

The Heart Line: Taking the Pulse

Covering Volunteerism and Service Throughout the Commonwealth

March 2010 Edition

Welcome

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

Spring is finally here and the beautiful weather seems fitting for all the wonderful events coming up, such as the Build-A-Bed project, the Governor's Volunteer Awards ceremony and a surprise to be revealed in the April 18th edition of USA WEEKEND Magazine. Keep an eye out for ways for you, your family and your community to get involved this spring.

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.

Build-A-Bed Project

Adapted from a Build-A-Bed press release 3-3-10



The Build-A-Bed project has gained much momentum since its formation last year. The project, conceived by AmeriCorps members, delivered more than 50 beds to K-12 Kentucky students last May. This year, Build-A-Bed has announced that they will build 500 beds during a 24-hour bed-blitz on **May 8-9**. Building this many beds allows the project to have an impact in every Kentucky community. The project is slated to take place at the National Guard Hangar in Frankfort and will require the help of about 2,500 volunteers.

Since Build-A-Bed has taken on such a dramatic goal this year, AmeriCorps recently announced that this project will be the official kick-off event for AmeriCorps Week on May 8, the designated week for all 75,000 AmeriCorps members across the nation to hold community service events. This is a great honor for Build-A-Bed and our community. There are thousands of projects occurring during this week, and this local project has been selected because it is the only one of its kind.

Build-A-Bed targets a very specific and often neglected community --the working-poor. Many children in Kentucky are living in homes with not enough beds, or none at all. Charities such as the Salvation Army and Red Cross do a great job of taking care of the homeless, but those who have homes and not furniture rarely receive much focus for help. Thus, Build-A-Bed's mission is to ensure that K-12 Kentucky children are guaranteed a proper place to sleep in their home. Far too many Kentucky children have to share beds, or simply improvise one. The science of sleep, has shown us that with as little as two hours less sleep per night, children are more prone to learning challenges like attention deficit disorder. With less than eight hours of sleep, Elementary age children can lose a whole grade-level equivalent for every hour of sleep they miss. Additionally, sleep deficit contributes to diabetes, and other health concerns that affect children throughout their lifetime. Through Build-A-Bed, our community is able to address the quality of life of children now, the physical conditions of children's homes and health, and in the long-term, preventatively address economic conditions by supporting good health and education.

The Build-A-Bed project has enjoyed much success in the past two years because each child receives much more than a bed. Each recipient is given a set of sheets, a hygiene kit, books, night-light, teddy bear and a blanket or quilt. "There are lots of talks these days about reforming education, but no one addresses the fact that so many Kentucky children have to find places to sleep in their own homes," Build-A-Bed Public Relations Chairman David Bachert said. "How can a child perform well in school when they've slept for less than five hours on a lawn chair?"



Build-A-Bed's website, <http://build-a-bed.org> is central to the project's success. Anyone can suggest a child to receive a bed, sign up to volunteer, or make a secure donation. If you know of a child who may need a bed, or mattress please visit their website and refer that child. All information about children who are referred for beds is kept confidential and shared only with Build-A-Bed staff. To make this project a success, Build-A-Bed is going to need plenty of help. More than 2,500 volunteers are needed on May 8-9 to help build beds, distribute refreshments, deliver beds and help with registration. Beds will be built by

teams of four or five people working day and night in multi-hour slots. Since this is a 24-hour event, volunteers can choose the time most convenient for them. Volunteers are encouraged to participate as many hours as they choose.

To help achieve this year's goal of 500 beds, Build-A-Bed is also asking everyone in the area with extra lumber to give it to a good cause. "Lumber donations are our most needed commodity, because every mill and yard has been hit by the recession," Bachert said. "Home building and construction have declined, so our forestry friends are simply unable to make large donations to Kentucky children this year." Since Build-A-Beds are hand made exclusively out of solid lumber, any donations are critical to ensure that all 500 beds can be built.

For the health of the children, donated lumber needs to be finish grade. Any 2x4s over 1', 2x8s over 3', or 2x10s over 3' will be accepted. Build-A-Bed is also accepting #10 screws. It takes 60 screws to complete each bed. Lumber donations can be picked-up by Build-A-Bed volunteers. Call Angela Baldrige at (502) 564-4986, ext. 4037 or e-mail admin@Build-A-Bed.org to arrange a donation pick-up or drop-off.

If you are interested in additional opportunities to support Build-A-Bed, or have any questions about the project, contact David Bachert at info@Build-A-Bed.org or (502) 564-4986.

A Disney Family

Adapted from a Metro United Way press release 2-12-10



A Louisville family joined families from around the nation on a free trip to Disney World as recognition for their volunteer activities. Tom and Jennifer Parr and their three children; Elizabeth, 13; Abby, 10; and Chris, 7, participated in a celebration of family volunteerism Feb. 11 at Walt Disney World Resort. More than 100 families from all 50 states, Puerto Rico and Canada were brought to the Epcot theme park to recognize their exceptional volunteer efforts. It was part of the Disney Parks effort to inspire families to get involved with community volunteer projects through the "Give A Day, Get a Disney Day" program with the national HandsOn Network. Metro United Way's Volunteer Engagement Center is the local HandsOn Network affiliate.

Metro United Way nominated the Parr family for the honor. The family's volunteer service includes visiting elderly residents at local nursing homes; recruiting their extended family of 20 at Thanksgiving to help sort gifts for the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program; volunteering at a horse rescue program, and working extensively with their church, Southeast Christian, on efforts such as the annual holiday toy drive and the Easter pageant.

The family says their most memorable experiences have involved helping with Salvation Army projects during the holidays. When the family volunteered to serve as bell ringers, the children decided to bring Charlie Brown Christmas tunes to put people in the Christmas spirit to give more. "We want our children to learn about the community, and about the value of sharing and giving their time and talent," Jennifer Parr said. "It benefits us as a family. For example, our volunteering for the Salvation Army Angel Tree Program gave us the opportunity to see the great need in the community and truly appreciate what we have as a family." Elizabeth, Abby and Chris are all students at Whitefield Academy.

Kathy Saulitis, the Vice President of Youth and Family Engagement for HandsOn Network, said volunteering strengthens families. "Volunteering as a family is increasingly popular as parents see the benefits of service for their children," she said. "It teaches the values of kindness, compassion, tolerance, responsibility and good citizenship, and strengthens communication within the whole family. Service has been linked to improved school engagement; decreased antisocial behavior, violence, and alcohol or tobacco abuse; and reduced rates of teen pregnancy, class failure and school suspensions."

The "Give A Day, Get a Disney Day" program celebrates the spirit and power of families that volunteer together. One million volunteers already offered their time and resources to tackle tough community problems and received a free one-day ticket to a Disney theme park.

To learn more about local volunteer efforts in Louisville go to www.metrounitedway.org/volunteer.

Disabilities Corner

By Lanny Taulbee, KCCVS Disabilities Coordinator



No matter how experienced someone is regarding disabilities, there is always something new to learn. New statistics, new technologies and new treatments for diagnoses are always challenging us to keep up with the latest information from every aspect of human ingenuity. There are new discoveries every day in science, technology, psychology and even new ways to communicate those ideas. There is the old-fashioned handwriting, e-mailing, texting, tweeting and Skyping, all of which we can use to promote the concept of disability inclusion.

In December 2009, two staff from the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) and two Kentucky AmeriCorps Disabilities Inclusion Advisory Council (KADIAC) members attended a specialized training in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The National Service Inclusion Project (NSIP), a Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) training and technical assistance provider, presented the training as

part of its efforts to expand the concept of disability inclusion in national service and community volunteerism.

Among the participants were representatives from CNCS's AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, Learn and Serve programs, and several non-profit organizations from across the country. In order to be eligible to participate in this training, attendees had to be responsible for the management and implementation of inclusion at a volunteer agency, national service program, commission, or be responsible for addressing requests for reasonable accommodations and overseeing its implementation. Increasing the knowledge of disability inclusion and the ability to impart this knowledge to others, whether it is basic or more complex, is a critical part of a disabilities coordinator's or an inclusion manager's job.

Disability Inclusion is "the ongoing process of creating an environment that respects the dignity and value of all individuals", according to Tom Wirtz, a conference attendee and the training/disability inclusion officer for the North Dakota Department of Commerce. Many of the conference attendees have adopted Wirtz's definition considering it one of the best definitions of disability inclusion to date.

Because of the wide range of experienced and inexperienced attendees, NSIP divided this training into two levels of expertise. Level I consisted of basic training techniques and activities that targeted national service and volunteer inclusion managers with little or no experience conducting disability inclusion trainings. Level II consisted of advanced inclusion training activities that targeted more experienced inclusion managers who were graduates of past NSIP Training-of-Trainers workshops or similar learning experiences. It also included those who already possess a basic understanding of disability concepts, or those who have had previous experience in responding to requests for basic technical assistance regarding disability inclusion.

The training encompassed many old and new ideas for those of us in positions to conduct presentations to groups promoting the inclusion of people with disabilities. Kentucky's four attendees now have a wider range of tools, techniques and strategies to draw on when conducting presentations. Among the topics addressed were inclusive recruitment and outreach, position descriptions, legal requirements, volunteer management and retention and work incentives for government benefits.

With so many programs available that provide necessary human services, and thousands, if not millions, of assistive devices available, the only thing remaining to be fully inclusive of people with disabilities is to make everyone aware of the concept of inclusion. We simply need to change our attitudes toward interacting with people with disabilities and realize that even the individual with the most severe disability can be an asset to society rather than a burden. This training is the beginning of that change. Remember, inclusion is an attitude, so keep it positive.

Governor's Volunteer Awards Update

By Shannon Ramsey, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist

Wow, there were some wonderful nominations this year and judging was as heated as ever! However, the judging committees have made their final determinations for the 2009 Governor's Volunteer Awards. Nominators of the winners are being notified by phone. All other nominators will be notified by mail in April. Thank you to everyone who took the time to write a nomination, and thank you to those who take their time to volunteer!

“Volunteerism is the voice of the people put into action. These actions shape and mold the present into a future of which we can all be proud.”

- Helen Dyer

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

Website: www.volunteerKY.ky.gov

