



THE PSP JOTTER



The Public & School Partnership's Monthly Newsletter October 2017

FIRST QUARTERLY TRAINING

PSP's VISTA Members have already received a number of reminders about the PSP Quarterly Training, which is taking place on October 25 at the Eccles Conference Center. The conference starts at 9:00 AM and ends at 4:00 PM. However, there will be a continental breakfast starting at 8:45 AM. Lunch will also be provided.

To encourage team building, we will be participating in the maze at the American West Heritage Center from 2:00 until 4:00 p.m. PSP is happy to pay for admission for all of its VISTA Members.

If a VISTA Member is not familiar with the USU Campus please note that the Eccles Conference center is NOT the same as the University Inn and Conference Center. If you need directions, PSP can provide VISTA Members with a map on the location of the Eccles Conference Center.

Rikki, Shonna, and Elisa are working hard to make the conference a success. It is our hope that VISTA members will have an opportunity to meet with each other and to learn.

We look forward to seeing you there.

VISTA MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

ArtCore

PSP VISTA Member Daniel Bialkowski has been working diligently to develop a new arts-education nonprofit, known as ArtCore. Daniel recently reported that ArtCore has officially received its 501(c)(3) letter from the IRS and is now officially a nonprofit.



Daniel Bialkowski representing ArtCore.

Daniel reports that ArtCore had its first board meet-

ing and heard a lot of great ideas from the dynamic team of individuals.

Daniel and ArtCore are already out working in the community bringing the arts to youth. On the left is a picture of Daniel and others during the Pride Festival.

Logan Family Center

The Logan Family Center held its annual Tables of Content fundraiser at the David H. Haight Alumni Center on September 9. This event was started by former VISTA member Laura Higgins, and current VISTA member Joanna Escalante is continuing the tradition. She worked many hours to make the event successful.

There were 13 Utah authors who attended the event this year, including Kathryn Purdie, whose young adult book, "Crystal Blade," was #1 on the New York Time's Bestseller list for young adult fiction.

Authors mingled with dinner guests and sold copies of their books (signed if you wanted!).

Todd Milovich provided guitar music for the evening. Amongst other endeavors, Todd directs the Education Outreach program through USU. This is another AmeriCorps-funded organization, as we are.

It was a great evening!

Cache High School

Kaylyn Christensen has been very active at Cache High, throwing her energy and determination into helping students there.

She helped create the First Annual Cache High Reunion. This is Cache High's last year in the current building and the team at Cache High



Cache High Reunion Attendees

wanted to give former students an opportunity to see their school before the move to the new high school south of the BATC.

Kaylyn also put together a free yard sale for students. Kaylyn estimates that they received \$4,800 in donated clothes and other items. Students were allowed to “shop” the donations and take home clothing and other home goods for themselves and their families.

Kaylyn is also directing the Panther Pride Program. The school provides incentives for academic achievement, good attendance, and exemplary behavior. Students are able to earn tickets from teachers which they can then turn in for prizes. All of these prizes Kaylyn acquired through donations. In August she was able to gather over \$1,000 worth of donations from various local businesses and universities.

From our site visits, we also know that Kaylyn is working hard to provide a nutrition program to the students at Cache High. She reports that chicken noodle soup warmed in a crock pot is really successful with the students. She works hard to get enough donations to provide some food for the students.

VISTA MEMBER RECOGNITION PROGRAM

Consider nominating a VISTA member for his/her work.

- The *Above & Beyond Award* for the VISTA who puts in extra effort for PSP, their site, or a struggling student.
- The *Good Role Model Award* for the VISTA who exemplifies what it means to be a National Service volunteer.
- The *Outstanding Outcomes Award* for the VISTA who makes big impacts on their site and their community.

- The *Determination Award* for the VISTA who rises to face challenges and overcomes them unyielding tenacity.

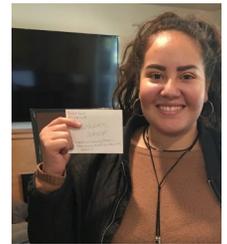
The Determination Award: Daniel Bialkowski

Daniel has come up against several road blocks and has had to be very patient as he brings arts education to all youth in Cache Valley. With the help of his site, the USU Ed Outreach Office, Daniel is creating his own nonprofit, ArtCore, that will provide affordable and accessible arts education opportunities to all youth. He has had to go through the entire process. He has used what he has learned thus far as a VISTA to acquire donations, build partnerships, train volunteers, and contribute to the overall sustainability of this project. The process has not been fast or easy by any means, but he has been very persistent and determined to make this dream and incredible opportunity a reality!



The Above & Beyond Award: Joanna Escalante

Shortly after VISTA Member Joanna began service as a VISTA at the Logan Family Center, she was asked to take over the primary coordinator role for one of the center's major events, the Tables of Content annual fundraiser dinner. Joanna took the project on with energy and enthusiasm despite not being familiar with last year's event and learning about the center from day to day. Joanna was willing to do what was necessary to make sure the event was a success, which meant she worked a few long days, got out of her comfort zone, learned on the fly, and took over or delegated responsibilities where necessary. It was apparent to Joanna's site supervisors and to our PSP team that Joanna was not afraid to go above & beyond to make sure the event was successful or that guests enjoyed their experience.





PSP Newsletter



Senior and Community Volunteers

Sponsored by the Public & School Partnership at Utah State University. We match volunteering opportunities to seniors in Cache County..

October , 2017

Current and planned organizations where PSP Senior and Community Volunteers serve:

In Hyrum:

Mountain Crest High School

In Logan:

Adams Elementary
Bear River Head Start
Bridgerland Literacy
CAPSA
Cache Food Pantry
Cache High School
Cache Refugee & Immigrant Connection
Logan Family Center
Mountain Crest High School
Somebody's Attic
Stokes Nature Center
Wilson Elementary
Utah Conservation Corps

In Smithfield:

Birch Creek Elementary
Park Elementary
Somebody's Attic
Summit Elementary

The Attendance Imperative

The Public & School Partnership's mission is to reduce poverty by improving the educational successes of children—especially at-risk children. As we know, having a strong educational foundation dramatically improves economic opportunity after high school.

Attending school regularly is essential to students gaining the academic and social skills they need to succeed. Reducing absenteeism is a simple, cost-effective, but often overlooked strategy for improving academic performance. Starting as early as preschool and kindergarten, chronic absence—missing 10 percent of the academic year—can leave third graders unable to read proficiently, sixth graders struggling with coursework and high school students off track for graduation. Chronic absence is especially problematic among students living in poverty who are most likely to have poor attendance over multiple years and least likely to have the resources to make up for the lost time in the classroom. In some communities, chronic absence affects more than one out of four children.

Unfortunately, many schools and communities don't realize the extent of the problem because districts don't look at all the right data. They're paying attention to how many students show up every day and how many skip school, but not how many miss so much school in excused and unexcused absences that they're at risk academically.

A student who was chronically absent in any year, starting in the 8th grade, was 7.4 times more likely to drop out of school than a student who was not.

The good news is chronic absence can be significantly reduced when schools, families and community partners work together to monitor data, nurture a habit of regular attendance and address hurdles that keep children from getting to school every day such as lack of access to health care, unhealthy environmental conditions, unreliable transportation, housing instability or the lack of safe paths to school.

Utah has a total of 949 public schools. Of this total, 175 have low chronic absences, defined as 0 to 4.9%.

There are 145 school with modest absences (5-9.9%), 422 with significant absences (10-19.9%), and 128 with high chronic absences (20-29.9%). And 79 schools have what is called "extreme chronic absences" with absences of 30% and higher. Schools with extreme chronic absences is 8% of our total schools. The national average is also 8% of schools.

A University of Utah Research Brief found that students who are chronically absent from school during the school year are 13 times more likely to be chronically absent the following year.

All of us play a part in helping students get as much value as possible out of schooling. There are always schools looking for volunteers willing to give one-on-one help to students struggling with reading and writing. Falling behind in school is one of the factors in decreased attendance. Students really trust older volunteers.

Career Speakers List for High Schools

Each year, local high schools have a career day where students can hear from those who work in, or are retired from, various careers. We have provided a list in past year of our volunteers who are willing to give a short talk at these events.

Students love to hear about potential career choices from those who have actual experience at a vocation. If you are willing to be added to our list, send us an email with your name, best contact number, and the career you are willing to talk about.

We give the list to the schools and they choose whom they call. So it is possible you will not be contacted about

participating.

Cache Maker 4-H Club

The Cache Maker 4-H Club is a little different than the first 4-H club in 1902 called “The Tomato Club.” Unlike the first clubs that focused on agricultural projects, Cache Makers is focused on teaching science, technology, engineering and math to 9-15 year olds—subjects commonly referred to as “S.T.E.A.M.”

These subjects have often been male-dominated in America. But the club has made progress in getting young girls to participate. They have also had summer programs focused on young refugees who often have had little chance for education in S.T.E.A.M. subjects.

Cache Maker has operated on a DWS grant for the last three years, but that grant ends this month. While they have other sponsors, the loss of this funding will greatly impact their ability to offer the same level of educational experiences in programming, robots, DIY electronics, and 3D printing.

Besides funding, Cache Maker is always looking for volunteers willing to share a few hours each week with club members. While volunteers with a technology background might be of greatest help, anyone who enjoys working with youth would be an asset to them.

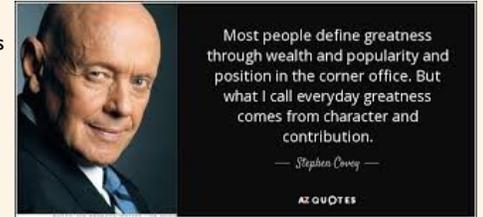
You can find out more details by contacting Amber O’Quinn at amber@cachemakers.org.

VISTA Members and Seniors Make a Difference

Seniors continue to make a difference in America. Along with VISTA members, seniors from all 50 states have participated in helping areas that were impacted by hurricanes Harvey and Irma.

In the years following Hurricane Katrina, CNCS sent more than 40,000 AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members to the Gulf Coast region who managed the bulk of the 1 million volunteers who arrived to help rebuild. Since then, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps teams have provided critical support after countless disasters, including Hurricane Sandy; last year’s Louisiana flooding; tornadoes in Joplin, Mo., Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Moore, Okla.; the explosion in West, Texas; and the Deepwater Horizon BP Oil Spill.

Volunteering in our senior years allows us to connect with a purpose larger than ourselves. Seniors can and do make a difference in our world—and in Cache Valley.



More Opportunities to Serve

Cache High School

This high school on 1400 North in Logan needs volunteers to help in classrooms, mentoring and tutoring students. They also need volunteers with background/skill in art.

Students at this school want to learn! Their 104 students have an average daily attendance of 91%!

Stokes Nature Center

The Stokes Nature Center needs volunteers to carry out their mission of providing nature education to people of all ages.

Stokes has a strong need for volunteers with a range of experience. Needs include retired educators with natural science backgrounds who can talk to

groups about understanding and appreciating nature, helping with outreach events, and handicrafts.

They need “critter caretakers.” These volunteers can come in any time the center is open and care for native critters. Critters include a snake, a salamander and hummingbirds.

They also need volunteers who can serve as docents at the center welcoming visitors.

You can find out more about volunteering opportunities at their web site: www.logannature.org/volunteer.

Bridgerland Literacy

Bridgerland Literacy offers free reading and writing tutoring to adult learners who are conversational in English.

Volunteers are matched with a student for one-on-one tutoring in an open, safe, and confidential environment. Tutor training and teaching materials are provided at no cost. By improving literacy skills, individuals can function more efficiently and find more fulfillment in their lives.

They match volunteer tutors with students and provide tutoring materials and a place—usually Bridgerland Applied Technology College—to conduct tutoring sessions. Volunteers meet with an assigned student twice a week for a 1-hour session. Volunteers are asked to make a 6-month commitment.

**Public & School
Partnership’s
Senior & Community
Volunteers
Utah State University
6505 Old Main Hill
Logan, Utah 84322-6505
435-797-5720**