

2010 National Conference on Volunteering and Service



The National Conference on Volunteering and Service was held June 27-30 in New York City. The annual conference, convened by the Corporation for National and Community Service and the Points of Light Institute, is the world's largest gathering of volunteer leaders from the nonprofit, corporate and government sectors. Kentucky had four representatives attend this year's conference: KCCVS Commission Chairman Aaron Anderkin, KCCVS Disabilities Coordinator Lanny Taulbee, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist Shannon Ramsey and Kentucky AmeriCorps Disabilities Inclusion Advisory Council (KADIAC) member Oyo Fummilayo. Read what some participants thought about the conference and the city.

Lanny Taulbee, KCCVS Disabilities Coordinator

The opportunity to network with our counterparts from other states, to me, is one of the most important aspects of attending a national conference. We share ideas, resources and experiences--learning from one another. We meet new people and renew old acquaintances. Like family reunions, there are always new faces to learn while others have moved on to other positions. I have now attended five national conferences on volunteerism and service, and each one has been unique both in geography and in content. There are always too many great workshops and too little time to attend them all.

This year my favorite part of the conference was actually the pre-conference. The training and technical assistance provider on disabilities for the Corporation for National and Community Service, the National Service Inclusion Project, sponsored a daylong session entitled: "Strategic Alliances for Inclusion: Our Future under the Serve America Act." We learned about group development and the many stages involved in organizing and maintaining a group such as a board or council. We analyzed how a group can identify and achieve their goals using specific tools and techniques. Through tabletop exercises, we discovered how each member of the group influences the group as a whole and why we need creative thinkers, extroverts, coordinators, completers and specialists in order to transform a group of people into a cohesive team that can get things done.

The big adventure in New York City for me was taking my first ride on a subway. It is like a horizontal roller coaster ride, except it moves from side to side instead of up and down. Using a mobility scooter adds just a bit more excitement to a subway ride. The stops and starts are so sudden that it throws you back and forth without warning. The quick turns sling you from side to side as if the whole purpose of the ride is to remove you from your seat. The doors open and close at lightning speed, and I am certain they could crush anything in their path. A ride on a subway is as much fun as those at Kings Island, and costs a lot less too! Lucky for me, I was with a couple of friends who kept me from being slung half way to Chinatown. I understand that every subway system is different; so next time I plan to bring my friends along again just to keep me vertical.



Oyo Fummilayo, Lanny Taulbee and Deb Nelson-Allender (left to right) brave the New York subway system. Photo by Shannon Ramsey.

Shannon Ramsey, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist

This was my first national conference, and I thought it was a great experience. One reason I have never been to a national conference before is that my position with KCCVS is pretty unique, so there weren't enough (if any) sessions that would help me in what I do every day. However, now that social media and communicating via electronic methods is so prevalent, an entire track at the conference was dedicated to "Technology and Social Media." Along with my need to expand my disabilities inclusion knowledge to assist the Disabilities Coordinator, there were more sessions to attend than my schedule allowed!

One social media session brought together an impressive panel of experts, including the co-founder of Facebook, co-founder of Twitter, Craig of Craigslist and other industry experts. However, my favorite session was a small session about using social media to collaborate — from individuals to movements — featuring Joe Solomon of 350.org. The smaller group setting allowed us to share practical knowledge, tips and troubleshooting advice from a broad range of perspectives. The high level of participation enabled me to bring home information directly relevant to my work.



*Lindsay Snyder, Massachusetts Service Alliance;
Shannon Ramsey; and Katie Bellers, Missouri
Community Service Commission (left to right)*

I also enjoyed the peer networking session for state service commission staff because I found that I do have counterparts in other states! We shared challenges, tips and a sympathetic ear. We also shared a lack of sleep since the session was at 7 a.m.

This was also my first time in New York City. I admit I was a little apprehensive at first, but I am so glad I got to experience the city. I was amazed at the sheer number of people and taxis, the apparent lack of fear by bicyclists and pedestrians, the variety of activity offerings, the number of food options, the prices of everything, the lack of green grass or trees and the height of the buildings. There wasn't much time for

sight-seeing, but I did manage to visit Central Park, take the subway to Brooklyn and see the Statue of Liberty from the Staten Island Ferry. Although I spent time with my traveling companions, Lanny Taulbee and Oyo Fummilayo, I also met new friends and reacquainted with friends I met at the disabilities inclusion training I attended last December in Albuquerque.



*Taxis were everywhere in NYC.
Photo by Shannon Ramsey.*



*NYC skyline at sunset from the Staten Island Ferry.
Photo by Shannon Ramsey.*

Oyo Fummilayo, KADIAC member

New York City... lights, glitter, glamour, and glitz make up the heartbeat of the pulsating city! The City called my name, fascinating me, making me feel full of life and energy! New York City moves at the speed of light, and keeping up with its pace can sometimes be extremely difficult. The city lives and breathes 25 hours a day 8 days a week; and I loved every minute of those days!



Oyo Fummilayo (center) at the pre-conference workshop. Photo by Shannon Ramsey.

However, what I most appreciated about the visit to New York became the Conference session on how to make your way around the city with the “First Timers’ Session – Navigating the National Conference on Volunteering and Service, Navigating NYC.” This session paired participants with each other through personal conference interests --- choices of workshops, forums; and what each participant was interested in taking with them when they left the conference. This session became a major networking forum as a place to meet new national contacts.

Along with these new collaborative partnerships, the session focused on

how to navigate New York City on foot, on the subway, in taxis and other modes of transportation. While one would think that traveling in New York is just like traveling in Kentucky, it is not, and etiquette lessons are never a waste of time. For example, who would guess that New Yorkers consider talking on your cell phone while on the subway, or in a taxi rude or obnoxious and dangerous. This behavior, according to our session leaders, marks you as a tourist and easy prey. No matter how great New York City seemed to be, nothing can take the place of seeing green hills, trees, and pastures of Kentucky Bluegrass soil. In Kentucky, the grass is really bluer on our side of the fence.



New York City shoreline from the Staten Island Ferry. Photo by Oyo Fummilayo.

Download a full copy of the August 2010 edition of The Heart Line newsletter at <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/newsletter>.