



'Roots EYE View

The newsletter of the MU Extension Youth Enterprisers VISTA Program

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Background:

EYE VISTA is a statewide AmeriCorps*VISTA program co-sponsored by MU Extension and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Consistent with the mission of VISTA, EYE VISTA places national service participants in economically disadvantaged areas to build the capacity of communities to eliminate poverty.

For more information, visit our website at: www.mo4h.missouri.edu/go/programs/vista



EYE VISTA Spotlight: Rosanna Hernandez

by Andrew Kelly, MU student, and Antoinne Jones



Rosanna

In the heart of rural south central Missouri, VISTA member Rosanna Hernandez is promoting entrepreneurship to young people through the arts. With sponsorship from the Ozarks Regional Foundation & Affiliated Trusts, Rosanna has engaged area teachers, students, and other local citizens in forming a new non-profit Ozarks Arts Council, organizing a high school student art sale, and supporting teachers in incorporating new entrepreneurship curricula into the classroom. We caught up with Rosanna to get her perspective on AmeriCorps*VISTA now that she has reached the mid-year mark of her service.

What did you do before AmeriCorps*VISTA?

I graduated from Truman State University with a Bachelors of Fine Arts degree in 2007, and about a month after graduation, I moved to California, where I'm originally from. After a little less than a year there, I realized I was more of a Midwesterner and came back. While out west, I worked as an Administrative Assistant for an Assisted Living Facility.

What interested you in national service?

Ever since I was old enough, I was volunteering for something. Growing up I volunteered at a nursing home my mom worked at—it was practically my second home! While in college, I was involved in Alpha Phi Omega, a National Service Fraternity. I guess I have always known that I wanted to work in the not-for-profit area, and I found this while searching for a job. It involved a county next to where I was from, and the project seemed challenging but a great cause. I love the foundation, and am happy to serve the communities around where I live and grew up!

How did you first learn about serving with AmeriCorps*VISTA?

I never heard of VISTA before this project, but I knew about AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps. A close family friend of mine volunteered for both AmeriCorps and the Peace Corps after college, and she has always been an inspiration to me. Also, a few of my friends from Truman have been in AmeriCorps. I am happy that I have also been given the opportunity to serve!

Describe some programs you have established though your project. How have they enriched the community?

One program I'm proud of and excited about is the Art Entrepreneurship Initiative. It



showcases local youth talent that otherwise might not be seen or appreciated. The community has accepted it with

open arms and in return the students have gained more confidence in themselves as well as pride in their work and in their community. To me, art is enrichment in itself and for everyone to be able to enjoy the students' hard work is a great accomplishment. Another program I'm happy about is the high school entrepreneurship class in Mansfield, Mo. The students are learning about what it takes to become an entrepreneur through curriculum, hands-on experience and speakers that come in and talk about their successes and setbacks.



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Four New Members Join the EYE VISTA Crew!



St. Louis, Mo.

Tim Brinkmann is the new VISTA at the St. Patrick Center City Seeds Project in St. Louis. He is expanding upon the great work

Tim

Lindsey Jones produced at the urban farm in downtown St. Louis which allows homeless and impoverished clients to learn skills in horticulture and marketing and sales of fruits, vegetables, and value-added products at local markets.



At the Catholic Charities of St. Louis, Dylan Atchley is launching "Youth Planting Roots," an urban horticulture

Dylan

project for young aspiring entrepreneurs involving vegetable production at three Catholic Charities outreach sites. Dylan will be recruiting and training volunteers to work with youth at these greenhouses, as well as developing a marketing and distribution plan for the greenhouse produce.

Hartville, Mo.

Mary Hargus has begun service at the Ozarks Regional Foundation & Affiliated Trusts in Wright County, Mo. She will be assisting prospective entrepreneurs start businesses primarily focused on value-added agricultural products, sustainable agriculture, and agri-tourism. Mary will also conduct research and providing information to local leaders and the public on renewable energy and agricultural land preservation in the region. Each of these areas ties into long-term strategies the organization has established for creating a more viable regional economy.



Mary

Salem, Mo.

At the University of Missouri Dent County Extension Center, Eric Stevens is using his passion for food and agriculture to increase participation at the Salem Farmer's Market. Through promotion and marketing, he is working to expand



Eric

education, awareness, and participation of local residents in food entrepreneurship. Additionally, Eric is coordinating the start-up of a community garden led by volunteers from the Salem United Methodist Church.

Stay tuned!

Two more VISTA members are scheduled to begin service on projects in late April.

Congratulations!

We would like to recognize Shanna Sorg for receiving the **2009 Show Me State Service Award for AmeriCorps*VISTA**. The award is given annually by the Missouri Community Service



Shanna

Commission. Shanna was selected for her outstanding service to the City of Fredericktown, Mo. in supporting entrepreneurship. Sorg accepted the award at an Apr. 23 banquet in Jefferson City, Mo., with City Administrator Jim Dismuke (her supervisor), family members, and friends in attendance. Congratulations Shanna!

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act

by Andrew Kelley, MU student

New legislation in Washington D.C. has cleared the way for a new era in national service. What was originally called the G.I.V.E. Act (*Generation Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act*) in the House, and later cleared the Senate, the bill was re-named *The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act*, out of respect for the long-time Massachusetts senator. President Obama signed the bill into law on April 21. With strong bipartisan support, it went from introduction to passage in 22 days.

The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act has far-reaching implications for national service, calling for an increase in AmeriCorps members nationally from 75,000 to 250,000 (including an increase in VISTA members placed from 6,800 to roughly 9,800). AmeriCorps members would be assigned to projects ranging from energy preservation and "green" technology to helping the homeless and fighting hunger. The Act also calls for an enhancement in member benefits, including an increase in the education award members receive from \$4,725 to \$5,350.

With unemployment reaching 8 percent in parts of the country, the supply of potential national service participants is becoming more plentiful. AmeriCorps reports that applications for national service assignments have tripled over one year ago. The trend suggests that many Americans, even if finding themselves out of work, want to help our economy and to stay involved in their communities..

Nicola Goren, Acting CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (which administers AmeriCorps), stated: "In this time of economic crisis, we need service and volunteering more than ever. The downturn means more Americans are suffering, putting more pressure on nonprofits, and service and volunteering can help fill the gap. We are thrilled that the President and Congress have put service high on the agenda, and that the President's call to service is striking a responsive chord with the American public."

To read more about the Serve America Act, go to: <http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/newsroom/releases.asp>.



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It's always great when the community gets involved with the youth of the area. I'm glad the students are getting an opportunity to connect with the community leaders on a new level.

Name an event you coordinated that you're proud of. How did it affect the community?

I've been hosting Financial Literacy trainings featuring Quicken software for home & business. These trainings have been co-sponsored with MU Extension as well local entities such as the Chamber of Commerce, MSU Extension and local school districts. It has been a great way to promote financial literacy as well as make people aware of the Ozarks Regional Foundation. All of the participants have really appreciated the opportunity to get the trainings at a modest cost and loved that they receive the licensed software for free. This is an ongoing project and each session has had challenges but they have been very successful events!

How has your experience been as a VISTA?

This past 7 months have been an amazing experience. I've learned so much about the local communities, the subject of my project as well as myself. From the very beginning, I knew I had made the right decision to serve my country for a year. The Foundation that is sponsoring my position is comprised of very intelligent and forward thinking individuals. The Ozarks Regional Foundation has great values, always with the rural Ozarks interest in mind. I feel lucky to have been given the opportunity to



learn from their experiences and areas of expertise. It has been an all around great experience that will only benefit my future plans and goals.

What will you take away from your one year service as an AmeriCorps*VISTA?

I've learned so much from the people I've been serving as well as the Board members of



the Ozarks Regional Foundation. As an art major, I knew very little about business, let alone becoming an entrepreneur. Fortunately I have been given the opportunity to combine my passion for art with the values of VISTA and the Ozarks Regional Foundation. I feel lucky to have such a pro-active Board of Directors and a Supervisor that trusts my instincts as well as supports my ideas. It's been a challenging, but very rewarding year.

What would you say to someone who is thinking about becoming a VISTA?

You need to have a heart to become a VISTA because at times it can be very stressful. Overall though, it is very rewarding. I would recommend joining the VISTA program to anyone who is thinking about working in a non-profit field.

Do you have any further comments about AmeriCorps*VISTA?

Don't be afraid to take a chance; don't be too aggressive, but be more creative. Gandhi once said: "Be the change you want to see in the world." This is exactly what AmeriCorps*VISTA stands for.

"I knew that I had made the right decision to serve my country for a year."

For more information on how your community or organization can sponsor an EYE VISTA member, contact:

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