Campus Corps Connections

A Montana Campus Corps publication

Volume 5, Issue 2 **Spring 2009**

Montana | Campus Compact

Participating Campuses:
- Blackfeet Community College
- Carroll College
- Dawson Community College
- Flathead Valley Community College
- Fort Belknap College
- Fort Peck Community College
- Little Big Horn College
- Miles Community College
- MSU-Billings
- MSU-Bozeman
- MSU-Great Falls College of Tech
- MSU-Northern
- Montana Tech
- Rocky Mountain College
- Salish Kootenai College
- UM-Helena College of Tech
- UM-Missoula
- UM-Western
- University of Great Falls

Our Mission:
Montana Campus Corps is an AmeriCorps program that engages college students in meeting community identified needs through meaningful service.

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Campus Corps is a proud member of the AmeriCorps family of National Service Programs.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Last summer, representatives from nine of Montana's college and university campuses gathered together for a Visioning Summit. The intensive 3-day retreat challenged "visioners" to develop a strategic vision for the future of student service in Montana. The result of these discussions was a recommitment to the mission of Campus Corps, "to actively engage college students in meeting community-identified needs through meaningful service." With over 800 student AmeriCorps members serving with Campus Corps last year alone, the visioners determined that the program has evolved during the past three years into something bigger, more impactful, and farther-reaching than ever before in its 15 year history. At the close of last summer's Visioning Summit, the groundwork was laid for an ongoing dialogue about how Campus Corps can tell its story to a broad and diverse audience of students, faculty, community partners, and citizens throughout the state.

On March 12, 2009, Campus Corps visioners gathered once again to tackle this pressing need for a clear marketing strategy for the program, which plans to grow beyond 1,000 members next year, engaging 4 new campuses and incorporating 10 new departments in AmeriCorps service initiatives by 2012. Participants met in Missoula and included program coordinators and staff from Blackfeet Community College, Montana State University-Bozeman, MSU-Billings, Montana Tech, MSU-Great Falls College of Technology, Salish Kootenai College, UM-Helena College of Technology, and the University of Montana-Missoula. The group's discussions focused on identifying target markets for Campus Corps, developing a strategy for establishing contact with target markets, and fashioning the appropriate message and tools for students, staff and faculty to effectively promote the program. ***(Continued on p.6)***

Campus Corps to Participate in Statewide Donate Life Today Challenge

Fact: There are more than 100,000 people in the United States waiting for a life-saving organ transplant. **Fact**: every day, 18 people die waiting. **Fact** You alone could save or enhance the lives of over 50 people!

During the month of April, Campus Corps members will be encouraged to register their donation wishes, and encourage their friends and family to do likewise at donatelifetoday.com/students

All MTCC campuses will participate in a statewide challenge, kicking off at the Spring Summit, April 17-19, 2009! More information can be found at www.mtcompact.org

Take 5, *Save Lives !*
Take 5 minutes out of your day to register as a donor.
http://donatelifetoday.com/students

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY IN MT

Montana Tech

In Butte, Campus Corps members brought in Eran Thompson to recite Dr. King's famous "I Have a Dream Speech" in the courthouse. The courthouse soon became standing-room-only as community members came out by the dozens in support of this great event. After the speech, those in attendance walked from the courthouse to a local church, holding candles and signs, singing and chanting. Empowered by Dr. King's message of equality, members of the Butte community got up for an open-mic, reading poetry, telling their personal stories, and encouraging people to be accepting of diversity.

Flathead Valley Community College

The Campus Corps team at FVCC wanted to showcase the great amount of diversity represented at their campus. They sent out a request for all individuals at FVCC who indicated backgrounds other than Caucasian as their nationality to come to a photo shoot. After gathering together all of the "Faces of Diversity" their campus had to offer, the campus and surrounding community were invited to attend the Faces of Diversity panel, where many speakers talked on the subject of diversity and the photos were hung for all to see.

MSU– Northern

Anyone who believes that diversity doesn't exist in Montana should have a word with the Campus Corps team at UM-Northern in Havre. They found over 50 different nationalities in Montana, and they didn't have to look very hard. Along with many different Native American tribes, they found a wealth of European nationalities, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, Canadian, the list could go on. Campus Corps team members put together a booklet of fun facts about these different nationalities and gave the booklets to fourth and fifth graders at the Havre Boys & Girls Club. They really take diversity seriously when it comes to educating the next generation!

MSU-Billings

Heading farther east in the state, the MSU-Billings Campus Corps team thought that one day celebrating diversity just wasn't enough, so they decided to make their Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations last a full week! Their activities ranged from a reenactment of "I Have a Dream" to a simulated underground railroad, where participants played the part of slaves trying to escape to freedom. The team also hosted a service project to get community members involved in giving back.

STUDENTS TAKE A BREAK TO SERVE:

Giving-up winter or spring break to participate in community service is becoming increasing popular among college students

By Mason Giem, UM Campus Corps member

The people I met in L.A.'s homeless shelters exuded a positive energy that was infectious. I walked out of those shelters feeling like everything is going to be O.K. I really did see the city of angels.

There were nine students that participated in an Honors College service-learning class that added to our understanding of poverty and homelessness while we did service work in L.A. Over our week long stay in the 80 degree weather, we participated in a variety of organizations ranging from Habitat for Humanity to The Salvation Army. While we were at Habitat for Humanity, we helped paint a sign that some younger children had already painted because Habitat has found that artwork done by kids does not get tagged with graffiti. When we were at The Salvation Army homeless shelters, we conducted interviews with the residents and wrote them up into personal stories that will be used for marketing tools. When we were at The Salvation Army Bell Shelter, we helped with cooking, maintenance and cleaning.

The Bell Shelter had a mission statement that I felt really epitomized the attitude of homeless shelters in L.A. towards the homeless: "a hand up not a hand out." This mission statement was really utilized at a shelter we visited called P.A.T.H. (People Assisting the Homeless). At P.A.T.H. they offered hair care, medical care, job training, job search help, housing, food, computer skills training, life skills training and psychological services.

The experience as a whole was supplemented through excellent reflection and personal interaction with the homeless themselves and I highly recommend it to anyone.

This semester, three trips are available through the University of Montana that offer a great way to see different parts of the country while performing meaningful service. A one-credit seminar option related to the trips is also available. During a trip to Moab, Utah, students will help with plateau restoration. Students can also choose to travel to Portland, Oregon, to work with hunger and homelessness issues or head to Lame Deer, Montana, on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation to work with American Indian youth.

BreaksAway Program at MSU

Thirty-five MSU students spent their spring break volunteering in community projects around the country, including these 11 who worked with the Grand Canyon Trust. The students served a total of 270 hours over the week removing barbed wire fence and clearing tumbleweeds. Other MSU Breaks Away groups included 17 students who traveled to New Orleans to work on New Orleans City Parks. Another seven students worked for the Save the Family Foundation, an organization dedicated to helping homeless families in Phoenix. Photo courtesy of MSU Office for Community Involvement.

Three Campus Compact institutions in Montana run annual Alternative Breaks programs: UM, MSU, and MSU-Billings. To learn more, contact Colleen Kane (UM) at 243-5128, Mandy St. Aubyn (MSU) at 994-3113, or Lindsay Blackburn (MSU-Billings) at 896-5815.

Montana Regional Science Fair at MT Tech

By: Janel Evans, Montana Tech Campus Corps leader

Clark Fork Watershed Education Program (CFWEP) is one of the Montana Tech team's Campus Corps sites. Two Campus Corps members, Coulter Wyant and Adam Wuest, are placed with CFWEP as their main responsibility within their team. The mission statement of CFWEP is *fostering environmental stewardship and science-based decision-making through place-based learning.*

CFWEP and East Middle School have formed a partnership in the last four months. Scientists, Campus Corps members and VISTA member Lorna McIntyre, tackle 7th grade science fair projects by engaging students in the restoration of the Clark Fork River. The after school group has met every Wednesday for the previous four months and will continue to meet until the middle of March. Each student has a mentor to assist them with their project. The mentors are all from Tech and are either professors or graduate students at MT Tech.

A few of the projects competing in the science fair are: The Influence of Heavy Metals on Aquatic Snails, Groundwater Quality in Local Wells and Plant Germination with Exposure to Soda, Mine Waste or River Water. The students, mentors, CFWEP, Campus Corps and VISTA make a remarkable team. Each individuals involved puts in a lot of hard work and time that is to be paid off when the spectacular science fair projects are complete!

March 9th was set up and get ready day at MT Tech for the roughly 500 students grades 5th through 8th. Montana Tech Campus Corps members volunteered to help out with preparations, the big day itself and final cleanup all before, in-between and after daily classes. In essence a couple of crazy busy days for everyone involved!

The results were: Jeff Schultz – Mentor John Babcock – Red Ribbon, Dillon Harlan – Mentor John Babcock – Blue Ribbon, Gold Metal, Chaunce Sabin – Mentor Dave Salo – Blue Ribbon, Silver Metal, Trystan Van Nuland – Mentor Marty Hoven – Blue Ribbon, Gold Metal, Specialty Award (CFWEP = money towards next years research), Andie Palagi – Mentor Raj Kasinath – Blue Ribbon, Silver Metal, Justin Gelling – Mentor Dick Gibson – Red Ribbon, Connor Whealon – Mentor Karen Gillespie – Red Ribbon

Project Connects Homeless to Resources

By Rohanna Erin, UM Campus Corps leader

Eager red-shirted volunteers lined the halls of the First United Methodist Church in Missoula on a January morning. This was the third year that several community partners have come together to organize Missoula's Project Homeless Connect. For the five hours that the program ran, the church basement morphed into a one-stop shopping trip for people in need of social services. The stations set up provided people not only with general information about a particular cause or social service, but with solutions to whatever their present situation might be; they could walk away with a bag of canned food, clothing items, hygienic products, free bus passes, a pair of glasses, diapers, etc.

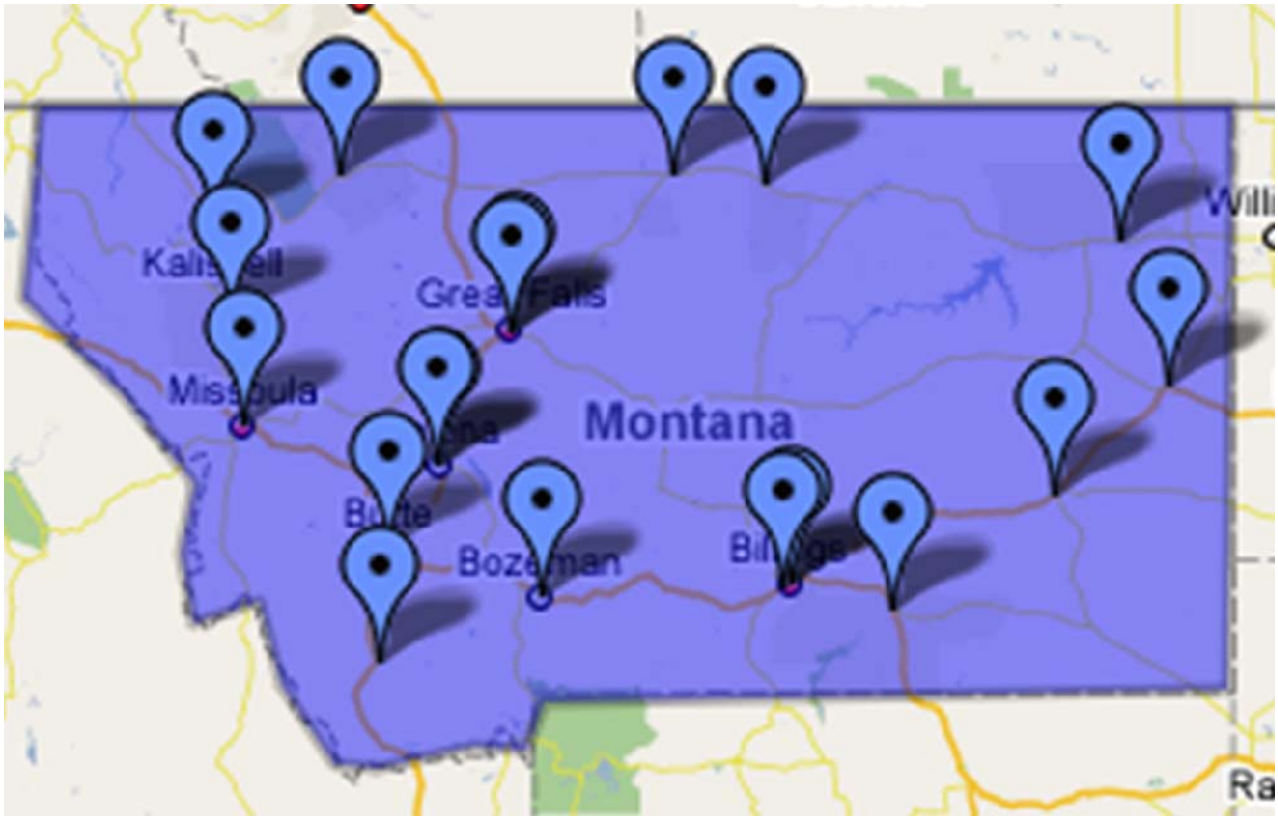
Poverello Center Representative, Kevin Johnson, stood at ease in the narrow hallway where he greeted visitors, sometimes by name, but always with a smile. Kevin paired up volunteers with clients who came seeking anything from information about affordable housing options, to HIV testing, to haircuts. Campus Corps Team Members from UM came in shifts throughout the day, as did several representatives from both the Office for Civic Engagement and the Montana Campus Compact Network Office. Campus Corps Team Member, Alaina Strehlow enjoyed her experience as a volunteer, "It was great even to see what kind of services are out there."

UM's Campus Corps Team Members gathered later that evening to reflect on their experiences for the day. John Parente, who participated for his second year in Project Homeless Connect found the event extremely exciting: "Missoulians from all walks of life came out to show their support, and to do what they can for the homeless population."

Small Population, Big State, and Even Bigger Heart!

Montana, the fourth largest state in the U.S., has a population larger than only six of the other 49 states. To give you an idea of the distances between campuses and service sites in Big Sky country, imagine driving form Portland, ME, to Washington D.C. It's a journey of approximately 545 miles, through many states. Now take the distance from Portland to D.C. and add 20 miles, that distance would take you from the University of Montana in Missoula to Dawson Community College in Glendive, not even from one edge of our great state to the other! As the fourth largest state, Montana is 145, 552 square miles. Comparatively, Rhode Island, our country's smallest state, is 1545 square miles. This means that almost 95 Rhode Islands could fit inside of one Montana. Population of these two states, however, is a different story. According to the 2006 U.S. census, the population of Rhode Island was 1,067,610 while the population of Montana is only 944,632. We have fewer people than even the smallest state in the country, and much greater distances to travel than our AmeriCorps counterparts in other states.

So what does this all mean in terms of service for the state of Montana? It means that rather than being isolated from one another, as would be expected in such a sparsely populated area, Montanans are more civically engaged and more willing to serve their communities. In 2007, the percent of the population that volunteered was 37.8, which is more than 10 percentage points higher than the national average of 26.2 percent. So, fellow Montanans, native or newly arriving, give yourselves a pat on the back for overcoming vast distances and sparsely populated areas to be engaged in service in the great state of Montana!



As shown in the map above, Campus Corps members serve in communities throughout the state, and since we're talking big, Campus Corps is the largest AmeriCorps program in Montana! With over 800 members serving last year alone, Campus Corps had more members than any other individual AmeriCorps program in the state.

Instilling Service in the Next Generation

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is the largest annual celebration of young volunteers, where millions of young people in countries everywhere carry out thousands of community improvement projects. GYSD is an annual global event organized by **Youth Service America** and the **Global Youth Action Network**, together with numerous International Organizations and National Coordinating Committees that celebrates, recognizes, and mobilizes (a) the year-round contributions of young people to build their communities and their world through voluntary service, and (b) the contributions made by the community (public, private, and nonprofit sectors) for empowering young people, especially through mentoring.

Arlee: Students at Arlee High host a free community clothing swap, bring your old clothes, or come find some that are new to you!

Browning: Campus Corps members and students from the local high schools and middle schools will be working together to pick up trash from around the Blackfeet reservation.

Butte: Campus Corps members will be helping out with Little Digger Day, where close to 900 kids come to campus to be college students for a day.

Havre: College and High School students will be holding food drives and then a competition to see who can build the most creative "can-struction" out of the food collected, which will then be donated top the local food bank.

Missoula: High school students and AmeriCorps volunteers will be teaming up to create public garden beds at the Joseph Residence. Volunteers will also be helping the Moon Randolf Homestead prepare for it's annual MayDay festival.

(Continued from p.1) As Campus Corps enters its sixteenth year as an AmeriCorps program, it is essential that constituents re-evaluate the effectiveness of the program—what we currently do well and what we could be doing better. With a student population that changes every year as enrollments rise and academic programs expand, it becomes a priority to educate individuals about the opportunities available via community service programs like Campus Corps. The tremendous popularity and universal acceptance of new marketing technologies, such as web-based social networks, have dramatically changed how we communicate with one another, and how we transmit information. This is especially true for today's college student. If the mission of the program is truly to engage students in meaningful service, then it is necessary to re-define exactly what "meaningful service" is, and how best to engage our target audience. If you're reading this article in the "Campus Corps Connections" newsletter, then you are part of our target audience! Keep an eye out for new branding tools and marketing strategies in the weeks and months ahead. Our goal is to combine new technology with old-fashioned business savvy so that we can effectively share our success stories from the past, as well as find new ways to spread the news about what we're doing and what we hope to accomplish in the future.

Changes to Come

On March 18, 2009, the House of Representatives passed the Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education (GIVE) Act (H.R. 1388). On March 26, the Senate passed an amended version of the bill, renaming it "The Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act," which was passed by the House on March 31. The bipartisan bill reauthorizes the Corporation for National and Community Service and its programs through 2014. representing the largest expansion of national and community service in this country since the 1930's. President Obama is expected to sign the bill into law upon returning from his travels abroad.

Here are just a few things the Act includes:

- Increases full and part-time national service (AmeriCorps and VISTA) opportunities from 75,000 positions to 250,000 positions by 2017.
- Increases the amount of the Segal Education Award to $5,350, with incremental growth over time.
- Increase access to college for millions of Americans by creating more education awards and targeting high-school drop-outs through programming.
- Designates "Campuses of Service" to denote institutional commitment to civic engagement. These select colleges and universities will have special funding authority and opportunities.
- Encourages Americans of all ages (from teens to retiring Boomers) to serve their communities and nation.
- Authorizes a 10-year longitudinal study of the impact of service-learning.
- Improves and expands international service opportunities that take American know-how to troubled regions and help better connect America to the world.