



# DPI VISTA Monthly



**Jane Grinde**  
Project Director

**JULY 2008**

**Ruth Anne  
Landsverk**  
Family Education  
Coordinator

If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time.  
But if you have come because your liberation is bound up  
with mine, then let us work together.

**Betsy Prueter**  
VISTA Leader

**Diane Krumm**  
Program Assistant

LILLA WATSON

## SUSTAINABILITY IS NOT A FOUR LETTER WORD



By Betsy Prueter

has been created. But it's a *start*. The work that VISTAs do in terms of continuity, stability, and follow-through may be behind the scenes but it's important to the health and well-being of your programs.

Before you go complete your service, wrap up your projects, and turn in your keys, think about these key questions carefully and critically.

*Who* knows about the VISTA at your site?  
*What* do they know about the VISTA at your site?  
*Who* *needs* to know about the VISTA program?  
*How* will you tell them about the VISTA program-  
what tools and strategies will you use?

To access the Sustainability Webinar from June 25<sup>th</sup> follow these steps:

Go to:  
<https://www.livemeeting.com/cc/wislineweb/view>

--Enter Your Name  
--Recording ID: VISTASustain-080625  
--Recording Key: (Leave Blank)  
--Click View Recording

And don't forget about the Sustainability Worksheet. Put in your binder, hand it off to a staff member, or save it on your computer but whatever you do, also email a copy to Betsy. Your insights and suggestions will help to ease the transition for our new VISTAs!

For those of you who are completing your service in August, sustainability is (hopefully) on your mind. How can I ease the transition for the next VISTA? What has been my impact? What can I do to ensure that my efforts are put to good use?

During our Sustainability Webinar last week we addressed a lot of these questions and you were given suggestions and tips for creating that sustainable infrastructure at your VISTA site.

But it's not that easy is it? It's not just a matter of making a binder and organizing your files. Simply leaving that contact list behind and your own words of wisdom does not ensure that long-term change

# GRANT OPPORTUNITIES



## **CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH GRANTS**

The American Dental Association Samuel Harris Fund for Children's Dental Health Grants Program awards grants to oral health promotion programs designed to improve and maintain children's oral health through community education programs.

Deadline: July 17, 2008.

[http://www.adafoundation.org/ada/prod/adaf/prog\\_access\\_harris.asp#eligibility](http://www.adafoundation.org/ada/prod/adaf/prog_access_harris.asp#eligibility)

## **GRANTS FOR AFTER-SCHOOL MUSIC PROGRAMS**

The Mr. Holland's Opus Special Projects Program provides musical instruments and instrument repairs to existing K-12 school music programs that have no other source of financing to purchase additional musical instruments and materials.

Deadline: August 1, 2008.

[http://www.mhopus.org/app\\_special\\_0.asp](http://www.mhopus.org/app_special_0.asp)

## **EXCELLENCE IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE EDUCATION**

Honors outstanding educators who excite a commitment in their students to the free enterprise system and unleash the entrepreneurial skills of their students at the elementary, junior high school, high school and college level.

Deadline: October 1, 2008.

[http://www.ffvf.org/leavey\\_info.asp](http://www.ffvf.org/leavey_info.asp)

## **RGK FOUNDATION GRANTS FOR EDUCATION**

RGK Foundation awards grants to programs that focus on formal K-12 education (particularly mathematics, science, and reading), teacher development, literacy, and higher education.

<http://www.rgkfoundation.org/guidelines.php#programs>

## **AWARD FOR DESIGN AND EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN SCHOOLS**

KnowledgeWorks Foundation and the American Architectural Foundation seek submissions for the Richard Riley Award, which recognizes design and educational excellence in "schools as centers of community" — schools that serve as centers of community and provide an array of social, civic, recreational, and artistic opportunities to the broader community and to students, often clustering educational and municipal buildings together.

Deadline: July 25, 2008.

<http://www.nationalschoolsearch.org/en/Index.asp>

## **MOTOROLA GRANTS TO COMMEMORATE THE 200TH ANNIVERSARY OF LINCOLN'S BIRTH**

The Motorola Foundation and the Chicago History Museum are commemorating the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth by identifying projects developed by civic, educational and cultural organizations that actively engage the public in lessons from Lincoln's life. The grant program will focus on the themes of Bringing History into the Future, Engaging in Current Events, and Leadership Skills.

Deadline: July 30, 2008.

<http://www.motorola.com/content.jsp?globalObjectid=8772>

## **NWA GRANTS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION IN METEOROLOGY**

National Weather Association Sol Hirsch Teacher Grants are given to improve students' education in meteorology. Teachers selected will be able to use the funds to take an accredited course in atmospheric sciences, attend a relevant workshop or conference, or purchase scientific materials or equipment for the classroom.

Deadline: August 1, 2008.

[www.nwas.org/solhirsch.html](http://www.nwas.org/solhirsch.html)

## **VERIZON GRANTS FOR LITERACY**

The Verizon Foundation is now accepting proposals from eligible institutions for Literacy Grants.

Deadline: November 1, 2008.

<http://foundation.verizon.com/grant/guidelines.shtml>

**MINI-GRANTS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES**

Ezra Jack Keats Mini-grant Program for Public Schools and Public Libraries supports educators, parents and children in their efforts to spread literacy and love of learning.

Deadline: September 15, 2008.

<http://www.ezra-jack-keats.org/programs/minigrant.html>

**GRANTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES**

The Public Welfare Foundation supports organizations that address human needs in disadvantaged communities, with strong emphasis on organizations that include service, advocacy and empowerment in their approach: service that remedies specific problems; advocacy that addresses those problems in a systemic way through changes in public policy; and strategies to empower people in need to play leading roles in achieving those policy changes and in remedying specific problems.

Deadline: August 1, 2008.

<http://www.publicwelfare.org/ApplyGrant/Guidelines.aspx#deadlines>

**RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE GRANTS FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Ronald McDonald House Charities Grants support programs that help children read, provide nutritious after-school meals, offer life-changing surgeries, or help prevent life-threatening disease. Ronald McDonald House Charities Board of Trustees is most interested in national and/or international organizations that have a specific program related to children's health and well-being.

Deadline: September 8, 2008.

<http://www.rmhc.com/rmhc/index/grants.html>

**ACCESS FOR EDUCATORS TO C-SPAN ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE**

The C-SPAN Archives Grants awardees are granted the videotapes of their choice from the extensive collection in the C-SPAN Archives for creative proposals for using the network's programming in the classroom or in research projects. Eligibility: middle and high school teachers, college/university professors.

<http://www.c-span.org/classroom/grants.asp>

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Deadline: July 25, 2008.

<http://www.nationalschoolsearch.org/en/Index.asp>

**NATIONAL GARDENING ASSOCIATION AND HOME DEPOT ANNOUNCE 2009 YOUTH GARDEN GRANTS PROGRAM**

NGA awards Youth Garden Grants to schools and community organizations with child-centered garden programs. In evaluating grant applications, priority will be given to programs that emphasize one or more of the following elements: educational focus or curricular/program integration; nutrition or plant-to-food connections; environmental awareness/education; entrepreneurship; and social aspects of gardening such as leadership development, team building, community support, or service-learning.

Deadline: November 1, 2008.

<http://www.kidsgardening.org/YGG.asp>

**"INCREASE YOUR GREEN" SCHOOL COMPETITION**

Do Something is inviting America's middle and high schools to reduce their carbon footprint this fall through the "Increase Your Green" competition. Students should register their club or school to receive an "Increase Your Green" action guide with tip sheets and materials (i.e., stickers, posters, flyers) to help launch the competition at their schools.

Deadline: December 15, 2008.

<http://www.dosomething.org/increaseyourgreen>

**RICHARD RILEY AWARD TO HONOR STUDENTS THAT SERVE AS CENTERS OF COMMUNITY**

The American Architectural Foundation, in partnership with the KnowledgeWorks Foundation, invites nominations for the Richard Riley Award, which honors K-12 schools that serve as centers of community, demonstrate innovative design ideas, and help to promote student achievement.

Deadline: July 25, 2008.

<http://www.nationalschoolsearch.org/en/Index.asp>

**MOTOROLA CELEBRATES LESSONS FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S LIFE WITH DEDICATED GRANT PROGRAM**

The Motorola Foundation, the philanthropic arm of global communications company Motorola, will partner with the Chicago History Museum to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. Working in collaboration, the groups will identify projects developed by civic, educational, and cultural organizations that actively engage the public in lessons drawn from Lincoln's life.

Deadline: July 30, 2008.

[http://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/ao\\_login.login?x\\_qm\\_id=1505&x\\_proposal\\_type\\_id=10220](http://www.cybergrants.com/pls/cybergrants/ao_login.login?x_qm_id=1505&x_proposal_type_id=10220)

**HOOKEED ON HYDROPONICS**

When children and teens explore how to grow plants hydroponically (without soil), fruitful questions bloom, and these questions can lead to active investigations and problem solving. These studies may even lead to classroom business opportunities or fuel student career interests. Not the least of the benefits is the joy of students harvesting a crop of their own incredible edibles or bounteous blossoms!

Deadline: September 15, 2008.

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants/HOH.asp>

**GRANTS FOR MATH HEROES**

Raytheon's MathMovesU Grants and Scholarships Program rewards real-life "Math Heroes" for their dedication to improving math education and their inspiration of participation in math.

Deadline: July 15, 2008.

<http://www.raytheon.com/stewardship/mmu/gs/index.html>

**TOMMY HILFIGER EDUCATION GRANTS**

Tommy Hilfiger Corporate Foundation Education Grants support programs/partnerships that promote educational opportunities for diverse populations in the United States.

Deadline: October 1, 2008.

<http://www.tommy.com/opencms/opencms/corporate/foundation/aboutthefoundation.html/>

**HEALTHY SPROUTS AWARDS**

The National Gardening Association recognizes outstanding youth programs via the Healthy Sprouts Awards. The awards support school and youth garden programs that teach about nutrition and the issue of hunger in the United States.

Deadline: October 15, 2008.

<http://www.kidsgardening.com/healthysprouts.asp>

**AMERICAN SCHOOL BOARD JOURNAL MAGNA AWARDS**

The American School Board Journal is accepting nominations for its 2009 Magna Awards, which recognize programs that have been important in promoting the district's mission and advancing student learning; capable of being replicated by other school boards with similar conditions and resources; and the result of collaboration between the school board and others.

Deadline: October 15, 2008.

<http://www.asbj.com/magna>

**2009 NESTLÉ VERY BEST IN YOUTH PROGRAM**

The Nestlé USA Very Best in Youth Program honors young people ages 13 to 18 who have excelled in school and who are making their community and the world a better place.

Deadline: November 20, 2008.

<http://www.nestle-verybestinyouth.com/>

# SUSTAINING YOUR ACTION TEAMS



By Ruth Anne Landsverk

Just like Wisconsin's Karner blue butterfly, the existence of a Partnership Action Team in some schools can become endangered or even extinct without a supportive "habitat". A survey of over 100 Connecticut schools found that Action Teams in one-third of the schools disappeared eight years after starting. The major culprit? Changes in school leadership.

The National Network of Partnership Schools identified a well-organized Action Team as critical to sustaining a high-quality partnership program in schools. Here are some things departing VISTAs can do to keep the school's current principal informed and supportive of the Action Team, as well as lay the groundwork to help incoming VISTAs sustain partnerships, no matter who becomes school principal.

**1. Leave your principal with a written summary** of how Action Team decisions and activities connected to and helped advance school improvement goals. Did your Family Read-In tie in to helping 4<sup>th</sup> graders turn in more book reports? Did the interactive math homework help 2<sup>nd</sup> graders get faster at addition facts? Any numbers or positive testimony you collected from teachers and parents will be valuable fuel for your principal to keep school partnerships alive and well at the district level.

**2. For the new VISTA, leave a "how-to" of your Action Team's accomplishments.** What did you do this year? How did you do it? Who were the key people involved in making it happen? What programs or businesses funded activities? Your experiences, thoughts, and any data you collected will be liquid gold to new VISTAs and/or other partnership advocates seeking to continue a good thing.

**3. Display your district's Family Involvement Policy in a prominent place.** This policy serves as a reminder that partnerships are not only beneficial to invest time and effort in, but are a board-authorized way of "doing business" with the people who schools exist for: children and their families. If your district doesn't have a policy, display your Action Team's answer to the question, "What do we believe and value about engaging parents in children's learning?"

**4. Nail down dates and times with your principal for school staff** to start 2008-09 with inservice training on partnerships and effective practices. In what areas did staff need more help with learning how to work with families? What goals or needs did teachers and parents on the Action Team identify to address next year? What impact do changes in school demographics have on partnerships? Leave time for teachers to share with each other successful ideas for working with families.

**5. Disseminate meeting times, dates, and locations to Action Team members (including the principal) for 2008-09.** Fill vacancies for the coming school year. Make sure members have each others' phone numbers and e-mail addresses to keep the lines of communication open during the summer. Sketch out a tentative agenda for the first meeting of the new school year, as well as a plan to get new members up to speed on the goals and history of your Action Team.

Some planning ahead and communicating on your part will make the incoming VISTA's transition much smoother. It will also help your school leader keep partnerships front and center in the minds of teachers and families, and continue the good work of your Action Team.

May your Summer of 2008 be filled with happy memories!

# A MILWAUKEE VISTA'S REFLECTION



BY MICHAEL CASTANENDA

*Michael has provided some insight and reflections on his year of service. Certainly each site is unique as are its experiences. We intend this reflection to serve as one example from a diversity of experiences from our project.*

It's early September and the first day of school at Kosciuszko; it's a Middle/Montessori elementary school located in Milwaukee's south side in a predominantly Latino neighborhood. I'm anxious to see what I'm going to be doing for my assignment here. Funny, there are police cars in front, lights flashing, and a student is being escorted down the steps by two policemen... That's when I knew I was in it for *real*. Alright, so my first impression of the job was not the best; that was then, but I have to say that my year as a VISTA is not what I thought of as a typical urban school experience.

The first couple of weeks were an intense affair. There were new people to meet each day and a lot of names that I had to remember. While people would introduce themselves, I'd be thinking that if I don't say this person's name *a hundred times* or write it down, I'll never remember them. My site supervisor introduced me to the school. Parents were very receptive and listened to the spiel I had to say. My bi-weekly reports reflected lots of volunteers. I thought I had this gig all wrapped up. Then it hit the fan; among the meetings and trainings at Parents Plus, MPS central office, the school, DPI, and the plethora of medical appointments with my kids and the Mrs. I really had my hands full.

It's a known fact that schools are always concerned about funding, so you can imagine what I was asked to do – fundraising. Raising donations is a big task for one VISTA. There are a lot people to talk to, lots of driving, and lots of begging involved.

I started with the local neighborhood businesses with little to no avail. I had people telling me that they couldn't afford to give anything or that their superiors would say "No." It was really frustrating. I realized how much the area gets hit up by the schools. I learned how to ask people for donations; it's a peculiar art form. Some strategies that worked were to get the person to feel empathetic, or to make them realize that they had a vested interest in contributing. Making the person feel good about giving worked as well.

Communication is a key to success in the VISTA project. Sometimes I struggled to know what was expected of me in my supporting role as a VISTA. With the restructuring of my school, the staff seemed very tied up in the situation, not to mention the closing of the middle school. Parental interest was also waning. I realized that I to be fairly self directed, so I went back to the VISTA Work Plan and decided to work from there. I started by recommitting myself to aide in the Montessori program and began to incorporate myself in the staff. I wanted my presence to be known so that I could build some trust. Eventually, not only the staff, but parents as well as students began to greet me and ask me where I had been if I hadn't been at the school. It made me feel accepted and appreciated. I was asked to help write the Ed Plan and was also asked to stay.

My experience as a VISTA in Milwaukee has taught me how important it is to keep in good communication with the people you work with, especially among the constant change. The VISTAs at Parents Plus have been a great support. They have taught me that it's good to have your work scrutinized in order to learn and become a better professional. The job has also taught me the importance of following up. Following up with people has led to success; especially with donation requests. It has also been helpful to keep returning to the VISTA Work Plan in order to gain focus and to get a better sense of direction of the task at hand. Much of what we do is based on the relationships we build; that is why it is so important that we get out of our comfort zone and talk to the people we serve. There have been many moments of frustration and times where I have been stifled, but the results of seeing happy faces of the people I have served have been the most rewarding part of my experience.

# WISCONSIN COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

## PUBLIC FORUMS



<http://www.wisconsinway.org>

Attend one of the forums being held this summer to: learn what economists, private sector policy analysts and UW-Madison public affairs experts have discovered in their research about property taxes, public services and Wisconsin's long-term economic viability; and, most importantly, weigh in as the workable blueprint for the state's future takes shape.

### **Green Bay Public Forum** **7/17/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Rock Garden Banquet & Conference Center  
1951 Bond Street  
Green Bay, WI

### **Waukesha Public Forum** **7/21/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Richard T. Anderson Education Center, WCTC  
800 Main Street  
Pewaukee, WI

### **Wausau Public Forum** **7/23/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Stoney Creek Inn  
1100 Imperial Ave  
Rothschild, WI

### **Kenosha Public Forum** **7/24/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
The Parkway Chateau  
12304 75th Street  
Kenosha, WI

### **Columbus Public Forum** **7/28/2008**

7:00 PM - 9:00 PM  
Kestrel Ridge Golf Club  
900 Avalon Road  
Columbus, WI

### **La Crosse Public Forum** **7/29/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Onalaska OmniCenter  
255 Riders Club Road  
Onalaska, WI

### **Janesville Public Forum** **8/4/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Pontiac Convention Center  
2809 North Pontiac Drive  
Janesville, WI

### **Platteville Public Forum** **8/5/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Governor Dodge Hotel & Convention Center  
300 Business Hwy 151  
Platteville, WI

### **Superior Public Forum** **8/7/2008**

4:30 PM - 6:30 PM  
Rothwell Student Center, UW-Superior  
1605 Catlin Ave  
Superior, WI

### **Milwaukee Public Forum** **8/11/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM, Location TBA

### **Rhineland Public Forum** **8/12/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Northwoods Banquet Center  
1540 Pueblo Dr.  
Rhineland, WI

### **Appleton Public Forum** **8/14/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
The Grand Meridian  
2621 N. Oneida St  
Appleton, WI

### **Madison Public Forum** **8/19/2008**

6:00 PM - 8:00 PM  
Alliant Energy Center-Exhibition Hall  
1919 Alliant Energy Center Way  
Madison, WI



## Save the Dates



### THE “HEY! THAT’S A GOOD IDEA” CORNER

BY BETSY PRUETER

*Each month I try to highlight some of the successes our VISTAs are having. This gives us a chance to celebrate and share promising practices! As a new feature, I am now suggesting what “Key” each practice might address.*

1. **Cathy Knott** developed and designed a booklet for parents called *Parent HelpSource* that included information on creating relationships with school staff, teen stress and various internet resources.

**[Parenting]**

2. **Virginia Walker** organized a Family Day Picnic at Lowell Elementary School that brought in over 100 families to engage in discussion with school staff on how to best communicate with their children. **[Parenting]**

3. **Jen Gaul** is developing a city-wide Family Resource Map for Milwaukee to identify other agencies and centers working on family involvement and parent leadership. **[Collaborating with the Community]**

4. **Brittany Pensis** helped to organize a Grandparents Breakfast event where student’s grandparents (or family friend) joined them at school for breakfast and a tour of the facilities. Door prizes were included and over 200 grandparents attended!

**[Collaborating with the Community]**

5. **Dan Tourdot** hosted a Strengthening Family, School, and Community Partnerships workshop for schools in CESA 9. Topics covered included NNPS, STEP, and asset mapping.

**[Communicating]**

#### QUARTERLY REPORTS DUE

July 15<sup>th</sup>, 5pm

#### VISTA END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

July 21<sup>st</sup>, 10am-12:30pm

Madison, Location TBD

#### POVERTY SIMULATION

July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1pm-4pm

Lafollette High School, Madison

#### YOUTH AS PARTNERS IN CIVIC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

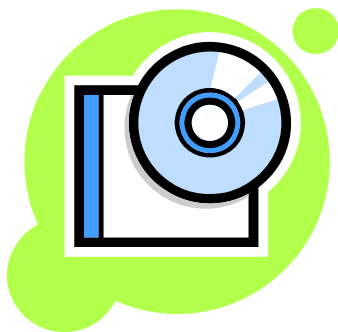
SAVE THE DATE: Oct 31<sup>st</sup>-Nov 2<sup>nd</sup>



Have you subscribed to the VISTA Viewfinder yet?

Email [VISTAoutreach@cns.gov](mailto:VISTAoutreach@cns.gov) to subscribe and connect with VISTAs across the country!

## READING TOGETHER: A DVD FOR PARENTS



BY CASEY GAUTHIER

“Reading Together” is a short DVD that features parents reading with their children. It also includes tips for reading time. This three minute DVD will be available to parents at upcoming events and will be given out this month and in the months to come in child literacy kits. These kits, titled “Increased Involvement = Greater Success,” include a host of information on book, reading together, and being involved in children’s education. In addition to the DVD, it includes a helpful bookmark and a few activities for the kids.

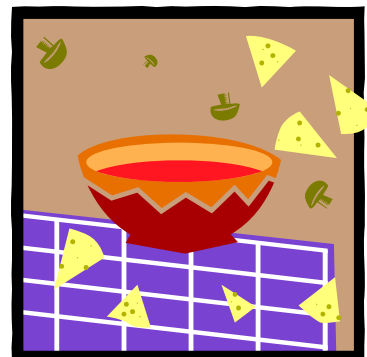
I came up with the idea for this DVD after realizing that parents often don’t have a lot of time, so they need something quick to look at and absorb. Instead of a long lecture, they get a few good tips and are equipped to read with their children.

I worked with sixth and seventh grade students at Rhinelander’s Northwoods Community Secondary School. The voices you hear giving the tips belong to these students and some of them did some taping for the DVD. Not all of the footage made it into the final product, but I appreciate the work that each of them did.

The importance of reading daily is critical in a child’s life, especially over the summer. That is why I made sure these DVDs were available at the beginning of this summer.

## RECIPE OF THE MONTH

APPLE BERRY SALSA  
WITH CINNAMON CHIPS



Submitted by Robyn Krimke

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 medium granny smith apples
- 1 pint strawberries diced
- 2 kiwi peeled & diced
- 1 orange
- 2 T packed brown sugar
- 2 T apple jelly or apricot jam

### DIRECTIONS

1. Peel, core, slice & coarsely chop apples
2. Mix with strawberries, kiwi, brown sugar & jam
3. Juice the orange into the mixture. Mix well.
4. Set aside.
4. Cut tortillas into wedges, sprinkle with water, add cinnamon & sugar, and bake 8-10 min.

Serve cinnamon chips with salsa and Enjoy!

INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING  
TO THE **AUGUST** NEWSLETTER?  
EMAIL YOUR ARTICLES,  
RECIPES, OR REFLECTIONS TO  
BETSY BY THE END OF JULY.