Masters of ‘Done’

It is such a pleasure to welcome our CAC AmeriCorps Members for the 2019-2020 service year! Now partnered with more than 40 organizations, our ranks continue to swell, but the talent, enthusiasm, dedication, and energy never diminish. Our members hail from as far away as Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Minnesota, Michigan, Kansas, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska while many are also of the area.

In this year they will help turn the tide on invasive species in the Great Smoky Mountains, educate the young and young at heart on our richly biodiverse region, calm and clean our stormwater, keep our streets spruced, welcome and assists our new friends from abroad, encourage our youth to shine, cultivate community agency, secure our food and nutrition, and give dignity to those with weighted hearts. We could not be any prouder!

Purposed gifts bestowed
From afar gathered and freed
These Masters of ‘Done’

Independent Service Projects

If your organization has a community development project that could utilize the talents, skills, energy, and enthusiasm of CAC AmeriCorps Members, we encourage you to consider this initiative. Projects may be a community development challenge to be addressed, a set of well-defined tasks leading to community improvement, or a larger-scale, service day event.

Click here for Guidelines and Application

A Day in Cherokee National Forest

by Christine Doka

When planning the site visit, Katherine was insistent that if I were to drive all the way down, she would love to take me on a hike and show me the beauty of where she was serving. As someone who loves spending time in nature but doesn’t get to do so often enough, I happily obliged.

Read the rest of the story and others on our BLOG
Another Lap of Service

Several of our AmeriCorps members decided to do a second year of service, which we are extremely grateful for. Below are these AmeriVets reasons for doing a 2nd year, as well as some things they are excited to accomplish in the future.

Allison Bate knew that she was getting much more valuable experience from her AmeriCorps service at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park than she would be getting from an internship. In her role as a Resource Educator, she not only gets to have loads of fun teaching, she gets to create and design the programs as well. Allison is very excited for the growth potential in her programs this coming year.

Connal Boyd decided to serve a second year in AmeriCorps so she could fully experience all Knoxville has to offer. Serving her first time at Keep Sevier Beautiful helped her learn a lot, but her second year at Knox County Stormwater will allow her to be fully immersed in the Knoxville community which should help Connal grow both professionally and personally. Connal is excited to learn about water quality and to help protect the waterways of eastern Tennessee.

Randall Eaker is continuing his journey of service based work with a second year of AmeriCorps service. Serving his first year with the Tennessee Valley Authority, Randall is now serving in the UT Office of Sustainability as the Data Analysis Coordinator. Randall is excited to get to know the Knoxville community better. He feels the community here can help him grow as a human while he also gets to give back to the same community.

Julie Elfin served her first year in AmeriCorps at the Water Quality Forum. However, one of our new partner sites, Discover Life in America, excited Julie so she decided a 2nd year of AmeriCorps would let her be involved with the site’s work and allow her to serve in and around the National Park. Julie is excited to be involved with DLiA’s programs that get students outside in nature, like their iScience program. This allows students to explore nature and make observations on an app, which can then be used in academic research.

Gordon Harless chose to do a second year of AmeriCorps because he’s not done learning the skills he needs to succeed in his goal of working in the non-profit or public service area. He enjoyed learning so much about service during his first year at CAC Housing & Energy, but he is so excited to learn a whole wide range of new things during his year as VISTA Leader.

As she has said for months, Jackie Eul wishes she could have the CAC AmeriCorps experience for the rest of her life. Everyday serving at Great Schools Partnership, she is surrounded by a group of intelligent young people who want to make a dent of change in her community. Jackie can’t think of anything more inspiring than that. This coming year, Jackie is excited to continue learning how to make an impact. In June of this year, she looked and realized she was elbow deep in projects. Staying to complete them was a no-brainer.
Marlee Jennings decided to continue with a second year of AmeriCorps because of the great community of friends and service-minded people she has been able to connect with. Finishing her first year with the UT Office of Recycling, Marlee’s second year will be with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park Vegetation Management Crew. Marlee is excited to be able to serve in and around the Smokies and looks forward to learning lots of new skills and being out in the great outdoors.

Leah McCord said she enjoys AmeriCorps since it has allowed her to make a difference in her community while also preparing her for graduate school. Leah serves as the VISTA member at the UT Office of Sustainability as the Food Systems Coordinator. Leah was able to help establish a community garden while also being a student herself during her year of service. She looks forward to growing new campus partnerships to address food security and food waste issues on campus.

Maddy Staff stayed for a 2nd year of AmeriCorps service because it just made sense. She loves serving with the Keep Knoxville Beautiful community because the people and the projects she gets to interact with are wonderfully diverse. There is such a wide variety of things she gets to be involved in, she is excited to continue developing existing programs, and develop even more new ones during her second year of service.

Chase Steele decided to do a second year of AmeriCorps so he could see the program he spent his first year designing and launching move into action. Chase serves with the City of Knoxville Waste and Resource office, and developed ConServe Knoxville, a low waste restaurant certificate program. Chase is looking forward to getting the ConServe Knoxville program off the ground and running, as well as starting to actually certify area restaurants as low-waste.

Annalisa Tarizzo wants to explore more areas of sustainability while staying in the supporting environment that AmeriCorps provides. Annalisa served at the UT Office of Recycling doing hands on work with reducing campus waste. Now in 2nd year, she will be the UT Office of Sustainability Program Development Specialist, where she is excited to develop programs around climate action, renewable energy, and environmental justice.

Kalil White loved the impact she made at her site so much she decided to stay for a 2nd year of AmeriCorps service. Kalil serves at Inskip Community schools as the Garden Program coordinator. Kalil was very proud to be able to make changes in a community that reflected her own life growing up. This year, she is excited about several programs, including an Inskip Food Pantry and Fresh Food Cooking demos for families. She is also hoping to help provide affordable transportation, so the children in Inskip have access to the green spaces of Knoxville.

Mary Woody decided to continue her professional and personal growth through a second year of AmeriCorps service. Previously serving at ETRPI, this year Mary will be the VISTA Senior Nutrition associate with CAC Mobile Meals. Mary is excited to work with the CAC Collaborative Farm-to-Senior program getting fresh, healthy food to seniors. Mary wants to raise awareness about Mobile Meals to help build a sustainable program for years to come.
Connection

AmeriCorps undoubtedly brings positive impacts to community, but many AmeriCorps alums often describe their service year as transformational, the experience having brought new skills and networks, presented challenges successfully met, redirected perspective from self to broader issues, and reset life plans and career trajectories. A good piece of that comes from deeply meaningful connections, and we at CAC AmeriCorps — with our large and growing annual onboarding of members and a rich orientation process that includes a three day retreat in the Great Smoky Mountains — like to tout our role in facilitating those friendships.

We’re only a few weeks in with our new body of corps members, and the initiated bonds continue to strengthen. Members have gathered to honor Shabbat; to learn and share in yoga; for tabletop role playing games; and to strengthen their skills in French, Spanish, and American Sign Language. Kudos to starting those up! It’s a great beginning, and we look forward to this year of growth and development.

Community Health Corps

CAC AmeriCorps is developing a new 47 week national service program with a focus on regional public health issues projected to begin August of 2020. Our Community Health Corps will be focused on engaging Americans of all ages in solving public health related challenges in a 9-county region in East Tennessee. Concentration will be on healthy lifestyles, regional food insecurity, opioid / drug addiction, and providing services to help the elderly age in place. If your organization is working to address one or more of the above topics, we would welcome the opportunity to speak with you regarding the potential of hosting a full-time national service member in support of your mission. Contact us at mark.carper@knoxcac.org; 865-564-3500 ext 1120.

National Day of Service
September 11, 2019
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
S/N-Red Cross Center
6921 Middlebrook Pike
VISTA-Mercy Housing
5845 E Gov. John Sevier Hwy

Place Making
September 27, 2019
3:30 pm - 4:45 pm
Mule Barn
Knoxville Botanical Gardens
2743 Wimpole Ave

Courses of Action
October 25, 2019
3:00 pm - 4:45 pm
Public Works Building
3131 Morris Ave

Make a Difference Day
October 26, 2019
9:00 am - 12:00 pm
Dogwood Elementary
705 Tipton Ave

The CAC AmeriCorps Office

Christine Doka, CJ Butcher, Gordon Harless, Jason Scott, Mark Carper