



Campaign To Advance Citizen Service

On Wednesday, March 30, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, in collaboration with Jumpstart and preschool partner Escuelita Boriken, hosted a celebration at the beautiful and historic Jorge Hernandez Cultural Center in Boston's South End. Those in attendance came to celebrate AmeriCorps' tenth anniversary and the kick-off of the Campaign to Advance Citizen Service (State Senate Bill No.1119) sponsored by Senators Marc Pacheco (Taunton) and Brian Lees (Springfield).

Specifically, this legislation maintains Massachusetts' national status as a leader in community service and volunteerism by enabling the state to better coordinate volunteers, utilize funds, improve communication, and identify the needs of the Commonwealth while removing barriers to volunteering and creating new opportunities to serve.

In support of the legislation, honored speakers Senator Edward Kennedy, State Senator Marc Pacheco, and UMass Boston Chancellor J. Keith Motley addressed a crowd of 150 people and highlighted the important role Massachusetts plays throughout the Country as a leader in community service, service-learning, and volunteerism. Senator Kennedy praised the dedication of people involved in successful service programs, such as those where students-in-need are matched with mentors or uninsured citizens are provided access to preventative health care services. He also emphasized the invaluable contribution all volunteers make in their communities. In addition, Senator Pacheco and Chancellor Motley recognized volunteers who have answered the call to protect our city streets and address other critical community needs with their service. From her own personal perspective,

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Dear Friends...



Kristin McSwain
Executive Director

“The nonprofit sector plays a vital role in the State's economy, yet its value is not clearly understood by policy makers and the general public. This lack of understanding affects policy and funding decisions which directly impact the ability of organizations to serve their constituents.”

Recently I have been attending meetings on two issues critical to the service world. The first is the pending retirement of the "Baby Boomers" and the second is the lack of a single voice to advocate for the nonprofit sector. Both, if addressed correctly, have the potential to change the nonprofit sector in Massachusetts and beyond.

I am happy to report that significant progress is being made in each arena by groups of volunteers who have come together to think about, plan, and implement innovative strategies to address each issue area.

Organizations that have gathered to talk about the impending retirement of the "Baby Boomers" and the potential resources that they bring to the table are rethinking the way that volunteer opportunities are structured. Their work builds on that of organizations which have been trying to reframe what it means to volunteer and to provide meaningful service to our communities. Organizations like the Massachusetts Coalition on Vital Aging, Experience Corps, the Massachusetts Intergenerational Network, and many others are producing blueprints for the field on engaging all volunteers in project based, high impact opportunities to serve. These opportunities include traditional direct service with elders, children, and other at-risk populations. But, more importantly, they also include projects that build the capacity of nonprofits through strategic planning, development, board leadership, and financial planning.

On the other end of the spectrum, a group of volunteer leaders in the nonprofit sector have been meeting to reposition the nonprofit sector in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Non-Profit Sector Working Group is a coalition of nonprofit leaders, stakeholders, and practitioners from across the Commonwealth. All agree on the necessity of a statewide effort to develop a "shared" agenda among nonprofit organizations. Why? Simply put, the nonprofit sector plays a vital role in the State's economy, yet its value is not clearly understood by policy makers and the general public. This lack of understanding affects policy and funding decisions which directly impact the ability of organizations to serve their constituents.

The Massachusetts Service Alliance is playing a role in both of these ongoing efforts since each offers tremendous opportunity to expand meaningful service that will strengthen nonprofit organizations operating in our communities. To learn more about how you can be involved, visit www.mass-service.org.

Kristin McSwain

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Vivan Chu, a Senior at UMass Boston and a Jumpstart AmeriCorps member, spoke about the impact her experience as an AmeriCorps member has had on her life. Because of her experience, Chu hopes to graduate from UMass and pursue a job with Jumpstart and the early childhood education field.

Following the event, Senator Kennedy read to a classroom of preschool children at Escuelita Boriken.

The children chose their favorite book, *If You Give a Moose a Muffin*, for the Senator to read to them.

Overall, the event was a huge success and marked the beginning of the Massachusetts Service Alliance's Campaign to Advance Citizen Service across the Commonwealth. For more information on the Campaign and how to lend your support, contact Molly Goggin at 617-542-2544 ext. 220 or mgoggin@mass-service.org.



Name
Samantha Harvey

Program
Habitat for Humanity

Project
Youth United

Volunteer Profile

How did you first get involved with Habitat?

In March of 2004, my class advisor received a letter from Habitat for Humanity Cape Cod concerning the potential interest in a YouthBuild on Cape Cod. As class president, I took it upon myself to respond to the letter. I then attended the first steering committee meeting, where we discussed the possibility of a YouthBuild and the reality behind it. From Sandwich, I recruited 30 students who committed to the project. The steering committee assembled weekly and from those productive meetings stemmed the amazing build on Danvers Way.

What does it feel like to give back to your community?

I was touched on the first day of the build when the woman and her daughter who would be living in the house began crying at the sight of their walls being raised. It was at that moment that I was motivated to con-

tinue contributing my service to this project.

What are your responsibilities as a volunteer?

My service has been primarily planning, fundraising, public relations, and grant writing. Since last spring, I have been an active member of the steering committee. Throughout the summer and the past two seasons, I have helped organize numerous fundraising activities, including a car wash, raffle, and shingle sale. I've also been a speaker at many of our events, helping to teach others about Habitat while recruiting volunteers.

What are you learning by being a part of this program?

I have gained a deeper understanding of the work and time required for a project such as Habitat for Humanity. I am inspired by the caring and dedicated people who put so much of their time and effort into bettering the lives of others.

Students Speak Of Real Change In Essay Contest From Raise Your Voice

The Massachusetts Campus Compact (MACC) challenged students from across Massachusetts and Rhode Island to submit inspiring, creative, and exciting ideas to spark social change as a part of *Real Change*, the student idea contest from *Raise Your Voice*. Students who submitted essays showed that they were not only caring people but also leaders with tremendous potential for creating change. Three students each received \$500 awards to be used in implementing their vision for change. Two of the winners were from Massachusetts. Their essays are printed on the following pages:

Theater for Social Change: A Proposal from the Simmons School of Social Work Theater Group

By: Sara Bursac, a Simmons College student

The curriculum taught in the Simmons School of Social Work is intellectually stimulating and full of theoretical considerations and empirical case studies, but students have found difficulties applying that academic knowledge to concrete situations that arise during their clinical internships. The disjunction between classroom and workplace results in the general absence of guided practical learning that would otherwise enhance students' capacity to effect real change for people of diverse backgrounds and needs.

We are an emerging student organization that uses theater improvisation to practice social work skills and to learn tools that will help us to serve our clients more fully and creatively. We propose to create a two-day interactive theater workshop for 25-30 students and faculty of the Simmons School of Social Work in the 2005-06 academic year.

The intention of the workshop is twofold. Its primary purpose will be to teach students and faculty how to use theater improvisation games and activities as vehicles for addressing challenging social issues both in the classroom and at our internships. Secondly, workshop participants will themselves experience the therapeutic power these theater exercises evoke; throughout the two days, they will be working on creating an improvisational play that will be performed at the close of the second day for the social work community, family, and friends. This play will be an opportunity for participants to creatively examine social, political, familial, economic, and intellectual forces that have shaped their lives.

The creation of a collective story based on improvisation has the potential of giving form and voice to unspoken

thoughts and ideas that can transform both the participants and the audience. The theater group will organize the workshop with consultation from some of our mentors and role models. They are excited by our goals because they parallel their own use of theater as a tool for learning and social change.

We seek basic financial support because we are committed to offering the workshop at no cost to participants. We anticipate that funding will cover the minimal costs to ensure adequate pre-event publicity, pay for some expenses of guest workshop leaders, and provide participants with modest refreshments on both days. We expect to achieve high attendance in light of the excitement and enthusiasm expressed both by members of the faculty and by students at the Simmons School of Social Work.

Finally, our event will give its participants an opportunity to create and share insight, through theatrical interpretation, into the application of classroom materials to real situations.

Remember To Volunteer

The snow is gone and the leaves are on the trees. It's time to think about cook-outs, days at the beach, and vacations from work and school. As you make your plans for the summer months, don't forget to schedule time to improve your community through service and volunteerism. Many local organizations and groups, like the ones listed here, would benefit from your time and talent...

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Unique: A Food and Nutrition Program: West End House Boys and Girls Club (WEHBGC)

By: Tracy MacIntosh, Tufts University student

Rates of [people who are] overweight have been dramatically increasing in the United States during the past four decades. The Centers for Disease Control report a 45% increase among children and teenagers ages 6-19 who are overweight. Two of the most important factors are lack of physical activity and poor nutritional choices.

As a nutrition and public health student at Tufts University, I recognize that many teenagers lack the culinary or knowledge skills to select and make healthy foods. As a result, I created Unique - a weekly food and nutrition class for teens - with the support of WEHBGC in Allston-Brighton. Many of these teens come from financially disadvantaged and single-parent homes where they make a lot of their own food choices, emphasizing the need for these teens to be aware of nutrition and health issues.

Unique aims to engage teens in relevant nutrition and health issues, empower them to make more informed food and lifestyle choices, and teach practical and complementary culinary skills. We share the knowledge youth currently possess regarding healthy food choices, discuss nutrition, impart diet assessment tools, and teach youth survival cooking: how to read recipes and prepare simple meals. The name of the program, Unique, reinforces that

although we should all aim for balanced diets, be physically active, and strive for a healthy lifestyle, every individual is unique and should not try to conform to an "ideal" body shape or image.

I began the program in September 2004 and have continued to develop and improve the curriculum and focus to interest teenagers and motivate them to make changes in their food choices. I have been working closely with the WEHBGC staff to ensure that Unique is integrated with existing teen programs and meets the overall goals and objectives of the organization. Some of the themes and activities during the fall included a supermarket scavenger hunt, "beverage wars" (comparing soda to home-made smoothies and other drinks), "eggs-travaganza" (egg nutrition and recipes), and fruit and vegetable week. I strive to make each week as teen-centered and interactive as possible, instead of teaching "at" the teens.

In addition to food and nutrition, we also discuss some of the current nutrition research areas at Tufts University, and introduce teens to a range of nutrition and health professions and how they may one day work to improve the nutritional status of their community. So, while working to improve the nutritional choices that participants make today, the program also seeks to expose participants to careers and jobs in the fields of nutrition and community health which may inspire them to consider these opportunities in the future.

Given that Unique has been running for four months, it is evident that this project is realistic, relevant to teens, and sustainable. I feel that Unique aligns well with the goals and expectations of Real Change. The goal of the Real Change program is to help students build stronger communities and societies, and I believe that working with youth at the community level on food and nutrition issues, including obesity prevention, is crucial to building a stronger and healthier community.

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Senior Centers

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out specific opportunities in your area, visit...

www.mass-service.org

Light Shines Brightly On Local Volunteers Who Serve Their Community

Governor Mitt Romney and the Massachusetts Service Alliance are proud of the most recent recipients of the Governor's Points of Light Award. Established in 2001, this award honors individuals who have made a lasting impact in their communities through service and volunteerism. To learn more, or to obtain a nomination form, visit www.mass-service.org or call 617-542-2544 ext. 220.

March 2005

Dr. Constance Delgizzi a retired physician, holds weekly lab experiments and demonstrations for sixth-graders in Avon Public Schools. Her visits spark the students' interests and challenge them to explore the world of science.

April 2005

Dr. Karen Kolarik provides chiropractic care to the homeless and needy people of Boston as one of the founding doctors of the Boston Benevolent Chiropractic Clinic. Since its inception in 1995, the clinic has treated over 9,000 people with a staff of 70 volunteer doctors.

May 2005

Michael Grandfield, chairman of the Agawam Cultural Council, has been instrumental in promoting the Arts by revitalizing the free Summer Concert Series and promoting a "First Friday" series that brings performances to different venues throughout the school year. Thanks to his leadership, these events draw a large audience as well as local and national acts.

June 2005

Willard "Beaver" Bard has been a volunteer little league baseball coach in the town of Adams for over fifty years.

He has dedicated his life to being a positive influence on the local children. He is truly a great friend and mentor to not only the young people he coaches, but to the community as a whole.

Shown Below (l-r): Recent Governor's Points of Light Award recipients Dr. Constance Delgizzi, Dr. Karen Kolarik, and Michael Grandfield.



Tutoring Plus Volunteers Provide Outstanding Service

Volunteers are the mainstay for the underserved youth in Tutoring Plus programs in the Cambridge Area 4 Neighborhood. Each evening, throughout the school year, volunteers serve as personal tutors and role models to approximately 100 children enrolled in grades one through twelve.

Jason Gatoff, a research analyst at AMR, has been a volunteer tutor since November 2001. His dedication and commitment has allowed him to follow the same students from fourth- to eighth-grade. Often Jason volunteers two evenings per week and has built lasting relationships not only with his students, but also with their families.

Some Tutoring Plus' volunteers are newer to their community service. Laurie Backall is a development assistant at Brandeis University and brings her energy and enthusiasm to students and fellow tutors on the evenings she volunteers. Since joining the middle school program in September 2004, she has become a favorite of students.

"We are fortunate to work with hundreds of volunteers and yet, each year certain ones stand out for their commitment, enthusiasm, and ability to connect with the students and fellow tutors," said Nikki Fyfield, director of Tutoring Plus Programs. "Both Jason and Laurie have taken their roles as volunteers a step further, thus strengthening Tutoring Plus' programs."

These two volunteers have helped orient and mentor new volunteer tutors and are currently working with Tutoring Plus staff to design a new training program for volunteers. To find out about Tutoring Plus volunteer opportunities, visit www.tutoringplus.org.

Dance Classes Keep Teens In-Shape And Improve Self-Images

Sociedad Latina volunteer Mei Ver De La Cruz shares her love for dance by teaching Belly Dancing to teenage girls. On the surface, it looks like a great way for youth to keep their shape; however, there is a deeper meaning to this class.

Mei and Sociedad's Youth Development Specialist Casandra Clark Mazariegos use dance to target issues that are critical to young women's development and self-image. The program's goals are to raise the self-esteem of its students and explore the social issues involving their physical appearance.

"We are very fortunate to have such a committed and knowledgeable person working with us," said Mazariegos.

"Mei truly understands and believes in the importance of youth development through the Arts. It's the creativity and dedication of people like Ms. De La Cruz that keeps our community thriving."

The program's curriculum also features class discussions on how beauty is portrayed in the mass media, the family's role in building self-esteem, and ways to avoid negative behavior patterns that defeat a positive self-image. Mei has been performing Middle Eastern dance for five years and has taught women and girls of all ages. Sociedad Latina is one of the oldest Latino community organizations in Boston. For more information about its dance classes, call 617-442-4299 or visit www.sociedad-latina.org.

Generations Incorporated Volunteer Reaches Out To Roxbury Students

A widow by age 20, Ellen Kelley raised her daughter and worked for 30 years in nursing. After retiring, she responded to a newspaper ad from Generations Incorporated seeking senior volunteers to be trained as reading coaches. She was assigned to second- and third-graders at the Nathan Hale Elementary School in Roxbury.

"The story I like to tell is about my little man, Herbie" stated Kelley. "He just had a terrible time. He didn't want to come for tutoring. He was literally on the floor screaming, 'No, no, they think I'm stupid. I don't want to come.' I finally got him to join me and Herbie turned out to be just wonderful. He accomplished a great deal and he developed a sense of self that was just marvelous. He did well in school and they tell me that he did well in many other subjects, not only his reading."

Volunteers tend to get attached to the children they tutor. Often these young people open up about things that are going on in their lives. They talk about home situations that are less than ideal. As a tutor, Kelly makes sure not to make the child feel embarrassed or odd for his/her predicament. She realizes that sometimes these children just need someone who will listen to their stories.



Ellen Kelley tutors student Dale Cooper.

"This is a great opportunity for seniors to inspire young lives and get them to look ahead to what awaits in the future," Kelley added.

Generations Incorporated is a 13-year-old, nonprofit organization that unites youth and older adults in service to strengthen communities. To learn more, call 617-423-6633.

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Pictured (l-r): Governor Mitt Romney; Kristin McSwain, Massachusetts Service Alliance; and Harris Parnell, Massachusetts Community Water Watch, pick up trash along the "banks of the River Charles" during the 6th Annual Charles River Clean Up.

MASSACHUSETTS CONFERENCE ON SERVICE & VOLUNTEERISM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2005

This conference is designed to bring together practitioners from public, private, and nonprofit organizations throughout the Commonwealth that use service and volunteerism as a strategy to strengthen communities. Conference brochures will be available in July at www.mass-service.org.

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