



SERVE ILLINOIS

A graphic featuring a blue silhouette of the state of Illinois on the left, followed by the text "SERVE ILLINOIS" in large, bold, blue capital letters. Below the text is a stylized American flag with a blue field containing white stars and red and white stripes.

Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Spring 2014

National Service Partners Provide Aid in Aftermath of Devastating Tornadoes

On November 17, 2013, a devastating string of tornadoes ripped through the Midwest, affecting over 15 counties in Illinois; arguably the hardest hit was Washington, Illinois. Thousands of volunteers flooded the small town of Washington to aid in relief efforts. Among those were several national service programs including AmeriCorps St. Louis, Children's Home AmeriCorps members, American Red Cross AmeriCorps members, and Senior Corps members from Peoria Friendship House.



The Serve Illinois Commission would like to thank the volunteers who aided in the relief efforts of the November tornadoes.

The AmeriCorps St. Louis Emergency Response Team (ERT) was requested by Tazewell County to assist with volunteer management, primarily to set up Volunteer Reception Center (VRC) operations and coordinate volunteers. These members are highly skilled in the field of disaster response and hit the ground running. They established the VRC at Illinois Central College and set up hotlines on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at 12:30pm, to take calls from volunteers as individuals and groups as well as homeowners with unmet needs. They had over 600 calls in several hours, with only half of their lines working. AmeriCorps St. Louis has since turned over the VRC to local volunteer organizations to keep it sustained for the long-term.

Children's Home Association of Illinois and their Fostering Transitions AmeriCorps members were some of the very first groups of first responders, as they are located in Peoria and some of their staff and members live in Washington. Children's Home has been very instrumental in organizing and administering a donation reception and distribution center (seen in photo on left), while directing and managing over 400 volunteers.

The Illinois VOAD consists of non-profit, faith based, and governmental agencies in Illinois. Throughout the year, these groups meet to prepare for disaster events. When the tornadoes hit on November 17th, the VOAD members immediately scheduled daily calls to coordinate relief efforts in Washington and establish the Multi-Agency Resource Center (MARC) that made resources like the DMV and childcare available to storm victims in one location.

If you would like more information about the storms, or want to help, please visit www.Ready.Illinois.gov.



“The mission of the Serve Illinois Commission is to improve communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the state.”

To be added to the mailing list, please email DHS.ServeIllinois@Illinois.gov.

From the Executive Director



We are proud to showcase in this newsletter the incredible work that volunteers in communities across Illinois perform when mobilized around a vision. Many of the articles reflect projects around the vision and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King reminded us that anybody—regardless of age, gender, race, faith, or socioeconomic background—can serve. It is important to reflect on where we stand as a state in terms of volunteering, so we can continue to progress toward realizing our vision of an Illinois in which service is simply a part of our culture. According to statistics from the Volunteering and Civic Life in America (VCLA) report, 2.73 million Illinoisans volunteered in 2012, committing 286 million hours of service to our state. If we translate this to a dollar amount, the service provided by Illinoisans is valued at \$6.6 billion. Illinois also continues to lead the nation in Cities of Service with 39 mayors signed into the coalition. While these two accomplishments are a great testament to the volunteer ethic in Illinois, we still have much more room to grow. Only about 27.4 percent of Illinois residents volunteer—ranking us at 27th nationally. If we wish to continue to grow as a state of volunteerism, then we must simply improve our efforts. Though there is much work ahead of us, let us not be discouraged. Let's continue to be inspired by the vision of Dr. King; let's harness the motivation of our 17,000 Senior Corps and 3,600 AmeriCorps members improving communities each day in our state; let's ensure that the 2.73 million of us who volunteered last year recruit some of the 9 million Illinoisans who didn't, so that the health and resilience of our state becomes a true force to be reckoned with.

Yours in service,

Brandon Bodor
Executive Director, Serve Illinois Commission

From the Chair



I had the privilege to work with a unique initiative to address the extreme needs of poor communities. The name of the initiative was called Team Illinois. **TEAM (Together Everyone Accomplishes More)** Illinois, which was established in 2003, focused on the needs of small towns throughout Illinois that needed to be stimulated both economically and socially. The project helped local businesses, churches, faith-based organizations, and schools in partnership with federal and state agencies to develop strategies and recovery efforts in underserved communities. During my time working with Team Illinois, I came across **extra-ordinary** individuals who went out of their way at personal expense and commitment to address the needs of their communities. I would like to take time to say thank you to all of the volunteers who assisted with the implementation of key projects that resulted in \$3.8 million dollars of value-added initiatives in their communities.

I would like to highlight one of the TEAM Illinois volunteers who played a major role in our success. Vernon Stubblefield was instrumental in facilitating and developing a community strategy that resulted in a computer lab for a local high school, college tours to historical black colleges for the local high school students, health fairs and school supplies, the construction of two new playgrounds, the development of a local museum, the removal of abandoned tires, the demolition of an abandoned high school, and hundreds of social service programs for the citizens of the community.

I realize that others have received the credit for all these projects; however, none of the projects listed above would have occurred if it was not for Vernon Stubblefield. I would like to take this moment again to thank the Stubblefield's of the world that work behind the scenes making it happen without fanfare.

My unsung hero is Mr. Vernon Stubblefield and all of the Stubblefield's that are out there. Thank you!!!

Yours in service,

Frederick D. Nettles Jr.
Chair, Serve Illinois Commission

Village of Campton Hills Awarded \$25,000 Cities of Service Grant to Implement “Prepared is Protected” Initiative

After receiving a record-number of applications, Cities of Service announced that it has awarded \$25,000 to the Village of Campton Hills to implement a service initiative designed to address emergency management preparedness. Campton Hills is one of 23 U.S. cities to win a Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund grant, which supports mayors who are implementing “impact volunteering” strategies that tackle pressing local challenges.

Campton Hills’ “Prepared is Protected” aims to train 250 volunteers in emergency preparation and response plans. “Our Village is built on a base of volunteerism and being prepared in a time of emergency is critical,” says Village President Patsy Smith. “Through this grant, we will be able to plan and train volunteers to cope during a time of crisis.”

The \$25,000 grant will be used to allow Paul Bumba, the Village’s Coordinator of Emergency Management, to train volunteer trainers to prepare others in emergency response plans, in addition to engaging outreach volunteers to education others in emergency preparedness, response and recovery awareness to better serve the community and inform residents about the importance of emergency planning to give them the tools for preparation success.



Funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Cities of Service Impact Volunteering Fund is a multi-million dollar fund. Nearly \$1 million was awarded through the first round of grants in October 2012, with an additional \$1 million awarded through this second round. Grantee cities were

selected based on the quality of initiative proposals, scale and potential for impact, and caliber of implementation plans, among other criteria.

About Cities of Service

Founded in September 2009 in New York City by New York Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg and 16 other mayors from across the nation, Cities of Service is a bipartisan coalition of over 180 mayors committed to addressing critical city needs through impact volunteering. American cities face serious challenges and many mayors want to take advantage of every resource available to them – including the time and energy of public-spirited residents – to address those challenges. But in cities across America today, citizen service is often an underutilized strategy by municipal governments. By leveraging citizen service strategies, Cities of Service helps mayors address local needs and make government more effective. To find out more about Cities of Service, visit www.citiesofservice.org.



Serve.Illinois.gov

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Inspiration of Service

The Serve Illinois Commission is rooted in the ethic of service found in all Illinois volunteers and service members. It is important to reflect on the importance of service and those who inspire our service. In light of the recent passing of Nelson Mandela and the holiday honoring Martin Luther King, Jr., the Serve Illinois Commission has sought the insight of national service members to honor the legacy of these men.

We asked our AmeriCorps members who inspired them to serve and received several great responses, including these from Charlotte and Talia. To see all of the photo essays, please visit the Serve Illinois Blog (<http://serveillinoiscommission.wordpress.com/>).

Charlotte Pope is a Public Ally serving at YMCA of the USA in Chicago; her inspiration is Ella Baker.



Charlotte Pope's personal inspiration is Ella Baker.

“Ella Baker built a foundation for all women fighting for transformative social change, and serves as my inspiration. Dr. Barbara Ransby, historian and author of a biography of Ella Baker, writes, “A creative and independent thinker and doer, Baker operated in a political world that was, in many ways, not fully ready for her.” Over five decades, Baker contributed to

dozens of organizations, playing a pivotal role in the work of the NAACP, SCLC, and SNCC. She pushed to mobilize all people impacted by structures of discrimination and inequality, and lives forever through her insurmountable legacy of service.”

Meghan Hughes serves at Belleville AmeriCorps, and her inspiration for service is Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.



Meghan Hughes finds her motivation from Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

“Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, known as Africa’s “Iron Lady”, was elected head of state in Liberia in 2005, becoming the first female head of state in Africa and the world’s first elected black female president. A champion of non-violent action for the safety of women and for their participation in peace-building activities, President Sirleaf was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011 in conjunction with two

other women for their tremendous contributions to the women’s rights movement. As a young woman studying politics and gender, I find President Sirleaf to be extremely inspirational. Her efforts at bringing justice and democratic rule to Africa, while simultaneously supporting a women’s rights agenda, are truly magnificent and fuel my passion for service in my own community.”

Clarissa Johnson is an AmeriCorps Member at Rend Lake College; her service inspiration comes from David LeNeave.



Clarissa Johnson receives service incentive from David LeNeave.

“David LeNeave is the example that I feel all volunteers should follow. David is always the first one to respond, but also the first to listen for a need. He is one that will not just drop food by your house to offer comfort, but will also sit down to eat along with you. He has a heart for his community and serves to meet all needs within his community on a daily basis. He

is as genuine as they come and when those around him hurt, he hurts just as much. Getting things done effectively with the biggest impact is right up his alley. He always seems to remember that the small things he can do for people mean the most, and are top on the priority list. Not only does he take the time to volunteer, he gives it his all to do the job completely, thoroughly, with a smile, and always comes away from the project with many more friends.” insurmountable legacy of service.”

Talia Horwitz is an AmeriCorps Health Educator with PCC Community Wellness in Chicago whose role model is Grace Lee Boggs.



Grace Lee Boggs is a source of inspiration for Talia Horwitz.

“Grace Lee Boggs, a 98-year-old social activist in Detroit, says, “We are the leaders we’ve been waiting for.” I have been inspired by many leaders of service before me, but this quote embodies my spirit of service mission. As a 22-year-old, recent college graduate, Grace Lee Boggs has inspired me to take responsibility in this leadership role and to, like her, commit myself to a

lifetime of service. She challenges us to “re-imagine everything,” and combine this philosophy with activism. My goal is to never lose touch with these words and to sustain the inspiration from these resilient leaders as I become a leader myself.”

Governor Quinn Salutes “CNN Heroes” Awardee

Declares Sunday “Chad Pregracke Day” to honor East Moline river advocate

Governor Pat Quinn declared December 1, 2013, “Chad Pregracke Day” to salute the East Moline man who was named “CNN Hero of the Year” for his efforts to clean up America’s waterways. Chad Pregracke was honored in a CNN broadcast hosted by Anderson Cooper.

“Chad Pregracke personifies stewardship of our rivers, a ‘roll-up-your-sleeves’ tenacity and the volunteer spirit that makes Illinois special,” Governor Quinn said. “Having known Chad for years, I believe CNN made the ideal choice for ‘Hero of the Year’. This man has truly made a difference and we are extremely proud of him.”

Governor Quinn noted that in an act of uncommon generosity, Pregracke said he will share part of his \$300,000 prize with the other nine finalists of the CNN Heroes initiative.

A former commercial shell diver, Pregracke founded Living Lands & Waters in 1998 to remove mounds of debris he saw on the river bottom near the Quad Cities. Since then, he has been responsible for removing 7 million tons of trash from 23 waterways including the Illinois, Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. In 2005, he partnered with then-Lieutenant Governor Quinn to clean up the Illinois River’s Plum Island, now an eagle sanctuary.

“I am honored to have a day named after me,” Pregracke said. “I don’t know who is more excited, me or my Mom! I think one my biggest accomplishments is encouraging others that they can make a big difference in this world. I am proud to say I’m from Illinois, and want to thank all the people of Illinois that voted for me and cleaner rivers. This has allowed me the privilege and opportunity to be named 2013 CNN Hero.”

Pregracke and his crew spend nine months a year living and working on a barge, organizing riverbank cleanups, watershed conservation initiatives and invasive plant removal. He is halfway to his goal of planting one million trees along Midwestern shorelines.

Pregracke is instilling a passion for stewardship to a younger generation, as well, with an “Alternative Spring Break” and “Floating Classrooms.” In 2013, Floating Classrooms were conducted on Living Lands & Waters’ boats moored at Alton, Cave-in-Rock, Chester, Grafton, Quincy, Rock Island and other Illinois riverfront communities.

During the past 15 years, more than 70,000 volunteers have participated in Pregracke’s projects. The Living Lands & Waters staff has grown to 12, and its fleet includes 15 boats, six trucks and a crane. Pregracke has been called “the garbageman of the rivers”, and Living Lands & Waters is known as the most “industrial strength” river recovery project on earth.

In his Proclamation, Governor Quinn said that Pregracke is a model for the 3,000 AmeriCorps members in Illinois and embodies the mission of the Governor’s Serve Illinois Commission to instill an ethic of service.

To learn more about Chad Pregracke or to volunteer on a Living Lands & Waters project, visit www.livinglandsandwaters.org.



Chad Pregracke founded Living Lands & Waters in 1998 to remove debris from the river near his home.

Volunteers Honor Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Through Service

Governor Pat Quinn proclaimed January 20, 2014, as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service in Illinois, and urged citizens throughout Illinois to honor the memory of Dr. King and put his teachings into action by participating in the King Day of Service and finding ways to give back to their communities on this day and throughout the year.

While many individuals spent the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday relaxing from school or work, thousands of volunteers statewide engaged in service projects to honor the legacy and vision of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Governor Pat Quinn joined the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Serve Illinois Commission in encouraging Illinois citizens to take part in the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service that took place on Monday, January 20. The theme of the service day was “A Day On, Not a Day Off.”

“Dr. King’s life was dedicated to service, and, in his memory, we should each strive to give back to our communities,” Governor Quinn said. “We all have something to contribute and share to make our neighborhoods, state and country a better place.”

Many AmeriCorps programs throughout Illinois also engaged their members in the Day of Service. Project YES and Public Allies AmeriCorps members held a Literacy Fair that included storytelling and hands-on literacy activities and games. Volunteers helped with storytelling, puppet-making, journal and bookmark creation, book distribution, one-on-one reading, and more. AmeriCorps members at the Greater Chicago Food Depository assisted the Fisher House and made lunch for the veteran family members staying at the house, while members of City Year helped to beautify and transform two Chicago Public Schools in the Rogers Park Community - Sullivan High School and Kilmer Elementary.

The Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service is an event that encourages all volunteers, as well as the individuals they serve, to remember the importance of diversity, teamwork, and shared community.



PCC AmeriCorps members spent the day with youth participants and volunteers facilitating line dancing, nutrition education and stress ball making stations for approximately 100 youth.



Literacy Volunteers of Illinois AmeriCorps members prepared and served breakfast for 30 guests at the Lincoln Park Community Shelter.

Find or Post
a Volunteer
Opportunity
Today!

Visit Serve.Illinois.gov



**Commission on Volunteerism
and Community Service**

In addition to the searchable portal of more than 140,000 volunteer opportunities statewide, Serve.Illinois.gov hosts a wide variety of volunteer resources:

- Ability to Post Volunteer Opportunities
- Statewide Volunteer Management Network Conference & Meeting Information
- National Service Program Information (AmeriCorps, Senior Corps & Learn and Serve America)
- Volunteerism Research & Volunteerism Web Links
- Featured Volunteer Stories
- Serve Illinois Calendar of Events

We want to hear from you!

If your agency is currently preparing for upcoming volunteerism or national service events, or if you have recently completed an event and would like to share your story, we want to hear from you. For newsletter or website publication consideration, please send information to dhs.serveillinois@illinois.gov. Web links, photos accompanying a story and professional development resources are also encouraged.

Training and Professional Development

Save the Date

2014 Volunteerism Conferences



*Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference:
June 2014*

www.civconference.org

*Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration:
August 2014*

www.icova.info



*Southern Illinois Volunteerism Conference:
September 2014*

www.sivc.net

*Northwest Illinois / MVDOVIA Volunteerism
Conference: October 2014*

www.nwivc.net



Mark Your Calendars!

Mark your calendars for the AmeriCorps 20th Anniversary Opening Day Celebration on September 12, 2014. The Serve

Illinois Commission will be celebrating AmeriCorps' 20th Anniversary and recognizing all National Service members at the beginning of their year-long commitment to service. Join us on September 12, 2014!



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“Building Stronger Communities Through Service”

Upcoming Days of Service

March 31, 2014	Cesar Chavez Day of Service www.chavezfoundation.org
April 6-13, 2014	National Volunteer Week www.handsonnetwork.org
April 28, 2014	Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards www.serve.illinois.gov
TBA	AmeriCorps Week www.americorps.gov



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Illinois AmeriCorps Disability Outreach Project: Meeting the needs for AmeriCorps Members of all backgrounds and abilities.

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