

AmeriCorps Quarterly

April 13, 2009

Volume 2 | Issue 6 | Free



VISTA Kendra Knickel proudly displays a supply drive poster for MLKD. 233 Items were collected and donated to women and children in need.



AmeriCorps members staff info booth for MLKD, Helena.



Elementary children learn Yoga poses for MLKD activity, Lake County.



VISTA Amber Murrey-Ndewa and site supervisor accept grant from Ronald McDonald Charities Foundation. Grant money will be used to send guardians ad litem to the 20th Annual McQuire Memorial Conference on Family Violence.

SERVICE FROM OUR PERSPECTIVES

Finding Meaning in What We Do

2. Editorial

Amber Murrey-Ndewa, AmeriCorps Quarterly Editor

3. Room To Grow

Adjusting to Sacrifice During a Year of Service To America, Everet Yi

3. So Rewarding it Almost Feels Selfish

One Fulfilling Experience of Service, Lindsay Dietz

3. The Wiki

A Wealth of Resources for AmeriCorps Members

4. Martin Luther King Jr. Day Service Projects

A Look at Successful Projects Around the State

7. Pearls of Wisdom

A Reminder of Compassion and Humanity in the Northern Rockies, Zoe Zulakis

8. The Importance of Service

Making a Difference Combines With Intellectual Growth, Julia Guarino

8. I Have A Voice

One Woman Speaks of Finding Strength After Sexual Harassment, Elizabeth Harrell

9. Global Youth Service Day Projects

Check Out Upcoming Service Projects Taking Place Around the State

Registration is open:

"Making it Work in Indian Country"
**The BIA Rocky Mountain Regional Native American
Economic Summit**

The summit will provide an opportunity for conference attendees to learn from national and local economic development policy speakers; offer an environment to develop business partnerships and contracting opportunities with public and private sectors, as well as supply best methods of financing techniques.

Location: Montana State University, Billings- Student Union

Dates: August 12-13, 2009

Register: www.nadc-nabn.org, or 406-259-3804

**HTTP://
ACMAC.WIKIDOT.COM**

AmeriCorps Member Advisory Council (ACMAC)

ACMAC is a representative council of AmeriCorps State and AmeriCorps* VISTA members from across Montana. We work to encourage networking between all AmeriCorps programs in Montana through action, communication, and representation, in an effort to enhance the national service experience in our state.

If you apply to join ACMAC, you will be asked to pick a committee to serve on. These committees act to address specific aspects of the ACMAC mission. Aside from the advising committee that consists of the co-coordinators, there are two committees. They are Public Relations and Ambassador. Visit our website for more info on how to become involved.

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AmeriCorps Quarterly EDITORIAL

The President of the United States is a former community organizer. His early work with a Catholic organization awarded him some flack from members of the GOP during his campaign—recalls his opponents Vice Presidential candidate, “Being a Governor is kind of like being a community organizer, only you have real responsibilities.” Indeed, when I opted to change my own career route—going from hotel receptionist to AmeriCorps* VISTA for CASA-CAN Children’s Advocate Network—my stepfather’s words were, “When are you going to get a real job?” Despite these sentiments, the United States is making its largest commitment to civilian service since the New Deal. The House passed a bill that increases the number of federally funded service positions to 250,000.

This edition of the AmeriCorps Quarterly asked AmeriCorps members to consider their commitment to service and how their commitment may have increased, expanded or changed throughout their months of service. Although personal, the responses of members showcase varying incentives for commitment to service and outline dilemmas encountered during the process of serving America. These incentives are essential to understanding the position of paid volunteerism in America. In the face of a deep recession, the government alone cannot solve every social problem that faces a large number of Americans and when job possibilities for our nation’s young people—especially those graduating college and entering the workforce for the first time—are in short supply, we

need to consider the ramifications of potentially under-experienced, well-intentioned young people setting out to ‘do good’ in communities around the country.

An understanding of the history of volunteerism in the West shows that this type of community effort arose from religious sentiments and shifted in the 19th century as a leisure activity of the wealthy combined with a sense of obligation to help the poor. Today, studies report that the majority of American citizens involve themselves in some form of volunteerism at least once a year. As AmeriCorps members, we need to consider some important questions as we embark on our period of volunteerism.

How can we ensure that the impacts of our programs on recipient communities are necessary and beneficial? How can our programs be made more effective? Are volunteer activities the domain of the wealthy and how can this social relationship be mutually beneficial? You may wish to advance your skills, enhance your CV, have an adventure in Montana, or simply make yourself feel better by doing something ‘good’—what does this mean in consideration of the needs of your service community?

Young people are a powerful resource for community building; they often approach their service with high levels of passion and commitment. It is our responsibility to ensure that volunteering is valued, not simply due to a historic assumption that all volunteering is good, but because of the real difference volunteers are capable of making in the world.

Amber Murrey-Ndewa
CASA-CAN Children’s Advocate
Network
Great Falls, Montana



April is
Sexual Assault Awareness Month

Media Images and the Impact on Women
The rates of violence against women are alarming. The media often depicts women and girls as victims of violence; often the violence is sexualized. Because we see these images with regularity and without objection, they become normal.

Join us for a Special Film Presentation
"Killing Us Softly" - Advertising's Image of Women
Livingston Library Wednesday, April 29 6:00 p.m.

Tri-County Network Against Domestic & Sexual Violence
24 Hour Crisis Line: 406-222-8154

Room To Grow

Adjusting to Sacrifice During a Year of Service to America

When I learned that there were restrictions regarding political participation for AmeriCorps* VISTA members, my soul cried out in anguish. I won't deny it. I got misty eyed knowing that I would be losing a part of my life for a year. Fortunately, my commitment to service has filled the empty void left behind from political inactivity.

I discovered that the best way to dull the pain was to fully engage myself in service activity. Of course, I did go to a political meeting when my VISTA service just started (hopefully Michelle isn't reading this). However, I felt that if I couldn't participate fully, I might as well refrain from going to meetings or associating myself with anything political. If I couldn't get the whole meat pie, I wouldn't settle for just a slice. The slice would only tempt me more and eventually I would succumb to its delicious aroma.

Instead, I settled for a pumpkin pie. I joined the AmeriCorps Member Advisory Council and the Miles Community College Multicultural Club. I began to fully immerse myself in service orientated activities. I liked it.



Photo Courtesy of Eliza Singer

Initially, I began to focus more on service to distract myself from politics, but now service has become a large part of who I am. It's something I want to do; it's something that I enjoy. Who says that pumpkin pie isn't just as good as meat pie?

When I started VISTA service, my plan was to do only one year. Just one year and then I could go back to the love of my life: politics; however, now I plan to do another year of service. It would mean another year abstaining from politics. Who could have imagined?

Furthermore, my first year of VISTA service feels similar to my freshman year in college. During my freshman year, I was in the process of getting my sea legs; trying to adapt to a whole new environment. The first year of college was marked by tentativeness, but it was

also a harbinger of good years to come.

I feel that I haven't reached my potential when it comes to my VISTA service. By staying for another year, I'll let the embers grow into a full fledged campfire. Who knows? Perhaps, it'll turn into a bonfire with more time.

I know that some people are ambivalent when it comes to doing another year of AmeriCorps service. After all, we're eager to go back to our former lives. But why not give that flicker of flame a chance to grow into something more? I heard that food cooks better when you have a hot and bigger fire, too.

By Everet Yi
CNADA-Custer Network Against
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault
Miles City, Montana

The Wiki

The members of ACMAC would like to invite everyone to visit <http://acmac.wikidot.com/>.

This website ("the wiki") contains a wealth of resources. To help you prepare for Global Youth Service Day (and all other service days), the wiki has a special section dedicated to each service day, showcasing projects occurring around the state.

You will also find a service day survival guide, and links to websites associated with each service day.

The wiki is a great resource to locate information regarding small- and large-scale fundraising events for your project. There are lists of businesses offering discounts for AmeriCorps members. A page is devoted to highlighting towns and sites across Montana.

Go check it out!

So Rewarding it Almost Feels Selfish

One Fulfilling Experience of Service

I began my service as a VISTA in July of 2008. I did some volunteer work in my community before moving Montana, and I felt the need to dedicate more of my time to serving others, which ultimately led to my joining AmeriCorps. My dedication to service has deepened more thoroughly than I ever expected, and I find the work to be more rewarding than anything else I have done. I've always considered serving others in any capacity to be an unselfish act. In many ways it is: often it is emotionally draining, stressful, and usually it doesn't pay well. However, in the past eight months I have enjoyed serving this community so much it almost feels selfish to do so. I find myself volunteering for other agencies, and taking every possible opportunity to join in efforts to make this a better community. Perhaps I have just found my niche in this world.

I am repeatedly inspired by the individuals I meet while engaging in

community service. Their dedication to the community continues to amaze me. Days that find me exhausted and somewhat pessimistic about the world tend to send these individuals in my direction and I end up seeing the glass as half full again.

Overall, my time in AmeriCorps thus far has shown me how difficult life can be for some, but also that there are so many people out there working to help make this world a better place. I've also realized that I love being a part of that effort, however I choose to contribute. I hope that service days, like Global Youth Service Day, may help to inspire others to commit to service in the long-term, even if they give a couple of hours a week. Our country and our world need it now more than ever.

Lindsay Dietz
SAFE Harbor
Flathead Indian Reservation, Montana



Mark your
Calendars!

AmeriCorps Week is a recruitment and recognition event designed to bring more Americans into service, salute AmeriCorps members and alums for their powerful impact, and thank the community partners who make AmeriCorps possible. Start Planning: May 9 - 16.

Service Projects

Martin Luther King Jr. Day
January 19th, 2009



VISTA Kendra Knickel, Supply Drive, Helena



African Drumming Session, Lake County



Lt Governor Speaks, Helena



Elementary Children Learn Yoga, Lake County

Billings. MSU held a bell ringing ceremony and the Campus Corp and myself participated by reading Martin Luther King's famous quotes. - Patricia Ross, VISTA

Billings. Yellowstone RSVP and St. Vincent Healthcare FGP partnered with the Billings Parmlly Library for our MLK Day event. On Saturday, January 17th, 5 RSVP volunteers and 5 FGP volunteers met in the children's dept. at the library to have a story time with the children, reading books that are geared toward MLK day. The library recently received a "We the People" grant. With grant funds, they purchased a set of books that fit in perfectly with the event. One of the books is "Martin's Big Words", a children's book about Martin Luther King's life. The story time ran from 11:30am - 12:30pm with an excellent turn out. Volunteers read to the children one-on-one and in small groups. -Barbara Brady, St. Vincent Healthcare FGP

Bozeman. RSVP Handcrafters, a group of 45 women meet regularly to sew, crochet, and knit handmade items to be sold and donated in our local community. Two-hundred dollars of the proceeds raised from the sale of handcrafter products were used to purchase much needed items for homebound, low-income seniors. Teams of RSVP volunteers purchased necessities that these individual personal budgets would never allow. The items were then hand delivered by the RSVP teams. The rewards for the visited seniors and the RSVP volunteers produced a sense of fulfillment, pride, and dignity that is immeasurable. -Kelly Ziebarth, Southwest Montana RSVP Director

Butte. There was a speech at the courthouse at 5:30pm sponsored by many area businesses and a key-note speaker from Billings who recited the famous "I have a Dream" speech by Martin

Luther King, Jr. and then there was a dinner at St. John's Church. -Anita Pollock, VISTA with Safe Space, Inc.

Crow. Organized a coat drive at the multi-purpose building in Crow Agency. Volunteers collected donated coats that were in good condition for all ages. -Amica Morning with MM\$.

Great Falls. Our MLK Project was Books 4 Cameroon & G.F. Reach Out and Read - a statewide book drive to benefit the Center for Communal Skills Building (CCSB) in Yaoundé, Cameroon as well as Great Falls Clinic Reach Out and Read Program. CCSB provides free educational opportunities - resume writing courses, HIV/AIDS information, computer software training, etc. - and has a free community library. The Reach Out and Read Program promotes reading to children in low income families. More info on CCSB: www.ccsbcameroon.com. Hundreds of books were collected. -Amber Murrey-Ndewa, VISTA with CASA-CAN Children's Advocate Network, Great Falls, MT. Steve Cape, Georgiana Horn, Megan Powell and Ali Smith with MM\$ co-held the book drive.

Glendive. Helping to fight hunger, on Thursday and Friday, volunteers bagged and delivered approximately 630 pounds of food to 42 low income seniors through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Volunteers set up preparations for the AARP Tax Counseling Program for the Elderly which provides tax assistance for low income seniors in our area. -Patty Atwell, Dawson/Wibaux RSVP Director

Great Falls. Cascade County Foster Grandparent Program teamed up with the Great Falls Rescue Mission to help serve meals to the homeless and sort through a variety of

donations. 60 clients were served meals. —Tina Lopez, Custer County FGP Program Director

Great Falls. North Central MT RSVP facilitated three main projects for MLK Day. The first project was the Iraqi Children Project, items are shipped to US Soldiers to be given to Iraqi children. This was requested by a military member stationed in Iraq. 558 items were collected. Volunteers recycled over 1,000 lbs of material on MLK Day, 14 families were referred to local organizations to participate in service on MLK Day. —Audrey Finlayson, North Central MT RSVP

Helena. Helena had a morning of various service projects followed by an afternoon diversity fair. Lisa Korby, Rebecca Harbage and Kendra Nickel co-coordinated a supply drive to benefit the women and children in need in Helena. Donations went to the Florence Crittenton Home, the YWCA, and the Friendship Center. The drive was very successful, with 233 total items donated. —Kendra Nickel, VISTA with Montana Supreme Court Office of Court Administrator

Helena. A grand celebration of service was held at the Capitol Rotunda to celebrate Reverend King's legacy and teachings. The event was organized by the Governor's Commission on Community Service and the Corporation for National & Community Service, including a planning committee made up of partners from AmeriCorps national service programs, Carroll College and the Helena School District. The event was kicked off with a welcoming by Lieutenant Governor John Bohlinger, followed by remarks Commissioner Bob Harris. Throughout the afternoon there were a variety of performances including the Same Difference Inclusive Theatre Company, Butte RSVP Silver Bow Stompers, Northern Cheyenne Tribal dance, Irish dancing, and a variety of contemporary dance by Big Sky Dance Works. There was a collection bin for household supplies and

toiletries for several nonprofits helping women and children, and also a bin to recycle old Christmas lights with S.A.V.E. Volunteers all wore Martin Luther King, Jr. t-shirts and the event had a great deal of press including newspaper, television, radio, fliers, and announcements to State employees and legislators.

Helena. Volunteers helped the Helena Humane Society clean the entire facility. In honor of MLK Day of Service, we helped organize a supply drive for women and children in need which collected 233 items. —Sara Williams, Jill Wagner, and Claire Vandewalle-VISTAs and Lisa Korby, VISTA Leader.

Helena. The Broadwater, Jefferson, and Lewis & Clark County RSVP Program (sponsored by Rocky Mountain Development Council) recruited five RSVP volunteers to help with children's activities at the Annual Diversity Fair and Martin Luther King Junior Day Celebration. Our five volunteers helped children take simple MLK-related quizzes and complete coloring pages. —Marcella Walter, Tri-County RSVP Volunteer Coordinator

Helena. The Student Advocates for Valuing the Environment (S.A.V.E.) Foundation held a 'Recycle the Holidays' event for MLK Day. We had a small event with two people representing S.A.V.E. and three volunteers recruited for the entire day. We were able to collect about a dozen strands of holiday lights, but also hand out information on S.A.V.E. and talk to people at the event about recycling electronics and keeping these materials out of our landfills. —Kim Degner, VISTA with the S.A.V.E. Foundation

Kalispell. Working with the Flathead Valley Community College AmeriCorps Campus Corps, I helped plan a Diversity Exhibit and a panel discussion to follow.



MLK Poster, Lake County



233 Items Collected For Supply Drive, Helena



AmeriCorps Members Staff Info Booth, Helena

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Lindsay Dietz, article on pg 3

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Join us at
Black Eagle Community Center
for
THE SECOND ANNUAL NIGHT OF CELEBRATION
April 17th @ 6:30

Sponsored by:



Civic awards will be presented to six community members who have shown compassion, devotion and diligence in their work with victims of sexual and domestic violence or abused and/or neglected children.

\$10 dinner. Catering by Good Eats.®

A spectacular speaker. Dr. Christine Fiore from the University of Montana, will speak on the psychology of family violence, focusing on the impact domestic violence has on children who witness the violence.

RSVP at 406.454.6738.

· CASA-CAN · Voices of Hope · Victim Witness · Center for Mental Health · Cascade County Law Clinic · Opportunities, Inc. · Malmstrom · Gateway · Great Falls Rescue Mission · Haven of Hope · YWCA · Planned Parenthood · Cascade County Sheriffs Office

Pearls of Wisdom

A Reminder of Compassion and Humanity
in the Northern Rockies



Martin Luther King Jr Day, AmeriCorps Members in Helena

There is a small shabby trailer tucked away in the closed down RV park on the south east side of Marion. A Dodge truck parks permanently next to it, its engine lays under it, shaded by its flatbed and encroaching weeds. The screen door blows open and shut in the wind, and the unmistakable smell of sewage swirls upward from the underbelly of the faded yellow home. I feel abandoned here.

A man comes to the door. It bursts open. "Oh that darn screen!!! Hello, come in come in, come in." He wears a worn and mismatched sweat suit, his skin is falling from his bones, his smile is bursting across his face, and his right hand is outstretched. "Hi I'm Chris! This is my son. Well thanks for comin'! Glad you could fit me in."

And so I learn that this little inhospitable corner of the world is home to the most loving person I will ever meet. Hanging from the ceiling in little drawstring bags are his treasures. Quartz crystals, small pearls, knickknacks which he finds beautiful and enjoys. The corners of his living room hold his guitars, relics of his past, and on his coffee table are countless bottles of poisonous medication, which will determine whether he will have a future.

We quietly assess the home while he asks us about our lives; about what we love to do; about who we love. He shows us pictures of family, and sings some of his favorite tunes. He becomes faint from the excitement but even after sitting talks himself silly. Four cracked windows, no smoke detector, no CO detector, no carpeting, only two rooms (the kitchen and the living room) which are finished, broken pipes, freezing cold floor, and a lot of dishes which are for naught because of his constant nausea. He brushes aside cancer as though it isn't an elephant in the room. As though it hasn't taken up enormous space in his life, as though it hasn't left him abandoned and broke in this naked place. And you only realize the tragic truth when you look into the eyes of his son who helps change light bulbs and laughs at his dad's jokes, but who steps outside for a cigarette, hanging

his head, knowing that his father will probably not be around long enough to feel the cold that will seep into the windows of this broken down home.

We chatter happily as our work progresses and suddenly the windows and doors are sealed, the light bulbs are shining, the detectors are beeping, and our job is done. It seems brighter, perhaps warmer. "Open your hand!" He grins at me. I open it. "Close your eyes!" I close them. I feel a cold hand on mine. And then I feel a small smooth pebble. I know what it is. But I am afraid to open my eyes. Afraid that I might cry. Afraid that I am angry for him. Angry that I can give him plastic windows but that I cannot save him. Angry that in this dreary home he will see the last of his days, and that he is giving away one of the few beautiful things that he owns. Away to me.

I open my eyes anyway. There is not a bone of anger in him. He admits to no frustration in the face of this great injustice. None of that. He is simply smiling with the anticipation of a 2-year-old. I thank him profusely, tell him that his treasure is beautiful, because it is the most beautiful gift anyone has ever given me, and I turn to leave.

"Wait!" He says. He takes Eli into one arm, and cradles me in the nook of the other, and pulls us toward him. We wrap our arms around his tall skeleton. When I look back up he looks sad but smiles. "Thank you. It was nice meeting you!" The screen door creaks and slams behind us and the unmistakable smell of sewage again composes itself. But I no longer feel abandoned here. I am accompanied, instead, by grief and anger, and in my pocket, a small pearl—a reminder that even if plastic cannot keep out the cold, maybe compassion and humanity still can.

And. I. cry.

By Zoe Zulakis
Montana Justice Foundation
Missoula, Montana

The Importance Of Service:

Making A Difference Combines
with Intellectual Growth

When I graduated from college in the spring of 2007, ready to conquer the world, I found myself facing a rather harsh reality. Despite all the deep thought and insightful writing I had done over the course of my college career, what did I, a 22-year-old with a B.A. in Medieval Literature, really know about the professional world? The answer was, clearly, nothing, and for all my idealism and eloquence I was in no way qualified for the jobs that I yearned for; they were years away down a dark and winding career path.

I settled for a position as the Registrar at a Public Charter school in an impoverished neighborhood of Washington, DC, hoping that if I felt I was making a difference, the secretarial work would feel meaningful. I soon discovered, however, that no measure of meaning could soften the reality of data entry and I began to contemplate what it was, exactly, that I felt I was missing. What would make a job feel significant? How could I satisfy my need to feel I was making a difference in my work while simultaneously growing intellectually? The answer came quickly: service work. Because I have a love for language and travel, I was immediately drawn to the idea of the Peace Corps. But was I ready to leave the country for over two years, in such an important and fascinating political moment? AmeriCorps, I discovered, offered nearly all of the benefits of Peace Corps, and I could make the difference I craved while traveling within my own country.

In my three months of service with AmeriCorps in Montana, I have learned more than I would have, I am sure, at any other position over years of work. I know that my year, despite the challenges, and despite being so far from family and friends back home, will be extremely meaningful, and will lead me on to even greater things!

By Julia Guarino
Billings Community Development
Billings, Montana



Photo Courtesy of Eliza Singer

I Have A Voice

One Woman Speaks of Finding Strength After Sexual Harassment

Sometimes in order to deal with things, and to get things off your mind you must put them on paper. The majority of this I have never told anyone and at the time I was embarrassed about the situation. I was more embarrassed that I did not stop it. How could I let anyone treat another human like this? How could I think that it was all my fault. How could I think that I brought all of it on myself, that I deserved it. How could I speak like a true victim? More so, how could I give the opportunity for this to happen to someone else?

I started working on my Masters degree in the spring of 2007. At the time I was planning on doing a thesis, but the college I attended was not equipped for the type of research that I wanted to conduct. So, I settled for a thesis in a similar field. Little did I realize at the time just what I had gotten myself into.

I began working with a professor on my thesis. This professor was fairly new to teaching, only a few years and still quite young. However, he was married and he seemed to be settled in his family and career. In fact, he obtained tenure during my time at this institution.

The working relationship began on a friendly basis. There were a few off course comments that were made occasionally, but nothing that made me terribly uneasy.

As the course of the year went on, so did the comments. Physical moves were made such as putting ice or money down my shirt or tickling me when I was not expecting it. Some of the comments were definitely not appropriate, especially between a student and a mentor.

This professor soon began a relationship with another staff member on campus. I knew of this relationship and mentioned to him that word was going around of the relationship and students making comments. I did this to let him know, I didn't realize that this would make him defensive towards me and feel as if I was the one spreading the rumors. He became cold and rude towards myself and another staff member that also knew of the relationship. He questioned me daily, "Who is talking about me what did they say?"

The comments that were once said in a playful but inappropriate sexual manor had now become rude, harsh and belittling.

When I took these issue to the department head he stated, "That is just part of his personality, you are making a

big deal out of nothing. You will find all of this funny later on." I did not and I still do not.

I took another job during the time I was working on my Master's. This did take more of my time than I had hoped and unfortunately took time from the work I was doing at the university.

When confronted by this I stated that I was doing the best that I could. He replied no you are not this is crap, what do you mean turning in crap to me. This made me feel as if all of my work and torture through out the year was in vain. This went on for several months. The final breaking point is when he stated that I didn't care about my work, that I took no pride in it, and that I cared more about my other job. It is true that I did have to spend a good bit of time away from the college by working another job. At the time financially I did not have a choice in this matter. However, I did not feel as if it was that I did not care about my work or that I did not take pride in it. I had spent many nights and many hours away from my family as well as much in the way of gas and money to do this work.

I found a way to remove myself from this particular program and still graduate. At the time my other job was teaching at night at a community college. I asked him if he would continue to work on this project with me so that "we" could publish this work as educators. He was teaching at the university, me at the CC. He told me that we were not alike as educators that we were no more alike than dogs being of the same species. Prior to this I had told him where he could put my work—i.e. a dark cavity within the human body—this was after he told me it was crap and I took no pride in it. He asked me to apologize for what I said. I refused, stating I meant every word of it. He then proceeded to degrade my parents and the way I was raised. I walked out. The remaining of my time there he avoided me at all cost, and when faced with me, refused to speak or said, "What do you want?"

I took the first job I could find as far away from him as possible, even before I had graduated. I took a position as an AmeriCorps VISTA. I knew this program would give me the opportunity to help others that were in a bad situation as well. I moved from Mississippi to Montana. I didn't realize then that he was

the one I was running from, that the way he treated me was wrong. No one deserved to be belittled the way I was or to have sexual comments made that were inappropriate.

I had to write all of this down for my own sanity but I also had to write this so that others would be aware of how this can happen so quick and how someone might not even realize that they are the victim of abuse.

I now know that there were several mistakes that I made while at this institution. The first, not reporting the touching and comments when they first happened. The second, letting anyone speak to me the way he did. The third, blaming myself for this and thinking I deserved

everything he did and said. Thinking I deserved to be sitting on the side of the road being lectured thirty miles from the college knowing the only way I was to get out of the crucifying situation was to get out and walk. The fourth, missing my graduation and lying to myself and others by making up excuses why I didn't go knowing he was the real reason. The final mistake I made was knowing there were others out there that he had done this to before, that I was not the first and would likely not be the last.

I called to get a copy of my transcripts the other day. Talking with some old friends and staff members brought into perspective all the pain and anger that I have kept bottled up inside. I had to write all of this for my own sanity but I also had to write this so that others would be aware of how this can happen so quick and how someone might not even realize that they are the victim of abuse—mental, physical and emotional. This is the first time I have actually put everything on paper. At the time I was enrolled, I was afraid of the influence to my grades, he was the professor of many of my courses. I was also afraid of the reactions of his co-workers/friends in the department. I did not want to make the experience any harder on myself than it already was. I did report this to a staff member verbally but I still refused to report it to the appropriate authorities out of fear and shame. He felt that he would place easier questions on my comprehensive finals, as if that would make things better. I know now that he no longer has control over me. He can not belittle me. He can no longer harass me. He can no longer make me feel threatened. I am free of him, I am free of his abuse. I pray no one else will ever experience the wrath of this man. I pray that someone may read this and realize that if this is happening to them, there is a way out, and it is not their fault. I am finding strength through AmeriCorps. I am finding that others are in bad situations and sometimes they just need

(Continued on page 9)

someone to help them out. They need an opportunity. Many just need a voice. A voice I did not have. I now have that voice. I have the pride and honor to tell my story and let others know that it is not OK. I have a voice.

I live through volunteer work and community service to give others a voice too. Members of my community may not be in the exact situation but everyone deserves a voice, everyone deserves a chance!

By Elizabeth Harrell
Chief Plenty Coups State Park
Pryor, Montana

Check Out The Global Youth Service Day Projects April 24 - 26



MLKD Book Drive, Browning

Arlee. Community Clothing Swap, organized and staffed by students of Arlee High School on April 25 from 10 am to 3 pm at the Arlee High School gymnasium. Everything will be free, including food and drinks as well as clothing for all sizes and seasons. Donations of clothing and volunteers are welcome now until the day of the event. Contact Tabitha Espinoza, Montana Making \$ense member at (406)207-2218 or Dori Knoll, AmeriCorps member at Arlee Schools (406)726-3216 ext. 2213.

Billings. The MSU-Billings Campus Corps team and Conservation Corps will be joining forces along with high school key clubs and environmental clubs for the Great American Clean Up! They will gather together on Saturday April 25th to clean the rim rocks in Billings, then will celebrate with a BBQ afterward. For more information, please contact jung.megan@gmail.com

Butte. Campus Corps of Montana Tech in Butte and a Montana Making \$ense

member are hosting Little Digger Day on the 21st of April. They will bring about nine hundred 1st through 6th graders from the Butte School District to the college campus for a day full of food and games. To participate in this event, please contact Heather Corcoran at 406 -496-4692. A second project is with 20 kids from the Human Resources District Council. They are organizing a fundraiser to provide care packages to soldiers deployed abroad. They will bake and sell Indian tacos on April 7 and 21. To participate in the second event, please contact Michaelynn Hawk at michaelynnh@yahoo.com

Crow Agency. MM\$ member at the Crow Agency Housing Authority, Amica Morning, and the Meth Free Crowalition, are planning a highway cleanup project with local students. They plan to clean a span of MT Hwy 90 and put up a sign to credit the youth.

Havre. MSU-Northern Campus Corps team and student volunteers will be hosting "can-struction". Student volunteers form teams which will solicit donated food in order to build the best can structure. The public will vote on which team has constructed the best sculpture out of the donated items. Items will then be donated to the food bank. For more information, contact Sue at AmeriCorps@msun.edu

Helena. Helena will be celebrating Global Youth Service Day by having a day of community service. There will be a kick-off event at Women's Park at 11:00 a.m. with food, fun, and special guest speakers. Registration will begin at 10:30. Service groups will depart for fun service activities around the community at 11:30. Service projects include painting a playground, working a recycle drive, and many more. Service teams will return at 3:00 for more fun, food, and games. Volunteers get a Global Youth Service Day t-shirt, food, the satisfaction of serving the Helena community and fun memories!

To sign up to serve, go to <http://www.helena.k12.mt.us> and click on the Global Youth Service Day link. Don't forget to tell your friends!

Kalispell. Montana Conservation Corps Youth Crew Leaders will work with local youth on opening day of Kalispell Community Gardens. Their goal is to assign plots, assist gardeners, and create stable path to wheelchair accessible plots. In addition, the group will deliver container box gardens to community

members and organizations that would benefit from having a garden plot but are unable to maintain a plot at the actual garden. There will also be demos throughout the day on how to build/use the container box gardens. Saturday, April 25th - 10am to 3pm Kalispell Community Gardens Liberty & Hawthorn Kalispell, MT, 59901 United States

Miles City. In conjunction with Global Youth Service Day and the Miles City Multicultural Club, we are having our local youth create dessert dishes that represents different cultures around the world. The dishes will be presented to the community and members will have a chance to taste the various desserts. As part of admissions we ask participants to bring one canned good that we will donate to the local food bank. Please contact Everet for more information at 253-222-4715 or email him at everet.yi@gmail.com. We welcome participants and volunteers who willing to make dishes.

Missoula. Community Gardening. On Saturday, April 25th, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. In collaboration with Garden City Harvest, the Poverello Center, and the Joseph Residence at Maclay Commons, Sentinel High School Students and AmeriCorps volunteers will participate in the GYSD at the Eaton Street Community Garden, digging the new "Garden of Eaton." Students will meet at Sentinel High School, transportation will be provided. Contact: Zoe Zulakis, Montana Justice Foundation VISTA (406) 523-3929 with any questions.

Missoula. Community Gardening. On Saturday, April 25th, 2009 from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Local Youth and AmeriCorps volunteers will participate in the GYSD at the Moon-Randolph Homestead. Volunteers will be helping to clean the chicken coup and goat shed, organize tools, work in the garden, and prepare grounds for the annual May Day Party. Bagged Lunches and Transportation will be provided. Prepare for the weather and wear something that you're not afraid to get dirty! Participants will meet at the Northside Park, on the corner of Worden Ave. At Colley St., Missoula MT 59802. On-site parking arrangements can be made for those with disabilities. For Questions regarding this project please contact Zoe Zulakis, GYSD Coordinator (406-523-3929), or the Moon Randolph Homestead at (406)728-9269.

Interested in Contributing a Story for the Upcoming AmeriCorps Quarterly?
We want to hear about your experiences with service and volunteerism in Montana.

Contact Julia Guarino (guarino.julia@gmail.com) or Eliza Singer (eliza.singer@gmail.com)
with questions, ideas and concerns.

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