Volunteers lending a hand and celebrating National Volunteer Week during an MSA-supported project at Sharing the Harvest Community Farm at the Dartmouth YMCA.
Dear Friends of MSA,

This year marks MSA’s 25th anniversary. For twenty-five years, the Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) has been a national leader in service and volunteerism. With strong partnerships with the state and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), over the years MSA has been able to support thousands of people engaged in service and volunteerism, meeting critical needs in the Commonwealth. Our start pre-dates the formation of CNCS or AmeriCorps. We were founded in 1991 by a group of people dedicated to advancing youth service opportunities in the Commonwealth. The programs these service visionaries represented became some of the earliest AmeriCorps programs and the backbone of the national service movement.

When AmeriCorps was launched by President Clinton in 1994, MSA was one of the first state commissions to take up the charge. We swore in 600 AmeriCorps members on Boston Common that year. In 2007, with the launch of the Commonwealth Corps program, Massachusetts became the first state to have a state supported Corps-based program focused exclusively on state residents. Last year, there were over 1,500 corps members serving in Massachusetts through MSA’s support at 15 Commonwealth Corps host sites and 23 AmeriCorps State programs and over 6,750 people volunteered through National Days of Service and the Youth Development Volunteer Initiative.

As you read through our annual report you will see the broad impact MSA’s support has upon organizations and communities in the Commonwealth through volunteers’ and corps members’ service and you will hear from some of the members about how service has transformed their lives. We know that service transforms the Commonwealth and we look forward to partnering with you for the next 25 years of addressing issues in the Commonwealth through service and volunteerism.

Emily Haber  Barbara Moffat
CEO   Board Chair
The Massachusetts Service Alliance (MSA) prides itself on being on the forefront of the National Service movement — from cultivating key partnerships with national service champions, to developing innovative Corps-based program models that address unmet community needs, to expanding ways we support our state’s volunteer infrastructure.

Employers of National Service — In 2015, MSA joined nearly 400 members of the Employers of National Service initiative, which connects AmeriCorps and Peace Corps alumni with employers from the private, public, and nonprofit sectors. The initiative is a win-win for the job market — employers have increased access to a dedicated, highly qualified pool of potential employees while alumni have additional opportunities to apply their skills in the workplace.

Growing Partnership with America’s Service Commissions — MSA values its strong partnership with America’s Service Commissions (ASC), the national association of state service commissions. Made up of more than 1,110 commissioners, ASC has a strong focus on advancing national service policy. MSA’s CEO Emily Haber serves on the ASC board while she and other MSA staff participate on ASC committees including Public Policy and Strategic Planning.

Service Exchange — Massachusetts is a founding state for the Service Year Exchange, a technology platform for young people seeking service positions; organizations seeking corps members; and funders who want to support these efforts. MSA is working closely with its AmeriCorps programs to support their participation on the exchange.

“The people of Massachusetts have a strong sense of community, translating into a bold culture of service to meet local needs. When you give freely of your time — mentoring a student, cleaning a park or teaching a skill — you are setting an example that will inspire others to join you in giving back. Lt. Governor Polito and I appreciate all that AmeriCorps and Commonwealth Corps members and volunteers are doing to support our citizens, and strengthen our cities and towns.”

—Governor Charlie Baker
MSA formed a partnership with the United Way of Greater New Bedford and the United Way of Cape Cod and the Islands in Fall 2014 to identify a cohort of organizations within those two regions to offer the nationally recognized Service Enterprise Certification program. Eleven organizations participated in Service Enterprise, which included intense volunteer program evaluation, 20+ hours of training, and individualized coaching — with the goal of being certified as a Service Enterprise. A Service Enterprise is an organization that leverages volunteers and their skills to successfully deliver on the social mission of the organization. The United Way of Greater New Bedford not only identified a cohort of organizations in its community, it participated in the certification training, as well.

The United Way of Greater New Bedford is a leader in promoting volunteerism on the South Coast. As a member of the first Service Enterprise cohort on the South Coast, the United Way has increased its capacity by looking at and updating its own internal policies and procedures surrounding volunteers, developed continuous recognition strategies, and empowered more volunteers to take on leadership roles. All of these steps taken during the Service Enterprise process will ensure volunteers are getting the best experience possible when volunteering with the United Way.

Embarking on their second cohort in 2016, United Way hopes to increase the capacity of other organizations working with volunteers in Greater New Bedford. Being able to offer this additional service to other local organizations has allowed United Way to strengthen and extend the network of non-profits within its community while encouraging other organizations to collaborate with one another around the topic of volunteerism.

“The Service Enterprise Initiative proved to be a terrific opportunity for WE CAN. The training allowed us to bring several volunteers and staff to learn about different aspects of the effort, thus involving those with a range of expertise and engaging them to invest in the process. However, the big payoff has been the work we are involved in to improve different aspects of our volunteer program with support and technical assistance. The outcome has been exciting throughout the organization!”

— Andi Genser, Executive Director, WE CAN (Cape Cod, 2014-2015 Service Enterprise cohort)
In the 2014-2015 program year, the Commonwealth Corps provided 35 diverse individuals of all ages and backgrounds an opportunity to rebuild communities and address unmet community needs while developing their own skills, leadership, and passion for service. Corps members provided direct service, built organizational capacity, increased volunteerism, and positively impacted Massachusetts residents. Buzzards Bay Coalition was one of 15 host site partners to benefit from the Commonwealth Corps.

Rob Hancock, VP Community Engagement at Buzzards Bay Coalition describes the impact Commonwealth Corps members have had on the organization: “When it comes to measuring just how much our Commonwealth Corps members have helped us increase our capacity, the numbers are easy to quantify. During the 2014-2015 service year, our members transformed the volunteer orientation process in our department, helping us recruit or manage 27 community volunteers who, in turn, provided 1,420 hours of service. In addition, the members created curricula and engaged teachers in order to provide outdoor exploration programs for 2,600 students across the Buzzards Bay watershed. Students searched for shells on a beach, found critters on the forest floor, or dug in the mud of a marsh for mussels and crabs. All things they would have never done during school without the Commonwealth Corps.

What is harder to measure, but perhaps more important, is the way in which our members’ energy, creativity and commitment to service has built our capacity to serve our community. They have inspired our staff, energized our constituents, and helped build stronger ties throughout our community.”

MSA established the Youth Development Volunteer Initiative (YDVI) in Spring 2015 to support youth-serving organizations across the Commonwealth and their efforts to recruit, retain, manage and support increased numbers of volunteers. Emmaus was one of 10 recipients of the YDVI grant.

Through MSA’s support under the Youth Development Volunteer Initiative, Emmaus launched Emmaus Explorers, a summer enrichment program for school-aged homeless youth living at the Emmaus House family shelter in Haverhill, MA.

The program provided these youth with a safe, positive space for educational and social development and the opportunity to improve their math and reading skills, build rockets while learning about space, participate in Olympics Day events, learn how to make nutritious snacks, visit the zoo, and more.

The initial success of the program and additional funding from MSA, allowed Emmaus to expand Emmaus Explorers to include after school programming in both the fall and spring. During 2015, Emmaus Explorers served 50 children from 34 families living in emergency shelter. Additionally, the program allowed them to build relationships with community partners and develop a strong base of dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers from which to draw for future youth programming. Through the summer and fall sessions of Emmaus Explorers, Emmaus partnered with 13 community organizations and engaged 73 volunteers in over 1,200 hours of service.

Emmaus looks forward to future partnerships with MSA, as well as the continuation of the successful Emmaus Explorers program.

“The Service Enterprise Initiative proved to be a terrific opportunity for WE CAN. The training allowed us to bring several volunteers and staff to learn about different aspects of the effort, thus involving those with a range of expertise and engaging them to invest in the process. However, the big payoff has been the work we are involved in to improve different aspects of our volunteer program with support and technical assistance. The outcome has been exciting throughout the organization!”

— Andi Genser, Executive Director, WE CAN (Cape Cod, 2014-2015 Service Enterprise cohort)
Service Transforms

**COMMUNITIES**

- 505 individuals received job training/skill development services and job placement services
- 21,575 youth served through National Days of Service (MLK Day of Service & National Volunteer Week)
- 13,421 students demonstrated gains in academic performance, school readiness and/or school engagement

**ORGANIZATIONS**

- 23 AmeriCorps organizations supported
- 15 Commonwealth Corps organizations supported
- 32 Service Enterprise organizations supported
- 5 Service Enterprise organizations certified

**ORGANIZATIONS**

- 27 National Days of Service organizations supported
- 844 acres of parks and other public lands were improved
- 1,748 individuals received training in environmentally conscious and energy efficient practices
- 92 housing units were made available for low-income individuals, families, or people with disabilities

**YOU**

- 1,397 AmeriCorps and Commonwealth Corps members served
- 4,344 volunteers engaged through National Days of Service (MLK Day of Service & National Volunteer Week)
- 2,347 volunteers engaged in the Youth Development Volunteer Initiative, including 118 youth volunteers

**YOU**

- 206 organizations participated in the Massachusetts Conference on Service & Volunteerism
- 103 miles of trails or waterways were improved
- 663 individuals were transitioned to safe, healthy, and affordable housing
- 472 individuals received housing services
- 10 units of veterans’ housing benefited from rehabilitation services

ALL DATA IS FROM 2014-2015 PROGRAM YEAR
One of the best parts about the Tenacity Program are the AmeriCorps Fellows. They serve in ELA classrooms during the day and support instructional time with students after school. The students look up to the Fellows and see them as mentors. We feel lucky to partner with Tenacity and have this added support from AmeriCorps.

—Katie Grassa, Principal, Curley K-8 School

During the 2014-2015 program year, over 1,300 AmeriCorps State members answered the nation’s call to service by addressing critical needs in the Commonwealth. Full and part-time members spent one year performing intensive service in the areas of academic enrichment, disaster preparedness and response, land conservation, mentoring, citizenship assistance, legal services and housing.

SCA Massachusetts AmeriCorps program is a residential community of emerging leaders who devote 5 or 10 months to full-time environmental education and conservation service. This year 26 Corps members, age 18-25, came from across the U.S. to provide over 40,000 hours of direct service to the lands and people of Massachusetts, by mentoring local youth through in-school and after-school environmental education programs, serving as Corps members in local conservation organizations and state programs, and carrying out significant natural resource protection and conservation projects throughout the Commonwealth. Celebrating its 18th year of service, the SCA Massachusetts AmeriCorps program is a partnership between the Student Conservation Association, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Corporation for National and Community Service.

SCA Massachusetts AmeriCorps members receive over 250 hours of training in Environmental Education and Conservation Service skills, including chainsaw and Griphoist certifications. Additionally, members participate in extensive communication, leadership, and professional development training.

In the 2014-2015 program year, Corps members engaged 1,748 students in environmental education and made significant conservation impacts on 96.5 miles of trails and 28.5 acres of land, including the construction of 62 timber bridges, 208 rock and timber stairs, and 220 feet of stone and timber retaining walls.
“I cannot imagine having done the 826 Book Project without our Commonwealth Corps Member Rachel. She managed to stitch her signature positivity and focus onto every aspect of the program — from helping students brainstorm lists of essay topics, to encouraging that one reluctant writer to get that pencil moving across the line, to dealing with the inevitable and unavoidable problems that tend to arise in long-term projects (e.g., Boston winter 2015). She organized volunteers, balanced multiple schedules, led the recruitment and training for the Student Editorial Board, and managed endless other threads that all resulted in the gorgeous and important anthology, *Things Will Get Better & More Delicious: Stories From Our Lives So Far.* The students loved her!”

— Jennifer De Leon, Educator and Author, whose class at the Boston Teachers Union School were among the 1,500 plus BPS students that the 2 full-time 826 Boston Commonwealth Corps Members helped the agency reach across the city supporting students with their creative and expository writing skills and helping teachers inspire their students to write.

Tenacity brings dedicated individuals together for 12 months of full-time AmeriCorps service. Members serve in six Boston Public Schools with Tenacity’s Middle School Academy where they deliver engaging daily programming including literacy and fitness/tennis while developing life skills and fostering family engagement. As a part of their service in 2014-2015, AmeriCorps members led students in 388 events and trips, made over 2,000 phone calls home and engaged 215 additional volunteers.

Middle Schoolers can be a hard audience but our AmeriCorps members build deep relationships with them. AmeriCorps Member Gabriela Cohen wrote, “A breakthrough moment was the work I did with Jose. Jose had poor grades and didn’t like doing homework. I worked with him every day and talked with his parents. In tennis he became one of the best 6th graders in our program, this influenced his confidence and his grades started to rise. The thing that sticks with me the most was when he got an A in E.L.A. That, to me, meant everything.”

Our 28 Tenacity AmeriCorps Members finish the school year and turn to Tenacity’s Summer Tennis and Reading program where they supervise junior counselors and delight Boston children 6-16 with summer games and reading under trees. All totaled Members served 4,194 Boston youth and served 52,635 hours.

“One of the best parts about the Tenacity Program are the AmeriCorps Fellows. They serve in ELA classrooms during the day and support instructional time with students after school. The students look up to the Fellows and see them as mentors. We feel lucky to partner with Tenacity and have this added support from AmeriCorps.”

— Katie Grassa, Principal, Curley K-8 School
For two years, I served as a DIAL/SELF AmeriCorps Member with Youth Action Coalition in the Pioneer Valley of Western MA. During my service terms I had the opportunity to practice my values and explore my interests in youth work and education. As a young person who identified with the LGBTQ community, I wanted to serve as a mentor and strengthen community to support marginalized youth. In my role, I supported social justice art-enrichment programming for youth, facilitated trainings for interns and peer leaders, led teambuilding activities and coordinated creative events to bring together youth from different programs and schools.

Through this experience I learned about Positive Youth Development: all youth have strengths and assets, and when provided supports and opportunities youth can thrive. I gained a deeper understanding of different learning styles and intelligences, and the importance of recognizing youth contributions and encouraging participation. As an AmeriCorps Member, I had the opportunity to support youth engagement in learning and creative self-expression. I collaborated with other Corps members on a Team Service Project, using an asset-based framework to activate community resources through a series of arts workshops with youth in Springfield.

The AmeriCorps Member Coordinator position with DIAL/SELF opened up towards the end of my service term and I proudly rejoined the program as a staff member. I feel invested in and committed to this work, and I know that I will continue to build inclusive and accessible learning environments as well as opportunities for strengthening community connection.

This service was a transformative experience as it helped me build confidence in myself, connected me with community, and led me right into a meaningful job where I continue to apply and improve my skills and knowledge in youth work.
Kassmin Williams

As a recent graduate who studied journalism at the time, there were things I appreciated and enjoyed about being a newspaper reporter. However, I was often left with the sense that I wanted to be doing more. It wasn’t enough for me to just tell the story or spread the news, I longed to be a part of the story in some way. Serving with Commonwealth Corps provided me with the opportunity to do this.

When I learned about the opportunity to serve as an Academic Coach at School on Wheels of Massachusetts (SOWMA), I was already involved with the organization as a volunteer tutor. I appreciated SOWMA’s mission to support young people who are impacted by homelessness reach their full potential. More so, I was happy to be a part of an organization that was providing this great service in Brockton, the community I call home. I became attracted to the idea of joining Commonwealth Corps because the opportunity allowed me to become more involved with SOWMA and in my community in a way that also provided a rare chance for me to focus on my own professional development.

During my year of service with Commonwealth Corps, I felt like a valuable member of the team at SOWMA and well supported by MSA. My experience serving with SOWMA and the focus on development and reflection provided by MSA motivated me to apply to graduate school and take on a second year of service through AmeriCorps.

You

Service Transforms

Commonwealth Corps

FINANCIALS

FY2015 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENT (JULY 2014– JUNE 2015)

Operating Revenues:

Grants and contracts:
Federal  10,725,769
State   1,281,768
Conference fees and other 66,679
Contributions  6,630
Total operating revenues 12,080,846

Operating Expenses:

Program services:
AmeriCorps  10,979,103
Commonwealth Corps 540,666
Volunteer Generation Fund 185,108
General and administrative 405,487
Total operating expenses 12,110,364

Changes in unrestricted net assets from operations  (29,518)
Net Investment Income 40,664
Changes in unrestricted net assets 11,146
Unrestricted Net Assets (Beginning of year) 1,674,579
Unrestricted Net Assets (End of year) $1,685,725

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July Afable
Manager of Accounting & Finance

Susie Flug
Commonwealth Corps
Program Manager

Steve Gallucci
Chief Financial Officer

Emily Haber
Chief Executive Officer

Lisl Hacker
Manager of Training and Technical Assistance

Maura Hackett
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Senior Program Officer

Rachel Liebermann
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Shana Lathrop
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Lindsay Rooney
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Elizabeth Way
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