

January 2009 Edition, The Heart Line

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](#).

2008 Governor's Volunteer Awards



Nearly everyone knows at least one of those extraordinary people who give selflessly of themselves to help improve the lives of others. These volunteers perform good deeds largely unnoticed and wholly without expectation of recognition or compensation.

To honor these individuals, the KCCVS is accepting nominations for the Governor's Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service. Nominations now are being accepted for the annual awards, which have recognized and celebrated the contributions of Kentucky volunteers for more than a decade.

KCCVS Executive Director Eileen Cackowski said volunteers are an integral part of their communities.

"During these difficult economic times, volunteers are more important than ever," Cackowski said. "These awards are our way of saying 'thank you' to some of our greatest unsung heroes and role models while we promote Kentucky's volunteer spirit."

Award nominations may be submitted through **Wednesday, Feb. 18**.

KCCVS will host a special ceremony in May to publicly honor the winners and other Kentuckians who have given back to their communities through volunteering.

To learn more and download the nomination form, go to the [Governor's Volunteer Awards](#) Web page.

Make A Difference Day 2008 Results



Seventy-one tons of food was collected and distributed to local food pantries and emergency feeding centers - enough food to feed 283,880 Kentuckians (8 oz-serving). If all 283,880 Kentuckians were standing in line for their serving of food, that line would be more than 100 miles long!

With the current economy, many people need help feeding their families, and food banks are low on donations. The Make A Difference Day food drive helps so many people, even with a majority of participating schools and organizations located in some of the poorest counties in Kentucky. Many participating food banks rely on the infusion of food

from the annual Make A Difference Day food drive collection to help them sustain their clients through the winter.

The KCCVS held two food drive competitions – one involving our Kentucky AmeriCorps programs and another among Cabinet for Health and Family Services' community-based service regions. Our AmeriCorps programs also participated in various service projects in their areas.

Not only will the winning program and region earn bragging rights for a year, but they will receive the special Make A Difference Day Traveling Award, which remains with the winner for one year and travels to reside with each consecutive winner. If a program or region wins the award three consecutive years, it is theirs to keep. The award is presented in the spring at the annual [Governor's Awards for Outstanding Volunteer Service](#).

The region award will go to **Eastern Mountain** – it is their first year to win. The AmeriCorps program award will be issued to **MSU Corps** for their first year winning effort, but due to the amazing effort, the KCCVS will also award The Learning Corps for their third successful year.

To learn even more, including a breakdown of collections, information on other service projects, pictures, etc., go to the [Make A Difference Day](#) Web page.

Commissioner Spotlight: Bob Jackson



Robert (Bob) Jackson, of Murray, brings a lot of experience to the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service. Jackson is currently the associate vice president of Development and Governmental Relations at Murray State University. Prior to working at the university, Jackson served in the Kentucky Senate from 1997 to 2004, and he served as the Senate Minority Whip from 2002 to 2004. His vast professional experience also includes investment banking and financial advisory services.

Jackson's educational experience is equally broad. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in finance from Murray State University and a Master of Arts degree in higher education administration from Antioch University in Ohio. He has completed doctoral courses at the University of Leicester in the United Kingdom and is currently a doctoral student at Western Kentucky University.

Jackson was appointed to the commission in 2008.

"I am very appreciative to Gov. Beshear for this appointment," Jackson said. "And I'm extremely proud to serve in this role to advance community service and volunteerism in Kentucky."

Jackson and his wife of 23 years, Karen, have two children. Both children attend Murray High School; Nolan is a senior and Mariel is a freshman. The family belongs to Murray First United Methodist Church and they enjoy traveling both in the U.S. and abroad.

He just finished Cormac McCarthy's novel "The Road," which he says is a great book and will be a great movie. Jackson is currently reading Vice President Joe Biden's autobiography, "Promises to Keep."

Jackson grew up with five siblings and he credits his parents as his greatest life influences. "They taught me to always give back more than you take, and to never forget where you came from."

He wants to leave a legacy of being a great father, husband, elected official and leader. It sure sounds like he is on his way! The KCCVS is honored to have Jackson serve on the commission and we look forward to what his experience brings to the table.

Family Volunteer Day

Family Volunteer Day, a day of service held on the Saturday before Thanksgiving, is designed to demonstrate the power of families who choose to volunteer together to support the communities in which they live and serve. Volunteering as a family provides quality time for busy families, strengthens communication and bonds, and positively impacts local communities across the nation.

The KCCVS and the SUCCESS Corps, one of our AmeriCorps programs, participated in the 2008 observation.

KCCVS Participation



On Family Volunteer Day, volunteers from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services came together to help brighten the holidays for local seniors. The gifts that were collected during the week prior were wrapped, and greeting cards were decorated. Nine volunteers braved the chilly temperatures to assemble and wrap approximately 50 gifts – ensuring that each senior receiving home care services through the

Frankfort Adult Activity Center would receive something for the holiday. The KCCVS staff would like to thank all the cabinet staff who donated items and helped wrap the gifts.

SUCCESS Corps Participation

All around the state, AmeriCorps members supported Family Volunteer Day. One statewide corps, SUCCESS Corps participated in three notable projects. First-year member Kim Singleton who serves with the Beacon Youth Service Center in Boyle County volunteered with her son, MarConey, 15, for six hours each. Together, they raked leaves for an ill and elderly neighbor, and wrapped Christmas presents for a

friend who is ill with cancer. "I want my son to learn that that's what life is all about – helping people. You gotta give people a hand up."

Singleton's commitment to service was mirrored by others in SUCCESS Corps, including first-year member Kayla McDowell. McDowell serves with Abraham Lincoln Elementary School Family Resource Center in LaRue County. Together, she and her family made crafts for residents at an assisted living facility. The gifts were distributed with song at the facility on Sunday, Nov. 30.



Finally, Lori Thompson, a second-year member who serves at Helping Hands Family Resource Center in Lewis County recruited 10 volunteers for the special day. She, her supervisor Lisette Clark, and her family and friends delivered 10 Thanksgiving boxes to feed local families on the holiday.

Learn more about [National Family Volunteer Day](#).

Articles submitted by Melissa Newton, KCCVS Training Officer and Angela Baldrige, SUCCESS Corps Program Director

Special Friends Mentoring Program: Saving the Starfish



January is National Mentoring Month, and in honor of this observance, the KCCVS is pleased to let our readers know about the Special Friends Mentoring Program in Frankfort, founded by past president (2006-07) of Optimist International and KCCVS Commissioner Ronnie Dunn.

If you could be assured that spending one hour a week with a child would provide that child with hope and a positive vision of the future, would you do it? Many Frankfort citizens—approximately 30—have already made this choice and are enjoying a mentoring relationship with a student in one of the public schools.

The Special Friends Mentoring Program, sponsored by the Frankfort Optimist Club, has matched hundreds of volunteer mentors with at-risk students since I founded the program in 1996. A recent survey revealed that there are more than 450 students in the Frankfort Independent and Franklin County Public Schools whose lives would be enhanced with the assistance of a mentor.

What is required to be a mentor? A commitment to spend one hour a week with the student at school, usually around the child's lunch period, and the ability to connect, listen, and encourage. Each volunteer completes an Interest Survey and a Volunteer Criminal Records Check by the Administrative Office of the Courts. Parental permission is obtained, and training is provided.

There is a great deal of flexibility in the Special Friends Mentoring Program. Realizing the busy lives of today's volunteers, if there is a conflict with the regularly scheduled day to meet with the student, another day of the week can be selected. Communication with the school and the student is critical when this occurs.

Judy Zeigler, past president of the Frankfort Optimist Club, has been mentoring Kayla for two years at Second Street School. Judy says she gets as much from their relationship as Kayla does. "It makes me feel good to know I am making a difference in her life," Judy said.

Have you heard the Starfish Story? A young man was walking along a beach early one morning following a violent storm the evening before. The storm had washed thousands of starfish up on the beach, and the young man would stop from time to time during his stroll to pick up a starfish and toss it back into the ocean. An observer watched for a while and finally caught up with the young man. The observer said, "Man, you are wasting your time throwing those starfish back into the ocean. There are thousands of them, and you can't possibly make a difference." The young man responded by tossing another starfish in the ocean and saying, "I did for that one."

There are over 450 starfish (children) washed up in our community without hope and no way to dream about a bright future. The storms of life that have washed them up are abuse, neglect, drugs, alcohol, bullying in school, violence, disease, death, divorce, teen pregnancy — you name it. The Special Friends Mentoring Program needs volunteers "on the beach" to help them get back into the ocean of life. You can make a difference in their lives. All it takes is one hour a week.

Ronnie Dunn welcomes the opportunity to speak at staff meetings, club meetings, church meetings—anywhere there is love for children and people who want to help them achieve. You can reach [Ronnie](#) by e-mail or call (502) 875-5348.

[Look for mentoring opportunities in your area.](#)

[2009 Mentoring Month Proclamation \(PDF\)](#)

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