



SERVE ILLINOIS



Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Summer 2012

Chicago Hosts the 2012 National Conference on Volunteering and Service

On June 18-20, over five thousand volunteer managers, volunteers, and other individuals gathered in Chicago for the 2012 National Conference on Volunteering and Service. The three-day event was convened by the Points of Light Institute and took place at McCormick Place West in the heart of the city.

This year's conference, aptly themed "Turning Points", emphasized new opportunities for intimate, thoughtful conversations about national service, social entrepreneurship and hands-on action. The conference offered 14 topic areas, including volunteer management, excellence in education and environmental sustainability, and over 100 different workshops. Former First Lady Barbara Bush headlined the opening session that discussed the power of social movements. She was joined by J.R. Martinez, U.S. veteran and winner of Season 13 of ABC's *Dancing with the Stars*, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and actor and founder of www.sixdegrees.org, Kevin Bacon.



The South Shore Drill Team performs at the Opening Session.

Other highlights of the conference included:

The Summit on Advanced Volunteer Engagement (SAVE): Participants immersed themselves in advanced topics relating to best practices, proven models and innovations in volunteer engagement.

The Community Blueprint Summit for Change: This session, designed for individuals who were interested in community-based solutions for meeting the needs of service members, veterans, and veterans' families, discussed topics such as coordination of services and care, as well as trends and research on challenges facing service members.

Generation on Youth Summit: Nearly 250 youth between the ages of 13 and 18 convened for an afternoon of leadership development activities and a service project that benefited the local Chicago community.

Seeds of Change Service Project: On June 18, volunteers from the conference worked alongside community members to create a community garden at Theophilus Schmid Elementary School in Chicago.



A group of volunteers work on the "Seeds of Change" service project.

America's Sunday Supper: Designed to honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy, this event offered conference attendees of diverse backgrounds the opportunity to come together and share a meal while discussing challenges the nation faces and actions that can be taken.

Solution Centers: These 90-minute, highly interactive sessions explored service solutions that had been successful in the past and offered participants a chance to devise solutions of their own. Presenters included the Minnesota Reading Corps, National Park Service and University of Phoenix.

At the end of the event, the Illinois Host Committee passed the torch to a new Host Committee from Washington D.C. They will convene the next conference on June 20-22, 2013.



"The mission of the Serve Illinois Commission is to improve Illinois communities by supporting and enhancing traditional volunteerism and community service and the administration of the AmeriCorps program."

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

From the Executive Director



It is with great pride, excitement and eagerness that I join the Serve Illinois Commission. I cannot think of a more fitting place to channel my passions and energy after U.S. Army service than to the Commission. It is an honor to have the confidence of Governor Quinn, a leader who undoubtedly sets a fantastic culture for community service and volunteerism initiatives across Illinois.

I would like to acknowledge the great distance that Ted Gibbs pushed the needle forward during his three years at the Commission's helm. I hope to build upon Ted's momentum, and on the fine work that the dedicated staff of Scott McFarland, Lisa Fernandes and Karla Kunzeman continues to do on a daily basis.

Illinois has a grand tradition of service, but what is even more exciting is the work yet to come. The Points of Light National Conference on Volunteering and Service, held here in Chicago in June, provided countless examples of how service is simply in our fabric as Americans. It is more than just something we do; it is who we are. Each day, thousands of us recommit ourselves to serving each other, and because of that, what may seem impossible can become a reality. Right now, there are over 100,000 volunteer opportunities just waiting at www.Serve.Illinois.gov.

In a recent conversation I had with Governor Quinn, he emphasized the need to restore the public's trust in government institutions. During these polarizing times, I can think of no better source of restoring that confidence than through emphasizing the power of volunteerism and community service. It is an ideal that brings everyone together, and in the process makes our communities, our state and our country a proud model for the world to emulate. The seeds of service may take time to grow and blossom, but I call on each of you to find your own way to plant those seeds.

Yours in Service,

Brandon Bodor

From the Chair



Service, baseball, soccer, volleyball, work, church, dinner, school, family, cleaning, conference, fundraiser, book club and volunteering – wow... what a list, and it seems to be my life in a nutshell. I bet it is similar to yours. How to fit it all in and accomplish each responsibility to the best of my ability is constantly on my mind. I know I am not alone – how do you do it and stay committed to service?

The numbers speak for themselves. While our lives our busy, service is a priority. In 2011, over 378 million hours were recorded in the state of Illinois. As you read the articles in this newsletter, you will notice a central theme: outstanding volunteerism. You will learn about this year's recipients of the Governor's Service Awards, including exemplary youth volunteers, Daniela and Jonny Cohen, and the appointment of Wendy Spencer, a proven leader in the realm of national service, as the new CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Whether it's initiating programs to support youth, conserving land, fundraising or assisting veterans, individuals are uncovering needs and doing what it takes to enhance and develop strong communities.

When looking for opportunities to serve, please visit www.serve.illinois.gov, and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

In Illinois, we are making volunteer service a priority. It matters. You make a difference.

Thank you for your commitment to serving our communities.

Sincerely,

Jill C. Heise

Top Illinois Youth Volunteers Honored for Service

Jonny Cohen, 16, and Daniella Cohen, 13, both of Highland Park, were recognized as Illinois' top youth volunteers for the year by the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, the United States' largest youth recognition program based on volunteerism and community service. The program not only named two outstanding youth volunteers from each state and the District of Columbia, but 234 students across the nation were recognized as distinguished finalists.

Jonny, a junior at Highland Park High School, invented an aerodynamic shield that fits on the front of school buses to reduce wind drag, thus improving gas mileage and diminishing pollution. Jonny calls the invention the Green Shield, and developed the project idea in seventh grade while walking home from class and noticing how much exhaust school buses were emitting. After receiving encouragement from teachers, Jonny formed a team of 20 students and teachers interested in the idea and entered grant competitions to help fund the project. He won nearly \$30,000 to support the project, and traveled to several prestigious universities for advice before spending two summers at Northwestern University designing and building a prototype. The invention was then tested on a bus donated by a local company. Thus far, tests show that Jonny's Green Shield can cut fuel usage by 10 percent.



Jonny Cohen, 16, inventor of the Green Shield, an aerodynamic shield that improves school bus gas mileage and decreases pollution.

Daniella, an eighth-grader at Elm Place School, co-manages a pen-pal program between students in the United States and orphans in Bangalore, India. In third grade, Daniella developed an initial pen-pal project between her classmates and children in war-torn countries. The idea for her most recent project was created when Daniella's older sister introduced her to a college student from Virginia whose grandparents had founded a school for orphans in Bangalore. Since the two students had similar goals, they joined to form a project called G.I.V.E., which stands for Go Innovate Volunteer & Educate. The project originally consisted only of letter writing, but recently, Daniella was awarded two grants to purchase video cameras so the students at her school can video-chat with the orphans in India. Currently, nearly 500 students at Daniella's school and 30 kids at a Boys and Girls Club in Virginia are communicating with 53 students at the Bangalore school.



Daniella Cohen (center), 13, creator of G.I.V.E., a pen-pal program that connects American students to orphans in India.

Daniella and Jonny each received a \$1,000 engraved silver medallion and an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. where they joined the other top honorees from each state and the District of Columbia for several days of national recognition events in May.



Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Serve.Illinois.gov

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you should know

Wendy Spencer Named CEO of Corporation for National and Community Service

The U.S. Senate has unanimously confirmed Wendy Spencer as Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). Spencer is a well-known and proven leader in the realm of national service. She joins CNCS from the Florida Governor's Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service (Volunteer



Wendy Spencer, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS).

Florida), where she has been the CEO since 2003. In this position, Spencer managed federal and state grants, set policy and program priorities, provided training and monitoring, coordinated volunteers and donations in times of disaster, and promoted service and volunteering across the state.

In 2006, Spencer was selected by President Bush to serve on the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation along with 24 other leading supporters for volunteer service across the nation. She was given the prestigious Governor's Award at the 2005 Florida Governor's Hurricane Conference for her leadership in response and relief work due to the record setting disasters throughout the

state the previous year. This past year, Spencer served as Chair of the American Association of State Service Commissions.

Spencer served as director of the Florida Park Service, where she oversaw natural resources and recreation management for Florida's state parks. She was also campaign director of the United Way of the Big Bend, and director of marketing for the Macon County Chamber of Commerce in Georgia, among other positions.

"As a leader, Wendy is known for uniting diverse groups and organizations to work on common goals," said Laysha L. Ward, Chair of the CNCS Board of Directors. She added, "Wendy has the experience and reputation to drive the CNCS mission to help solve local problems, support vulnerable citizens and strengthen communities throughout the United States."

spotlight

Volunteers Help WINGS Program Grow Stronger

The Women in Need Growing Stronger, or WINGS Program, Inc., provides housing, food and counseling services to women and children seeking refuge from abuse. To make the program possible, WINGS turns to its' three resale stores – which generate more than a quarter of WINGS' gross revenue. The stores, which are located in northwest suburbs of Niles, Palatine and Schaumburg, rely heavily on community volunteers, and provide locals who support WINGS' cause with a chance to help families rebuild their lives. From sorting clothes, to accepting donations and cashiering, the service provided by WINGS' individual and group store volunteers is valued at more than a half million dollars annually. Beth Renee Lye, WINGS' manager of volunteer resources, works with each volunteer to help them define their role within the resale stores.

"One person's most dreaded project is someone's favorite task," said Lye. "There's nothing better than seeing someone enjoying what they're doing. We have many people who've been in the same role for many years."

Store volunteers are highly regarded by the nonprofit. In fact, Maryann Misevich, a merchandising volunteer, was recently nominated for the Village of Schaumburg's Volunteer of the Year award for her unique contributions to the Schaumburg store.

"Volunteers are critical to the store's operation," said Schaumburg Store Manager Erick Dahl. "We rely on volunteers every day to support our small staff."

Since joining WINGS in 1999, Executive Director Rebecca Darr has seen WINGS triple in size, and has seen the volunteer base grow with the organization. "Nothing would've been done without the mass community support," said Darr. "It's very humbling and inspiring," she added.

AmeriCorps Members Assist Harrisburg Tornado Victims

On February 29, 2012, unseasonably warm weather produced an EF4 tornado that hit Harrisburg, Illinois. Though the tornado only wiped out a section of the town, it caused fatalities and many injuries, which affected both the citizens of the town and nearby communities.

During AmeriCorps week, a group of five Lutheran Social Services of Illinois (LSSI) AmeriCorps members, four AmeriCorps VISTA members and two other volunteers went to Harrisburg to help with disaster relief and recovery efforts. Local churches, disaster relief groups, other AmeriCorps members, and even a nearby baseball team joined us in our efforts. In Harrisburg, we worked in a distribution center that was created to accommodate the overflow of donations. The distribution center was located in an old grocery store, donated by the owner as a space for relief effort donations. Part of the store was set up to resemble a grocery store, and individuals who needed food or supplies could grab a cart, walk between the aisles, and “shop” for what they needed. The rest of the building was used to store the abundance of supplies that had been, and continued to be donated.

The day was long, and the work was strenuous. By the end of the day, everyone involved was exhausted, but fulfilled and thankful. In spite of soreness and exhaustion, we felt good. We had spent the day working hard to help others, and that was rewarding! While assisting, we not only learned that people from other towns were there helping, but people from Harrisburg who had been in the storm themselves were helping others as well. It felt good to see so many different groups there working together to help others.

Selfless giving in service to others is what volunteerism is all about!

*-Submitted by Amanda Hayes,
AmeriCorps member with LSSI*

Volunteers Recognized with Service Award

The third annual Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards were held Thursday, April 19 at the Governor’s Executive Mansion in Springfield. The event recognized 24 outstanding volunteers from across the state for their service to their communities.

The reception included a welcome from then acting Executive Director Scott McFarland, words from the Volunteer Recognition Chair Barb Tubekis, and remarks from Jill Heise, Serve Illinois Commission Chair. Merri Dee, a Serve Illinois commissioner, served as master of ceremonies, with awards distributed by McFarland, Tubekis and Heise.

Awardees were selected by Governor-appointed Serve Illinois Commissioners from a pool of nearly 150 nominations. Awards were distributed in the categories of Youth, Adult and Senior, as well as the National Service Award Categories of Learn and Serve, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. Each category of awards was given to individuals from each of the five regions of Illinois.

The following volunteers were honored with the Governor’s Volunteer Service Award. To see photos and biographies of each recipient, visit www.serve.illinois.gov.

Southern Illinois Award Recipients

Kim Lingafelter, Nathan Elwood, Elmer Ragland, Lee Stowers and Madelyn McGlynn

East Central Illinois Award Recipients

Teresa Haley, Jamie Hadley, Ellen Harms, Jamie Storm and Mary Perkins

West Central Illinois Award Recipients

Lane Pfeiffer, Karla Williams, Bob Wiltz and Mike Faley

Northwest Illinois Award Recipients

Leann Duncan, Carole Perrin, Steve Verdick and Alexis Ochoa

Northeast Illinois Award Recipients

Luciano Rodriguez, Monica Gonzalez, Howard Allen Jones Jr., Lou Ann Johnson, Linda Kielas and Isha Jog



Teresa Haley, recognized for her work with state and local branches of the NAACP, poses for a photo with Serve Illinois Commissioner and Master of Ceremonies Merri Dee.



Elmer Ragland was congratulated by acting Executive Director Scott McFarland upon receiving the Governor’s Volunteer Service Award for his work with the Lions Club.

AmeriCorps Program Offers Media Services to Urbana-Champaign Community



The AmeriCorps members at the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center (UCIMC) seek to help alleviate poverty in Champaign County by connecting community members with resources available at the UCIMC and our partner organizations. The UCIMC fosters the creation and distribution of media, art and narratives emphasizing underrepresented voices and perspectives, and promotes empowerment and expression through media and the arts education. The UCIMC owns and operates a 30,000 square foot Community Media and Arts Center in Urbana, Illinois. Community access to a free monthly newspaper is offered, as well as a community radio station, computer labs, a production studio, performance space, art studios, a bike repair shop, meeting spaces and a variety of workshops, classes and volunteer projects, including the Books to Prisoners Project, which has shipped over 60,000 free books to inmates in Illinois.

In its eleventh year of growth, the UCIMC serves as the only AmeriCorps grantee in East Central Illinois for the State of Illinois AmeriCorps program. The UCIMC has hosted 26 AmeriCorps members to date who have taught media production to the community,



During AmeriCorps Week, AmeriCorps members at the UCIMC package crackers for the Eastern Illinois Food Bank.



Before re-packaging the food, individuals from UCIMC counted and labeled bags for the process.

booked shows at its venue, helped local artists get a show on its radio station, and supported community partners.

UCIMC AmeriCorps members also take part in National Days of Service, including AmeriCorps Week. On March 15, 2012 as a part of AmeriCorps Week, UCIMC AmeriCorps members and volunteers from service fraternity Alpha Phi Omega (ΑΦΩ) helped package food for the Eastern Illinois Food Bank. Volunteers labeled bags, filled them with Cheez-It crackers and re-packaged them into smaller boxes. The combined efforts of the group was quite efficient – volunteers managed to pack one-and-a-half pallets worth of boxes in three-and-a-half hours. AmeriCorps members also put together a West African dance class and benefit for the Crisis Nursery of Urbana on the evening of Friday, March 16. The price of admission for the class was one item on the Crisis Nursery's wish list, such as baby wipes, diapers, baby food and formula.

To learn more about the Urbana-Champaign Independent Media Center and its events and services, visit www.ucimc.org.

-Submitted by Carol Ammons, Program Director for the UCIMC AmeriCorps program

Find or Post
a Volunteer
Opportunity
Today!

Visit Serve.Illinois.gov



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

2012 Volunteerism Conferences

Illinois Conference on Volunteer Administration:
August 9, 2012- Chicago, IL www.icova.info



Northwest Illinois Volunteerism Conference:
September 27, 2012 – Moline, IL www.nwivc.net

West Central Illinois Volunteerism Conference:
October 27, 2012- Macomb, IL www.wcivc.net



Southern Illinois Volunteerism Conference:
November 1, 2012 – Mt. Vernon, IL www.sivc.net

Thank you!

The Serve Illinois Commission would like to take a moment to thank Emily Fox for her dedication and hard work to the mission of Serve Illinois. Emily joined our staff two years ago as a graduate intern from the University of Illinois- Springfield. Over her two years with us, Emily's work has helped move Serve Illinois forward in many ways, one of which was this newsletter. Emily served as the editor-in-chief for the past six issues, and her support can be seen in the increased quality of the information we put out. Emily graduated from UIS with her Masters Degree in Communications this Spring. We wish her nothing but the best, and hope that we have an opportunity to work with her again very soon.

Correction:

The "Volunteerism" section of the last issue of the Serve Illinois newsletter incorrectly stated Little City hosted a three-day conference for more than 90 volunteers from OfficeMax® Incorporated. In fact, Little City did not host the conference.



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“Building Stronger Communities Through Service”

Upcoming Days of Service

September 11, 2012	9/11 Day of Service http://www.911dayofservice.org/
October 18, 2012	National Service Recognition Day www.serve.illinois.gov
October 27, 2012	Make a Difference Day www.handsonnetwork.org



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SERVE ILLINOIS Editor
Illinois Commission on Volunteerism & Community Service
815 E. Monroe St., Springfield, IL 62701
DHS.SERVEIllinois@Illinois.gov
800.592.9896 TTY 888.261.2713



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

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