



Volunteer Virginia

A newsletter for the service and faith community

Virginia Office on Volunteerism & Community Service | March, 2015

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Information is Good



Tell a friend or colleague about this issue.

Theme is Set for 2015 Volunteerism Conference

Theme: Volunteers are Everyday Heroes: Serving Locally & Globally

Virginians making a difference in their communities and around the world will be the focus of the 2015 Virginia Volunteerism and Service Conference, September 30-October 1, at the Sheraton Roanoke Hotel. The statewide conference will be presented by the Office on Volunteerism and Community Service and the Virginia Service Foundation. **Early Bird Registration will begin June 15.**



Interested in being a part of this exciting event?

Opportunities are available to lead workshops, participate as a sponsor, spread your message as an exhibitor, or serve on the planning committee. Contact Wanda Stevenson, 804-726-7924, wanda.stevenson@dss.virginia.gov for more information.

Spread the word! [Download the Conference Save-the-Date Flyer](#) and pass it on!

Celebrating Volunteers During Volunteer Week

[National Volunteer Week](#), April 12-18, is a nationwide opportunity to recognize the volunteers that are changing communities. A program of Points of Light, Volunteer Week is about inspiring, recognizing and encouraging people to seek out imaginative ways to engage in their communities. Here's how you can be involved:



- The [National Volunteer Week Resource Guide](#) has event ideas, social media tips, downloads, etc.
- Join the conversation at [@PointsofLight](#) and #NVW on Twitter or like [Points of Light](#) on Facebook.
- [Download National Volunteer Week logos.](#)
- Contact Jennifer Geckler at jgeckler@pointsoflight.org for questions.

Upcoming National Service Events

AmeriCorps Week is March 9-13

AmeriCorps Week is celebrated every year to recognize the commitment of members and alums by highlighting their extraordinary impact. This week is an opportunity to salute AmeriCorps members and alums for their service, thank AmeriCorps community partners, and communicate impact on communities and on the lives of those who serve.



Governor McAuliffe has issued a [Proclamation](#) designating March 9-13 as AmeriCorps Week in Virginia. The proclamation cites how last year in Virginia, more than 6,400 AmeriCorps members helped to meet local needs at more than 930 locations across the Commonwealth.

- Download the [AmeriCorps Week Impact Guide](#)
- Join the National Conversation on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- Spread the word about AmeriCorps in Virginia on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).
- [Check out videos](#) that tell compelling AmeriCorps stories.

Mayors and Counties Shine Light on National Service

Local elected officials and other leaders will honor the achievements of national service in their communities on the third annual [Mayors Day of Recognition for National Service](#) and the first annual [County Day for National Service](#), April 7. Virginia's mayors and county executives will hold public events and use traditional and social media to highlight the value of national service. This is the first year the Corporation for National and Community Service is teaming up with the [National Association of Counties \(NACO\)](#) for this initiative. Pictured: Yolanda Earl of Alternatives, Inc., PASS and Hampton Mayor George Wallace.



View Past Issues

Miss an issue of *Virginia Volunteer*? View the [archives](#).

Contribute

Have a news item or calendar event you want to see on *Virginia Volunteer*? Send comments to info@vaservice.org

Some ways local leaders can celebrate national service in their communities:

- Visit [national service programs or projects](#).
- Create a Mayor's Award for Outstanding AmeriCorps and Senior Corps participants.
- Invite national service programs (and their members and organization's board of directors) to City or Town Hall for a public roundtable to discuss how they address community problems.
- Issue a report on the scope and impact of national service in their community.
- Serve with a national service program as a "member" for a day
- [Use social media](#) to thank national service programs and members serving in their community.
- [Write an op-ed](#) about the unique contributions of national service their community.
- Take a group photo with all national service members in their community (post on social media!).

AmeriCorps VISTA Celebrates 50 Years of Service

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) is celebrating the [50th anniversary of AmeriCorps VISTA](#) in 2015 by supporting Community Solutions Summits throughout the country. The events will bring together local participants from various fields, sectors and walks of life to identify the issues related to poverty in their community and brainstorm solutions that can be implemented through VISTA programs. Since its inception 50 years ago, nearly 200,000 men and women have served communities all over the country. From establishing literacy programs to training people for 21st century jobs, VISTA members have mobilized community volunteers and local resources to create a lasting impact.



National Service Map Now Available

A map of all National Service Programs in Virginia is now available on [vaservice.org](#). The map contains program information for all AmeriCorps State, VISTA, Senior Corps and National Direct programs currently in the Commonwealth. The programs are also broken down by focus area for those interested in learning about what types of programs are available. The interactive map contains place marks for each program and gives a description of the type of service being completed by the AmeriCorps members.

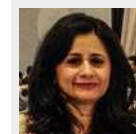


Also available is a downloadable spreadsheet with all program information to be utilized in reports and presentations. The map also contains information on the Community Action Agencies within Virginia.

Get to Know Seema Sethi

Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism

Advisory Board member Seema Sethi is the founding President and CEO of the Society for Enrichment of Asians (SEA), a nonprofit promoting the exchange of technological, cultural, art, education, social, and civic engagement -- as well as fosters the friendship between the U.S., Asian cultures, and other cultures of the world. In addition to serving on the Advisory Board, she also serves on the Virginia Faith Based and Community Initiative (VFBCI) Advisory Council. Ms. Sethi has developed Global Student Connect, an international technology and cultural program, for underserved students and nonprofits worldwide, collaborating with under developed countries and major technology companies in the U.S. She has extensive local and international volunteer and leadership experience with various civic, faith-based and ethnic community organizations organizing different event and programs. Ms. Sethi also has international experience serving as a Professor of Political Science with a masters degree In Political Science with specialization in International Affairs and an MBA in Management Information Systems.



Who Ya Gonna Call? Snowbusters!

AmeriCorps Teams Responds to Virginia Snow Damage

Members of the DCR Division of State Parks - Virginia Service and Conservation Corps and Virginia Tech's VT AmeriCorps Network programs sprang into action recently when homes were hard hit by heavy snow in Southwest Virginia. Members quickly responded to community needs



which included collapsed roofs and snow removal. The group first provided relief to the Southwest Virginia Museum where the facility was completely snowed in with more than 15 inches of snow leading to the collapse of buildings and some flooding. The team was able to acquire emergency volunteer lodging with assistance from OVCS and Virginia State Parks at Camp Bethel and food was provided by Wise Baptist Church. The group was then able to assist hard hit areas by going door to door in the town of Appalachia in Wise County, shoveling out vehicles and providing access for individuals. [Photos](#).



What You Need to Know for Tax Season

It's Not Too Late to Be a Tax Prep Volunteer

The IRS is still seeking volunteers to support partners that provide free tax help to individuals. The [Volunteer Income Tax Assistance \(VITA\)](#) and the [Tax Counseling for the Elderly \(TCE\)](#) programs are community-based partnerships managed by the IRS providing free tax return preparation assistance to low-to-moderate income taxpayers, seniors, people with disabilities and non-English speakers. Anyone can volunteer and no previous experience is required. Volunteers will receive specialized training to serve in a variety of roles. Tax sites are generally open nights and weekends and the hours are flexible. You're sure to find a volunteer site close to you. [Search for VITA sites by zip code](#).



Tax Information for Charities & Nonprofits

Do you have tax questions relating to exempt organizations? Visit the [IRS Charities and Nonprofits webpage](#) for help with applying for exempt status, annual reporting and filing, information on education and training, and more. Get a jump start on next year by attending one of the [IRS' Nationwide Tax Forums](#). The closest location will be National Harbor, MD, July 7-9, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center. Registration opens this month. Some additional tools available to help your constituents include:

- **Free Tax Software - Free File** is a consortium of 14 leading tax software companies that makes their branded products available for free. If you earned \$60,000 or less last year, you are eligible to choose from among 14 software products.
- **IRS2Go App** - An updated version of IRS's free mobile app, [IRS2Go](#), is now available for convenient access to real-time tools and information.
- **Multi-Lingual Tax Information** - The IRS website has tax information available in the following languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean and Russian. [Find out more](#).
- **Videos for Deaf/Head-of-Hearing Taxpayers** - The IRS now offers an [expanded library of videos](#) explaining a variety of tax information, terms and tips in American Sign Language.

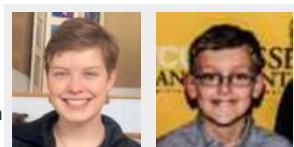
AmeriCorps Build-a-Thon Welcomes Additional Participants

For two weeks in May, 400 members of Habitat for Humanity International's (HFHI) AmeriCorps program will travel to New Orleans, LA, to serve the community's need for affordable housing. The annual AmeriCorps Build-a-Thon (BAT), May 19-31, brings together currently-serving members and alumni from HFHI's National Service programs, AmeriCorps National and AmeriCorps VISTA. This year, HFHI is extending the invitation to friends of Habitat for Humanity and/or AmeriCorps with 200 additional slots for event construction volunteers. For more information, visit the [BAT website](#) or [Facebook](#).



Virginia Youth Volunteers Win National Awards

Emma Buchanan, 15, of Glade Spring, and Thomas "Tucker" Durham, 13, of Glen Allen, have been named Virginia's top two youth volunteers for 2015 by [The Prudential Spirit of Community Awards](#), a nationwide program honoring young people for outstanding acts of volunteerism. Emma, 18, a senior at Patrick Henry High School, has worked tirelessly to improve health and nutrition in Southwest Virginia since 2009. Tucker, an eighth-grader at Holman Middle School, helped his family raise almost \$14,000 last year. Honors were also bestowed on youth volunteers from Richmond, Midlothian, Winchester, Smithfield, and Charlottesville.



Get the Training You Need to Boost Your Organization

In every corner of the Commonwealth, organizations and institutions offer opportunities for education, training and networking -- many of them free or for a nominal cost. The Office on Volunteerism and Community Service publishes an [online database of workshops, conferences, webinars, and special events](#) throughout Virginia of interest to nonprofits and service organizations. Below is a sampling of training opportunities coming up in March:

- [WEBINAR: 19 Twitter Best Practices for NGOs](#) (March 10) will explain the intricacies of successfully Tweeting, Mentioning, Replying, and Retweeting.
- [Screening Volunteers for Effectiveness](#) (March 11 in Richmond) will focus on red flags that will cue you take a closer look at a mentor and ensure they are the right fit for your program.
- [Virginia Campus Safety and Violence Prevention Forum](#) (March 16-18 in Portsmouth) brings together experts in the field of campus sexual assault, the Clery Act, Title IX, risk assessment, and mental health issues.
- [Planning Strategically for Volunteer Support](#) (March 19 in Charlottesville) will detail the steps involved in fully incorporating and successfully managing volunteers.

Nonprofit Resources

- The deadline for nominations for the [Hanover County Spirit of Volunteerism Awards](#) is March 9. Awards honor volunteer contributions in seven categories recognizing adults, youth, groups, seniors, businesses and more.
- Save the Date for the [2015 Virginia Annual Prevent Child Abuse Conference](#), April 13, at the Hilton Short Pump in Richmond.
- [Global Youth Service Day \(GYSD\)](#), April 17-19, is the largest service event in the world that activates and celebrates the millions of children and youth who find their voice, take action, and have an impact on vital issues. If you choose fighting hunger as your cause for GYSD, [download these hunger project ideas](#) for ideas on how to get started in your community.
- The [13th Annual Virginia Mentoring Awards Event and Conference](#) is March 19, at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond. Award recipients will be recognized during a luncheon followed by educational workshops for mentoring program staff, mentors and advocates of mentoring.
- The [Statewide Triad Conference](#) is March 23-25, at the Great Wolf Lodge in Williamsburg. Who should attend? Crime Prevention Specialists, Senior Service Providers, Adult Protection Services Workers, Law Enforcement Professionals, Triad/S.A.L.T. Council Members, Senior Citizen Community Leaders, and anyone concerned with issues that affect seniors!
- [The Social Media for Nonprofits Conference](#), March 19, in Richmond, will highlight the latest trends in mobile technology and social media through workshops, a panel discussion and presentations from Heather Mansfield - founder of Nonprofit Tech for Good.
- The [Advocates In Disability Award \(Ada\) Program](#) awards and encourages a young adult with a disability between (age 14-26) who is dedicated to positively affecting the lives of individuals with disabilities and their families. The recipient will be awarded \$3,000 and will receive up to an additional \$7,000 in funding for a project to benefit the disability community. Applications must be received by April 10.
- The [Center for Nonprofit Advancement's 2015 Board Leadership Award](#) recognizes the role that boards play in building and sustaining successful organizations by executing their fiduciary and leadership responsibilities. The winner will receive a \$10,000 grant, communication, and training and development opportunities. Applications are due March 30.
- A searchable database of [Resources Related to Teen Pregnancy and Foster Care Youth](#) is available for organizations working in this field and in need data for grant applications.
- Did you know that under provisions of the [Virginia Senior Citizens Higher Education Act](#), a person who is at least sixty years of age with legal domicile in Virginia for one year before the beginning of a semester may enroll in a Virginia university to take tuition-free classes?
- The [2015 Assets & Opportunity Scorecard](#) illustrates that many Americans are struggling in their abilities to control their finances, absorb a financial shock or be on track to meet their financial goals. [Check out Virginia's Scorecard.](#)

- The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau has released [Financial Well-Being: The Goal of Financial Education](#). The report develops a definition of financial well-being and explores the factors that contribute to it in order to gain a better understanding how people develop financial capability.
- Youth volunteers are encouraged to submit entries for the [President's Volunteer Service Award](#). The award honors individuals, families and groups who have demonstrated a sustained commitment to volunteer service over the course of 12 months.
- Helpful [Affordable Healthcare Act Fact Sheets](#) are available for download on a variety of topics including, Health Insurance Marketplace & Medicaid Coverage for Children with Disabilities, Concurrent Care, Habilitative Services, and Health Home Programs/Coordinated Care.
- Virginia is working on expanding the [No Wrong Door \(NWD\) Initiative](#) which features an electronic tool to virtually connect a statewide network of long-term services and support providers, to share individual-level data in a secure web-based system, make electronic automated referrals between providers, track individual progress, and access reports related to referrals. For more information, contact NoWrongDoor@DARS.Virginia.gov.
- Pass along these [10 Ways to Participate in America's PrepareAthon!](#) With winter weather still in full swing and hurricane/tornado season around the corner, now is a great time to plan ahead and be prepared!
- [An Uneven Playing Field: The Lack of Equal Pay for People with Disabilities](#) is a new report from American Institute for Research. The report examines the earnings inequalities for people with disabilities and the impact to the economy.
- [What You Don't Want to Miss in Your Communications Strategy](#) in Sumac's Free Nonprofit Newsletter, details ways to cut through the marketing clutter by fine-tuning your organization's marketing strategy.

Upcoming Events

March

- 9-15 - [AmeriCorps Week](#)
- 17 - [Statewide Tornado Drill](#)
- 19 - [Virginia Mentoring Awards](#)
- 23-25 - [Statewide TRIAD Conference](#)

April

- [National Child Abuse Prevention Month](#)
- 7 - [Mayor's Day of Recognition for National Service](#)
- 7 - [County Day for Recognition for National Service](#)
- 12-18 - [National Volunteer Week](#)
- 13 - [Virginia Child Abuse Prevention Conference](#)
- 17-19 - [Global Youth Service Day](#)
- 30 - [Governor's Volunteerism Awards](#)

May

- [National Older Americans Month](#)
- 7 - [National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day](#)
- 8-14 - [National Foster Care Week](#)

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