

CAMPUS CORPS CONNECTIONS

A Montana Campus Corps publication



Montana | Campus Compact

Volume 2, Issue 2

May 2006

AmeriCorps Members Clean Old Butte YMCA Building During All-Member Gathering

Participating Campuses:

- Blackfeet Community College
- Carroll College
- Flathead Valley Community College
- Fort Peck Community College
- Miles Community College
- MSU-Billings
- MSU-Bozeman
- MSU-Northern
- Montana Tech
- Salish Kootenai College
- UM-Missoula
- UM-Western
- University of Great Falls

Objectives:

- Academic Mentoring
- Mentoring
- Collaborative Partnerships
- Volunteer Generation
- Member Development

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Many articles in this issue were written by Team Leaders **Jessi Bennion** and **Patrick Callaway**.

Layout and additional writing by Gini Aten Erving.

This year's AmeriCorps All-Member Gathering drew over 200 members to Butte on February 20th to network, learn from each other at training sessions, and engage in a service project designed to make a positive impact on the host community. This year's service project, organized by Campus Corps Team Leader **Debbie Saylor** (MTCC HQ), Campus Corps Team Leader **Seth Quigg** (MT Tech), and MTCC VISTA **Lindsay Rehder**, was a



Campus Corps members clean windows and walls.



Campus Corps member Zach Dill (MT Tech) heaves trash into a dumpster.

massive clean-up of the old Butte YMCA building in order to prepare it for use by its new owners, the Silverbow Arts Foundation.

The Foundation plans to lease studio and apartment space to artists in the community, maintain gallery space for shows and events, and provide commercial space on the ground level. But in order for all that to be possible, some major cleaning needed to take place, which is where the AmeriCorps members came in.

In just slightly over two hours, members provided the Silverbow Arts Foundation, and hence the Butte community, with over 400 hours of service. Members removed unusable equipment and piles of recyclable debris and trash, cleaned hallways and bathrooms,

washed windows, and painted walls. The results of all that group labor were immediately apparent and inspiring to both the Foundation staff on-hand and the participating members.

Almost without exception, Campus Corps members felt that the Butte YMCA project was the highlight of their service during the month of February. It is always amazing to see just how much a well-organized group of dedicated volunteers can accomplish in a short period of time!

Campus Corps members **Mystel McKinley** (FVCC Team Leader) and **Denise Pankratz** (MSU-Northern) take part in the chain of volunteers who passed debris and old equipment down from the fifth floor of the building to street level, where it was placed in dumpsters for recycling or disposal.



Campus Corps Member Wins Statewide Praise for After-school Program

As a student at **The University of Montana-Western**, **Nancy Reuter** signed on with the Montana Campus Corps program to serve her community and develop her own professional skills. After attending a meeting of the Inland Northwest Space Alliance and getting inspired about the possibility of bringing the excitement and wonder of space travel to schoolchildren in Dillon, Nancy approached the Southwestern YMCA for sponsorship and was told that the community needed an after-school program. So she developed a curriculum and started recruiting fellow college students to volunteer with her. The **Spaceward Bound** after-school program was born.



LEGO engineer Brando hard at work on a creation during Robotics session.



Montana Campus Corps member Nancy Reuter with Mick Bowen, Aerospace Education Specialist at NASA's Ames Research Center, who joined the group for a lesson on the mechanics of robots.

During the 2005/2006 academic year, the program has provided challenging hands-on activities using computers, rockets, simulators, and programmable robots to teach schoolchildren in grades three through five math, science, and the principles of engineering. Sessions have included topics such as Microgravity, Robotics, Aeronautics, and The Moon, Mars, and Beyond. *Spaceward Bound* has allowed traditionally underserved students in Beaverhead County to engage in activities, learn about potential career opportunities, meet real engineers, and foster strong skills and interest in math and science. The kids who have participated in the program have discovered that "it's cool to be smart," according to Reuter.

Reuter's work with the *Spaceward Bound* program has been praised by the Southwestern YMCA, which has found the results to be "really amazing." The program was also noticed by the Montana Department of Labor & Industry, which featured a story about Nancy Reuter and *Spaceward Bound* in the Spring 2006 edition of its Main Street Montana magazine. The work of Nancy Reuter, like that of countless other Campus Corps members, has surely sparked interests in a group of Montana schoolchildren that could change the course of their lives in a very positive direction.



A young participant in the program prepares to be "spaceward bound" by viewing the world from the perspective of an astronaut's suit.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 1

Summer member orientation, Missoula

June 2

May Timesheets due

June 5

New supervisor orientation, Rocky Mountain College, Billings

June 9

3rd Quarter Progress Reports and Performance Evaluations for all members due

June 16

Team Leader Conference Call, 10 am

June 18-20

National Conference on Volunteering & Service, Seattle, WA

July 7

June Timesheets due

July 14

Team Leader Conference Call, 10 am

August 4

July timesheets due

August 31

Last day for summer members to perform service hours to be counted toward completion of term

Campus Corps Welcomes New Members at February Orientation in Butte

Just prior to the AmeriCorps All-Member Gathering (held in February in Butte), Campus Corps held an orientation session for **eleven new 450-hour members** from **Blackfeet Community College, Fort Peck Community College, and Salish Kootenai College**. The members are working with diverse organizations such as the Blackfeet Community Development Corporation, the Polson High School Indian Club, the “Warriors Against Meth” task force in Browning, the NASA/SKC/MSU Space Science Camp, and the Polson and Ronan Boys & Girls Clubs. They are also serving their communities with their work mentoring youth and encouraging them to pursue higher education through coaching activities at the Browning Boxing Club and by providing the elderly with assistance and Senior Sunday activities in Poplar. Campus Corps is proud to welcome them to the program and inspired by their excitement and energy for their work.



New Campus Corps members at their orientation in Butte in February 2006. With them are Molly Collins, Campus Corps Program Manager (front row, left), and Debbie Saylor, Team Leader in the MTCC HQ (back row, right).

Volunteers Participate in Fifteen Service Projects During Second Quarter



During the 2nd Quarter, Campus Corps members participated in **fifteen** service projects for which they found additional community volunteers. Despite it being winter and holiday vacation time for many people, **2414** non-AmeriCorps volunteers donated **5197** hours toward meeting community needs. These volunteers helped with the following projects:

- Dr. Seuss Day/Read Across America Day activities on 2 campuses;
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day activities on 6 campuses;
- A Volunteer Recruitment Fair;
- AmeriCorps All-Member Gathering Service Project (cleaning of old Butte YMCA—see article on page 1);
- Random Acts of Kindness Day activities on 2 campuses;
- A Volunteer Information Meeting; and
- Our Lady of the Rockies fence set up in Butte.

100% of the surveyed volunteers said they believed that the projects they participated in were worthwhile, that the experience was positive, and that they would volunteer in the future. And over **94%** felt that their contribution was helpful to their community!

Campus Corps initiatives connected people throughout Montana with numerous volunteer opportunities during the 1st and 2nd Quarters. So far this year, a total of **3183** non-AmeriCorps volunteers have participated in Campus Corps service projects and donated **13,450** hours of service to their communities!

Campus Corps members and recruited volunteers participate in Dr. Seuss Day activities with local schoolchildren at Missoula Public Library.

Campus Corps Initiatives Provide Support for Montana Youth

One of Montana Campus Corps' many important fields of endeavor is providing academic support to Montana's youth. As poet William Butler Yeats wrote, "Education is not filling a bucket but lighting a fire." During the second quarter, Campus Corps members have been very effective at kindling those small fires that may one day illuminate the world around us. A total of **19** Campus Corps members recruited, trained, and placed **85** volunteer tutors, who in turn provided **2727.5** hours of supplementary educational assistance to **330** students. Some very bright sparks were provided by the America Reads/America Counts program at Montana State University in Bozeman, where the program benefited from the inclusion of the classroom teacher into the discussion regarding the needs of each student receiving tutoring. Tutors report that this inclu-



Scenes from the classroom at Paxson Elementary where Campus Corps member Sharon Ellsworth tutors Missoula youth, helping them to succeed with their reading and math assignments.

sion has made their efforts in tutoring much more effective: **77%** of surveyed tutors reported that they were able to directly interact with the classroom teacher to receive updates about their students or information which helped prepare them to work with their students.

While academic support is an important mission for Montana Campus Corps, it is not the only form of support provided for the youth of our state. Campus Corps members also provide mentoring for at-risk youth. Through the efforts of Campus Corps members in the second quarter, **102** mentors were trained, who in turn donated **356** hours for the benefit of **80** youth mentees. Upward Bound is one example of a program designed to assist first-generation college students to prepare for post-secondary education. Survey results indicate that the program is having a dramatically positive effect on the beneficiaries it is designed to help: **90%** of the surveyed mentees indicate that they are more hopeful about the future and will get into less trouble, and **70%** report that their social perceptions had changed due to increased self-esteem.

Montana Tech Campus Corps Members Receive Governor's Spirit of Service Award

At the 2006 All-Member Gathering in Butte, Montana Tech Campus Corps members **Ed Lindquist** and **Tim Messick** received the Governor's Spirit of Service award for their hard work with the YMCA Tutoring Program. Both members went above and beyond the call of "tutor coordinating" duty when over the 2004/2005 Christmas break they were able to get computers donated and develop software for use in the tutoring program. They have continued to serve many low-income youth in the Butte community through their work with the program, in addition to recruiting high school and college student tutors to sustain the program's long-term viability.

Senior InSTITUTE Held at Flathead Valley Community College

The Flathead Valley Community College (FVCC) Service Learning Office and Campus Corps Team assisted with coordinating this year's Senior Institute program at FVCC.

The 2006 Senior Institute was held on Fridays from 12-3pm, from February 10 through March 17. Approximately **150** senior citizens from the surrounding area participated in eleven classes. A variety of art classes in painting, jewelry making, and photography were offered, along with classes in the history of the Civil War, basic health & fitness, exploring Africa, creative writing, motion picture appreciation, basic computer skills, and line dancing.

The AmeriCorps team, along with **9** volunteers, was responsible for setting up and serving lunches, guiding the seniors to their classes, and assisting in the computer class.

A Day On, Not A Day Off: Martin Luther King, Jr., Day 2006

Six Campus Corps sites organized and participated in activities for Martin Luther King, Jr., Day of Service, January 16, 2006.

UM-Missoula members recruited volunteers to go into four elementary classrooms at Lewis and Clark school, where they spoke about Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and the importance of his work, as well as participating in diversity-centered activities.

At **MSU-Northern**, volunteers and Campus Corps members went into kindergarten classrooms and talked about Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as did diversity-centered activities. Many of the children stated, "We just want everyone to get along."

At the **University of Great Falls**, two service projects were held, in addition to a bell-ringing ceremony to commemorate the event.



MSU-Billings Campus Corps members Traci Ball (center) and Danielle Barton (right) assist with preparations for MLK Jr. Day activities in their community.



Carroll College Campus Corps members and volunteers held a diversity fair. Youth were able to go to different booths and learn about different types of diversity. They also had performers from other cultures do dances and shows. The kids brought school supplies to donate to the Salvation Army; over 225 books and 110 school supply items were collected at the event.

MSU-Billings Campus Corps members and volunteers planned an MLK Day ceremony that involved many elected officials and community members. After the ceremony, volunteers participated in five different service projects in the Billings area. The event received significant media coverage. The **MSU-Bozeman** Team Leader assisted the Human Rights Task Force with arranging for two speakers on campus in conjunction with MLK Day.

Campus Corps Members Hold HIV/AIDS Training at Salish Kootenai College

The Salish Kootenai College Campus Corps team assisted with a three-day series of events for World Aids Day (December 6, 2005). Each day featured different speakers on HIV/AIDS awareness, prevention, and post-diagnosis counseling. The SKC Team Leader recruited volunteers to help post signs displaying myths and facts about HIV/AIDS next to all the sidewalks on campus. Every day, volunteers from the staff, faculty, and student body helped with set-up and clean-up of this event. Campus Corps members and recruited volunteers helped in getting the word out on HIV/AIDS and offered free 20-minute testing sessions on campus. Along with the testing, counselors were available to explain results. As a post-event service project, members and volunteers made snag bags filled with prophylactics, lubrication, and information on where in the community to get tested for HIV/AIDS.

Campus Corps Members Partner with Community Organizations To “Get Things Done”

Campus Corps members partner with existing community organizations to increase each group’s capacity to provide services in its community. During the 2nd Quarter, Campus Corps members worked with 12 different community partners as diverse as the Reintegrating Youthful Offenders program and the Blackfeet Community Development Corporation.

The **Reintegrating Youthful Offenders** (RYO) program takes place at a youth offenders facility in Galen and is organized by a Campus Corps member at Montana Tech, who develops curriculum and recruits volunteers to help with Saturday activities at the facility. Over the course of three Saturdays this quarter, detainees learned how to earn a GED and apply for college, in addition to other basic life skills necessary to improving their lives post-release.

Campus Corps members serving with the **Blackfeet Community Development Corporation** (BCDC) helped facilitate economic growth on the Blackfeet Reservation by assisting the Chamber of Commerce and Business Association with recruitment and advertising services.



Team Leader Mandy Murphy (UM-Missoula) holds the son of fellow Team Leader Bryen Saluskin (SKC) at a training in February.

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☆ **Campus Corps Trivia!** ☆

☆ What is MTCC HQ Team Leader Debbie Saylor’s middle name? ☆

☆ Which other Team Leader shares the same middle name? ☆

Answers: Jean, Mandy Murphy (UM-Missoula) ☆

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As of the end of the Second Quarter, Campus Corps members had served a total of 20,798 hours during the 2005-2006 program year.



MSU-Bozeman Campus Corps members (from left) Amber Erhart, Hannah Wilson, and Alex Morton with MTCC VISTA Nora Olsgaard (in red pants)—still awake at 4 a.m. during the MSU-Bozeman Relay for Life, held February 19, 2006.

FVCC Holiday Giving Tree Donations Exceed Expectations

The Flathead Valley Community College Service Learning Office and AmeriCorps team exceeded their initial goal of collecting 161 gifts to benefit children of Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) by over 100 donations. The initial goal was surpassed by the **generous donation of over 260 items** from FVCC faculty, staff, students and community members.

From December 1-16, 2005, the college hosted two holiday giving trees to benefit the non-profit organization whose mission is to speak for the best interests of abused and neglected children in the courts in order to provide children with safe, permanent, and nurturing homes. The donated gifts provided CASA children with the opportunity to receive gifts this holiday season they may not otherwise have been able to receive.