



THE PSP JOTTER

The Public School Partnership's Monthly Newsletter

JANUARY 2016



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

A Time for New Challenges & Opportunities

As we bring in the New Year, PSP would like to thank our VISTA Members, Site Supervisors, and other partners for their ongoing support to help us in our mission to eradicate poverty in the Cache Valley community. A new year always gives the opportunity to reflect on what we have done well and what we can improve upon; using these insights we hope to grow stronger as an organization. We are excited for both the opportunities and challenges 2016 has in store!

SITE HIGHLIGHTS

Look at What Our VISTAs Have Been Up To

The Center for Civic Engagement & Education Outreach

The CCE Outreach office at Utah State University houses several education and community-related programs, most notably, *America Reads*, which connects tutors in after school programs to over 1,200 Cache Valley students each school day. Other projects the CCE is involved with include college-readiness summer camps, curriculum that integrates music and art, and fundraisers for variety of social causes. Our VISTA Member Gracie Botello helps to facilitate these programs by creating and delivering training materials, tracking outcomes, managing large numbers of volunteers, and collecting and organizing the data necessary to keep these programs running. She has also been busy putting the pieces in place for her new My Young Mother scholarship, a program that will provide tuition assistance and baby care supplies to a mother who is a senior in high school needing help getting started in college. Additionally, the CCE office houses support groups which Gracie helps to mentor: North Cache Girls and Changing Faith Raising Hope.

Box Elder Middle School

Since becoming a new site with the PSP in August, Box Elder Middle School has made great strides to combat poverty with the help of our VISTA Member Shayley Warner. In recent months Shayley has helped to coordinate not only a clothing drive for students needing warm winter clothing, but also an ongoing toiletry closet so that all students can have their basic hygiene needs met. Box Elder Middle School also participates in Utah Futures, a college and career readiness program that Shayley helps facilitate. This program uses informative sessions to encourage all students to pursue post-secondary education. She also serves as a counselor and mentor to help strengthen programs that improve grades and outlook for students needing extra support.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **January 23:** Amanda's Birthday
- **February 2:** Lynda's Birthday
- **February 3:** Jon's Birthday
- **February 4:** Angela's Birthday
- **February 4 & 5:** Site Visits
- **February 8:** Jaclyn's Birthday
- **February 15:** President's Day (Holiday)
- **February 17:** Monthly Training (Optional), 12pm-1pm & 5pm-6pm: Grants
- **February 24:** Jason's Birthday
- **March 3 & 4:** Site Visits
- **March 9:** Quarterly Training (Mandatory), 9am-5pm
- **March 10:** AmeriCorps Gathering in SLC
- **March 11:** Shonna's Birthday

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VISTA MEMBER RECOGNITION

Thanking our VISTAs for all of their hard work

As part of our recognition program, each month we spotlight four nominated AmeriCorps VISTAs to show of appreciation for their efforts and enthusiasm.



**Angela Wood,
Willow Valley
Middle School**

*Outstanding
Outcomes Award*

Angela has been following the VISTA motto of "Getting things done!" for her school. She recently created a program titled *Mission Impossible: No Missing Assignment* that rewards students for turning in all of their classwork. The program has received overwhelmingly positive feedback from teachers, staff, and eager-to-participate students. She has also been busy creating lesson plans, helping organize a school advisory board, and arranging additional student support. Even with all that on her plate, she continues to help coordinate Willow Valley's college & career readiness program. Keep up the good work, Angela!



**Jon Wilkey,
Sky View
High School**

*Good Role Model
Award*

Jon is great to work with and a good role model at Sky View. He is a fun person to talk to and always in a cheerful mood no matter the situation. Jon is willing to help his fellow VISTA Members Jaclyn and Rebecca with extra projects such as Red Ribbon week, a campaign that discourages students from using drugs. Jon also helps his coworkers calm down in times of stress by taking the time to help them see the big picture and that everything will be OK. Thanks for being awesome, Jon!



**Jennie Hymas,
Title VII**

Perseverance Award

Jennie has recently come across some tough situations in her work with the Title VII Native American program, as several of the students she works with on a regular basis face difficult circumstances. Jennie has supported her students throughout their trials and made sure they were getting help they needed at school. By providing a secure safety net, Jennie has helped her students overcome adversity and succeed academically. We appreciate your dedication to your students and program, Jennie!



**Jason Jensen,
Sound Beginnings
Preschool**

*Above & Beyond
Award*

Jason is always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone who needs it at Sound Beginnings, even when his own schedule is already filled to the max. Jason understands that being a VISTA Member goes beyond performance measures and program outcomes; he knows that helping people is of utmost importance to our mission and works hard to make his coworkers and supervisors happy. He is always volunteering for extra projects and checking in on people to see how they are doing. Way to go, Jason!

**If you think one of PSP's VISTA
Members deserves special recognition,
you can submit a nomination on our
website at:**

www.publicschoolpartnership.com

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE Celebrating With Service



It is tradition for National Service members to spend MLK Day giving back to their communities, and this year was no exception. With a grant provided by UServeUtah, Utah's state commission on volunteering, the PSP held a donation drive at four grocery stores across the valley, and in all we collected:

- 387.3 lbs of FOOD
- 135 HYGIENE items
- 407 HOUSEHOLD items,
- 344 BABY CARE items

Our local America Reads program also held a baby care item drive as part of our MLK Day efforts. These AmeriCorps members brought in a total of 2,677 baby care items from six local schools, with Lincoln Elementary bringing in the most donations. All donations will benefit local pantries that serve youth, seniors, families, and students in need as well as the *My Young Mother* program, a scholarship created to support a young mother from Cache Valley as she pursues post-secondary education. Through this year's MLK Day project, 85 members of various Cache Valley National Service Alliance organizations— PSP AmeriCorps VISTA, Cache Valley SeniorCorps, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program, and the America Reads AmeriCorps program— served a total of 266 volunteer hours! We also collaborated with the Cache Valley Senior Citizens Center, USU's Val R. Christensen Service Center.

Jesse Walker of *Jesse Walker Photography* volunteered his time to take some awesome photos of the event, which you can find on our website.

We would like to thank all of our local partners who made this project possible, especially:

- South Logan Walmart
- Natural Grocers of Logan
- Lee's Marketplace of Logan
- Macey's of Providence



SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS Our New Year's Resolutions to You

As we begin a new calendar year, we would like to let you know how PSP as an organization is working to better serve you. The December VISTA Satisfaction Survey provided some valuable insight and we would like to thank our VISTA Members for their feedback. We are happy to see more VISTAs report they feel acknowledged for their efforts by their site supervisors, PSP administrators, and VISTA Leader, but there is still room for improvement in this area. The December survey results also show that there is a want for more interaction with mentor groups and optional PSP social activities. We will work on providing more opportunities in these areas over the next few months to benefit our VISTAs. Please remember to take our next VISTA Satisfaction Survey in March; these surveys help us to help you!

The Public School Partnership (PSP) is an educational nonprofit organization based at Utah State University in Cache Valley, UT. The PSP accomplishes its mission to eliminate poverty through improving education by building partnerships between schools, parents, and the surrounding community in Northeastern Utah.