SERVE ILLINOIS

Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service

Annual Report

2016

AMERICORPS ILLINOIS

The Mission

of the Serve Illinois Commission is to improve Illinois communities by enhancing volunteerism and instilling an ethic of service throughout the State.

Our Vision

is an Illinois where all citizens recognize their ability and responsibility to help strengthen their communities through voluntary service.

SERVE ILLINOIS

Table of Contents

4	From the Executive Director
5	Meet Serve Illinois
6	National Service and AmeriCorps
8	AmeriCorps Works for Illinois
10	Recognizing our Volunteers
14	Illinois Disaster Corps
15	Social Media Outreach

From the Executive Director

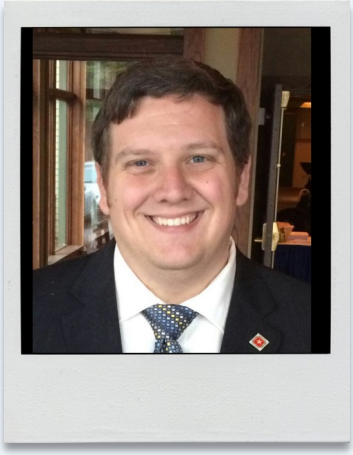
As a scout, I was told when you camp that you 'leave only footprints and take only photographs'. The memories were always much stronger than anything else we could take back with us. Every time we volunteer our time to help someone else, we leave a bit of ourselves with them – a footprint. The memory of that service carries on long after we are gone.

We of course take the memory of our time with us, and we are forever changed by that memory. But more importantly, the memory of service stays with those whom we helped. The time we spend volunteering, no matter how small the amount, changes things. Whether it is helping a child read a book, feeding a family on hard times, or helping a veteran find a job, the world is forever changed by our service. In this annual report, we hope to share some of our memories with you, and more importantly, we hope that you see just how it easy to change this world for the better with something as simple as time and a kind heart.

2016 was a banner year for service in Illinois. More than 2 million of our citizens volunteered to help their neighbors, and that led us to be the top volunteering state among the largest states in the country. Those millions of Illinoisans gave 286.5 million hours of their time to others, and that led to $7.3 billion in impact to our state. Illinois is only as strong as its people, and our volunteers have created a strong foundation for us to build a better home upon.

When you read all these stories and look at all these memories of service, remember that we are only just getting started. The millions of hours and billions of dollars we speak of only come from the 24.9% of us who volunteer.

That's right: only a quarter of Illinoisans volunteered last year. Now, just imagine what the Land of Lincoln could look like if each one of those volunteers brought a friend or family member along with them. Imagine the groundswell of good deeds that could come from just asking someone to join you when you volunteer!



Yours in Service,

Executive Director

Staff

Scott McFarland, Executive Director
Mike Esper, AmeriCorps Program Officer
Mattias Ghelaidos, Fiscal Officer
Mike Stehlin, Training Coordinator
Kelia Beck, Volunteerism Coordinator
Liam Coussens, AmeriCorps Program Coordinator

The Serve Illinois Commission is a 40-member (25 voting and 15 non-voting), bi-partisan board appointed by the Governor and administered by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH). Commission staff and commissioners work closely together to advance the mission and strategic plan of the Serve Illinois Commission.

Quarterly commission meetings are held in both Springfield and Chicago, which are open to the public.

Commissioners

Jeff Turnbull, Chair
Deb Marton, Vice Chair

Julian Brown
Barb Bryne
Nisan Chavkin
Laura Davis
Merri Dee
James Dixon
Chris Errera
Beth Ford
Amanda Guinn
John Hosteny
Jane Angelis
Howard Lathan
Adam McGriffin
Jenne Myers
Joseph Rives
Giraldo Rosales
Anne Schuman
Cynthia Sims
Stephen Silberman
Tony Smith
Barbara Tubekis
Jennifer Witzel

AmeriCorps

The Serve Illinois Commission administers AmeriCorps State Programs, and partners with organizations that administer other National Service Programs overseen by the Corporation for National and Community Service. In addition to AmeriCorps State programs, there are three other national service programs that utilize AmeriCorps Members:

- **AmeriCorps State**–Programs host members that perform direct service at specific host sites across Illinois.
- **National Direct**– Members perform direct service with organizations that operate in multiple states.
- **VISTA**– "Volunteers In Service To America" members focus on capacity building and work to improve health services, end illiteracy, increase housing and job opportunities, and end poverty.
- **NCCC**– The National Civilian Community Corps is a residential service program where members are deployed in teams to various locations across the nation to work exclusively on service projects that promote public safety, improve the environment, and post-disaster response.

National Service in Illinois

Senior Corps

Senior Corps National Service Programs utilize senior volunteers in different capacities:

- **RSVP**– The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program utilizes individuals 55 and older to serve communities in a variety of capacities.
- **FGP**– The Foster Grandparent Program recruits senior volunteers to work in schools with students that are primarily low income.
- **SCP**– The Senior Companions Program utilizes senior volunteers to work with other senior individuals to help them maintain their independence.

Our AmeriCorps Programs

AmeriCorps Works for Illinois!

Focus Areas of Service

- Youth/Adult Literacy
- Legal Services
- Prenatal Care
- Public Health

- Economic Opportunity
- Tutoring/Mentoring
- Environmental Stewardship
- Disaster Services

- Community Revitalizations
- Crime Victim Assistance
- Prisoner Re-entry

In 2016 AmeriCorps programs in our state served...

- 300,000 Illinoisans
- 11,765 Veterans
- 26,740 Military Families
- 3,943 Homeless Individuals
- 13,050 Disaster Victims
- 38,942 Disadvantaged Youth
- 2,600,000 Meals Served

31 Programs serving in 49 Counties...

...hosted 1,606 AmeriCorps Members...

...serving 1.9 million hours...

...equaling $48 million worth of service!

Veteran's Day

This year Illinois was able to collaborate on a special initiative with the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs to honor veterans across Illinois. **Serving Those Who Served** brought hundreds of Illinoisans together to provide services for over 3,730 Illinois Veterans and their families.

MLK Jr. Day

Every year in Illinois thousands of volunteers get together for **Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service**, a day when all serve their communities for a "day on, not a day off" in honor of Dr. King and his legacy.

Service and Training

CONFERENCES

Each year Serve Illinois sponsors four volunteerism conferences across the state. In 2016 over 400 volunteer administrators and volunteers from more than 200 organizations benefited from and array of training and networking opportunities! Be sure to sign up for our email list to stay up to date on conference opportunities!

VOLUNTEERING in ILLINOIS

- $7.3 billion of service was performed by volunteers
- 286 million hours of service by 2,429,013 Illinoisans

Recognizing our Volunteers

OUR VOLUNTEERS

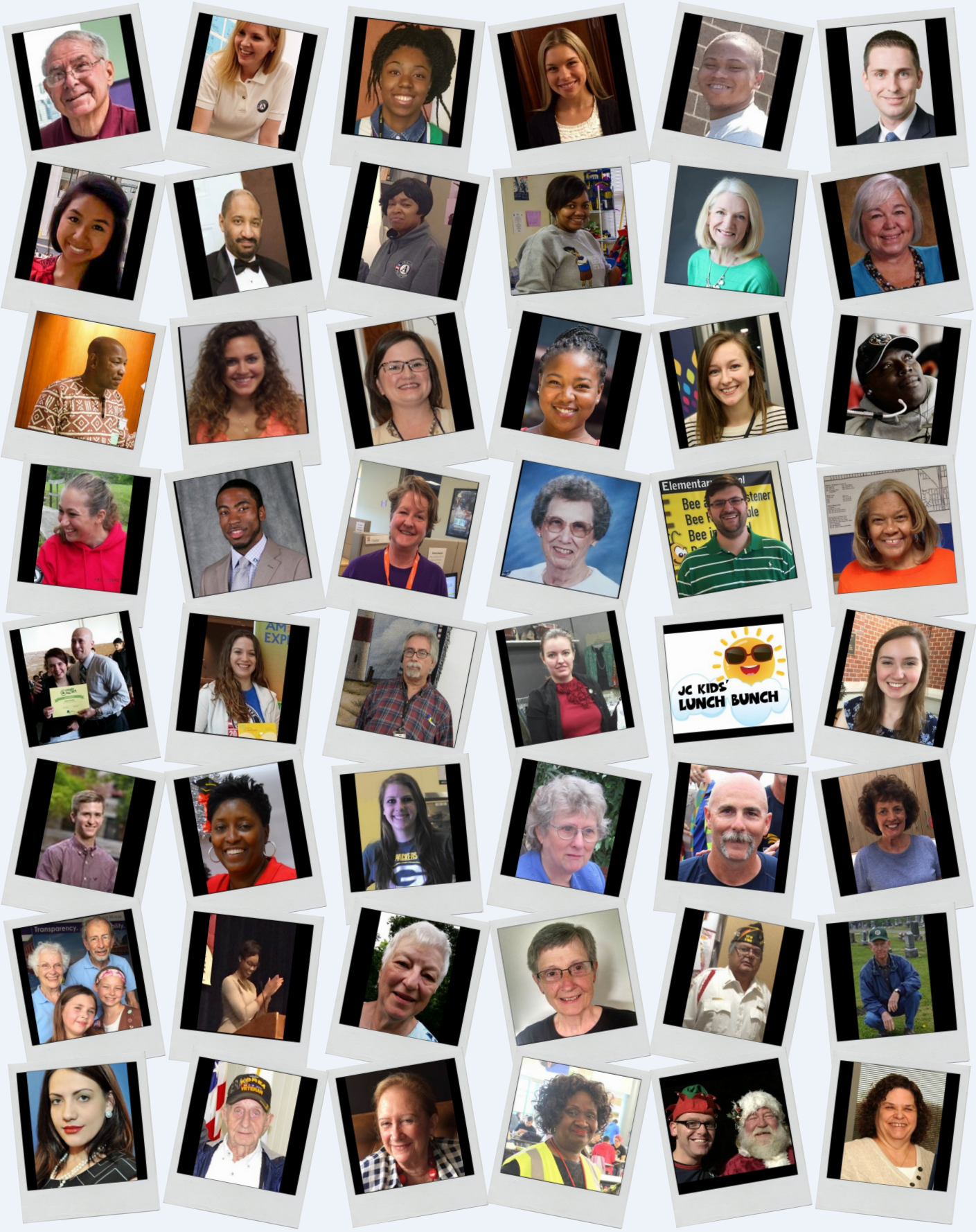
For yet another year, Illinois ranked #1 in volunteer hours logged among the five largest states!

#Volunteer of the Week

⟵ THIS COULD BE YOU

Serve Illinois recognizes the efforts of a special volunteer every week! We rolled out Volunteer of the Week at the start of January 2016, and 49 volunteers across the state were recognized. Nominate a deserving volunteer today. Visit Serve.Illinois.gov for more info!

Meet our Volunteers of the Week!



Snapshots of Volunteerism

In November we had the pleasure of highlighting Veterans for the entire month. Veterans took an oath to serve our country, and when they return, many continue serving their communities in volunteer roles.

In tandem with the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs "Serving Those Who Served" month of service, we were happy to honor and recognize veteran volunteers throughout November 2016.

Veteran volunteer **Leslie Rodriguez** became our most popular Volunteer of the Week to date, gaining more than 6,500 views on Facebook alone!

Another special Volunteer of the Week featured a whole class!

Alison Acevedo, a teacher at William B. Orenic Intermediate School in Plainfield, IL has fulfilled a social and emotional learning requirement at the school through her class dedicated to service. Fifth grade students are able to establish an ethic of service through the work that they do throughout the year!

Can you imagine a class dedicated to service and service projects? Students begin the term by identifying needs in their community and then brainstorm ideas on how to fill those needs, work hard to develop a plan, and implement it every step of the way!

The Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago made the move to empower AmeriCorps members who pursued a Harris degree by fully matching the Segal Education Award! This award is provided to AmeriCorps members upon completion of their service, and Harris is the first policy school in Illinois to offer such matching funds.

Governor's Volunteer Service Awards

A recognition story:

Ester Walker was surprised to learn on her way to a recognition dinner, that someone had purchased a sign to honor her receiving the Governor's Volunteer Service Award. Although volunteers don't volunteer to be recognized, it can be wonderful to be shown you are appreciated! For Ester, her recognition can now be seen by all in her hometown of Flora, Illinois!

The 7th Annual Governor's Volunteer Service awards took place April 13, 2016, honoring 31 volunteers from all across the state. You too can honor a senior, adult, youth, business, or National Service member by nominating them for the volunteer service awards—be sure to look out for the announcement each year in the fall!

National Service Recognition Day

Every year in October AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members gather in Springfield for a celebration of their upcoming year of service. This past October we welcomed more than 900 National Service members and staff for service projects, activities, and training sessions. Working with AmeriCorps Alums we also recognized those who have gone above and beyond in their time after serving, and capped the day off with a parade downtown led by Abraham Lincoln!

Responding to Disasters

Illinois Disaster Corps is a statewide initiative designed to provide disaster assistance to Illinois communities when the unthinkable happens.

Each of our 31 AmeriCorps programs has committed members to participate in Disaster Corps. We have more than 20 members trained, serving across the state and ready to respond when called to action.

When disaster strikes, many areas see an influx in volunteers coming to help clean up the aftermath. Although this is wonderful, it can do more harm than good unless the volunteer are managed properly. By continuing to strengthen the presence of Illinois Disaster Corps with support from National Service members we have set a strong foundation to help communities get back on their feet.

If you are ever at the scene of a disaster in Illinois, you might see this badge or these vests at the Volunteer Reception Center - know that you are in good hands!

Keep Up with Social Media

Our social media accounts have seen quite an increase in activity over the last year, largely driven by our newest segment: Volunteer of the Week!

facebook.com/ServeIllinois
facebook.com/IDPH.Illinois

Our Facebook page has seen an increase of 177 new likes. The top month for likes and impressions was November, thanks in large part to our Veteran volunteers!

twitter.com/ServeIllinois
twitter.com/IDPH

@ServeIllinois gained over 300 followers in 2016. Over 350,000 impressions were made in the course of a year!

instagram.com/Serve.Illinois

Instagram made its debut to our social media line-up this October for Recognition Day! Be sure to follow us @Serve.Illinois

Serve.Illinois.Gov

In 2016 we saw some of our highest web traffic yet, with a total of more than 50, 000 individual visitors! Through recurring posts like our Volunteer of the Week and Nonprofit Spotlight we've been able to keep Serve.Illinois.gov responsive and up-to-date. Be sure to check it out regularly so you never miss a beat!

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