



DPI VISTA Monthly



Jane Grinde
Project Director

SEPTEMBER 2008

Betsy Prueter
VISTA Leader

Ruth Anne
Landsverk
Family Education
Coordinator

The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.

Diane Krumm
Program Assistant

--JANE ADDAMS

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF ORIENTATION



By Betsy Prueter

In just about two weeks, all of you will come with your Supervisors to our annual Orientation and training. Those two days will give you the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of family involvement and give you the opportunity to brainstorm together with your site representatives on how to start implementing a plan for partnerships.

There will be a LOT of information disseminated here in Madison as we try to squeeze in the most important materials, research, and strategies. We'll be covering Asset Based Community Development, nuts and bolts of the VISTA grant, leadership, and most importantly, family-school-community partnerships. In order to get the most out of Orientation, here are a few suggestions:

COME WITH QUESTIONS!

Look over everything you've received from me so far. What questions do you have? What doesn't seem clear? What are you wondering about?

EMBRACE THE OPPORTUNITY TO NETWORK WITH OTHER SITES AND GET TO KNOW YOUR FELLOW VISTAS.

This will be a unique opportunity to meet VISTAs and staff from across the state from Spooner to Green Bay, from Wausau to Madison.

BRING YOUR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GOALS!

Particularly on the second day of training, where we review the Fundamentals of Family Involvement, these will help you and your supervisor make plans for the year. Bring a copy of your ed plan or jot down improvement goals on a note card, but be sure to bring an idea of what areas your site wants to develop.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOOD?

Some of you may be serving in your hometowns and some of you may have moved to a new place. But understanding a bit about the history, demographics, and make-up of your community will allow you to get even more out of the ABCD session on day one. The following websites would be a good start:

<http://www.epodunk.com/demographics/index.html>
<http://www.wisconline.com/counties/>

DON'T FORGET THOSE PARENT AND TEACHER SURVEYS

Remember those surveys we asked you to do at the start of the school year? Bring all completed surveys with you; they will help you and your supervisor get a feel for the partnership climate at your site.

We look forward to seeing you all on the 10th!

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Be sure to send some birthday wishes!

Penny Bruskin (9/2)

p.bruskin@parentspluswi.org

Chris Briggs (9/16)

cbriggs@wausau.k12.wi.us

Kim Yoder (9/23)

k.yoder@parentspluswi.org



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.

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.

Deadline: December 15, 2008.

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

GRANT OPPORTUNITIES



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>

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>

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>

BEST BUY AWARDS FOR INTERACTIVE TE@CH PROGRAMS

The Best Buy te@ch program rewards schools for successful interactive programs they have launched with available technology.

Deadline: October 12, 2008.

<https://bestbuyteach.scholarshipamerica.org>

NATIONAL SCHOOLS OF CHARACTER AWARDS

The National Schools of Character Awards program identifies exemplary schools and districts to serve as models for others and helps schools and districts improve their efforts in effective character education.

Deadline: Dec. 8, 2008.

<http://www.character.org/site/c.iplJKTOEJsG/b.3937991>

COMCAST GRANTS FOR DIVERSITY-ORIENTED PROGRAMS

The Comcast Foundation is awarding grants to maximize the impact of community investments so they yield tangible, measurable benefits to the neighborhoods Comcast serves and the people who live there.

Deadline: N/A.

<http://www.comcast.com/foundation>

KIDS IN NEED FOUNDATION: TEACHER GRANTS

Kids In Need Foundation (formerly SHOPA) Teacher Grants provide funds for classroom teachers who have innovative ideas but lack the budget to bring them to life.

Deadline: Sept. 30, 2008.

http://www.kidsinneed.net/grants/grant_applications.php

INTERNATIONAL READING ASSOCIATION: TEACHER RECOGNITION AWARD

The International Reading Association's Regie Routman Teacher Recognition Award honors an outstanding elementary-school teacher of reading and language arts who is dedicated to improving teaching and learning through reflective writing about his or her teaching and learning process.

Deadline: Oct. 28, 2008.

http://www.reading.org/association/awards/teachers_routman.html

AMA AND LEADER TO LEADER INSTITUTE: SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

The AMA Scholarship is designed to provide nonprofit leaders with an opportunity to step out of the day-to-day, interact with peers across sectors, and develop practical skills they can apply immediately within their organizations.

Deadline: Dec. 15, 2008.

<http://leadertoleader.org/collaboration/ama/index.html>

FOURIER SYSTEMS: MATCHING GRANTS FOR SCIENCE TOOLS

The Fourier Systems Computing Science Exploration Grant Program provides an opportunity for teachers to receive science-focused tools for their classrooms to increase student learning in math and science.

Deadline: Jan. 1, 2009.

<http://www.nova1to1.com/science-grant/index.php>

GRANTS FOR FREE ACCESS TO SYLVAN DELL PUBLISHING SITE

Children's book publisher Sylvan Dell is reaching out to schools and school districts nationwide with grants that provide unlimited access to all 35 Sylvan Dell eBooks.

Deadline: rolling.

<http://www.sylvandellpublishing.com/ResourceGrant.html>

MINI-GRANTS FOR SERVICE-ORIENTED PROJECTS FOR YOUTHS

Pay It Forward Mini-Grants go to one-time-only, service-oriented activities that young people would like to perform to benefit their school, neighborhood, or greater community.

Deadline: applications accepted starting September 15, 2008.

<http://payitforwardfoundation.org/educators/grant.html>

NEA FOUNDATION STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT GRANTS

The NEA Foundation Student Achievement Grants are provided to improve students' academic achievement by engaging them in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen knowledge of standards-based subject matter.

Deadline: Oct. 5, 2008.

http://www.neafoundation.org/programs/StudentAchievement_Guidelines.htm

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS FOR PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Lowe's Toolbox for Education grant program finances school-improvement projects initiated by parents.

Deadline: Oct. 17, 2008.

<http://www.toolboxforeducation.com>

U.S. SOCCER FEDERATION: GRANTS FOR SOCCER PROGRAMS

U.S. Soccer Federation Grants provide funding for programs that develop players, referees, and coaches through programs, field enhancements, or the Foundation's All Conditions Fields Program, with special emphasis on the economically disadvantaged in urban areas.

Deadline: Sept. 15, 2008.

http://www.ussoccerfoundation.org/site/c.gpLPJQOpHkE/b.2766881/k.2AF1/Annual_Program_and_FieId_Grants.htm

TASH/WAL-MART: INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AWARDS

The TASH/Wal-Mart Breakthroughs in Inclusive Education Awards honor contributions of individuals and school districts in advancing inclusive education and equitable opportunities for students in grades K-12, particularly those with significant disabilities and support needs.

Deadline: Sept.

http://www.tash.org/awards_breakthroughs.html

DOLLAR GENERAL: YOUTH LITERACY GRANTS

Dollar General Youth Literacy Grants help schools and local nonprofit organizations implement or expand literacy programs for new readers, below-grade-level readers, and readers with learning disabilities.

Deadline: Sept. 24, 2008.

<http://www.dollargeneral.com/Community/Pages/GrantPrograms.aspx>

FREEDOMS FOUNDATION: AWARDS IN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE EDUCATION

The Freedoms Foundation's Leavey Awards for Excellence in Private Enterprise Education honor 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: Oct. 1, 2008.

<http://www.freedomsfoundation.org/leavey-awards>

SIEMENS FOUNDATION: MATH, SCIENCE, & TECHNOLOGY AWARDS

The Siemens Competition in Math, Science & Technology recognizes remarkable talent early on, fostering individual growth for high school students who are willing to challenge themselves through science research.

Deadline: Oct. 1, 2008.

<http://www.siemens-foundation.org/en/competition.htm>

TOSHIBA AMERICA FOUNDATION: GRANTS FOR SCIENCE AND MATH EDUCATION

Toshiba America Foundation Education Grants contribute to the quality of science and mathematics education in U.S. communities by investing in projects designed by classroom teachers to improve science and mathematics education.

Deadline: Oct. 1, 2008.

<http://www.toshiba.com/tafpub/jsp/about/HowApply.jsp>



Check out a new federal report that presents findings on the school readiness of young children, *as reported by their parents*.

Access the full report here:

<http://nces.ed.gov//pubs2008/2008051.pdf>

RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH: THE FIRST THREE STEPS TO GRANT WRITING



By Jen Gaul

Jen, a Milwaukee-based VISTA, participated in a grant writing workshop at Lakeland College in June and will be hosting a Grant Writing webinar in October. But for now, a few tips to get you started!

It is the beginning of the school year. As a VISTA you are full of hope and ready to start things off with a bang, you know what you want to achieve in the school and you know how you are going to get it. You begin planning a large event for your school and then realize that there is just not enough money to pull it off. What do you do now? Where can you get the money to make your vision a reality?

Grant writing is a very useful skill to have as a VISTA. More often than not you will have to deal with the above scenario, and when that time comes not only will you need to be able to write for a grant, you will need to know where to look to find the grant that will fit your needs. Researching grants can be time consuming and often challenging, but it is one of the most important parts of the grant writing process.

A great way to get started in the process is by answering the 6 W's. **Who** am I (the organization/institution I represent)? **What** is my project? **Why** do I need the money? **When** do I need the money? **Who** will benefit? **Where** will the funds be directed? By answering these simple questions you can narrow down the organizations offering grants to ones that meet your needs.

Once you find that perfect organization make sure you research them as well as the grant that you want to apply for. It is very important to make sure that the goals of your program match the mission of the organization to whom you are writing.

After you have answered the questions and found the perfect organization with the perfect grant, you can finally start the writing process! Remember, the best way to never get your projected funded is to never write the grant at all. Happy writing and good luck to you all!



VISTA VIEWFINDER HAVE YOU SUBSCRIBED?



http://www.campaignconsultation.com/VIEWFINDER/Issue_9/Issue9_Viewfinder.htm

Q: What is the Viewfinder?

A: The viewfinder, a toy that all generations of VISTAs recognize, was a kind of binocular that focused on points of interest, highlights, and snapshots in living color. The VISTA Viewfinder surveys in the landscape and zeroes in on service.

Q. Why the Viewfinder?

A. Here's your direct link to connecting with other VISTAs, learning what they are doing, and helping to spread the message of VISTA and national service!

Q. How can I contribute?

A. Have a story to tell? Submission ideas? Contact vistaoutreach@cns.gov. Use the Viewfinder to highlight your VISTA service and share your experiences with others across the country.

GET TO KNOW THE DPI VISTA PROJECT

STAFF AND VISTA INTERVIEWS



BETSY ANSWERS MATT'S QUESTIONS

BETSY IS LOCATED AT THE DPI IN MADISON AND HAS BEEN WORKING ON THE STAFF OF THE VISTA PROJECT SINCE JULY OF 2007,

MATT: What did you do before becoming a VISTA leader?

BETSY: Right before joining the DPI VISTA project I was finishing up my master's degree in Educational Policy and working as the Associate Director of the Greater University Tutoring Service at UW-Madison.

MATT: What is your family like?

BETSY: They support me, they challenge me, they make me laugh, and they are constantly a surprise. My immediate family lives in Cleveland, Ohio but I have relatives spread far and wide!

MATT: What kinds of music do you listen to? Name a few of your favorite bands or artists, or what you've been listening to lately.

BETSY: I have an eclectic taste in music though I usually like indie rock. Lately, the Swell Season has been speaking to me and one of my favorite albums might be the soundtrack from *Once*.

MATT: What was your favorite traveling experience?

BETSY: Great question! I think it's when my husband and I went to Amsterdam to visit his aunt. It was our first out of country trip together and it was a wonderful experience.

MATT: What are some of your goals or dreams for the future?

BETSY: Since graduating from college I've lived in four different states as my husband and I have served with AmeriCorps, traveled, and attended graduate school. I think it would be wonderful to finally feel settled someplace.

MATT: What are some of your hobbies?

BETSY: I love photography and when I'm feeling stressed out or overwhelmed, I love to take my camera out, go for a walk, and shoot what I see. Also, I love to blog as it helps me keep in touch with friends in family in other states (and countries!)

MATT: What are your favorite Internet news sources? Why?

BETSY: Well, I get the New York Times emailed to me daily and I subscribe to Common Dreams but my favorite news source is public radio. I try to never miss an *On Point* with Tom Ashbrook!

MATT: What was the last movie you saw in theaters? What did you like/ dislike about it?

BETSY: The Dark Knight. I thought it was great; Christian Bale has got to be the best Batman!

MATT: What is your preferred form of transportation?

BETSY: I ride my bike more than anything. But I love the subway; and I miss not having one in Madison! However, we have a great bus system, so I can't complain.

MATT: What are some changes you would implement if you were completely in charge of public education in the United States?

BETSY: Well, that is certainly tempting but I don't believe that education should be (or even can be) be controlled by one person; it's contradictory to its fundamental principles and our current system gives a great deal of power to states and those states in turn give power to districts and communities. Public education is the foundation of our democracy and its preservation vital to the success of so many other social programs. I believe in organic change, however, so I would hope to facilitate discussion on why public education is so important and how we can work together to improve it.



MATT ANSWERS BETSY'S QUESTIONS

Matt is serving with Franklin Elementary in Appleton.

BETSY: Tell us about your life before joining VISTA.

MATT: I was born in Eau Claire, WI, weighing in at a healthy 6 lb. 11 oz. At age two I climbed out of my crib and told my parents, "I'm going *out* the door!" During grade school I began drawing cartoons, and once wore a Superman costume under my clothes, only to reveal it later that day to a group of shocked and amused classmates. I pursued art more seriously in high school, enrolling in an afternoon art program. During this developmental period, I dressed in an outlandish fashion and listened to strange music. After high school I worked at an independent bookstore in Appleton for a year, in attempt to save money for college. The following year, I moved to Milwaukee, WI, to begin college at the Milwaukee Institute of Art & Design. After a quick four and a half years, I had a bachelor's degree in photography and dozens of close friends who would take a bullet for me at the drop of a hat.

BETSY: What motivated you to pursue a national service program?

MATT: During my college days I developed a "social consciousness" after being exposed to a wide variety of new and exciting perspectives. I soon became interested in writing, history, psychology, sociology, current events, and cultural issues. I realized that education plays a major role in determining the way societies function, and I wanted to contribute positively to mine.

BETSY: How does it feel to be serving in the community where you grew up?

MATT: Serving in Appleton is quite nostalgic, especially the elementary school setting. My family is happy to have me around, and I feel very welcome at Franklin.

BETSY: As you are well aware, VISTAs must be thrifty and resourceful due to financial

considerations. Do you have some money saving tips to share?

MATT: Hunt for food, or steal it. Just kidding. Think twice before every purchase. Ask yourself, "Do I really *need* this item?" Create and follow a detailed budget schedule on Microsoft Excel. Look for coupons, go to rummage sales, thrift shops, dumpsters, McDonalds, etc. Just be creative.

BETSY: When you're not eliminating poverty, what do you like to do for fun?

MATT: I enjoy many activities outside my VISTA position including reading, photographing, filmmaking, film watching, visiting friends in Milwaukee, raising my little brother and sister, bike riding, and making "Mix CDs" for girls.

BETSY: What's one thing you're really looking forward to about this year?

MATT: I am looking forward to working with children and being a role model. Also, I am excited to share my skills and creativity with Franklin, and hope to make a positive impact on the school community.

BETSY: Tell us about your skills and talents. What's your biggest asset?

MATT: I am creative and have a good eye for the visual arts, and arrangements in general. This includes photography, film, design, feng shui, etc. I am also friendly and hardworking.

BETSY: What do you hope will be the long lasting impact of your service?

MATT: About 30% of the families who have children attending Franklin are considered low income. I'd like to see that number decrease.

BETSY: Are you a reality TV fan? If yes, tell us your favorites and why. If not, tell us how you have resisted temptation.

MATT: I have resisted the seduction of network television by becoming addicted to the Internet. On a more serious note, I am not a fan of Reality TV. These programs are not only obnoxious, but they are superficial, irrelevant, and as far from "reality" as I can possibly imagine. If you want Reality TV, watch a documentary about Palestinian refugees, or homeless people living in abandoned subway stations, or women who work three jobs and still can't afford food and health care for their children.

BETSY: Any VISTA book recommendations?

MATT: *Lies My Teacher Told Me* by James W. Loewen and *A Man Without A Country* by Kurt Vonnegut.

10 WAYS TO GET PARENTS ON YOUR ACTION TEAM



By Ruth Anne Landsverk

Yes, you **can** find wonderful, giving parents to serve on your school Action Team for Partnerships! They may, in fact, be just waiting for an invitation. Following, are a few ideas for getting parents and families on your team who are willing, not only to share their own experiences, but also to speak for the ideas and interests of fellow parents and families.

1. Ask teachers for ideas. As the primary point of school contact for most families, teachers will be well-informed about many students' parents. Approach teachers one-on-one in a quiet moment. Ask for names of parents they think might like to help out the school in a way that is different and, one could argue, more meaningful than volunteering for a field trip or providing a classroom snack.

Use your chats with teachers as an opportunity to keep them up-to-date on Action Team activities and goals, to answer their questions, and to get their ideas about how teachers and families together can improve children's learning.

2. Look to your school's parent organization. Parents at the PTA or PTO meeting are already involved and willing to invest time in their children's school life; there's no need to sell them on the idea. A parent from the parent group might be willing to act as a liaison between the parent group and Action Team – i.e., keeping the parent group informed about what the Action Team is doing and how the parent group can be involved. It's a good idea to let the president of the parent group know what you're trying to accomplish. S/he may have good suggestions for Action Team candidates, too.

3. Specify the time commitment and the duties. It's much easier for a busy Mom or Dad to agree to attend one meeting a month than to sign on to a lengthy, two-year commitment for a major school initiative. Many parents don't volunteer to serve on Action Teams or say, "no," because they're nervous about being able to live up to what may sound like pretty rigorous demands. Be ready to give parent candidates a one-page summary about what the Action Team does, who the parent will represent, and what actual work will be required.

4. Be flexible. Can't get working parents to attend Action Team meetings during the school day? Consider holding shorter, more frequent meetings occasionally at night, in the morning just before school starts, or during the lunch hour. Offer Action Team members a stress-reducing school breakfast or lunch – one less thing for your parent member to squeeze in during the day.

5. Ask the Action Team to celebrate the school's diversity. Connect the Action Team to families with diverse cultures by designating school events or activities that celebrate families' cultural traditions and history. Build on the team's connections with families to identify new Action Team members, fill families' needs for helping children learn, and link families to each other.

6. Parents love company. Aim for two to three parents on your Action Team. A sole parent member may be reluctant to speak up, especially when everyone else on the team has worked together in the same profession for the past eight years and attended each others' baptisms, bar mitzvahs, and birthday parties. Consider asking a veteran-member to mentor new members, or to walk them through questions about the group's mission, past accomplishments, and procedures for making things happen. Don't let parents feel lonely.

7. Leave room on the agenda for issues important to parents. Make the report from parents a priority on every meeting agenda. Schedule the parent report early in the meeting. There are few gestures of respect more powerful than being listened to. Parents are much more likely to make time to attend meetings if they have important information to share and know that their work and contributions will receive due consideration.

8. Agree on a communications strategy. Who will type up Action Team meeting notes and e-mail them to all members, including the ones who couldn't attend? How can absent members get their thoughts and comments about the meeting to other members in between meetings, instead of waiting until the next meeting? Make sure all members have each others' e-mail addresses and phone numbers and know who to contact if the unexpected arises.

9. Keep everyone informed about Action Team efforts. Summarize Action Team developments in the monthly parent newsletter and among staff committees. Introduce Action Team members at school meetings and recognize them at end-of-year celebrations. Display a poster near the school entrance highlighting Action Team and partnership goals and accomplishments. Maintaining the Action Team's visibility will make it easier to attract new members among school families who already know what the Action Team "is."

10. Use issues of interest to gain members. The parent who walks into the principal's office with a question or concern is a potential Action Team member. So is the parent who speaks up at a parent forum and the one who fills out and returns a parent survey. What are the issues that galvanize parents and stir their enthusiasm for their own child's learning? How do those issues touch all children in the school? Parents who feel that their interests have a venue in the school can make long-lasting contributions as Action Team members.



Did you hear? Spooner Elementary, Adams-Friendship Middle School, Pulaski High School, Brener Elementary, and Howe Elementary have been selected for inclusion in the 2008 edition of *Promising Partnership Practices* from NNPS!

The entire edition can be viewed online here: <http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/ppp/index.htm>

Congratulations!

BACK TO SCHOOL IN RHINELANDER



By Casey Gauthier

Casey, serving with the Rhinelander school district, has offered to share some of her Fall kick-off and Welcome Back events and project she has lined up for families and students in Rhinelander.

Up in Rhinelander, there are plenty of exciting VISTA activities going on. September 8th brings International Literacy Day, which will be celebrated by a local bookstore, Brown Street Books, who will be offering 20% off their selection of children's books on that day. Also, there will be speakers on various aspects of literacy at 4:00 PM at the Rhinelander District Library. Speakers include Teresa Jensen, creator of the Bilingual Learning Club and sign language interpreter and Rose Prunty, Nicolet College's Director of Academic Success. Jensen will be interpreting a children's book through sign language and speaking on the topic of deaf literacy. Prunty will be addressing the issue of adult literacy in the United States.

Later in September, Northwoods Community Elementary School will be hosting an "Exercise your Mind" Reading Event. Athletes will come in, dressed in uniform, to talk about reading and their all-time favorite children's books. Also, older children will share reading strategies with younger ones.

Furthermore, I recently became a regular blogger for NewsoftheNorth.Net. I want to address poverty issues in our community and what can be done about them. My blogs will also include issues of literacy and parent involvement and whatever else is going on in the community that needs to be talked about. My first blog spoke about how I began my VISTA experience and what I've seen and what

I've done in the community. My second blog is titled "Hunger Remedies in Rhinelander," and talks about my visits to the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry and the Emergency Food Pantry. Upcoming blogs will be about health and academic success and poverty in the Rhinelander School District.

I'm already looking ahead to October and November activities. For October, I want to be able to hand out free books to children that attend the event I organize. I'm thinking that they can come dressed as their favorite book character, and the top three best-dressed will be awarded. Time for reading with parents and families will be allotted as well. I'm still thinking on this idea, but it's really good to look far ahead and start planning things.

Also, in October, I'm collaborating with two other employees that are in the school district through some grant funded projects. We are going to organize a poverty and literacy workshop for mentors.

In mid-November, I want to do a presentation at each school and ask the children questions such as, "What if you had no books?" "What if you couldn't read?" "What if you had no library or librarian?" and "What if you had no teachers or school?"

After the presentation, they can go back to their classrooms and make thank you cards for their teachers, parents and/or librarians. I think this is something simple that can make the children really think about what they have and be thankful for it.

There's a lot going on up here in the Northwoods. I enjoy keeping busy and making an impact, so feel free to contact me with questions about any of the projects that I have going on.



Save the Dates

SEPTEMBER 10 AND 11

DPI VISTA Project Orientation (Madison)

SEPTEMBER 18 AND 19

Poverty Matters Conference (Appleton)

OCTOBER 3

VISTA Web Meeting

OCTOBER 15

Quarterly Reports and Asset Maps due (via email)

OCTOBER 17

Supervisor Teleconference

OCTOBER 29

AmeriCorps Opening Ceremony (Volk Field)

NOVEMBER 7

Poverty Simulation (Milwaukee)

Register with Betsy by September 30

YOUTH AS PARTNERS IN CIVIC LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATES: Oct 31st-Nov 2nd



Have you read *Nickel and Dimed* by Barbara Ehrenreich? Written from the perspective of an undercover journalist, it's goal is to investigate the impact of the 1996 welfare reform on the working poor. Check it out!

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY VISTA: A LEGACY 44 YEARS IN THE MAKING!



Dear VISTAs and Friends,

Wednesday, August 20, 2008, marked the 44th anniversary of passage of our VISTA legislation. At 180,000 strong, VISTAs and alumni have been continuously fighting poverty for 44 years.

You are part of the great legacy of national service that brings opportunities for education, housing, health care, jobs, and so much more to low-income families and individuals throughout our country. Thank you for your service and dedication to VISTA and to them.

Every day, VISTAs across the country are working on a common goal: to empower communities to eliminate poverty. I look forward to celebrating 45 years of service next year!

Sincerely,

Jean Whaley
AmeriCorps*VISTA National Director



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! I also do my best to suggest what “Key” each practice might address.

1. **Jen Gaul**, in collaboration with the West Allis school district, is helping to implement Wisconsin’s first Parents and Teachers Talking Together program, developed by the Kentucky Center for Parent Leadership. More information here: <http://www.prichardcommittee.org/CPL/tabid/31492/Default.aspx> **[Decision Making]**
2. **Robyn Krimke** has developed Parent Buzz sessions for families at U.S. Grant school in Milwaukee. These sessions offer local resources and opportunities for parents who attend. Topics include Preparing your Child for WKCE testing and How to Build a Home Library. **[Parenting]**
3. **Matt Dolezal** provided information and reading materials on Franklin’s Family Resource Center and Birth to Five program to Appleton families at two school registration events. **[Communicating]**
4. **Brittany Pensis** participated in an online LEARNS webinar on creative recruitment. Especially useful was the segment was dedicated to recruiting male volunteers for Brener Elementary in Shawano. Read more about LEARNS free webinars here: www.nwrel.org/learns **[Volunteering]**
5. **Casey Gauthier** planned several events and resources for Rhinelander families to celebrate International Literacy day on September 8th. Keep in mind there are always great online resources for nationally celebrated education days. **[Learning at Home]**

PARTNERSHIPS ON THE WEB: ONLINE RESOURCES



National Network of Partnership Schools
<http://www.partnershipschoools.org>

Harvard Family Research Project: Family
Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)
<http://gseweb.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine.html>

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory,
National Center for Family and Community
Connections with Schools
<http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources.html>

National Coalition for Parent Involvement in
Education
<http://www.ncpie.org/>

National Institute for Urban School Improvement
<http://www.urbanschools.org/>

North Central Regional Educational Laboratory,
Critical Issues in Family and Community
<http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/pa0cont.htm>

U.S. Department of Education
<http://www.ed.gov/parents>

Wisconsin Education Association Council, Parents
Place
<http://www.weac.org/Kids/PARENT/main.htm>

Connect for Kids
<http://www.connectforkids.org/>

National PTA
<http://www.pta.org/> (Go to Parent Resources)

Parents Plus, Wisconsin's Parent Information and
Resource Center
<http://www.parentspluswi.org/>

Wisconsin FACETS (Family Assistance Center for
Family Education, Training, and Support)
<http://www.wifacets.org/>

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

FROZEN SUMMER SALAD



Submitted by Betsy Prueter

INGREDIENTS

1 20oz can crushed pineapple
1 small can mandarin oranges
1 small can sweetened condensed milk
1 can peach pie filling
8 oz cool whip

DIRECTIONS

This is an easy summer dessert. In a 9x12 dish combine the cool whip, sweetened condensed milk, and peach pie filling. Mix thoroughly. Drain the pineapple and mandarin oranges and add the remaining contents to the mixture. Mix well and freeze overnight. Remove from the freezer 15-20 minutes before serving. The fruit variations for this dessert are endless so feel free to be creative!

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