCC team: Friendship Center, Driftless Area Land Conservancy (DALC) and Folklore Village. The Friendship Center has evolved into an organization that seeks to use the natural environment to improve reading skills through its camps for children and retreats for adults. The team removed fields of garlic mustard, brush, and vegetation to prevent the spread of invasive species. In addition, the team installed new siding on a bunkhouse to make it safer for campers to use as lodging. DALC protects the rural landscape and quality of life of southwest Wisconsin. The team constructed a bridge and two boardwalk sections over marshy conditions and cleared approximately three acres of brush for a walking path, which will allow land to be more accessible to users. The Folklore Village is a nationally recognized folk arts center dedicated to enriching lives through time honored traditions. At Folklore Village, the team scraped the sides of several bunkhouses and repainted them as well as weeded multiple flower beds.

Senior Corps Foster Grandparent Program

For the last 40 years, hundreds of Foster Grandparent volunteers have served tirelessly in the Sheboygan Area School District. These caring older adults are an important part of the classroom as they provide individual attention to students who need extra help with their studies. In 2014, nearly 40 volunteers worked 23,000 hours. These dedicated volunteers have worked one-on-one with 320 pre-K to 5th graders. They have helped increase reading, math, and social skills. A new component is the Lunch Buddies program in which students in need of one-on-one attention are selected to eat lunch with a Foster Grandparent volunteer. One teacher attributed the assistance of the Foster Grandparent to helping a first grade student go from a pre-test reading score of 13 percent proficiency at the beginning of the year to 79 percent at the end of the semester. Another teacher reported a student going from a reading level 4 to a level 17 over the course of the year.

Senior Corps RSVP

The Centers for Disease Control reports that hypertension is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke, the first and fourth leading causes of death in the United States. Nearly a thousand deaths a day and a direct cost of \$141 billion annually are attributable to these diseases. Lowering blood pressure to decrease the risk of heart disease and stroke is a goal for Marathon County RSVP in their healthy futures initiative. Sponsored by the United Way, RSVP volunteers provide free blood pressure screening and hypertension education to educate seniors on healthy lifestyles. The program deploys 12 RSVP volunteers who are registered nurses provide more than 1,500 blood pressure screenings annually.

Senior Corps Senior Companion Program

The Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council, Inc. (GLITC) is a consortium of 12 federally recognized American Indian tribes located throughout Wisconsin and Upper Michigan with a combined American Indian population of 54,526. GLITC's mission is to support member tribes in expanding self-determination efforts by providing services and assistance. The Senior Companion Program supports that mission by mobilizing 60 Senior Companion volunteers to provide companionship, assist with meals, transportation to doctor's appointments and other services to homebound, disabled, or isolated older adults. As the result, more than 85 percent of the 81 clients served were able to remain independently in their homes and more than 11,000 Companionship visits were conducted this past year.

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 Wisconsin, 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 \$250,000 in expanding the impact of two nonprofits in Wisconsin.