

SERV-OR Volunteers Provide Care at Project Connect of Central Oregon

Redmond, Ore. – More than 2,500 people attended this year's Project Connect of Central Oregon, a one-stop free personal and health services event. For three years, members of the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Oregon (SERV-OR) have served and helped carry out the mission of Project Connect, which is to rally Central Oregon to support lasting solutions for those experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness in the region.



The medical area served an estimate one-third of the visitors. Volunteer healthcare professionals provided many medical services, including dental, vision, mental health, women's health, HIV and hepatitis C screening and testing, immunizations, addiction services, fluoride treatments, foot care, and referral services.

In total 85 healthcare professionals served as official SERV-OR volunteers. These generous individuals included many types of healthcare professionals. The largest contingent was the 30 Registered Nurses. Other volunteers from the nursing field included four Nurse Practitioners, four Certified Nursing Assistants, and two Licensed Practical Nurses. A growing contingent of complementary and alternate care practitioners in SERV-OR was represented by nine acupuncturists, nine chiropractors, and one naturopathic physician. Four Emergency Medical Technicians volunteered, providing such services as blood pressure checks to ensure patients were able to undergo dental procedures. In the dental clinic itself, there were five dentists registered with SERV-OR, as well as one expanded practice dental hygienist. Many other clinicians volunteered and provided hours of service, though not as registered members of SERV-OR.

Major health service events like Project Connect can help exercise Oregon's disaster response systems in partnership with other initiatives that serve current public health needs. SERV-OR volunteers were deployed as if it were a real mass casualty event and had their credentials verified as they would during an official state-sanctioned SERV-OR disaster deployment. The benefit to healthcare professionals during official state-sanctioned exercises such as this is significant, as they can receive state liability and worker protection coverage. The SERV-OR staff and stakeholders benefitted from the full-scale testing of deployment protocol, volunteer registration processes and legal policies. The event also doubles as a recruiting tool for SERV-OR volunteers and is an incredible testament to building community resiliency in our community.

Project Connect is a component of Central Oregon's Regional 10-year Strategy to End Homelessness. The annual event is based on a national model called Project Homeless Connect, which originated in San Francisco in October 2004. Today, Project Connect is emulated in over 400 cities across the United States as well as Canada, Puerto Rico and Australia. Volunteers partner with government, non-profits, businesses, schools, and the private sector to provide a one-stop shop of health, social, and humanitarian services for struggling members of our communities.

Multnomah County Health Reserve Corps supports flu shot clinics

Zumana Rios, MHA



The Multnomah County Health Reserve Corps (HRC) activated its volunteers to support the Health Department's seasonal flu shot clinics this fall in collaboration with a variety of community partners, including the Mexican Consulate, African American Health Coalition and Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO). Volunteers included registered nurses and vaccine-certified pharmacists. Volunteers supported three flu shot clinics during the months of October and November. Eleven HRC volunteers signed up to administer flu vaccines. These volunteers contributed a total of 55 hours of time.

The HRC was established in 2002 to house a cadre of licensed volunteer health care workers who would be mobilized to support the Health Department's response to large-scale emergencies or non-emergency public health activities. Volunteers are non-Health Department employees who serve as resources to expand communities' response capacity in Multnomah County and work under the Health Department's direction.

There are currently more than 400 licensed health care volunteers in the HRC. To learn more about the program, please visit the [HRC website](#).

AmeriCorps VISTA Profile: Danielle Brown

A new leader has joined the Washington County and Clackamas County Medical Reserve Corps units. In August, Danielle Brown began a year of national service as the AmeriCorps VISTA MRC Volunteer Coordinator for both units. She is one of 24 VISTAs -- or Volunteers in Service to America -- that the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division places around Oregon.



Here is more about Danielle Brown in her own words:

What did you do before this?

I worked in restaurants and bars for 10 years while I went to college. I held many positions including server, bartender, and Assistant Manager. Since I graduated college in June 2011, I was bartending until I started with AmeriCorps.

Where did you go to school and what did you study?

I went to community college at Portland Community College and Central Oregon Community College where I received my Associate of Arts Oregon Transfer Degree in 2008. After that I transferred to Oregon State University where I received my Bachelors of Science in Public Health-Health Promotion and Health Behavior in June 2011.

What has pleasantly surprised you in your new position?

I didn't realize how much appreciation and gratitude I would receive from some of the MRC volunteers! It feels good to know they appreciate the work I am doing here. There is also something exciting about having my own desk!

What do you see as the point of an AmeriCorps VISTA year of service, for you and for others?

I joined AmeriCorps because I wanted to make a difference and serve my community, while gaining real-world experience that I might not find elsewhere. AmeriCorps VISTA is challenging, rewarding, and a great way to meet new people and to continue to develop lifelong skills. There are also benefits we get at the end of our year of service, such as an educational award and one year of non-competitive status for a federal government job.

On a personal note, what was your best vacation ever?

Israel and Egypt.

What do you do for fun?

I love yoga!

Last, what is one food you can't live without?

Greens.

AmeriCorps VISTA Profile: Haleigh Gokey

Haleigh Gokey, an AmeriCorps VISTA member, just began her year of national service as the Linn County Medical Reserve Corps Unit Coordinator and Public Health Accreditation Organizer. She is one of 24 VISTAs -- or Volunteers in Service to America -- that the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division places around Oregon. Here she shares some of her background and plans for her time in Linn County and beyond.



What did you do before this?

I earned my MPH from Oregon State University in Health Promotion & Health Behavior. Before that, I earned my BA in Exercise Science and Psychology from Hope College in Holland, Michigan.

What has pleasantly surprised you in your new position?

The opportunities to network with so many people throughout the county and state who are working to improve the health of Oregonians.

What do you see as the point of an AmeriCorps VISTA year of service, for you and for others?

Our AmeriCorps VISTA year of service allows us to use our education and experiences to build capacity in the communities we serve to help alleviate the negative effects of poverty. As the MRC unit coordinator, I work to build infrastructure for community emergencies. This work is really important in Linn County because we have such a large county, geographically, and therefore serve a rural population that can be difficult to access during an emergency. With our MRC volunteers we can work to reduce the stress on the emergency responders and help provide more care for those in need. The accreditation work is helping build the Linn County Public Health Department infrastructure to better serve its customers' needs. We will be able to better appropriate our money and services and also apply for grants that will best serve our customers.

What is an accomplishment so far that you'd like to share?

We have been able to recruit more volunteers with diverse backgrounds and skill sets which is a huge benefit for our MRC and community.

What would a successful year on your position look like? What do you hope to achieve?

After my VISTA year is complete there will not be another VISTA, so my goal is to guide current MRC volunteers into more leadership roles to take on the program after I am done. I am also hoping to complete a lot of documentation gathering for the accreditation process.

Any thoughts or inspiration about what you want to do next after your VISTA year?

The possibilities are endless. I am interested in doing work in public health programming planning and evaluation, doing mission work abroad or joining the Peace Corps, or maybe going back to school to earn my teaching certificate and teaching middle school and/or high school students.

On a personal note, what was your best vacation ever?

Study abroad at the University of Aberdeen, in Aberdeen, Scotland.

AmeriCorps VISTA Profile: Marissa Mark

Yamhill County Medical Reserve Corps members are getting to know their new AmeriCorps VISTA member. Marissa Mark began her year of national service as the AmeriCorps VISTA working on Yamhill County's Medical Reserve Corps and public health accreditation process. She is one of 24 VISTAs -- or Volunteers in Service to America -- that the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division places around Oregon.



Here is more about Marissa Mark in her own words:

What did you do before this?

I graduated from Linfield College with a degree in health education in 2012.

What has pleasantly surprised you in your new position?

I really enjoy the people I work with and the volunteers that I coordinate. Since I am so young, it is really interesting to get the perspectives of others.

What do you see as the point of an AmeriCorps VISTA year of service, for you and for others?

For me it's really about the big picture. Most of what I do is kind of behind-the-scenes work that in turn will help the general public out in the long run. Although I don't do a lot of direct service, my job is important so that others can help directly.

What is an accomplishment so far that you'd like to share?

I have already increased membership of our MRC unit by ten percent.

What would a successful year on your position look like? What do you hope to achieve?

I hope to end my VISTA year with a (mostly) self-sustaining MRC unit that is able to recruit, train, and prepare on its own.

Any thoughts or inspiration about what you want to do next after your VISTA year?

My plan for next year is to go to grad school. I am currently studying to take the GRE and plan to apply to Oregon State University to start earning my MPH in the fall of 2013.

On a personal note, what was your best vacation ever?

Not exactly a vacation, but I got to go to Germany and Belgium with my school to study beer.

What was the last book you read?

The Fault in our Stars by John Green.

Last, what is your favorite movie?

10 Things I Hate about You.

AmeriCorps VISTA Profile: Andrea Pena

The newest Medical Reserve Corps unit in Oregon is fortunate to gain the service of another AmeriCorps VISTA member. Andrea Pena began her year of national service in August as the Wasco County Medical Reserve Corps coordinator, housed in Oregon's North Central Public Health District. She is one of 24 VISTAs - or Volunteers in Service to America -- that the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division places around Oregon.



Here is a quick introduction to Ms Pena, in her own words:

What did you do before this?

I was a full-time student at the University of Oregon where I studied Spanish. Go Ducks!

What has pleasantly surprised you in your new position?

How health is a huge impact on a community. Good or bad.

What do you see as the point of an AmeriCorps VISTA year of service, for you and for others?

Getting to know my community and making a difference.

Any thoughts or inspiration about what you want to do next after your VISTA year?

I'd like to continue to focus on community health improvement in small town communities and work with children with school health and wellness projects and exercise to help decrease child obesity.

On a personal note, what was the last book you read?

Gone Girl by Gillian Flynn.

Last, what's your favorite film?

50 First Dates.