

PERSPECTIVES

The AmeriCorps Accessible Transportation Project Newsletter

January/February 2011



A Message from the Project Director

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”

~ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

As I read through your success stories and service project reflections, it continually struck me that this project is about so much more than simply “accessible transportation.” It is about *heroes*. You, as AmeriCorps members, are wonderful, and in many ways you are heroes to the people you serve (read Amanda Goodwin’s success story later in this newsletter).

But this project, as you know, is not about you, me, or our host sites. It is about the people we serve. Many of them have a disability. Some do not speak English, and

others are elderly. These people are the reason we go to work to make a difference, even on those days when it feels bureaucracy, miscommunication or personalities are never-ending obstacles in our desire to accomplish goals. The people we serve will be the *heroes* of the story that, only partially, ends in August. They are the “face” of our success.

It is important that what we do for others has a lasting, meaningful impact on our community. As a result of this project, we will have not only improved transportation for individuals with disabilities; we will have improved transportation for the community as a whole. Carry this with you as you continue to embark on your AmeriCorps journey.

You are making a difference.

~Monique

“Story: A fact, wrapped in an emotion that compels us to take an action that transforms the world.”

~Robert Dickman

News You Can Use

Quarter Time Members

This is the last quarter you will be able to recruit a quarter-time member to help you accomplish your goals. While recruiting a quarter-time member is optional, it is highly encouraged. Please let me know as soon as possible if you do not foresee recruiting a member (so that we can move that open position to another location around the state).

As a reminder: Quarter Time AmeriCorps Members serve 450 hours and receive a \$1,468 education award upon successful completion of their hours. I have attached a sample job description which was created by AmeriCorps member, Janette Rickman.

I-Way Project Announced

On January 10, 2011, Brooke Green of Community Transportation Association of Idaho (CTAI) requested the services of AmeriCorps members throughout the state to assist with the I-Way Service Provider database project. In the spirit of "Getting Things Done," we have committed to helping CTAI to accomplish their goal in inputting service providers into this online database. This absolutely works toward our goal of better, more efficient, accessible transportation for individuals with disabilities. Our members will be making follow-up phone calls to the providers to remind them to sign up for I-Way and/or offer to assist them in this task. Please be on the lookout for more information. If you have questions/concerns, please contact Monique.

Sign up for I-Way Announcements

If you would like to receive updates on funding, meeting, and other important transportation-related announcements, go to www.i-way.org, scroll down, and click on the blue icon on the left-hand side that says, "Notify Me! Sign up to receive I-Way Communications."

Thank you!

All Quarterly Reports were submitted on time!
I think that deserves a special treat!
Be on the look out!

"I had need of a ride to Craigmont, Idaho to attend the funeral of my aunt, so I called COAST to arrange a ride from Riggins to Craigmont. Linda H. was my driver. She arrived on time and we had a pleasant ride to Craigmont... It would have been impossible for me to attend the funeral without this service. Thank you."

~ Karen M., in a letter to AmeriCorps member Nancy Hoobler of COAST.

Success Stories from AmeriCorps Members

From Amanda Goodwin's Quarterly Progress Report Success Story:

[The International Rescue Committee (IRC)] had a case where an African family that had just moved here two weeks ago needed to learn the bus because they had no other way of getting to their classes. Unfortunately there had already been a bad experience with the bus with the father of the family who has a disability...I met with both Anne and Sabrina [from the IRC] to discuss this family's special case. It was going to be interesting. We had to do this training the very next day and we had to do it with no interpreter. So Wednesday morning Sabrina and I met at the family's apartment. We walked from the apartment to the nearest bus that could take us where we needed to go. It was excruciating watching the father walk with his disability, but he handled it very well...

Our bus was running behind and it was very cold out. As soon as the bus arrived the father seemed apprehensive. I loaded the bus with his very small son and his wife and baby girl followed behind. Once on board I was able to show the father that the bus wasn't so bad. I showed the family how to swipe their monthly passes (with a little assistance from a very polite bus driver) and we sat down for our ride to the mall. By the time we got to IRC the family was elated to have made it all the way there without getting lost. Although they [didn't] speak much English, I was bombarded with thank you's, handshakes, and hugs. In my opinion, my job couldn't be any more rewarding than that.

From Janette Rickman's Quarterly Progress Report Success Story:

I was given a chance to be part of a Disability Mentoring Day in Boise. I was so excited to be involved in this project. It really helped me see firsthand how a project is put together. It was a valuable experience that allowed me to observe things that worked and didn't work when organizing a Disability Mentoring Day....

It was so much fun to see the excitement in [the students'] face and the passion as they spoke about their dream jobs. They were ecstatic to be able to experience what they had only previously imagined doing. One of the students was offered an Internship at one of the employer sites at the end of their mentoring day. I was able to get some great pictures! One of the students was actually able to share them with her friends and family so they could share in her experience.

An employer actually requested to use some of the pictures in furthering their mission for their non-profit organization...It was incredible to listen how this day had affected each student in such a profound way. There was such pride on their faces as they talked about their experiences. I can't wait to implement this same project as one of my main service projects through my host site in the Canyon County area.

*A good story often comes from looking at the familiar
in a new way with new meaning.*

From Ted Roy's Service Project Reflection:

I chose organizing a group outing to see some of the best Christmas lights surrounding Twin Falls, as a shadow project in the spirit of MLK Day's theme "in service to others." My host site, Living Independence Network Corporation (LINC), organized a similar outing the previous year. Laurel, LINC Twin Falls main planner of such events, died very unexpectedly. I wanted to create better memories surrounding this event and the time of year, as a quiet, personal tribute to Laurel's past events I had enjoyed...

We had 34 people RSVP, of which 32 attended, (despite the snow!), therefore, no further marketing/media was needed. A wide range of people, with and without disabilities, children to seniors, participated and had fun ...Everyone boarded the buses, and we were enjoying the lights displayed around town, going to neighborhoods participants suggested. Everyone was talking with one another, on what they saw or liked with the tour...

I learned I can trust in my abilities, and the people I partnered with, and helped to serve that day. When I addressed the group, and apologized for and explained the changes we made—nobody complained or left—they gave me applause instead! I will always remember the blessing of that moment. I felt Laurel would be proud of all of us.

I am a member of AmeriCorps. With this project being such a positive experience, I look forward to "getting things done" with my remaining service.

Deadlines and Calendar Items

January 17, 2011: Martin Luther King Jr. Day. SILC office is closed. "Make it a day ON...Not a day OFF!"



January 18, 2011: Interviews for quarter-time position held at Twin Falls LINC offices.

January 19, 2011: Interviews for Part-time and quarter-time positions held at SILC offices.

January 20, 2011 (3:30 to 5 p.m. MST): Monthly Team Meeting call-in. Call-in instructions will be sent ahead of time.

January 24, 2011 (12 to 2 p.m. MST): Treasure Valley Member Team Meeting. Location TBD.

February 17, 2011 (3:30 to 5 p.m. MST): Monthly Team Meeting call-in. Call-in instructions will be sent ahead of time.

February 21, 2011: President's Day. SILC office is closed.

March 1, 2011 (2 to 3 p.m. MST): I-Way Project Conference Call Follow-up. Call-in instructions will be sent ahead of time.

March 9, 10 and 11, 2011: Serve Idaho Conference at Holiday Inn Boise Airport in Boise

March 15, 2011: Mid-Year Member Performance Evaluations are due to Monique

"The universe is made up of stories, not atoms."

~Muriel Rukeyser