



January/ February
2007

We are prone to judge success by the index of our salaries or the size of our automobiles, rather than by the quality of our service relationship to humanity.
-Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The Volunteer Centers of Michigan announces the launch of its new website. Check it out online at www.mivolunteers.org.

Volunteer Centers of Michigan's New Face

The Volunteer Centers of Michigan is proud to announce the launch of our new website. The site has been developed to assist in our ongoing mission of strengthening, developing and connecting volunteer centers throughout the state. Check back often, as resources and stories will continue to be updated, offering your center cutting edge tools and ideas with which you can better serve your community. Also, consider sharing your best practices stories and innovative ideas online to collectively advance and develop programs throughout Michigan.

Earned Income Tax Credit

Did you know that through the Earned Income Tax Credit, over \$32 billion in funding is available for low-income working families, and 20% of those eligible for this support are not aware of it? Or that millions of taxpayers, including low-income families, spend \$2 billion on commercial tax preparers every year?

Through partnerships with local non-profits volunteer centers can effectively reach out to non-filers and those who currently resort to paid tax providers and provide financial services that will significantly increase the resources in the hands of low-income families. Volunteer centers can also play a role in recruiting tax preparers and establishing Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Centers in their communities.

Ramando Gee is Michigan's IRS Territory Manager. For a list of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites in your area, contact his office by phone at 313-628-3700 or through email at Ramando.Gee@irs.gov. The Territory Manager's office can connect you to IRS staff, EIC outreach materials, VITA trainings or VITA site supervisors, and help plan future efforts. The Territory Manager, or their staff, can also help you set up new VITA sites and train VITA volunteers.

EITC programs are committed to supporting and improving the lives of children and families by engaging volunteers more effectively in the efforts of [local tax coalitions](#) statewide. This website provides you with the information and resources you need to become a key EITC partner. Tax season begins soon after the New Year and now is the time to get involved in this initiative.

January- National Mentoring Month

Be on the look out for an email from the MCSC on National Mentoring Month. The email will highlight what initiatives will be taking place in Michigan and also list out each Mentoring Organization and Collaborative in our state registered with Mentor Michigan. I encourage our network members to connect with programs in their local communities and see how they can help in the effort to encourage more individuals to volunteer as mentors.





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Resources & Opportunities

A Lion in the House Community Service Grants

Youth Service America is proud to offer grants of \$300, designed for youth (ages 12-25) and youth-serving organizations (schools, youth groups, clubs, etc.) to design service projects addressing pediatric cancer. Projects should be youth-led and take place as part of National and Global Youth Service Day, April 20-22, 2007. Deadline: February 1, 2007. To learn more, visit <http://www.ysa.org/awards>.

Disney Minnie Grants

Disney and Youth Service America (YSA) are pleased to announce grants of up to \$500 to support youth-led service projects. These grants support youth in planning and implementing service projects in their community. Teachers, older youth, youth-leaders, and youth-serving organizations are also eligible to apply, provided that they that engage younger youth in planning and implementing the service event. Deadline January 24, 2007. To learn more, visit <http://www.YSA.org/awards>.

Washington Youth Voice Handbook

CommonAction is excited to announce the availability of the brand-new Washington Youth Voice Handbook. This 150+ page publication provides a clear map to the essentials of Youth Voice, including "What, Why, Where, When, and How" Youth Voice happens in diverse communities across Washington State. More than 50 programs, schools, and organizations are featured. To learn more, visit <http://www.commonaction.org/publications.htm>.

Technology Resources

Register your MLK event online

The Corporation for National and Community Service has recently launched My MLK Day. My MLK Day is an online tool for those organizing Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service projects to register their projects, manage volunteers, and report results. Individuals may search for volunteer opportunities with registered MLK Day Projects. To learn more, visit <http://my.mlkday.gov/default.aspx>

Web Based Reporting System

The Volunteer Centers of Michigan's web based reporting system is up and running! In an effort to encourage your participation in reporting your data, VCM is holding incentive drawings on a monthly basis. Every center that completes reporting will have their name placed in a drawing for a \$60.00 gift certificate to the 2007 Michigan Nonprofit SuperConference, being held May 15 & 16 at the Lansing Center. There will be another drawing on January 17, 2007. Eligible centers will have their first quarter reports completed; an additional drawing will be held on February 1, 2007 with the eligibility criteria being those who have reported all 6 months. Please take the time to fill out your report by visiting <http://www.grandnet.org/wip/mivolunteers/>.

Calendar of Events

January 15- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
<http://www.mlkday.org/>

January 17- VCM Executive Committee Conference Call
10:00-11:30 a.m.

January 22- Volunteer Center Conference Call: Governance
Passing the Torch 10:00-11:30 a.m.

January 23- Volunteer Center Conference Call: Governance
Passing the Torch 3:00- 4:30 p.m.

February 8/9- Institute: Service Learning and Civic Engagement
Join faculty, staff, and administrators from higher education and K-12 institutions from across Michigan for this practical, interactive, and stimulating Institute on Service-Learning and Civic Engagement.
Schoolcraft College, Livonia Michigan
<http://www.micampuscompact.org/institute07.asp>

February 9- Grape Expectations, Volunteer Center of Greater Kalamazoo 7:00-10:00 p.m. For more information email Judy Huth at jhuth@volunteerkalamazoo.org.



Your Volunteer Center Could Be Famous!

Does your Volunteer Center have a great story or event planned for the MLK day of Service? Submit your photos and stories to the Volunteer Centers of Michigan and you could be featured in future editions of this resource and other publications of the ConnectMichigan Alliance. Submit best practice articles and pictures for the March issue to Brandon Seng, no later than February 15, at bseng@connectmichiganalliance.org

Tell us what you think! Send your feedback on this newsletter to Brandon at bseng@connectmichiganalliance.org.