

PRESS RELEASE

Contacts: Laryn Flikkema (850-488-9660)
Lisa Brown (850-644-3342)

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Florida State University's Center for Civic Education & Service Receives an AmeriCorps*VISTA Grant Renewal

Florida State University's Center for Civic Education & Service recently received a grant renewal of \$250,000 from the Corporation for National & Community Service to host twenty AmeriCorps*VISTA members during the 2006-2007 program year. AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve with non-profit organizations and public agencies to leverage human, financial, and material resources to increase the capacity of low-income communities finding solutions to help end poverty. Since 1965, more than 140,000 Americans have served through AmeriCorps*VISTA, today there are nearly 6,000 AmeriCorps*VISTA members serving throughout the country.

As part of the Center's Statewide Programs Office, the Florida Alliance for Student Service (FASS) AmeriCorps*VISTA Initiative has proven to be an effective way for the university to reach out to communities throughout Florida. FASS AmeriCorps*VISTA members are successfully building bridges between the classrooms and communities by connecting educators, students, and community partners to improve education and address societal needs through service-learning, applied civic education, and engaged citizenship. Students are learning from being engaged in meaningful service opportunities that create positive change in communities. Last year the Center for Civic Education & Service placed twenty AmeriCorps*VISTA members at eighteen project sites engaging nearly 1700 students and 700 community volunteers in more than 12,000 hours of service.

In addition to its statewide outreach, the FASS AmeriCorps*VISTA Initiative works to support community-based organizations who provide service-learning opportunities for FSU students. Sara Guiffre is a 2006 FSU graduate serving as an AmeriCorps*VISTA member in Tallahassee with Florida Impact, a non-profit organization working to solve hunger and poverty issues in Florida through advocacy and public policy development. Sara recruits and supervises student interns from FSU who work on projects such as website design, developing reports about Florida Impact's Universal Breakfast Program and working with the After School Snack Program. The ongoing support of FSU students enables Florida Impact to more effectively serve those who need its services.

When asked about her experience with AmeriCorps*VISTA, Sara said, "Serving at Florida Impact has helped change my perspective. Joining AmeriCorps was the right post-graduate choice for me. I know that I am making a difference, helping the Tallahassee community and our country could not be more fulfilling." FASS AmeriCorps*VISTA members also serve locally at the Center for Civic Education's Statewide Programs Office, Community Neighborhood Renaissance Partnership, and Big Bend Cares. For more information visit www.fsu.edu/~vista or contact Program Director Laryn Flikkema at 850-488-9660.