



DPI VISTA Monthly

October 2008

“I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do. “

Edward Everett Hale

Jane Grinde
Project Director

Betsy Prueter
Education/Grants Specialist

Ruth Anne Ladsverk
Family Education Coordinator

Casey Gauthier
Newsletter Editor

Role and Resources

by Betsy Prueter

For many of you, this past week marked the first official month of service. For others, it marked the passing of the half way point (or more)! Now that school has started and you've had the opportunity to get to know your supervisors, site, and community, I encourage you to take a moment to step back and make sure you feel confident about your role and aware of your resources.

Are You and Your Supervisor Meeting Regularly?

We emphasized repeatedly how important the VISTA-Supervisor relationship is at Orientation. For good reason! VISTAs and Supervisors are a team and while you play different positions, you are both vital to the success of your work. You might want to use the bi-weekly reports as a communication tool and an opportunity to sit down to review them and check in with each other. You also might want to schedule weekly meetings several months out just to be sure that when things get busy, you have allotted time together.

Have You Discussed Modifications to the VAD?

Remember, the VAD is a living, breathing document that can (and should) be modified. We ask that you and your Supervisor sit down

together and think carefully about this year. What adjustments should you make? What changes are necessary? What should you add? What doesn't fit? The VAD should work for YOU and YOUR site and each VISTA's VAD will look differently- that's ok! We ask that updated VADs be submitted by October 31st but my plan is to talk with each VISTA and Supervisor about their ideas before that date.

Are You Mapping Site and Community Assets?

One of the most meaningful ways for VISTAs to find success is to build networks and relationships. Mapping assets and community resources allows you to partner with those "unusual suspects" and strengthen ties between the community and your site. Like the VAD, asset maps are living documents and should be ongoing throughout the year.

We anticipate that you will add to and develop these maps as your own networks expand. We are asking for copies of these maps by October 15th in order to get a sense for the connections you've made but by no means do we expect a completely finished product by that time! Asset Maps are crucial to sites sustainability and we hope you find them useful throughout the year.

Have You Joined Committees and Teams at Your Site?

Buy-in from site staff is something that we have asked Supervisors to help ensure. By now you should have met others working at your site and had the opportunity to introduce yourself and your work at staff meetings, in-services, etc. In the VAD you will notice that we ask you to join at least two teams or committees at your site whose work is related to partnerships. This can be your building REACH team, the school governance council, the PTA/PTO, Action Team, or other community organizations. I will be contacting VISTAs at the beginning of October to find out what organizations you have joined. This is a chance to build partnerships and promote the good work you all are doing!

Have You Networked With Other VISTAs?

Other VISTAs are your biggest resource. You are working on different projects at different

sites in different cities and towns across Wisconsin, but you share common goals. Your successes and lessons learned could benefit another site. Our monthly web or tele-conference meetings will help you to network with each other but I encourage you to explore other outlets. Use the VISTA list serv (email vistalist@lists.dpi.wi.gov), contribute to the VISTA blog (<http://dpivista.blogspot.com>), or pull out your Contact list and email or call another VISTA or supervisor. Forming partnerships with each other can only strengthen the work we do in our own communities.

Keep up the good work and remember that your site supervisor and the DPI VISTA project staff are here for support and guidance!

BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

Be sure to send some birthday wishes!



Kelly Martyka (10/5)

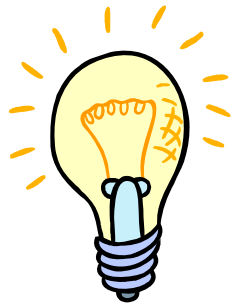
kmartyka@smhfc-harambee.com

Stephanie Jung (10/13)

s.jung@parentspluswi.org

“Hey! That’s a Good Idea” Page

1. **Chris Briggs**, through her service with the Wausau Early Childhood program, is working on a grant from U.S. Bank to fund a Native American Pow Wow program in collaboration with a local art museum in Wausau. This program would include presentations at local schools as well as a Family Fun night!
[Collaborating with the Community]
2. **Jen Gaul** and **Chad Olle** organized a successful Parents and Teachers Talking Together (PT3) program at Dottke High School in West Allis. This program brought teachers and parents together for a five hour session to brainstorm how to work more effectively together for their students. As a result of this training, Wisconsin now has trained facilitators to bring this work to your site!
[Parenting]
3. **Casey Gauthier**, VISTA in Rhinelander, is now a regular blogger for *News of the North.net*. She writes a monthly blog on her experiences combating poverty and serving as a VISTA in the community. Check out her blogs:
<http://news of the north.net/blogSection.cfm?sectionID=356>
[Communicating]



4. **Roxane Hagedorn**, VISTA with the Wausau School District and **Renee Hinn**, VISTA at Lincoln Elementary School in Oshkosh, both have contributed to their sites’ newsletters to let the staff and community know who they are and they are there! A great way to promote the work VISTAs are doing at your sites!
[Communicating]
5. **Michelle Traxel** had a tremendous response to her parent surveys! She is now using that data to help develop programming and volunteer opportunities for parents and families in Spooner. Surveying is a great step towards involving parents in decision making and advocacy for their children!
[Decision-Making]

Next Step in Setting Up Your Action Team: Just Do It!

By Ruth Anne Ladsverk



The DPI Community Learning and Partnerships Team is fortunate to sponsor an outstanding cadre of VISTA volunteers this year – yes, **you!!**

The common requirement for all DPI VISTAs is to start an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) and to devise a One-Year Action Plan linked to school goals. Now that you’ve recovered from September’s Fall Orientation in Madison, here are some ideas for “next steps” VISTAs can take to get the ATP ball rolling. **Now** is a great time to act on one or two of them, if you haven’t already done so!

“Next Steps” Ideas for VISTAs

- Meet with supervisor to discuss names of potential ATP members
- Prepare a brief handout that tells potential members what the Action Team is, what members do, and expected time commitments
- Email existing ATP members to ask for names of those willing to continue or to begin serving
- Informally visit with teachers in their classrooms to extract names of parents they think would make great ATP members
- Make phone calls to parents interested in serving on the Action Team
- E-mail or phone the PTA/PTO president to request someone from the school parent group to serve as liaison to the Action Team
- Personally invite teachers and other staff members to serve on the ATP AND send e-mail reminders inviting staff to participate
- Meet with supervisor and/or principal to talk about an Action Team schedule, meeting space, first agenda, refreshments (a nice touch, if possible), etc.
- Develop a short article for the school parent newsletter describing the ATP and inviting new members
- Create a brief parent survey and/or staff survey to gauge interest in ATP membership.

Remember, six to 12 members for an ATP is ideal, including:

- 2 to 3 parents and teachers (each) from different grades and/or school populations,
- The school principal (who may not be able to attend every meeting),

- 2 students, if possible, and
- A support staff member such as the school counselor, social worker, food service worker, or other member of the school staff.

It’s also a good idea to have a few parents who are willing to serve as alternate members to represent the “parent voice” when permanent members can’t attend meetings or events. Effective ATPs meet monthly, often vary when and where for members’ convenience, and know how to reach each other in between meetings via e-mail or phone.

Looking for ideas on how to conduct a good meeting or to get your Action Team off to a good start? Review DPI’s online Learning Together packet, The Action Team, at <http://www.dpi.wi.gov/fscfp/pdf/fcswintr.pdf> Or, visit The Action Team for Partnerships pages on the website of the National Network of Partnership Schools at http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model/school/atp.htm.

Taking that first step or two in recruiting members for your ATP may be scary, but lays the groundwork for future success. It’s common to hit a few bumps in the road in launching an Action Team, especially for VISTAs in schools new to this program. Start small, learn from each success and challenge, ask for help if you need it, and share your experiences, questions, and concerns with each other and with us at DPI. We’re all on this journey together! Bon voyage!

Did you know that **October is Breast Cancer Awareness month**? Check out <http://nbcam.org/> for information on how to continue to raise awareness and support.

Kelly Answers Kim's Questions

Kelly is Serving at the South Madison Health and Family Center



KIM: Where are you originally from?

KELLY: Milwaukee. Born and raised.

KIM: How many brothers and sisters do you have?

KELLY: I have two older brothers and a little sister. Chris, 32, Nick 28 in December (him and his wife have the same birthday but she was born in Germany so technically she's older) and Amanda aka Mani who's 18. We also have two ... well three dogs now. My parents refer to them as the kids and us, their actual kids. They are Duke who's 7 years old, Jackie is 5 or 6 – we don't know because we didn't get her as a puppy and the new baby Tonka Truck, he is no more than a few months and cute but only half Chihuahua. The other two are purebred Chihuahuas. My sister also owns a gerbil name Kool Aid (I named it). My mom owns some hermit crabs. And my dad has a pretty big fish tank.

KIM: What was your major in college?

KELLY: Majors, plural actually. Political Science, Legal Studies and Sociology. Yep three. In four years, with no summer classes.

KIM: Here is the classic question we have been asked oh so many times, why did you decide to take an Americorps*VISTA position?

KELLY: Well, it was sort of a few things. My last semester of school I took an international human rights class (Now, I should preface this with the fact that I had to take the class

and of all the options I had it seemed interesting enough but I am not one to have my mind changed about hot topics, especially political ones). On that note, I took that class and it totally changed my perspective. I learned a lot about the underlying issues that developed into these large human rights issues. From that, I thought, well, I want to be a judge in the future, so how awesome would it be to get into an advocacy program that would give me those kinds of opportunities. To see the nitty gritty part of society's problems and be able to work to tamper them a bit. So, I applied for various AmeriCorps and VISTA programs and got this one. Plus, I didn't get into law school so I had to find something else to do for another year that would look good on an application.

KIM: What are a couple things you value the most?

KELLY: Physically, my teddy bear, the little piece of corner that I have from my baby blanket (how embarrassing), my computer and my cell phone.

Emotionally, probably the corner from my baby blanket again, the funny side of things, people that really do care, my family, my future.

KIM: If you could hop on a plane and go anywhere right now where would you go?

KELLY: Somewhere warm, where I didn't have to work but could just sit and tan and read. I sit right under a vent at work (I am doing it right now) and it's freezing ALL THE TIME! Plus, I don't know why I decided to stay in Wisconsin for such a long time because I really don't like wintertime. It's pretty. A nice place to maybe come to for vacation but it's beyond me why I am still here in the freezing cold. I'd also say some place that I have never been. On my life list of things to do I'd like to go to Rome, the Vatican. I heard its beautiful and super rich in history and warmer than Wisconsin.

KIM: Who is one person you would like to meet in your life? Why?

KELLY: That's tough. Just one person. I think I'd like to meet either the Pope or Chief Justice Roberts – of the Supreme Court. Both of those people have a lot of power of interpretation and I would enjoy getting a chance to probe them a little and see how they handle the responsibility and find out what it's like to ride in the Pope mobile.

KIM: What are some of your hidden talents?

KELLY: This is a trick question because if I tell you then they aren't hidden anymore. But, I can wiggle my ears. In grade school, this kid and I used to have contests to see who could

do it the longest or who could make certain faces while doing it. It requires a deceivingly high amount of muscle control. I find it hard to smile while doing it because all the muscles are tight in your face. I'm also a pretty good dancer. I pick up dances really easily, probably because I took lessons for 16 years. Lastly, I have a mind of steel. I am really good at remembering things, dates, times, phone numbers, text books, information, what people were wearing on certain days, things people said, that kind of thing. It's a gift and a curse because I always feel kind of awkward remembering things that sometimes people hoped I would forget. Or not really wanting to say something but I know about it. It's a rough life.

Kim Answer's Kelly's Questions

Kim is Serving at Kosciuszko Montessori School in Milwaukee, WI.



KELLY: What made you decide to be a VISTA? How did you hear about it?

KIM: It was actually just by chance. I came across another VISTA position that I was interested in and then it opened my eyes to all of the other positions that were available. I think that doing service is something that should naturally be apart of everyone's lives

and I was very excited to be at a point in my life where I could take a VISTA position.

KELLY: How is your VISTA experience going? Where are you working?

KIM: It's going really well so far! I am working at Parent's Plus and then I am placed at two different schools, Banner Preparatory High School and Kosciuszko Montessori (try saying that name ten times fast).

KELLY: What is one thing you have learned thus far as a VISTA?

KIM: So far I have learned that it is important to just give things a try. I look forward to putting myself out there and trying to make connections with staff, parents, and the community. It is something that can feel awkward at times, but I truly love it and it is going to be so important as the year progresses.

KELLY: Even though you're only in a month, what advice would you give to new VISTA's (like the one's starting in December)?

KIM: First, it is crazy that we have been here a month already! Second, I would say to come with an open mind and be flexible.

KELLY: What do you plan on doing after your VISTA term (I know it's a long ways off)?

KIM: That is a great question and one that I do not think I will be able to answer until right before I am done with my service. I graduated with a degree in early childhood education, so there is a good chance that I will find a teaching position when I am done. I hope that this year will help me gain a good perspective on the career path I would like to take.

KELLY: Aside from fighting poverty, what other passions do you have?

KIM: Okay this may sound a bit cheesy, but I would say I am passionate about life. I love the possibility a day has and the unexpected events that take place each day, which may be good or bad. I also am passionate about the relationships and people in my life. I think support systems are so important and I feel pretty lucky to have such a great group of people in my life. Another passion is working with kids. It's what I love to do and feel in my element when I am working with kids.

KELLY: Do you have siblings? If yes, how many? Which one is your favorite? If not, what kind of sibling would you like and why?

KIM: Yes I do. There are 5 of us actually. I have 3 older brothers and an older sister (who is about to have her first baby!). I don't know if I can really pick a favorite, but I can say that my sister is my best friend. We are all pretty close even though we have lived far away from each other for a pretty long time.

KELLY: What is your ethnic background? Do you keep any particular traditions from them? Have you visited any of those countries? Would you like to?

KIM: I am a mix of everything to be honest. I am a mix of French, German, and Italian and I have not kept any traditions from them unfortunately. I was able to study abroad one summer in Italy, which was absolutely amazing. I loved learning more about the Italian culture.

KELLY: If your house was on fire, what 3 things would you be sure to save?

KIM: This is a tough question. I have a shoebox filled with little keepsakes that I saved throughout college to help remember different times and people. I would also take any other pictures in my room so that I don't lose the memories. I guess the last thing I would take is my journal (even though I am pretty bad at keeping up with it) to help preserve memories as well.

KELLY: Indoors or outdoors?

KIM: Definitely outdoors.

KELLY: BSB or N*Sync?

KIM: I was a BSB girl, but N'Sync had better dance moves.

KELLY: Gerbils or hamsters?

KIM: I had two gerbils when I was little, so gerbils of course.

KELLY: Diamonds or pearls?

KIM: I can't afford either, but diamonds are always pretty.

KELLY: Soccer or football?

KIM: Football...go Bucks!

KELLY: Early riser or night owl?

KIM: I think I am turning into an early riser.

Poco a Poco

By Kim Yoder

Poco a poco, or translated to English, “little by little”, is a saying that I lived by this summer while I was doing volunteer work in Honduras. Little by little, I was able to learn Spanish and discover my way around a community that was completely different than my own. I will continue to use this saying as I work at Koscuiszko Montessori, a bilingual K3 to 2nd grade Montessori school. It will take time, but I will gradually be able to recall the Spanish that I learned over the summer, as well as learn much more to enable me to communicate effectively with the parents at the school.

I look forward to the challenge that lies ahead during the year and I am lucky to have people in the school that are willing to help me through this process. While it can be intimidating at times, it truly helps keep me humble and understand what the parents in the school may feel like if someone does not speak their language. It would make things much easier if I spoke Spanish, but I feel fortunate enough that this summer I learned that it is possible to communicate even if there is a language barrier.

I am going to work through this barrier in many different ways. The staff and some parents are going to be great teachers throughout the school year. Ms. Aviles is always willing to translate and I have had many staff and parents tell me they would be more than willing to help me learn. I also have been looking into taking Spanish classes so that I have more practice outside of work. Since there is a language barrier between many parents and myself, I first need to make parents feel comfortable with my role at the school and how I am able to help them. I am doing this by spending time in the cafeteria in the morning when the parents drop off their children and help them eat their breakfast.

Even though I cannot say much to those that only speak Spanish, this is where a smile and a simple “Buenos Dias” goes a long way. It is the little things that make people feel welcomed at the school. Currently there are a couple of projects in the works at Kozy to help parents get a bit more involved. We just sent a survey home to parents to find out ways they would like to get involved with the school. We are also going to hold a parent breakfast on October 14th. This breakfast will be a way to open up communication lines at the school, sign up for volunteer opportunities, and also find answers to questions they may still have about Kozy. We are hoping for a great attendance and look forward to getting the ball rolling with this school year!



As for the Spanish barrier, I will learn and I am look forward to the challenges the year brings. I will keep the words of JFK in my mind, “The only unchangeable certainty is that nothing is certain or unchangeable.” While I may not be the best at Spanish now, I am not going to put another barrier up and think that I cannot accomplish learning Spanish. All VISTAs placed at various sites where people see that growth is needed and much deserved. Whatever barriers lie ahead for anyone, never limit yourself to think that something is unchangeable, with hard work and an open mind little by little there can always be change.

Grant Opportunities



National Child Labor Committee: Awards for Service to Children and Youth

The 2009 Lewis Hine Awards for Service to Children and Youth will be presented to individuals who have made a commitment to the well-being, growth, and development of youth, either in a paid job or through volunteering. Maximum award: \$1,000. Eligibility: professional nominees must work full- or part-time and receive pay for the activity or service for which they are nominated; volunteer nominees must be unpaid volunteers in the activity or service.

Deadline: Oct. 23, 2008.

<http://www.nationalchildlabor.org/>

Science Teachers: Sylvia Shugrue Award

The National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Sylvia Shugrue Award for Elementary School Teachers honors a teacher who has established (or is establishing) an interdisciplinary, inquiry-based lesson plan. The lesson plan must fully reference information sources and any relevant National Science Education Standards and benchmarks found in The Atlas of Science Literacy. Maximum award: \$1,000, and up to \$500 to attend the NSTA National Conference on Science Education, March 19-22, 2009, in New Orleans. The recipient will be honored during the Awards Banquet at the NSTA Conference. Eligibility: full-time elementary school teachers (grades K-6) with a minimum of three years' experience.

Deadline: Nov. 30, 2008.

<http://www.nsta.org/pdfs/awards/Shugrue.pdf>

Mathematics Council: Grants to Improve Students' Understanding of Geometry

The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Improving Students' Understanding of Geometry Grants seek to enable students to better appreciate and understand an aspect of geometry that is consistent with the council's Principles and Standards for School Mathematics. The project should include applications of geometry to, for example, art, literature, music, architecture, nature, or some other relevant area, and may integrate the use of technology into the teaching of geometry. Maximum award: \$3,000. Eligibility: K-8 teachers who are NCTM members as of Oct. 15, 2008, and are teaching at a school with an NCTM K-8 membership as of Oct. 15, 2008.

Deadline: Nov. 14, 2008.

<http://www.nctm.org/resources/content.aspx?id=1324>

ALA Cavendish Award: Library Programming

The American Library Association's Marshall Cavendish Excellence in Library Programming Award recognizes a library whose programs have community impact and respond to community needs. Eligible programs include: support of educational programs, library programs for children and adults, reading and literature programs for children, library programs for young adults, programming for multi-ethnic groups, community outreach, literacy programs, and programs and services for people with disabilities. Maximum award: \$2,000 and a citation of achievement. Eligibility: school or public libraries.

Deadline: Dec. 1, 2008.

<http://www.ala.org/ala/awardsgrants/awardsrecords/cavendishaward/cavendishaward.cfm>

State Farm, Youth Service America: Service Learning

The State Farm Good Neighbor Service-Learning Grant Program offers grants to teachers and service-learning coordinators who engage young people (ages 5 to 25) in implementing service-learning projects that will begin on Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 19, 2009, and continue through Global Youth Service Day in April. Maximum award: \$1,000. Eligibility: teachers or professors currently teaching in a public, private, faith-based, charter, or higher education institution within the United States or Canadian provinces, or school-based service-learning coordinators whose primary role is to coordinate service-learning projects in a school or university.

Deadline: Oct. 15, 2008.

<http://servenet.org/tabid/122/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/750/Default.aspx>

Weather Channel: Forecast Earth Summit for High School Students

The Weather Channel is looking for 20 outstanding students to be eco-ambassadors for its Forecast Earth Summit, Dec. 5-7. Contestants must submit an essay describing their love for our planet and what they have done to keep it clean and green. Maximum award: three-day, two-night trip for two (entrant and a parent or guardian) to Washington, DC, for participation in the 2008 Forecast Earth Summit. Eligibility: U.S. high school students.

Deadline: Oct. 18, 2008.

<https://www.forecastearthsummit.org/index.php>

Mickelson ExxonMobil: Teachers Academy

The 2009 Mickelson ExxonMobil Teachers Academy offers a five-day program of camps in New Jersey, Texas, and Louisiana that is intended to provide selected elementary school teachers with information and skills needed to motivate students to pursue careers in science and math. Maximum award: an all-expense-paid five-day program in July 2009.

Eligibility: third- through fifth-grade teachers in the United States.

Deadline: Oct. 31, 2008.

<http://www.sendmyteacher.com/>

Goody's Good Deeds for Schools

Goody's Good Deeds for Schools grants help local schools pay for things they really need but can't afford through regular education funding. Maximum award: \$10,000. Eligibility: schools in communities where Goody's stores are located.

Deadline: Nov. 1, 2008.

<http://www.goodysgooddeeds.com/Flip%20Page/index.html>

Foundation for Technology Education: Professional Development

The Foundation for Technology Education Greer/FTE Grant encourages professional development of classroom teachers and supervisors in technology education. Maximum award: \$1,000 to offset the expenses of attending an International Technology Education Association Conference. Eligibility: technology education teachers or supervisors for grades 6-12 who are members of the International Technology Education Association.

Deadline: Dec. 1, 2008.

<http://www.iteaconnect.org/Awards/grantgreer.htm>

Foundation for Technology Education: Quality Teaching

The Pitsco/Hearlihy Foundation for Technology Education Grant recognizes and encourages the integration of a quality technology education program within the school curriculum. Maximum award: \$2,000. Eligibility: K-12 teachers who are members of the International Technology Education Association.

Deadline: Dec. 1, 2008.

<http://www.iteaconnect.org/Awards/granthearlihy.htm>

Reader's Digest Foundation: 'Make It Matter' Grants

Reader's Digest Foundation "Make It Matter" Grants will identify people whose stories of giving back inspire others. The foundation will donate funds to a nonprofit organization that is associated either with a particular story or cause. Selected stories will appear every month in a new "Make It Matter" column in Reader's Digest and at www.rd.com, beginning in April 2009. Maximum award: \$100,000. Eligibility: Anyone can submit a story; grant recipients must be 501(c)(3) organizations.

Deadline: Jan. 1, 2009.

<http://www.efundraising.com/Readers-Digest-Foundation.aspx?partner=grantsalert>

Thomson Gale: TEAMS Award

The Fifth Annual Thomson Gale TEAMS Award recognizes and encourages collaboration between teachers and media specialists to promote learning and increase student achievement. Maximum award: \$2,500, Gale products (approximate value: \$500), a one-year subscription to Library Media Connection, and Educator's Professional Bookshelf (approximate value: \$500), from Linworth Publishing. Eligibility: K-12 public and private schools in the United States and Canada.

Deadline: June 15, 2009.

<http://www.galeschools.com/TEAMS/>