

The Heart Line: Taking the Pulse

Covering Volunteerism and Service Throughout Kentucky

Shannon L. Ramsey, Editor

November 2011 Edition

In This Edition

Make A Difference Day 2011
Food Drive Competition
Results

2011-12 Kentucky AmeriCorps
Member Conference

Disabilities Corner: National
Disability Employment
Awareness Month

KCCVS Strategic Planning

Article Submission

We'd love to have an article about your program or organization.

Please email [Shannon Ramsey](mailto:Shannon.Ramsey@kccvs.org) to learn more about submitting an article for the newsletter.

Newsletter Archives

Download the print version of this newsletter and past editions on the [KCCVS Newsletter](#) page on our website.



flickr

YouTube

Welcome



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

We hope that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday! The KCCVS staff and commissioners appreciate your passion, involvement and encouragement. It's been a little while since a newsletter has been issued and we apologize. There is just so much going on that it's hard to

stay on top of everything – we're sure you know how *that* feels! Reading this edition of the newsletter will help you have a better understanding of what's been keeping us busy at the KCCVS.

Also, 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.

Make A Difference Day 2011 Food Drive Competition Results

By Shannon Ramsey, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist



MAKE A
DIFFERENCE DAY
NATIONAL DAY OF DOING GOOD



Once again, in honor of Make A Difference Day, the KCCVS sponsored one food drive competition involving our Kentucky AmeriCorps programs and another among Cabinet for Health and Family Services' community based service regions. Collected food was donated to food pantries and emergency feeding centers in the communities where the food was collected.

Congratulations goes to the **MSUCorps**, who collected 20.92 tons of food, averaging 23,080 ounces per member for the Kentucky AmeriCorps program competition! An honorable mention goes to the **ATEAM**, who collected an impressive 38.97 tons of food, averaging 21,876 ounces per member!

For the DCBS regional competition, **The Lakes Service Region** once again swept the competition by collecting 65.48 ounces per employee.

Continued on page 2

This was their third consecutive year winning the traveling award, meaning they get to keep it!

Congratulations and a big heartfelt thank you to all who participated. We are very appreciative of your hard work because more than **337,511 people** in need will be fed because of your efforts.

Want to see the breakdowns between programs and regions? Check out the [2011 Final Totals Report](#). Also, see pictures on the [KCCVS Flickr site](#).



“Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation’s compassion, unselfish caring, patience and just plain love for another.”

~ Erma Bombeck

2011-12 Kentucky AmeriCorps Member Conference

By Shannon Ramsey, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist

The 2011-12 Kentucky AmeriCorps Member Conference was held on Nov. 2-3 at the Capital Plaza Hotel in Frankfort. The conference is the program year kickoff and training event traditionally known as the *Launch*.



Patrick John and Patrick Henry Hughes

“There’s one characteristic that every AmeriCorps member shares: You are compassionate,” CHFS Deputy Secretary Eric Friedlander said at the conference opening. “To be compassionate is to spread compassion. This is one of the best ways we can make an impact on the world. As AmeriCorps members, you set the example for the people and the neighbors you serve.”

The keynote address, “I am Potential” featured Patrick Henry Hughes, a remarkable young man who was born without eyes and without the ability to fully straighten his arms and legs, yet who is a virtuoso pianist, vocalist and trumpet player. Many became familiar with Patrick Henry and his father Patrick John Hughes after Extreme Makeover: Home Edition featured his family in 2008.

After breakout workshops on the first day, the more than 300 first- and second-year AmeriCorps members headed over to the steps of the Kentucky State Capitol for a meaningful and moving swearing-in ceremony led by KCCVS Commission Chairman Aaron Anderkin and featuring vocal performances by Kasey Standridge, accompanied on piano by Jay Flippin. Colmon Elridge, executive assistant to Governor Beshear, thanked and motivated members for their year of service and led the members in the AmeriCorps pledge “to get things done in Kentucky.”

Members, assigned to one of 13 AmeriCorps state programs serving more than 85 counties, will help address unmet, local human service needs. More than a fourth of the members in this year’s class are returning members.



Colmon Elridge leading the AmeriCorps member pledge.

Continued on page 3



AmeriCorps Conference Committee members Carrie Stith-Webster, Kasey Standridge, Shannon Ramsey, Donna Brown and Shannon Bailes (from left)

KCCVS Training Officer Carrie Stith-Webster and the conference committee worked tirelessly to put together a broad selection of training opportunities. Concurrent workshops covered topics such as American Sign Language, blogging, broad spectrum drug training, bullying prevention, conflict resolution, disabilities inclusion, elder abuse, financial management, mandatory reporting, meth in Kentucky, natural disasters in Kentucky, personality profiles, resume writing/ interview skills, self-care, self-defense and team building. Some members participated in a service project preparing gift boxes for residents at a Frankfort nursing home.

An AmeriCorps conference favorite Mike King had all participants laughing and learning in his closing plenary “People Come in All Shapes, Sizes and Colors.”

Eileen Cackowski, executive director of the KCCVS, said that Kentucky AmeriCorps members continue to prove the value of community service in meeting even the most serious social, academic and economic challenges.

“Faced with challenges, they persevere and overcome, reaching out to their fellow Kentuckians with direct service, compassion and care,” Cackowski said.

Check out photos from the conference on the [KCCVS Flickr website](#). Learn more about the 2011-12 Kentucky AmeriCorps programs on the [KCCVS website](#).

Disabilities Corner: National Disability Employment Awareness Month

By Lanny Taulbee, KCCVS Disabilities Coordinator



October was National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). In 1945, Congress enacted a law declaring the first week in October as “National Employ the Physically Handicapped Week.” Today, that title would not make it to print without someone objecting about it not being politically correct. Who knew that Congress had the foresight to recognize us for the past 66 years?

Through the years, the title has changed to reflect the changes in the attitudes of society and the law. The word “physically” was removed in 1962 to acknowledge individuals with all types of disabilities, their employment needs and the many contributions made by employees with disabilities. Then, in 1988, Congress lengthened the time from a week to a month and changed the name to the “National Disability Employment Awareness Month.” When the Office of Disability Employment Policy was established in 2001, it assumed the responsibility for this event and has been promoting the idea ever since. Times sure have

changed, especially since the enactment of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

For those of us with severe disabilities lucky enough to have a job, chances are we weren’t hired strictly because of our qualifications. We were hired to a great extent because of the inclusive attitudes of someone that saw our abilities rather than our disabilities.

Someone gave us a chance to prove we are capable of productive employment. We all have stories to tell about our education, our resumes and our futile attempts to land any job. No matter how well educated, how much predisability experience we might have, it all comes down to someone giving us a chance to prove ourselves.

Continued on page 4

In my case, it more than 30 years to land a “real” job. I went through three periods of getting an education in three different career fields, but I had very little work experience. I worked some here and there, mostly part-time or temporary, whatever I could get that would not jeopardize my disability income. But interview after interview, the excuse was always the same; I had too little actual work experience. Without a job, I could not get experience and without experience, I could not get a job. Does that sound familiar? The truth was that those who were interviewing could not get past my disability and summarily dismissed me as not being a viable candidate for the position. I often knew as soon as I went in the room that it was a lost cause. Every time, I would stick it out and complete the interview knowing my time and theirs was wasted.

Finally, after my third round of getting an education and still no employment, I decided that I was destined to sit on the sidelines and wait for that disability check every month for the rest of my life. I was tired of trying to become gainfully employed and self-sufficient. I was merely “a disability with an education” Then, it happened.

I was attending a disability conference when I met two other attendees at one of the workshops. They were at the conference searching for “an education with a disability.” They suggested that I apply for the position. With no expectations whatsoever, I applied and, within a week, I finally had my first real job. It was the inclusive attitudes of those individuals that allowed them to recognize the value of my abilities rather than only seeing my disabilities. I was given a chance to prove my self-worth.

That was six years ago, and I celebrate my start date every year as my “worth day” because that was the day that I finally felt like I was doing something worthwhile. I was contributing to my family, to work, to society and even paying taxes, just like everyone else. I was no longer just a disability with an education. I never imagined that a simple change in attitude could change one’s life so dramatically.

Today, America celebrates October as NDEAM and we appreciate the wisdom Congress showed in 1945. The [Office of Disability Employment Policy](#) is currently the agency that oversees the NDEAM initiative. The Office offers a variety of resources to help you learn more about disabilities inclusion.

Also, Oct. 19, 2011, (the third Wednesday in October) was Disability Mentoring Day (DMD) sponsored by the [American Association of People with Disabilities](#). DMD is a nationwide effort to promote career development for students with disabilities through hands-on career exploration. Students with disabilities are paired with employee mentors according to their career of interest. The students experience a typical day on the job and learn what it would be like if they pursued a career in that particular field.

Remember, disability inclusion is an attitude, so keep it positive!



Lanny Taulbee

KCCVS Strategic Planning

By Shannon Ramsey, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist

On Sept. 26-27, members of the Strategic Planning Committee of the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) met at the Cliffview Retreat and Conference Center in Lancaster. This critical meeting was held to ensure that the Commission’s funding priorities and grant processes reflect the priorities and impact measurements of their parent agency – the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS), their national funder – the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) and Governor Steve Beshear.

KCCVS manages AmeriCorps grant funding for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Grant funding is awarded through a national competition and through a formula process that awards funds

Continued on page 5



KCCVS staff and Strategic Planning Committee members Melissa Benton, Nathan Mick, Sister Andi Sieloff, Aaron Anderkin, Sue Brammer, Daron Jordan, Eileen Cackowski, Carrie Stith-Webster, Betty Martin and Janet Gates (from left)

based on state population. The KCCVS office oversees the grant application process and the grants after they are awarded. The Program Committee of the Commission is responsible for making funding recommendations that must be approved by the full Commission. With cuts in national funding for AmeriCorps and other national service programs, the tasks of the Commission and its committees have become more challenging.

The Strategic Planning Committee met to evaluate the current state of the entire Commission in terms of involvement and qualifications, and also wanted to ensure that the Program Committee’s processes for determining grant funding were sound and in line with the appropriate outside priorities. Education, with a focus on drop-out prevention and increasing graduation rates; disaster services; and service to veterans and their families were at the top of the priority list set by the Strategic Planning Committee.

Newly appointed Commission Nathan Mick, Economic Development Director for Garrard County, was a part of the planning session.

“I’m honored to be a part of the KCCVS,” Mick said. “Kentucky’s AmeriCorps members are making a huge difference in communities across the Commonwealth – including the three members serving here in Garrard County.”

The Strategic Planning Committee also discussed ways to help inform others about the benefits and community impact of AmeriCorps service. Moderated by KCCVS, the planning session was a huge step forward for the Commission.

“I’m so proud of our Commissioners – their level of involvement, their commitment to improving the lives of their fellow Kentuckians by supporting and educating others about AmeriCorps,” said Eileen Cackowski, KCCVS Executive Director.

During the 2011-12 program year, which began in September, Kentucky will benefit from the service of 425 AmeriCorps members serving in one of 13 programs. AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance, student loan forbearance, health care coverage and child care for those who qualify. After successfully completing their terms of service, members receive an education award up to the equivalent of a federal Pell Grant to help repay qualified student loans or finance college, graduate school or vocational training.



Eileen Cackowski watching the AmeriCorps members march up the steps of the State Capitol during the 2011-12 Kentucky AmeriCorps Swearing-In Ceremony.

Learn more about the KCCVS and AmeriCorps in Kentucky on the [KCCVS website](http://www.kccvs.org).



Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service

275 E. Main St., Mail Stop 3W-E, Frankfort, KY 40621

(800) 239-7404

kccvs@ky.gov

<http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/>

