



November/ December
2006

*"The best way to
find yourself, is to
lose yourself in the
service of others."
-Gandhi*



Volunteer Center Volunteer
takes time to instill in others
her joy of reading.

Volunteer Centers of Michigan AmeriCorps*VISTA Program

The Points of Light Foundation & Volunteer Center National Network, through a generous award from the Corporation for National and Community Service, has established a Strengthening Communities initiative that will engage VISTA members placed at Volunteer Centers across the country. An integral part of The Strengthening Communities AmeriCorps*VISTA Initiative in Michigan focuses on Youth at Risk.

Leading into the third and final year of the Points of Light Foundation's AmeriCorps* VISTA program, there are still opportunities for Volunteer Centers to become involved hosting a VISTA focused on Youth at Risk, EITC, Homeland Security and Disaster Preparedness or Family Strengthening and Grassroots/Faith based Organizations. Please be on the lookout for more information from the Points of Light Foundation. If you would like to request information please contact Molly Hilligoss, VCM VISTA at 517-492-2455 or through email at mhilligoss@mivolunteers.org

Regional Meetings

The VCNN Council has recommended sites for the Spring 2007 Regional Meetings. Our region, the Midwest, is scheduled to meet in Chicago. The timeframe for the regional meeting dates will run from February 26-April 30, 2007. Every effort will be made to ensure no conflicting volunteer-related events.

The Council also identified initial items for the Regional Meeting agenda: Volunteer Center Reception Training, Strategic Communications Training and Feedback on FY 2008 Strategic Operating Plan are all included. Be on the look out for information on confirmed locations, dates and key agenda items in early November 2007 from the POLF. Keep in mind that this is a wonderful opportunity for our VCM Directors to meet other directors from the Midwest. Chicago is easy to get to via car or train, and the POLF usually provides some level of support to attendees. Consider putting this on you planning schedule and look for colleagues to share the ride down and over night accommodations with. The networking opportunities presented here are great!

Keep Legislators 'In the Loop'

Advocacy efforts of Volunteer Centers at both the state and national level have increased over the last few years. It is essential that Volunteer Centers inform their legislators about the work they do. The most effective way to accomplish this is to invite state and national Representatives and Senators to visit Volunteer Centers and keep them updated about programs, services, and most importantly, successes. Efforts to engage legislators will go a long way toward building Volunteer Centers' credibility as indispensable community assets. Remember when communicating with state level elected officials, to mention the impact of the Volunteer Investment Grant to your center and local community.

VOLUNTEER CENTERS OF
MICHIGAN 



United Way Day of Caring Volunteer Lisa Grudzinski participates in her community's Extreme Makeover.

Resources & Opportunities

Youth Venture Program

Youth Service America and the Youth Venture Program have partnered to create a program for young people who want to form new sustainable, civic minded organizations. The program provides resources as well as up to \$1,000 for start up costs. The Youth Venture Program application deadline is December 18, 2006. More information about this opportunity can be found at www.YSA.org/awards.

Aiken Able-to-Serve Grants

The Bubel/Aiken Foundation and Youth Service America announce grants of up to \$1,000 to support service projects in which youth with and without disabilities serve their communities together. These grants support youth, teachers, youth-leaders, youth-serving organizations, or organizations that serve people with disabilities in creating service projects for National and Global Youth Service Day. The deadline is November 30, 2006 and information is available at www.YSA.org/awards.

Affiliation Update

To date over 130 Volunteer Centers have submitted their affiliation agreements to the POLF. Current members have until December 31, 2006 to submit their agreements. The VCM urges our membership to submit their affiliation material. If we can be of any help please feel free to give us a call. Let us know if you have submitted your materials by e-mailing me at dalgra@mivolunteers.org

Technology Resources

SurveyMonkey.com

Distributing surveys is a great way to get feedback on your affect in the community. Creating and analyzing these surveys, however, can be a complicated process. SurveyMonkey.com is a resource that makes this process easier, and more manageable. Available free to users targeting audiences of less than 100, SurveyMonkey could be your answer to simplifying the survey process. Check it out at <http://www.surveymonkey.com>.

Meeting Wizard

Online innovations like Meeting Wizard are making web conferencing more convenient and effective. Application sharing features allow attendees to see a software application running on an instructor's desktop and even allow the instructor to pass software control to participants. [Http://www.meetingwizard.com](http://www.meetingwizard.com) has more information about using this cutting edge technology for your next online meeting or training.

Calendar of Events

November 7- Election Day

November 9- VCM Quarterly Meeting, 10-4, Connect Michigan Alliance office, Lansing

November 10- Chelsea Community Hospital Annual Recognition Banquet

November 18- Family Volunteer Day
<http://disney.go.com/disneyhand/familyvolunteers/>

November 20- New Vitality Workshop: Strategies to Grow Your Volunteer Program, Southfield
(Learn how to attract and retain today's volunteer from nationally-known trainer and author Nancy McDuff. If you would like to attend and can not afford to cover the cost, VCM will provide up to 10 registration scholarships for members of our association. It will be on a first come first serve bases. Contact dalgra@mivolunteers.org with your request. Deadline for these seats is November 10, 2006.)

December 6- MNA Metro Detroit Office Open House

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



Your Volunteer Center Could Be Famous!

Does your Volunteer Center have a great story or event that took place on National Make a Difference Day? 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 January issue to Brandon Seng, no later than December 15, at bseng@connectmichiganalliance.org

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