



Priceless: An “Absolutely Wonderful” Day

Brown County’s Make A Difference Day -- Does!

JD Shatswell is an AmeriCorps volunteer at the Volunteer Center of Brown County.

JD Shatswell walked into the Volunteer Center of Brown County in September as a new, half-time AmeriCorps member not quite sure what he would do. His uncertainty was short-lived. He discovered that his major project -- Make A Difference Day, Neighbors Helping Neighbors – was less than a month away. A binder from the previous year gave him some idea of what needed to be done. “My challenge was to do it in less than half the time and at a half-time rate,” he said.

“As we went through the boxes, we found some very special pictures and keepsakes... I think for her, spending time with someone who listened to her and cared about her was treasured as much as getting the garage packing done. I know I treasured it.”

-- Green Bay volunteer

He quickly updated volunteer forms and e-mailed last year’s volunteers to recruit their help again, and then set out to break new ground in record time. JD attended several community networking events, eventually partnering with the Aging and Disability Resource Center of Brown County and the Volunteer Center. They succeeded in enlisting the services of more than 250 volunteers – 30 different groups of middle, high school, and college students; professionals; and families – to help 69 elderly and disabled

community members. Volunteers chose a fall cleaning work assignment, including raking leaves, washing windows, trimming hedges, weeding flowerbeds, or cleaning garages.

He credits the success of his volunteer recruitment efforts to personal contact and diligent communication. While the Volunteer Center sent out press releases, JD made lots of phone calls, and did numerous presentations to school and community groups and local TV interviews. “It’s convenient to e-mail, but direct contact is best,” he said. “My big focus was to try and have people associate a smile and voice with my e-mails.”

Once individuals volunteered, JD organized assignments into pdf files and either e-mailed or phoned volunteers every five to six days with updates. “You need to let volunteers know that they’re not out there alone,” he added. He also spent considerable time talking with and even visiting elderly and disabled homeowners requesting help to ensure a good volunteer match.

The payoff came in seeing the joy, not only of the recipients, but also of the young people who worked to help someone else that day. JD believes that Make a Difference Day gave many young volunteers “a sense of community, of belonging” to the place they live in. “It’s something they’ll reflect on a year from now, maybe many years from now,” he said. “Money can’t buy that.”

Online Resources for Tutoring

Reading

1. ReadWriteThink

<http://www.readwritethink.org>

Ideas for after-school and parent resources, lessons, interactive, and calendar activities.

2. TeachingBooks

<http://www.teachingbooks.net>

Free to state residents. Brings engaging resources about books for children and teens to every school, library, and home. Link to TeachingBooks through BadgerLink at <http://www.badgerlink.net>.

3. Big Ideas in Beginning Reading

<http://reading.uoregon.edu/>

Teaching strategies on five components of early literacy: phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Mathematics

1. The Wisconsin Mathematics Council

Sources for homework help, student activities, and other topics.

<http://wismath.org/resources.html>

2. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics

<http://www.nctm.org/> offers a huge compendium of lessons and resources for teachers, families, and Tips for Tutors to improve math achievement.

National Day of Service Reminder

All AmeriCorps members must participate in **at least one** National Day of Service. AmeriCorps members do not have to organize or coordinate an event, although they may if they wish. The requirement is to participate in an event or activity associated with the day or period. You may simply attend an event organized by someone else in your community.

2011 National Days of Service

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day January 17, 2011

Theme: Make it a day on... not a day off!

Purpose: To help keep Dr. King's legacy of service to others alive in communities across the country. www.mlkday.org

National & Global Youth Service Days April 15-17, 2011

Theme: The Power of Youth Serving Youth

Purpose: To empower young people, highlighting their ongoing contributions to their communities and mobilizing their energy, commitment, and idealism through sustainable service. www.gysd.org

National Volunteer Week April 10-16, 2011

Theme: Inspire by Example

Purpose: To recognize and celebrate the efforts of volunteers at the local, state and national levels

www.handsonnetwork.org/nationalprograms/signatureevents/nvw

Earth Day April 22, 2011

Purpose: Since the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970, Earth Day has been an annual event for people around the world to celebrate the earth and renew our commitment to building a safer, healthier and cleaner world for all of us. <http://www.earthday.net>

Join Hands Day May 7, 2011

Theme: Youths and Adults Volunteering Together

Purpose: A day of volunteering that brings youths and adults together to improve their own communities. www.joinhandsday.org

OnCorps: More than just your time sheet.

The timesheet, reflection log and "great stories" will help you reflect on and communicate about your AmeriCorps service year.

When filling out your **timesheet**, make quick notes about your day or week. It's a convenient way to log your tutoring hours and volunteer recruitment numbers, and to note your civic engagement activities. Expand on your ideas by using the **Reflection Log**. This is a great place to communicate your day-to-day successes and struggles, lessons learned, and plans for the future. In reflecting, consider why you joined AmeriCorps, what you enjoy most about your service, the benefits of your service, and if your plans for "what's next" have changed during your service. Had a great day? Share it on "**Great Stories**." Use these tools for your member portfolios, to communicate with your supervisor, and to inspire all of us!

Please send your stories and photos for next month's newsletter!

Education Award Information

How will you use your education award? Check out the Corporation for National and Community Service website for ideas at:

http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/benefits/benefits_ed_award.asp.

To access forms and track the status of your ed award (post-service), sign up for the "My AmeriCorps" portal at

http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/online/index.asp.

Register Now!

For the Every Child a Graduate Conference

January 13-14, 2011

Monona Terrace

Madison, Wisconsin

Register as an AmeriCorps Member for no fee at

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/ecg/registration.html>

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