



# TEAM UP!

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## Current VISTA member and project Snapshot

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**VISTA: Erin Garian**

egarian@cischarleston.org

Site: Communities in Schools

- Networks, gather resources, and builds partnerships with businesses, churches, and residents with the goal of keeping kids in school.

**VISTA: Stephanie Whelan**

swhelan@fsisc.org

Site: Family Services Inc.

- Provides outreach and develops partnerships to strengthen and expand veteran programs of Family Services.

**VISTA: Sarah Petkus**

petkuss@ccpl.org

Site: Charleston County Public Library

- Collaborates with schools and literacy groups to maximize community efforts, promote the library's literacy programming, and determine community needs.

**VISTA: Adriana Rodriguez**

arodriguez@beamentornow.org

Site: Be A Mentor

- Strengthens mentoring programs by providing mentor trainings and looking at what makes successful mentoring matches.

**VISTA: Simone Davis**

simone@pushingforward.org

Site: Metanoia

- Identifies and develops funds for programs, markets events and programs to the community, and maintains an active social media presence.

**VISTA: LaToya Frazier**

latoya\_frazier@charleston.k12.sc.us

Site: Charleston County School District Parent University

- Builds partnerships, develops communication plans and evaluation tools to strengthen the Parent University programs

**VISTA: Sandra Hoke**

sandra\_hoke@charleston.k12.sc.us

Site: Project HERO

Charleston County School District

- Builds partnerships, works with volunteers, and promotes the work of Project HERO, a literacy-based tutoring program.

**VISTA: Allison Carnevale**

acarnevale@northcharleston.org

Site: Mayor's Office for Education, Youth, and Families— City of North Charleston

- Identifies needs and connects resources to 5 North Charleston Elementary schools with a focus on after school programs.

**VISTA: Jackie Gordon**

gorjac@musc.edu

Site: MUSC Jr. Doctors of Health

- Promotes health literacy, good nutrition, and educates the community about childhood obesity by developing and maintaining a social media presence.

**VISTA: Allison Creedman**

Allison@wingsforkids.org

Site: WINGS for Kids

- Structures and coordinates volunteer programs, builds community partnerships, and increases parental outreach and programming.

**VISTA: Hatti Pringle**

pringleh@charleston-sc.gov

Site: Mayor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families— City of Charleston

- Engages, trains, and recruits youth for City of Charleston programs, and promotes youth related opportunities in the community.

**VISTA: Elise Cohen**

vista@palmettogoodwill.org

Site: Goodwill Industries

- Coordinates and enhances current volunteer opportunities, and develops ways to promote to and reach veterans.

**VISTA: Andrea DeSantis**

aldesant@g.cofc.edu

Site: College of Charleston Literacy Outreach Initiative

- Coordinates a school outreach program and community engagement opportunities for CofC Honors Students.

**VISTA: Emilia Odenkirchen**

eodenkirchen@palmettoproject.org

Site: Palmetto Project

- Supports and strengthens health related programs and a holiday gift giving program for low-income children and families.

**VISTA: April Lowe**

alowe@cchscom.com

Site: Charleston County Human Services Commission

- Develops resources and curriculums to strengthen and expand the youth engagement programs.

**VISTA: Cierra Rogers**

Cierra@pushingforward.org

Site: Metanoia

- Recruits, trains, manages, retains, and recognizes volunteers and mentors for on going and short term projects.

**VISTA Leader: Robyn Mulligan**

mulliganr@charleston-sc.gov

Site: Charleston Area Service Collaborative

- Mentors, recruits, connects, and facilitates trainings for VISTAs, and enhances and promotes the overall CASC project.

## 4th Graders ready to be Cougars!

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On December 15<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> the College of Charleston's (CofC) Literacy Outreach Initiative hosted 400 4<sup>th</sup> graders from seven Charleston County School District (CCSD) schools. Earlier this year these students participated in a four-week mentorship with CofC Honors College freshmen. Each 4<sup>th</sup> grader received two books based on the story of Ellen and William Craft, escaped slaves from Macon Georgia. In the classrooms Honors College students helped lead lessons based on the books and talked about the importance of attending college. The 4<sup>th</sup> graders were thrilled to learn that they would be visiting CofC's

campus!

While at CofC they toured residence halls, the library, and the Avery Research Center. At the Center the fourth graders heard from the great-great granddaughter of Ellen and William Craft. This experience truly brought history alive! The students ate lunch at the TD Arena donated by 5 Guys Burgers and Fries. Local Rotarians and members of the Men & Women's Basketball Teams joined them. After the day was over many of the 4<sup>th</sup> graders said they could not wait to be Cougars!

This program would not have been possible without partnerships through CofC's Honors College, Department of Teacher Education, College READS! Program, Avery Research Center, Department of Athletics, and CCSD. Many thanks to 5 Guys Burgers and Fries, The Rotary Club of Charleston, Rotary District 7770, and Royall Hardware for their generous support.

By: Andrea DeSantis,  
AmeriCorps\* VISTA  
College of Charleston— Honors  
College: Literacy Outreach  
Initiative

## MLK Day at the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry

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The Charleston Area Service Collaborative (CASC) VISTAs volunteered with other community groups at the Children's Museum of the Lowcountry on Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday to make the annual Day of Service a day on, not a day off. The CASC VISTAs spent the morning painting the floor with large paints splats, helping with garden upkeep and painting stepping stones, and reinforcing and restocking the grocery store with new items. In addition, they spread one of the many messages of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the message of service, by handing out bookmarks, stickers, and door hangers to children asking them "What are you doing for others?" and helped the children think about an answer to this question. The Children's Museum of the Lowcountry offers unlimited learning adventures for children and their families

and was chosen by the CASC VISTAs as their location to serve because of its tie to education.



Lt. to Rt: Hatti Pringle, Sarah Petkus, Andrea DeSantis

## TEAM UP!

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"I HAVE REAFFIRMED MY BELIEF THAT THEY ARE NOT TOMORROW'S LEADERS, BUT LEADERS OF TODAY." HATTI PRINGLE



Charleston Youth Serve members volunteering at the Lowcountry Food Bank.

### Advising today's leaders: The impact of youth voice

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For the past 6 months I have worked as an advisor for two youth development groups- Charleston Youth Serve (CYS) and The Mayor's Youth Commission (MYC). The groups represent an eclectic mix of freshmen through seniors that come from 6 different high schools. As the advisor for these groups, I help build the capacity for them to engage in leadership opportunities and participate in service learning projects. I help find proper funding for

their initiatives and seek out partners for their endeavors so that they have opportunities to make a lasting impact.

CYS and VISTAs teamed up at the Children's Museum for MLK Day and CYC volunteered at the Food Bank. Also, CYC will have

a booth at Kid's Fair that will provide children with the opportunity to play and learn the benefits of doing heart healthy activities. MYC tackles major issues that affect youth's everyday lives such as cyber bullying, and teen drug use. They organize a summit where youth attend workshops assessing what can be done as a team to educate and reduce the affliction of important youth-related topics.

Working with these groups, I have reaffirmed my belief that they are not tomorrow's leaders but leaders of today. Nearly half the entire world population, 46%, is under age 18. These young people represent 100% of the future. Being an AmeriCorps VISTA has allowed me to maximize youth involvement to build a smarter, healthier and more peaceful Charleston community.

By: Hatti Pringle, AmeriCorps\*VISTA  
Mayor's Office for Children, Youth and Families

### Literacy in Charleston: A new blog

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During my VISTA year, I have been working to increase the Charleston County Public Library's collaboration with other community agencies, especially those working to improve literacy in Charleston. It has been very rewarding to connect with others in the community and form partnerships that benefit all parties and that will help parents, educators and children utilize the library's many early literacy and pre-literacy services.

Most recently, I began a blog to compile online as many Literacy organizations in Charleston as I could, based on information submitted directly by the organizations. It

can be difficult to convince busy non-profit professionals to take time out to fill out my survey, but I've had great support from several already! The link to the blog is: <http://literacyincharleston.blogspot.com/>. Hopefully, this will be a useful resource for those in my organization, for others in the community, and will encourage further collaboration between the many literacy groups in Charleston.

By: Sarah Petkus, AmeriCorps\*VISTA  
Charleston County Public Library

If your organization is interested in being listed on this website, please email Sarah at [petkuss@ccpl.org](mailto:petkuss@ccpl.org)

## Collaborating to meet community needs

As one of my first tasks as a VISTA, I developed and conducted a basic needs assessment with the Communities In Schools Student Support Specialists (in the 24 schools CIS serves). The data was categorized by school, and cross-referenced by need so that a pattern of similar needs could easily be seen. Sadly, one of the most common needs identified was clothing. As a Social Worker, it was a natural progression of thought to begin linking up resources with this need. Through

the Charleston Area Service Collaborative, we were able to learn of and arrange for clothing vouchers that will provide shirts, pants, shoes and coats for several hundred children. To me, VISTA means utilizing the education, skills, and resources I possess to meet the needs of others.

By: Erin Garian, AmeriCorps\*VISTA  
Communities In Schools

“TO ME, VISTA  
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ERIN GARIAN

## VISTA helping families

AmeriCorps VISTA member, Emilia Odenkirchen, doubled as one of Santa’s elves in 2011. In her position at Palmetto Project, she coordinated Palmetto Project’s Families Helping Families holiday gift program. Families Helping Families brings together the generosity of local families, businesses, churches, and other community groups to help families in need during the holidays. Sponsored families are referred to the program by case managers at area social service and non-profit organizations and must meet income guidelines.

In 2011, Families Helping Families reached out to more Lowcountry families than ever before. 572 families, representing 2,019 individuals, were provided with gifts and food for the entire family. 1,338 children were able to experience the excitement of opening gifts. Palmetto Project’s 2011 Families Helping Families in the Lowcountry is especially grateful to its partner ABC News 4, to Strobel Tire for donating the use of their enormous warehouse in Summerville, to 250+ individual, family, and business sponsors, and to hundreds of generous donors.

Odenkirchen was instrumental in not only expanding the program’s reach to include

families from more social service organizations, but also using her experience with the program to create a much needed plan for recruiting additional volunteers and sponsors. “My time with Families Helping Families shone a new light on the true meaning of giving. I was privileged to meet several of the families we were able to help and to share their story of thankfulness with our sponsors and donors,” said Odenkirchen. “The true value of Emilia’s work on Families Helping Families will be evident in 2012,” commented Shelli Quenga, chief program officer and Odenkirchen’s supervisor during her VISTA experience. “Everyone knows that this has been a challenging time for non-profits, however, because we were fortunate to have been awarded an AmeriCorps VISTA position, Families Helping Families will begin its 22<sup>nd</sup> year from a position of strength.”

By: Palmetto Project  
CASC AmeriCorps\*VISTA Site



Families Helping Families  
warehouse

# CHARLESTON AREA SERVICE COLLABORATIVE

## Upcoming dates to remember

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March 7th: VISTA information session 9:00-11:00 Gailliard Auditorium

March 8th: VISTA information session 9:00-11:00 North Charleston City Hall

March 10th-March 18th: AmeriCorps Week

March 29th: Applications due for VISTA sites

April 27th: Selected sites notified

May 3rd: Selected site supervisor meeting 9:00-10:30 (location TBD)

### Contact us

50 Broad St.

Charleston, SC 29401

Ph: 843-965-4190

Fax: 843-965-4192

CASC on the web:

[www.charleston-sc.gov/mocyf](http://www.charleston-sc.gov/mocyf)

Robyn Mulligan

AmeriCorps VISTA Leader

[mulliganr@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:mulliganr@charleston-sc.gov)

Mindy Sturm

Program Supervisor

[sturmm@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:sturmm@charleston-sc.gov)

## Want to be a CASC VISTA?

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CASC VISTAs come from a variety of backgrounds with different professional goals, but are all interested and prepared to serve the Charleston community. CASC VISTAs help their organizations by coordinating volunteers, managing projects, assisting with program marketing, conducting outreach and much more. CASC VISTAs have a commitment to community service and social justice and often have an interest in one of the following areas: health, education, veterans, and/or youth leadership.

We require that VISTAs have a bachelor's degree or equivalent years of experience.

Our recruitment for 2012-2013 AmeriCorps\*VISTAs will begin in late April-early May 2012, and selection of members will be complete in June 2012. CASC VISTA members begin their year of service in August 2012. Our application will be posted on the AmeriCorps website [www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov) as well as publicized on our website: [www.charleston-sc.gov/mocyf](http://www.charleston-sc.gov/mocyf)

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the program please contact Robyn or Mindy.



Charleston Area Service Collaborative VISTA mid-year retreat