

The Heart Line: Taking the Pulse

Covering Volunteerism and Service Throughout the Commonwealth

November 2009 Edition

Welcome

Welcome to the November edition of the Heart Line newsletter, a publication by the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS).

This edition features the astounding results of the Make A Difference Day 2009 food drives, and shines the spotlight on the MSU Corps and their program director, Sherrie Bennett. In the true spirit of Thanksgiving, KCCVS wants you to know how much we appreciate people like you who support, sponsor and engage in volunteerism and national service in Kentucky.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have questions about any of our community service programs, such as AmeriCorps, the Governor's Volunteer Awards, the Volunteer Insurance Program, or the Volunteer Recognition Program. The KCCVS has transitioned to an electronic newsletter. To have information delivered directly to your inbox, please sign up for our e-mail distribution list by sending your contact information to kccvs@ky.gov.

Make A Difference Day 2009 Food Drive Results



As Thanksgiving approaches, Kentuckians have another reason to celebrate. The statewide Make A Difference Day Food Drive yielded **123.27 tons**, enough food to feed **493,087 Kentuckians** an 8-ounce serving.

Thanks to the strong support of Governor Steve Beshear and First Lady Jane Beshear, this is a 74 percent increase over the amount collected in the 2008 food drive.

In early October, Gov. and Mrs. Beshear launched the expanded food drive as part of Make A Difference Day, a massive national day of giving and helping others that is hosted annually by the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS).

The KCCVS traditionally sponsors a campaign to collect as much non-perishable food as possible as part of its Make A Difference Day observance. Collected food is donated to food pantries and emergency feeding centers in the communities where the food is collected.

The KCCVS once again hosted the food drive competitions between the Kentucky AmeriCorps programs and CHFS' nine Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) regions. However, this year included a new competition between the state government cabinets/agencies. Winners were determined by the number of ounces per employee or member.

The leading AmeriCorps program was SERV Corps, based at Eastern Kentucky University in Richmond, which collected 42.28 tons of food. With only 30 members, this equates to more than 45,000 ounces per member! All of Kentucky's AmeriCorps programs combined collected a staggering 105.94 tons of food.

The winning DCBS service region was The Lakes Service Region with 2.12 tons and 374 employees. This equates to more than 180 ounces per employee. All DCBS regions combined collected 4.38 tons.

The Cabinet for Economic Development came out on top of the cabinet/agency challenge, collecting

more than 134 ounces per employee. All state cabinets combined collected 12.96 tons; when added to the 4.38 tons collected throughout the regions, the final tally of food collected by state employees stands at 17.34 tons.

SERV Corps, The Lakes Service Region and the Cabinet for Economic Development were all first time winners. All winners will be recognized next spring at the annual Governor's Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service.

CHFS Secretary Janie Miller said she was overwhelmed by Kentuckians' tremendous spirit of giving. "It is amazing that so much food was collected during this year's drive," Miller said. "AmeriCorps members and DCBS staff serve vulnerable and disadvantaged families every day, and the success of this effort shows their commitment to serving these families is not just what they do, it's their way of life."



The amount collected this year is enough to feed nearly 500,000 Kentuckians an 8-ounce serving of food. If all 493,087 Kentuckians stood in line for their serving of food, the line would be more than 186 miles long.

Eileen Cackowski, executive director of KCCVS, said the campaign is a great way for AmeriCorps members and CHFS staff to connect with other state employees in service. "The Make A Difference Day food drive calls attention to the great needs of people across the state that so many families

– even families with working parents – are experiencing," she said. "The day also highlights the ease and fun of volunteering when you do it as a group with your coworkers, church or family."

The food drive project was part of Make A Difference Day, an annual nationwide effort held on the fourth Saturday of October and billed as a day to help others. USA Weekend magazine is the main sponsor.

See the competition breakdowns and pictures on the Make A Difference Day 2009 Web page, <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcv/kccvs/madd2009>.

Program Director Spotlight: Sherrie Bennett

By Shannon Ramsey, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist



Sherrie Bennett has served as the program director for the Morehead State University (MSU) Corps since 2007. MSU Corps members provide reading and math tutoring for academically at-risk students. Members recruit and train community volunteers to provide reading and math support as well as to assist schools and their communities with identified services. Bennett served as a MSU Corps member in Fleming County from 2001-03, so she has a unique understanding of and love for the program.

"It's an honor to lead a program that I feel so passionately about," Bennett said. "AmeriCorps connects people's passion with meaningful service—and provides opportunities for the community to get involved."

Although born and raised in Wilmore, she has called Morehead "home" for more than seven years. Bennett received her bachelor's degree from the University of Kentucky and her master's degree from Morehead State University. After her two years of AmeriCorps service, she was a program coordinator for GEAR UP Kentucky, a program that works with middle and high

school students to help them prepare for post-secondary education.

Sherrie has an exceptional ability to show her members how much she cares for them, what they are doing and the differences they are making in their communities. Her success in this area is shown in MSU Corps' impressive participation in national days of service, such as Make A Difference Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service and AmeriCorps Week.



For Make A Difference Day, the MSU Corps not only participates in the Kentucky AmeriCorps food drive competition, but also various other service projects such as coat/clothing drives, electronic scrap recycling, school supply drives and soldier care packages. MSU Corps won the AmeriCorps food drive competition last year, collecting more than 27 tons of food. This year they came in second place, collecting almost 22 tons of food for their local communities.

Not surprisingly, Bennett desires to be remembered as someone who made a difference in the lives of others. She believes in making the most of every moment in order to achieve life's full potential.

"I've always been drawn to people who care about social causes and aren't afraid to stand up for what they believe in," she said. "Passion is what drives my spirit everyday, and I am appreciative of every day I am alive."

Bennett is very close with her family, especially her parents, her sister and brother-in-law and her niece Joella. She and her fiancé, Mark, recently bought a cabin near Cave Run Lake where they spend their free time remodeling and gardening. She considers herself blessed to help Mark raise two wonderful stepchildren. Bennett also loves to travel and has been to all but four states in the United States. She loves to cook, read and listen to music.

KCCVS truly appreciates her passion and energy for MSU Corps and AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps Program Spotlight: MSU Corps

By Joy Dillow, MSU Corps member

MSU Corps Spreads the Word on Disaster Preparedness for 911 and Spreads Fall Cheer



MSU Corps has been spreading the "911" word about being prepared for disasters. Members of each school district helped families of their schools and communities learn to be more prepared for emergencies. There were fall festivals, safe trick or treating, fire safety prevention events, "Lights On Afterschool" promotions and more.

MSU Corps members Tara Burchett, Tara Porter and Justin Tackett in cooperation with the American Red Cross, FEMA, the Carter County Extension Agency, Carter County Emergency Management, the Olive Hill Police Department

and the Carter County Sheriff's office provided festival goers with treats and tips on how to be prepared in the event of a disaster or emergency.

MSU Corps members handed out and discussed pamphlets entitled "How to Build a Disaster Supply Kit," and "Plan to Protect Your Family," along with sheets of information about H1N1, "Preparing for Disasters

and Emergencies: Your Family Plan", "Disaster Supply Calendar," and "Vial of Life" information bags to the estimated crowd of more than 300 children and 150 adults. Also, MSU Corps members had a supply kit on display so everyone could get a visual idea of how easy a kit would be to assemble.

The video "Let's Get Ready! Planning for Emergencies" was playing while Olive Hill Police Officer Dick Williams fingerprinted nearly every child in attendance. The Sheriff's Office passed out treat bags with flyers about trick-or-treat safety tips. Everyone worked together to bring awareness of the need to be prepared at home for emergencies.



Other MSU Corps members, Rhonda Sizemore, Carie Kizziar, Emily Sterling, Kieshta Slatterly and Alicia Lowe joined the Ashland Town Center Mall for the annual Community trick-or-treat event inside the mall. This was a free event for children and adults who wanted to celebrate Halloween in a safe environment.



Our table included an information board that pictured natural disasters and described various ways to prepare for an emergency situation. We passed out emergency preparedness information in the form of brochures, coloring books and stickers, along with the much-desired candy, to the costumed crowd. Many of the adults signed up for a chance to win a backpack filled with items needed for an emergency and donated to MSU Corps by the American Red Cross.

MSU Corps put valuable information into the hands of more than 1,000 members of our community who attended this event, our exhibit brought emergency preparedness to the forefront in minds of the families we spoke with, and we all enjoyed ourselves while serving.

MSU Corps members Matt Altobello and Kathy Webb of Lawrence County Schools had disaster and fire prevention awareness programs last week during Fire Prevention Week on Oct. 10-17. The local fire station made visits to schools within our district. On Tuesday evening and Saturday afternoon, the firefighters at Louisa Volunteer Fire Station No. 1 offered fire truck rides for any student. Activities also included a smoke house to show children and adults the proper way to escape in case of a fire.

The Boyd County crew of MSU Corps highlighted "What AmeriCorps Is" and disaster preparedness information, including Disaster Kit supplies and pamphlet information to more than 400 participants at the Fiv-co District's "Lights On Afterschool" Annual Celebration at KYOVA Mall in Ashland. Other educational partners at this event included KYOSA, Boyd County Public Library, Girl Scouts, Boyd County Schools, Greenup County Schools, Fairview Independent Schools and Raceland Independent Schools, AmeriCorps Members from all participating schools attended and had a great time highlighting their schools, providing disaster information, treats, food, popcorn, games and more.



An additional backpack filled with items needed for an emergency and donated by the American Red Cross was given as a door prize at this event. Members present and serving at this event included Danny Taylor, Joy Dillow, Donnita Stephens, Angie Blake, Brett Brownstein, Jessica Sasser, Zach Stumbo, Karissa Sammons, Amber Logan, Melissa Ross, Rhonda Sizemore and Emily Sterling.

There are even more 911 service projects still going on within the MSU Corps. It's a great day to be an AmeriCorps member and a greater day to be in MSU Corps.

"It's easy to make a buck. It's a lot tougher to make a difference."

- Tom Brokaw

Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service

275 East Main Street, Mail Stop 3W-E

Frankfort, Kentucky 40621

Local: (502) 564-7420

Toll-Free: (800) 239-7404

Fax: (502) 564-7478

E-mail: kccvs@ky.gov

Web site: www.volunteerKY.ky.gov

