



Literacy Resources for Children: Books distributed to VISTA projects



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VISTA Campus has just what you're looking for!

VISTA Viewfinder
Issue 17:
December 16, 2008

VISTA: Volunteers In Service To America
Since 1964, 175,000 Strong



VISTA viewfinder



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How a VISTA Brought First Book to Her Community

By Elizabeth Matthews
VISTA, 1993-1994
Calcasieu Women's Shelter
Lake Charles, La.

I spent my year as a VISTA working at a battered women's shelter in Lake Charles, La. As it is for many VISTAs, it was one of the best experiences of my life.

THE LANDSCAPE



VISTA Campus now launched!

"V is for ____"



To learn more about "V is for," visit www.vistacampus.org

To request a V pin (limit one per VISTA), e-mail your name and address to VISTAOutreach

VISTA Alum is Co-Founder of Children's Health Fund: [view here](#)

Are you prepared for the DTV transition? [learn more](#)



Reading for All: Elizabeth Matthews (far left) at a First Book National Book Bank distribution in Los Angeles in February 2007.

After my service, I moved to Washington, D.C., to explore the landscape of national nonprofits. I realized so many of our social issues can be rooted back to literacy. If children can grow up reading and learning to love to read, then they are better to set up for a lifetime of learning and will ultimately be more successful and productive citizens. Eventually, I found First Book, an organization that provides access to books for the hardest to reach children. First Book provides resources to programs that work with low-income children. And all the books go home with the kids.

I was fortunate to have participated in a First Book National Book Bank distribution in New Orleans several years ago. (The distribution is one of the channels to get books. Groups can register to receive books from the book bank, which are publisher overruns. Distributions happen all over the country, wherever there is warehouse space.) After the distribution, I loaded my rental car with boxes of books and drove them to Lake Charles. The director of the shelter and all of the kids were thrilled to open those boxes and realize the books were for them to keep.

A resource like this can provide a women's shelter, after-school program, Head Start center, Boys & Girls Club, day-care provider, and other programs access to brand new books for the children they serve.

Getting books through First Book is a very simple process. And better yet, it complies with the VISTA philosophy of having your work continue after your service has been completed. The idea is that the children get one book a month for a year, so they are building their own home libraries. Once the programs are registered, they can receive books year after year. It's integrated into the program's existing curriculum in teaching the children to read. As well, it is a resource that you can easily share with other organizations in your community.

[@cns.gov](#)

Win a VISTA hoodie. [Click here](#) to find out how

Join AmeriCorps Alums—for current VISTAs too! [Join now](#)

My AmeriCorps Portal: Is your information up-to-date? [visit My AmeriCorps](#)

V Cafe Question of the Month: Reflecting on 2008, what are you most proud of in your service? [answer now](#)

VISTA on MySpace: [visit Myspace](#)

VISTA on Flickr: [visit Flickr](#)

VISTA on YouTube: [visit Youtube](#)

VISTA on Facebook: [visit Facebook](#)

FAQ

[Click for Frequently Asked Questions](#)

In order to receive books from First Book, the first step is to register your organization. Registering is easy and just takes a few minutes. Simply go to <http://register.firstbook.org/>. Once you've registered the organization contact will start receiving emails announcing First Book National Book Bank distributions and Marketplace specials.

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Graduate Fellowship Opportunity for National Service Alumni

**Marquette University, Trinity Fellows Program
Milwaukee, Wisconsin**

Marquette University offers the Trinity Fellows Program, a 21-month study/work program offering Master's degrees in Business, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Communication, Economics, Educational Policy and Leadership, English, History, International Affairs, Applied Philosophy, Political Science, Public Service, or Theology, to AmeriCorps Volunteers and alumni. While engaged in full-time graduate study, Fellows work on substantive projects designed by selected nonprofit organizations in the Milwaukee area. The nonprofit work commitment is 18 hours per week during each academic year and 40 hours per week during the intervening summer.



Each fellowship includes a full-tuition scholarship and a monthly stipend (\$1565 per month). Each student is charged a participation fee of \$1250 per semester (totaling \$5000 for the 4-semester program) which can be financed by the AmeriCorps education award. Fellowship terms begin in mid-August of each year. Up to ten fellowships are awarded annually. To qualify for the program, applicants must meet the admission standards of the graduate school and must have completed service in AmeriCorps or comparable full-time volunteer organization.

Application deadlines for 2009-11 term:

Trinity-HISTORY Applications are due **December 31, 2008**

All other Trinity Fellows Program Applications are due

February 2, 2009

View a letter from the university and a program fact sheet on the [VISTA Campus](#).

For more information:

Contact Carole Ferrara at (414) 288-5861 or carole.ferrara@marquette.edu.

Visit the Web site at www.marquette.edu/trinityfellows.

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Communicating for America Education Programs (CAEP)

Earn college credit through service and exchange

CAEP provides agricultural exchanges for young adults that teach them about other cultures, languages, and about the rural way of life, including agricultural practices used in other countries. Three to 12-month domestic and international apprenticeship and internship opportunities in eight agricultural-related fields are available.

Starting next year, they will also be offering more opportunities outside of agriculture here in the U.S. and Australia, in areas such as Rural Business, Forestry, Engineering, Mining and Aquaculture.

AmeriCorps alumni can now use their Education Award to participate in the programs and earn college credit. For more information, visit www.caep.org.

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TechSoup Offers Access to Technology and Training for Non-Profits

Founded in 1987 (as The CompuMentor Project), TechSoup Global is a recognized leader in bringing technological empowerment and philanthropy to social benefit organizations across the world. CNCS is partnering with TechSoup to help VISTAs and its non-profit partners gain access to better technology.



TechSoup Website: The Technology Place for Non-profits

www.techsoup.org

TechSoup is a trusted technology resource that offers a variety of information, discounted software and services for the benefit of the non-profit sector. Find access to By The Cup eNewsletter, TechSoup Talk webinar series, articles, discussion boards and much more.

TechSoup Stock

www.techsoup.org/stock

Donated and discounted technology products for nonprofits and public libraries. Choose from over 340 products from companies such as Microsoft, Adobe, and Symantec.

NetSquared: Remixing the Web For Social Change

www.netsquared.org

NetSquared is an initiative of TechSoup Global which enables social benefit organizations to leverage the tools of the social Web.

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A Great Time to Dive In!

Once the hustle and bustle of holiday events and annual drives ends, many VISTAs find they have free time as co-workers are out of the office and the workflow slows. It is a great time of year to catch up on all things VISTA. Whether you are a seasoned VISTA or a newbie, you can find interesting and helpful courses and resources on the VISTA Campus—and now you have time to explore them! Also, alumni and VISTAs who are nearing the end of service, check out the resources for “life after VISTA.”



A Sample of Courses & Resources:

[Living on the Living Allowance](#)

Read tips and stories from current and former VISTAs on how to live on a (very) limited budget.

[Capacity Building in Action](#)

Capacity building means working with project staff and the community to create, expand, or strengthen systems and processes to: Increase an organization's effectiveness and Reduce poverty in the community. Identify and explore the key elements of capacity building and what it means for your year of service.

[Navigating the VISTA Lifecycle](#)

Reflect on and plan for the ups and downs of your service year.

[Building Your Case for Support](#)

In order to raise funds for your project, you need a strong case for support that paints a picture of your organization and speaks clearly about your needs and impact. Get the skills you need to create the message that generates public response AND attracts funds.

[Project Planning](#)

Trying to get your project off the ground? Explore the steps to developing projects that put volunteers in the middle of the community and result in measurable community impact.

[Volunteer Management](#)

How do you develop and manage a volunteer base that can help grow your organization or project? Explore ways to provide meaningful service opportunities for volunteers; recruit volunteers with diverse skills and interests; and celebrate your volunteers' service.

Life After VISTA:

[What's Next](#)

Reflect on your service year and plan your next steps.

[Using Your Ed Award Effectively](#)

Maximize the benefits of your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award.

[Non-Competitive Eligibility FAQs](#)

Learn about your non-competitive eligibility for a federal position.

[VISTA Alumni Page](#)

Keep up with VISTA news and find out how to get involved.

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And the winner of this issue's free VISTA hoodie is...



Chalsea Lane

VISTA

University of Wisconsin

Eau Claire, WI

Chalsea, e-mail VISTAOutreach@cns.gov with your address and shirt size, and we'll send you a VISTA hoodie!

VISTAs and alumni, keep posting "V is for" photos and stories to enter the contest. Remember, winners are chosen at random so upload a photo today! You only have to post once to be eligible for every issue. For more information, visit the [VISTA Campus](#).

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Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: What is the Viewfinder?

A: VISTA means view-looking out on a broad expanse. The viewfinder, a toy that all generations of VISTAs recognize, was a kind of binocular that focused on points of interest, highlights, and snapshots in living color. The VISTA Viewfinder surveys in the landscape and zeroes in on service.

Q. Why the Viewfinder?

A. Here's your direct link to connecting with other VISTAs, learning what they are doing, and helping to spread the message of VISTA and national service!

Q. How can I contribute?

A. Have a story to tell? Submission ideas? Contact vistaoutreach@cns.gov. Use the Viewfinder to highlight

*your VISTA service and share your experiences with
others across the country!*

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