

The Heart Line: Taking the Pulse

Covering Volunteerism and Service Throughout the Commonwealth

November 2010 Edition

Welcome

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

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. We hope you will find time between bites of leftover turkey to read about an upcoming training opportunity, an upcoming national day of service, a commissioner spotlight and two community organization spotlights.

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.



Training Opportunity in Central Kentucky



The Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service is hosting a training, Making the Most of Your Volunteer Program, on **Tuesday, Dec. 14** in Elizabethtown.

Join Gary Kosman, CEO of America Learns, as he provides tools and strategies to evaluate and improve your volunteer or AmeriCorps program.

The event is **free**, and includes lunch, but you **must register** by Friday, Dec. 10. Space is limited, so don't delay!

For more information and to register, go to <http://makingthemost.eventbrite.com/>.

Results from Make A Difference Day 2010 Food Drive



Food collected at Austin Tracy Elementary in Barren County, part of the ATEAM AmeriCorps program collection.

Kentucky's Make A Difference Day 2010 Food Drive yielded **85.61 tons of food** - collected and distributed to local food banks.

Go to <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvskccvs/madd2010> to learn who won the competitions, see collection breakdowns and check out submitted photos.

Dates

Dec. 1 - World AIDS Day
Dec. 2 - Hanukkah
Dec. 5 - International Volunteer Day
Dec. 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
Dec. 22 - Winter Solstice

Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve
Dec. 25 - Christmas Day
Dec. 26 - Kwanza begins
Dec. 31 - New Year's Eve

King Day of Service 2011

The King Day of Service is a way to transform Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life and teachings into community service that helps solve social problems. On Jan. 17, 2011, Americans of every age and background celebrate Dr. King through service projects that strengthen communities, empower individuals and bridge barriers. The Corporation for National and Community Service produced a set of tools and resources to help plan projects or expand an existing idea to achieve lasting impact. Find those and other MLK Day planning resources at <http://mlkday.gov/>.



The KCCVS encourages everyone to participate in a local project on the 2011 King Day of Service. The best way to allow participation is to register your project on the MLK Day website, <http://mlkday.gov/>, so that those interested can find out how to get involved.

Learn more about the meaning of MLK Day at <http://www.thekingcenter.org/KingHoliday/>.

Commissioner Spotlight on Melissa Benton

By Shannon Ramsey, KCCVS Media and Publications Specialist



Governor Steve Beshear appointed Melissa Benton to the Kentucky Commission on Community Volunteerism and Service (KCCVS) in 2009. A longtime supporter of the KCCVS and AmeriCorps in Kentucky, she made a seamless transition to the role of commissioner. Not waiting to get her feet wet, Melissa jumped right in and is now as a member of the Program Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee and chairwoman of the Governor's Volunteer Awards Committee.

Melissa is a supportive housing planning specialist in the Specialized Housing Resources Department of the Kentucky Housing Corporation (KHC). Her department administers specialized housing programs that serve no- to low-income and hardest-to-serve Kentuckians. She also coordinates and oversees the administration and implementation of policies and procedures of the Kentucky Interagency Council on Homelessness (KICH), whose mission is to coordinate and influence policy across Kentucky to end homelessness. Melissa also works with the Continuum of Care, a local or regional system for helping people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, by providing housing and other appropriate services.

A self-professed "Tar Heel at heart," Melissa grew up in Smithfield and Raleigh, North Carolina. Her family moved to Kentucky in 1993, and soon after that, she learned about a new national service program called AmeriCorps. She joined, became a member of the first class of AmeriCorps in 1994 and served two consecutive years in the Getting Things Done for the Homeless program. She was placed at Transitions, Inc. where she assisted individuals in residential drug/alcohol treatment programs.



Melissa (on the left) with fellow AmeriCorps members

After completing her AmeriCorps service requirements, Melissa joined the program staff and spent the next five years there, advancing from a member coordinator to program director. Before landing at KHC, she also worked with the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice. All during her employment, she has been and continues to be an advocate for the AmeriCorps program.

Melissa graduated from Kentucky State University and was able to use her education awards earned from her AmeriCorps service to help pay off student loans.

In addition to her full-time job and her role as a commissioner, she volunteers with the American Red Cross in Frankfort. She volunteers specifically with the Armed Forces Emergency Services team which links members of the U.S. Armed Forces with their families during a crisis.

Melissa likes to take walks, spend time outdoors and travel.

"You may walk around the same block in your neighborhood countless times, but each time there is something new to notice -- if you are looking," she said.

Surviving challenges in life left her with a desire to be a positive influence in the lives of others. Melissa also believes in perseverance, a lesson her AmeriCorps service only helped her grasp more fully.

"The only thing holding you back is your own self" she said. "We are all dealt challenges throughout our lives. We must persevere, as the AmeriCorps pledge states, through all those challenges."

A longtime goal for Melissa was to become a KCCVS Commissioner, and when she was appointed, it wasn't clear who was more excited – Melissa or the Commission!

"I want to continue to be a contributing Commissioner to and for KCCVS, current and future AmeriCorps members, to the thousands of Kentuckians who need the services of our programs, and to assist with solidifying volunteerism in Kentucky," she said.

We are confident that Melissa will continue to be one of the biggest advocates for AmeriCorps in Kentucky, and we value her experience and enthusiasm.

Community Organization Spotlight: Never Too Old to Dream



Janice dreamed of meeting an Elvis impersonator. Barbara wanted to go to Dairy Queen for a banana split. Mary wished for a new Bible. Elmer just wanted to see a good movie in a theater. And Sylvia wished for a trip to Belterra Casino in Indiana.

For the past three years, Second Wind Dreams has been helping make such wishes come true for many of the nearly 60 residents at Homestead Nursing Center in New Castle, Ky. The 100th dream was recently granted.

Maryellen Garrison, the Henry County Cooperative Extension agent for Family and Consumer Sciences, learned about Second Wind Dreams from the program's founder, P.K. Belville, at a professional development meeting and decided it would make a good project for the Henry County Extension Council.

"Basically, it's run like a lot of the Dream Factory programs for kids, but it is designed to provide dreams for individuals who live in nursing homes," Garrison said. "We're kind of the dream weavers."

With help from Homestead Administrator Don Dalger and Activities Director Crystal Aldridge, the Second Wind Dreams Committee compiles a resident wish list and finds local sponsors willing to help make the dreams come true.

"They're not impossible dreams," said Garrison. "Somebody wanted to go to Cracker Barrel; one lady wanted to go to the Henry County Fair; two ladies wanted haircuts and perms; somebody wanted to go to Wal-Mart; somebody wanted a new pair of blue jeans; and somebody wanted White Castle's."

When the Christian Church in Eminence granted Barbara's wish for a banana split from the local Dairy Queen, they took Barbara and 11 of her Homestead friends there for ice cream. Dairy Queen's manager heard what was happening and picked up the tab.

And when 83-year-old Sylvia and eight other residents were taken to Belterra Casino, she hit one of the penny slot machines, winning \$240.



Several residents accompanied Second Wind dream winner Rosa on a trip to the county fair where the plan was to attend a talent show -- until some of them heard there was wrestling at the other end of the midway. "Three of them (including Rosa) went to the wrestling ... and when it came time to go home, we couldn't get the three at the wrestling match to leave," Garrison said. "One of the women who went to the wrestling said she just loved to see those men in tights."

The philosophy of the program is that you are never too old to dream, and that by granting these dreams, the resident, the staff and the community as a whole benefits. It highlights the positive aspects of dreaming and encourages the community to become involved in the lives of seniors by making their dreams come true. A lack of motivation or dreams has both physical and mental consequences. By fulfilling dreams, residents are stimulated both physically and mentally by giving them the special attention they deserve. As each dream

unfolds, members of the local community experience the perspective of older adults and gain a greater appreciation for their stage of life. Long after the dream has been fulfilled, the effects linger, giving all involved a "Second Wind."

As baby boomers age, the number of individuals who will spend their final years in nursing home facilities will increase. Not many of us want to think that either we or our family members will end our lives in an institution. The Henry County Second Wind committee instituted this program because they recognized that if we or our loved ones do, indeed, need nursing home care -- we want it to be in facility that has a "Second Wind Dreams" program in place.

To learn more about Second Wind Dreams®, go to the national website at <http://www.secondwind.org/>.

Visit the Henry County Cooperative Extension and see their 100 dream list at <http://www.henrycountyky.com/extension/secondwind.htm>.

Community Organization Spotlight: Bless the Children Day

By Kevin Russell, KCCVS Commissioner

Bless the Children Day is an idea that came from Pastor Aubrey Jackson of Heritage International Christian Church in Radcliff, Ky. Instead of traditional Halloween celebrations, we wanted to come up with a new way for children in the community to have fun.

The members of Heritage International Christian Church proclaimed Oct. 31 "Bless the Children Day" as an alternative to Halloween and threw a free party for the children in the community. It began nine years ago, when a declaration from the mayor proclaiming the day was read to the congregation.



Bless the Children Day provided a safe and fun alternative to trick or treating for the children in Hardin and surrounding counties. Bless the Children Day can be celebrated in any positive way that an individual, a family or group may choose. It can be a time to honor our children, speak positive things to them, and share our love with them. Bless the Children Day can have a positive impact in the lives of all types of children

Heritage's event was started by using Woodland Elementary in Radcliff as a gathering point for the neighborhood youth to come have fun, eat hot dogs, drink sodas, play games and, of course, get plenty of candy. The members of the church donated almost 5,000 bags of candy for the event, and community partners even got involved, putting up a motorcycle display and offering limo rides.

Bless the Children Day has expanded over the years by adding clowns, more games, prizes, face painting and inflatable bouncers. Today the event has grown to include a second location at New Highland Elementary in Elizabethtown. This year, more than 3,800 children from four counties, ranging in ages from 10 months to 16 years, participated in Bless the Children Day. We are spreading the word about how much we love our children throughout Kentucky and the world. Our hope is that this event will continue to grow, locally and across Kentucky.

Learn more about Heritage International Christian Church at <http://www.heritageky.org/>.

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.”

-- John F. Kennedy

Download the print version of this newsletter and past editions on the KCCVS Newsletter page on our website, <http://chfs.ky.gov/dfrcvs/kccvs/newsletter>.

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