Community Technology Organizing Consortium (CTOC), Los Angeles, CA

VISTA: Sheveeta Shephard
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/sheveeta_shephard/

Supervisor: Micheline Wilcoxin

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Our project has completed a number of projects from September 2005 to Feb 2006.   The summary is written below.

Workshops:
Our project has completed 5 workshops which covered the topics of IT fundraising for non-profits, education and advocacy surrounding local and state cable franchise issues in Los Angeles, disability and access issues, social enterprising for non-profits, and digital storytelling. In each of our workshops, our VISTA was implemental in outreaching to attendees and presenters, updating our website information and list-serv, and follow-up on evaluations of attendees.

Database:
As a major project of the VISTA, CTOC has managed to update and maintain a better structure to its previous database of members, which totals over 600 entries. CTOC%u2019s database has been filtered and is capable of being shared with other organizations, and is still being updated and refined on a weekly basis.

Website:
CTOC has made major changes to the website, moving it to a new server and expanding the previous capabilities to include membership capabilities, a discussion forum, and more resources for local organizations to aid CTOC in its networking and outreach capacities. The VISTA has helped to keep the site updated with upcoming CTOC workshops and events, as well as making the site more user friendly by changing the layout of the page and adding visual pictures.

List-serv:
CTOC maintains a growing list-serv which is used to send consortium members updates on local digital divide issues, as well as invitations to events and workshops. Our VISTA has aided in managing the list-serv and adding new members.

Logo Contest:
CTOC held a local logo contest for youth. This project was suggested and created by our VISTA who wrote a proposal, created the contest criteria, and outreached to local organization who worked with youth in digital media.

Needs Assessment:
CTOC finalized and published a research project concerning the needs of Southern California%u2019s computer technology centers. Our VISTA helped this project by editing and announcing the materials to our members.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Staff transition has been our number one difficulty. Our project coordinator took leave for a full-time position and our organization has had to multitask certain projects and reorganize strategies and planning while transitioning another staff member. This has required our VISTA to take a much more active and independent role in coordinating projects and tasks to propel CTOC%u2019s mission and goals.
Site visits are an important priority for our organization and have been difficult in performing because of the transition of staff. Our VISTA has created a survey and is working on a plan of action to make sure this project gets accomplished during her service.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?

Any resources that the project can provide the VISTA with more information or skills revolving around outreaching, grantwriting, policy work, current issues and best practices in addressing the digital divide. Specifically for the field of community organizing and CTOC%u2019s mission, resources that provide the VISTA with tactical approaches to surveying CTCs, and organizing community leaders interactively online.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
During the month of October, in Los Angeles, much attention was drawn to the SBC/ATT merger and the negotiations concerning franchise agreements and the public benefits that would result from the merger. Most community organizations were unaware of how these local policies could affect future funding for the Los Angeles communities. In October, CTOC held a meeting/forum to discuss the current issue and educate many organizations concerning the issue.
Organizing members for a best practices meeting or technical assistance workshop can be difficult on its own, but outreaching to members to attend a meeting concerning the cable industry and franchise agreements which was a complex and confusing issue for many members at the time was even more challenging. With the help of the VISTA our organization was able to have 45 different community members present at the meeting, a number that is double our usual number of attendees. From our evaluations an overwhelming 92% felt that the discussion helped them become more knowledge concerning the merger and local technology policies.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
The work our VISTA is doing with our database and outreach is a major function to CTOC%u2019s mission. As a consortium, keeping in contact with our members, keeping them updated to local policies, and positioning them to network together and exchange ideas and practices is reliant on constant and continuous communication with the membership base.

In addition, having a full-time member to our staff allows our organization more time to attend valuable workshops, have tasks completed on a continual basis, and keep our office open so that there is always a person to answer the phone and address business matters as they arise.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
CTOC is in a phase of transition and growth. Our VISTA has been resilient to the change and been able to adapt and stay focused on the work our organization needs to get done.
Our VISTA has taken initiative in certain projects, and proves to be able to work independently, and work on a multitude of tasks assigned.

VISTA: Sheveeta Shephard

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I have been accepted very well. When I arrived I already had a desk space and my own computer to work from, including an e-mail account, and I was provided with business cards and an introduction to the staff and history of the organization.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I feel that I have been able to stay on track most of the time. The one thing I lack is site-visits. In the past it was because I did not have a car. However, I now have transportation and feel I will be able to complete this important task once I have the time set aside and plan of order figured out. We've had a lot of transition in the staff, but I think I'm taking it pretty well, and things haven't been too overbearing for me.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I think our organization's mission to strengthen other organizations in our community is the most challenging tasks. Trying to build unity between local organizations and work together to strengthen the community as a whole is extremely inspiring. I think my organization has the ability to draw impact not only locally but statewide.
I do feel my work is helping the organization achieve it's mission, and I feel like we're helping other organizations get a stronghold on achieving their mission as well.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
We all work closely together, and my supervisor is very direct when it comes to communicating. Even if she is out of the office I know what's going on, and she keeps me updated with business. She's even taking me on as a mentee for technology policy issues, which I find very interesting.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges:
1. Figuring out the best plan of action to involve our members in local policies that affect them
2. Working with our webpage to make it more interactive, and get our members to speak out more
3. Doing site visits and getting as much info from the organization, as well as informing them about CTOC and our resources

Accomplishments
1. Organizing the database to be shared with other orgs, and searchable for specific categories. The database was the most confusing thing to get in order (and I'm still in the process)
2. Outreaching. I feel like I am becoming more familiar with many of the organizations in our consortium, with what resources they provide, which makes it easier for me to connect other organizations together, and answer questions from phone calls.
3. I organized a logo contest for our organization which allowed me to outreach to more organizations that deal with digital media.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I think the assistance so far from project staff and other VISTAs has been amazing. The blogs are an excellent resource to find out what's going on in the digital world and with CTCs over the nation. Our monthly conference calls are excellent and keep me involved as well.

Heart of Los Angeles Youth, Inc., Los Angeles, CA

VISTA: Emily Yoshida
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/emily_yoshida/

Supervisor: Lisa G. Rodriguez

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
We have a beta version now in the works for an html website which will be much easier for our staff to update once the Vista is no longer here. The Wireless Lab, the system for check in and check out, plus the Web Journalism project using this lab have been initiated successfully. While the new HOLA website is in Beta, there is a link to the HOLA web blog. All of the afformentioned accomplishments were part of our VISTA Emily's projects to be completed and she is making great progress.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Emily launched the new website before it was complete which as she's now learned, harmful to our business. As a result, we had a website up for almost two weeks that was very incomplete and then she had a difficult time taking the new incomplete website off and replacing it with our old one and we had to receive outside help to restore our old operable site.
We've also had some creative differences which are certainly open for discussion but as her supervisor, once I make the decision, we need to go with it. There have been some minor struggles with this.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Despite the challenges of #2, my overall experience with our VISTA has been absolutely superb, greatly appreciated and extremely beneficial to HOLA. Our VISTA is often times, and in many cases the most qualified technological person in our company and we absolutely value this VISTA's important contributions. No additional project resources are necessary I don't think.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Because of the AmeriCorps VISTA service, HOLA has a wireless lab that can now serve the needs of 200 teens. This is a critical advancement for our organization because before this wireless lab was built, access to technology for everyone was very limited. The Americorps Vista service also provided HOLA with more advanced technology offerings (Digital Media Class/Curriculum)and (Web Journalism) which HOLA now offers for the very first time in our organizational history. Americorps Vista Program has expanded the capacity of our organization in a way that we would not have been able to on our own.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our VISTA is building the infrastructure for "STUDENTS" to be able to develop meaningful skills that will serve them well later in life. Journalism, Digital Media and in the future, E-Commerce are areas that HOLA youth will now be able to excel in because our VISTA built out the technology and curriculum to one day master these skills. This will in turn allow our kids to realize HOLA's mission of advancing their lives (Through technology) and revitalize their communities with the new skills and experiences they will have had because of technology.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
While I shared that we've had some creative differences, there have been many, many more Creative Agreements and our Vista has a great blend of technological and artistic talent that has lent itself well to not only the projects she's accomplishing but in creating new organizational templates and art work that also help our fundraising efforts.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-2) Assist with the launching, implementation and maintenance of a new Wireless Network and Mobile Lab Project utilizing 10 - 15 refurbished laptops, and potentially up to 10 new laptops, to deliver college prep and technology training curricula for teens.

Comment: Now that the lab has been set up, we are in the process of ensuring that the proper links and resources are installed into each of the laptop stations. We'll easily accomplish this last piece.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Participate in installation of a wireless hub, wireless network cards, batteries, docking cart, and other ancillaries scheduled to be purchased by August 2005.

Comment: GREAT, DONE.

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2 (Qtr 1-2) Work with the CLC and/or ROPE Managers to ensure that the Mobile Lab Project curricula and incentives support the program goals for 50 additional teenage students.

Comment: This has been done and efforts to strengthen the incentives is also underway.

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3 (Qtr 1-2) Develop a system for check-out and return of laptops by teen participants.

Comment: Done, we've had no major or even minor problems with this system. Sharing this procedure with the staff so that we'll be able to take this process over once she leaves is a final step we'd like to add.

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4 (Qtr 2) Develop a system for maintenance of the Wireless Network and laptops utilizing the expertise of HOLA's technology partners at Activision, Gateway and/or IBM.

Comment: There has been some unforeseen staff turnover at ACTIVISION and initially they were going to be able to provide more support than they have to date, so we are looking for additional maintenance resources. IBM has been utilized to the max which is great and we are still working on support from Gateway for new computers and maintenance.

Results

1. (Qtr 1) The Wireless Network and Mobile Lab Project will be fully operational.

Comment: Done!

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2. (Qtr 2) Replicable curriculum will be established and documented for implementation with HOLA teens, related to the ROPE high school program goals (college prep, technological competencies, etc.).

Comment: Most of this has been done, we still need to focus on the COLLEGE PREP aspect, but this will get done.

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3. (Qtr 4) The Wireless Network and Mobile Lab Project will provide access to technology training and college prep activities for an additional 50 students.

Comment: Half this number have already begun to use the Wireless Lab for this purpose already!

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4. (Qtr 3) A regular maintenance schedule will be established and in-kind support and technical assistance will be solidified.

Comment: Work in progress.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-2) Work with The Computer Learning Center Manager to develop, test and deliver Digital Media Class curriculum.

Comment: THis has been done and the class is currently happening and per reports from the CLC Manager, everything is going really well.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Identify and acquire appropriate digital media software, per direction of the CLC Manager.

Comment: This has been done!

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2 (Qtr 1-2) Work with CLC Manager to install software, develop and test digital media curricula.

Comment: Done!

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3 (Qtr 1) Per direction from CLC Manager, assist with design and implementation of assessment tools for digital media class.

Comment: Done!

Results

1. (Qtr 1) 15 pc's will be equipped with the software needed to provide digital media instruction.

Comment: In progress, but enough are equipped to run a good class so far.

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2. (Qtr 4) 60 youth will acquire intermediate level of computer literacy.

Comment: The 60 kids are well on their way...

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3. (Qtr 4) 60 youth will acquire digital media competencies, including intermediate level knowledge of graphic design, and digital editing skills.

Comment: The number of kids involved at this level is increasing and we are trying to get as close to that number through both graphic design and digital editing as possible. We're very happy with the progress in this area.

Goal #3. (Qtr 2-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Launch the HOLA Fun Zone - a youth-designed Digital Yearbook, Art Gallery and Journalism website.

Comment: The Journalism Website is up and going and the digital yearbook and art gallery are in the works. We project that the Digital Yearbook will be complete while the art gallery as we've envisioned it might not blossom until the following year.

Activities

1 (Qtr 2) Work with selected youth to identify themes and categories of information that are of interest to potential student users of and contributors to the HOLA Fun Zone website.

Comment: DONE and an HOLA BLOG was desired by our kids.

2 (Qtr 2-4) Provide appropriate technology training (HTML, etc.) for youth who will design, implement and maintain the website.

Comment: This is happening and we are really proud of this first time acocmplishment.

3 (Qtr 2-4) Work with youth to build the website, design projects, compose and edit journal entries - moreover, to create an impactful online youth publication.

Comment: This is in progress

Results

1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] The HOLA Fun Zone youth website will be launched, featuring students' creative works, including an online art gallery with commerce opportunities that will benefit HOLA's young artists.
[INDICATOR] We will measure the functionality and appearance of the HOLA Fun Zone website.
[INSTRUMENT] The functionality and impact of the website will be measured by browsing and testing the links, and by tracking the number of hits to the website once it is launched. An additional measure of success may be sales of students' art work.
[TARGET] The target is a functional, attractive youth website, with working links to journal entries and creative writing, an art gallery and online yearbook. We would like to reach 100 - 1000 hits per week.

Comment: This process is being developed although it is quite an undertaking for us this year and while the basic infrastructure is being put in place, there will likely be considerable work to do on furthering this goal next year. The major reason, in order for us to engage in this process, we were advised to change the basic structure/sitemap and design of our overall website which would then impact a youth zone environment.

2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] At least five teens will know how to upload work, edit and maintain the online gallery; advanced knowledge of HTML will be achieved by this core group.
[INDICATOR] The number of teens who achieve advanced level knowledge of website design and maintenance, including working knowledge of HTML.
[INSTRUMENT] A list of teens participating in the design, implementation and maintenance of the website will be maintained. A log will be maintained, tracking students' participation in the project.
[TARGET] Five teens will achieve advanced competencies in website design, implementation and maintenance.

Comment: This has already begun and we'll easily acocmplish this goal with five of our teens.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] At least 25 teens will post creative, visual and journalistic work on the HOLA Fun Zone website.
[INDICATOR] The number of youth contributing work to the HOLA Fun Zone website, and the quality of the work that is posted.
[INSTRUMENT] The website will contain a list of youth contributors to the HOLA Fun Zone; the VISTA member, and HOLA's staff will proofread and evaluate students' work for grammatical accuracy, originality, etc.
[TARGET] At least 25 youth will contribute work to HOLA Fun Zone; the students' work will be expected to meet the California Language Arts Content Standards for the appropriate grade levels of the contibuting students.

Comment: The numbers of kids contributing is an issue as this class had to take a backseat for those kids who are struggling to finish and receive help with homework. Therefore, the number of kids who are academically able to take this class is projected to be below the original 25. The design and class time is there, but right now, a little less than half that number have had the time to make their contributions to this. But I still feel the class in its structure, design and implementation is a success so far.

Workplan Revision

The kids who participate are absolutely challenged and supported to meet state standards through this curriculum. It's been great.

VISTA: Emily Yoshida

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Very well, HOLA has a very family-like dynamic which I was welcomed into almost immediately.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
For the installation of the wireless lab, I was very much on track from the start since that was a project I was picking up from the previous VISTA and a lot of the groundwork was in place. The website I kind of had to start from scratch interface-wise, but content-wise I once again used the work of the previous VISTA to guide me. The only thing I feel like I'm really on my own with is the organization of our media classes, because I have no experience teaching and nobody really gave me any concrete advice on it. I got the first session of the web journalism class running, granted with a lot of trial and error.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
What inspires me is that this is not just a drop-in program, and that HOLA tries to move the youth that come here to pursue even higher goals than just staying in school, and tries to make them competitive with kids who have a more affluent upbringing. I feel like my work is helping, because a lot of crucial internet and computer skills, even basic typing, are absent in these kids. Many of the high school students are starting to want to pursue college, but they are simply lacking the skills that kids their same age in wealthier communities have already mastered. I feel that my web journalism class especially is opening up the possibilities of writing and technology to my students.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
For the most part I am, though I feel kind of left without a paddle in the teaching department, like I said earlier. The only recurring issue for me has been being assigned jobs that are not part of my workplan or even vaguely related to it, just because people know I have computer graphics skills. I am often happy to do these jobs, but I often need to clarify that it is not really in my job description. I also feel like a lot of the youth-management problems that arise in the wireless lab are not really acknowledged by the administrative staff and I'm left to my own devices in dealing with behavior issues (which I have very little experience with)

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges
1. Relating to and being able to communicate with youth who are growing up in a completely different environment than I did at their age
2. Managing my work time when it is often completely separate from what other people at the center are working on
3. Teaching myself new skills from scr

Accomplishments
1. Relating to and being able to communicate with youth who are growing up in a completely different environment than I did at their age (to the extent that I have so far)
2. Setting up the Web Journalism class on my own and having the first round of stories published on the web log.
3. Writing the curriculum for the Digital Video class, which is now being taught to middle-schoolers by a professional film director

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
All advice regarding grant pursual was useful, as were all the resources for getting cheap software and hardware for digital media classes.

Homeless Prenatal Program, San Francisco, CA

VISTA: Ellen-Rae Cachola
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/ellen-rae_cachola/

Supervisor: Mary Coyne

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
I know that I speak for the entire staff of the Homeless Prenatal Program (HPP) when I say that Ellen-Rae Cachola has been a boon to our organization. As her supervisor in the Community Technology Center it has been my pleasure to work very closely with her for the last 6 months. She is highly committed, intelligent, and industrious. She is extremely productive and always looking for new projects. She is also very personable, able to interact warmly with the diverse groups of people who work in our program and who come here for services.

In addition to her Vista Work Plan which is addressed below, her duties at HPP have included maintaining two websites, teaching technology in English and in Spanish, and trouble shooting technology problems in the lab and at staff workstations. Moreover she has created an online generator for our paper forms which allows staff to print forms on an as needed basis from their own computers. She has designed many flyers and signs as well.

Some of our projects accomplishments are:

1. A directory of all the vocational and educational training programs in the San Francisco Bay Area that could serve our clients.

2. Ellen's work with Media Alliance, a watchdog group, which is working to insure that San Francisco's CTCs are not left out of the Mayor's ambitious TechConnect Project. This project will provide wifi access to the internet for all San Franciscans, including low-income citizens. Ellen attends meetings and maintains correspondence with community leaders in Media Alliance. She also remains abreast of local activist events for social justice and participates in them through several listservs and community events.

3. Ellen has expanded our program by developing and coordinating a staff development technology training curriculum in the CTC. At this time she is training the community health workers and interns who form the first line of service here at HPP. She is teaching skill sets in the use of the internet, email, calendars, our client-based website and the client database. She has also begun training this group and other staff members in common forms of business correspondence.

4. HPP is now in the process of revising portions of our client database. Ellen has taken training in Microsoft Access and she will be an important player in writing new queries and developing a training curriculum for new features in the database.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Although Ellen has completed many of her project objectives, there have been some surprises that have led to some redirection in her duties.

1. Ellen worked very hard to recruit English speaking students to classes in the Technology Center. She met with case managers and several of the support groups to focus on the clients%u2019 needs and desires for technology training. She developed a curriculum, and created announcements. She continued to visit the support groups to introduce clients to the class, and she reminded the case managers to talk to the clients about the class. However, we just did not get the attendance that we needed and we now use the hours set aside for these classes to train staff and for open lab one-on-one assistance to the clients. Needless to say this has been disappointing to HPP and Ellen as well. We firmly believe that technology training is an important component of family stability in the digital era. We will continue to seek ways to enroll these clients, but it is no longer part of Ellen's work plan.

2. Ellen did research and create a client blog that was to be a part of the class for the English speaking clients. (see materials attached) However, the blog has not been used due to 2 factors:

First of all, we did not get enough participation in the class to keep it on our program calendar, and secondly, upon deeper consideration it became apparent that a client blog could create privacy issues for these clients, since many of them are addressing substance abuse and domestic violence issues. Since Ellen had spent some time researching these blogs, we also played with the idea of creating a staff blog where HPP staff could explore client issues and organizational questions. However, the staff felt that they had enough opportunities to collaborate in person, and that once again, a blog could create privacy issues. So the blog is also no longer part of Ellen's work plan.

3. Another area of challenge has been to train HPP clients in the technology skills that would equip them to assume responsibilities in our technology program. It is difficult to keep volunteers, and although we actively recruit clients for advanced technology training, the few that we are able to identify soon find paid employment and can no longer volunteer their time.

4. Last fall we reviewed our computer in the homes program and found that although placing computers in clients' homes was a great idea, the cost and logistics of computer maintenance in the homes was prohibitive. Until we can find a cost effective way to provide in-home support we have suspended this program.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
I have never really called upon the project staff for assistance and would be interested in hearing what forms of assistance other projects have requested. Ellen has suggested that we visit other project sites, and I agree that this would probably inspire us with new ideas and fresh approaches. I also support her recommendation that VISTA provide funds for training programs that are relevant to the CTC projects.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Ellen has been dedicated in providing technology access to low income, communities of color. Ellen's contribution at HPP's CTC has increased the computer skills of Latina women. According to attendance records, 45 new Latinas have enrolled in our 2 hour, twice weekly classes. From September 2005 to January 2006, an average of 17 students per month have attended these classes. They have developed skills in Microsoft Office, Internet usage, and Job Readiness.

In addition, Ellen has tailored computer training for English speaking clients in a one-on-one fashion. From September 2005 to January 2006, an average of 30 clients have utilized our technology center to apply for jobs, search for housing, and research information they need to help themselves and their families. Ellen has assisted individuals in resume writing and internet searches. One African American woman was hired on as staff to HPP through the computer skills that Ellen has taught her.

Since Ellen joined HPP, the agency has been going through physical and organizational changes. HPP has hired 12 new employees since their move to the new location in the Mission District. Ellen has trained staff, interns and volunteers at their workstations, instructing them on how to utilize a forms generator (which Ellen helped design and currently maintains) that is a portal to all documents that staff and clients need. She has also developed curriculum in Microsoft Outlook, Word, and Windows to teach each new hires and volunteers to work efficiently and independently at their workstations.

During January to February 2006, she has coordinated and instructed weekly classes and for Peer Mentors and Community Health Workers composed of 25% Latina and 75% African American women. She has held one-on-one sessions with staff to help them accomplish their tasks. Ellen has shared her technological knowledge with HPP's staff to ensure that the skills stay with the agency, even after she leaves.

Ellen has also done work to increase HPP's visibility in the larger community. She has maintained two websites for HPP, to keep the public updated on news and services that the agency offers. She has also trained students and staff on the helping-sf.org website so that they may be connected to community resources for underserved families. In addition, Ellen has collaborated with Media Alliance to ensure that the HPP CTC will become a training center for the city's universal Internet access project.

Ellen has also been active in community development. She has canvassed the local neighborhoods, to attract more community members to use HPP's CTC. She has also collaborated with neighboring community service agencies to raise awareness of our presence in the Mission and Potrero districts. She has also placed these agencies' information on the www.helping-sf.org (our client website) so that our clients and other underserved families could read about their services.

Currently, Ellen is working on promoting HPP through television media outlets. She is in the process of expanding HPP's CTC into video production. Currently, she is leading an interview project that will document the work being done at HPP and also show how people can positively transform their lives out of poverty. She has also connected with media outlets, such as Bay Area Video Coalition and Access SF (a public access station) to promote HPP's services.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our mission statement is: "The Homeless Prenatal Program believes that every woman wants to have a healthy child and stable family life. Seizing the motivating opportunity created by pregnancy and parenthood, HPP joins with clients to help them regain the physical and psychological stability necessary to break the cycle of homelessness and make fundamental, positive life changes for themselves and their families."

Ellen is helping HPP achieve its mission in many ways. She is providing instruction in technology to our clients helping them to gain access and skills such as housing searches and resume writing that will assist them to reach stability. She is also providing training and technological tools to the staff at HPP, raising their effectiveness and productivity so that they can help more clients get out of poverty. In addition she is bringing the message of HPP's mission and accomplishments to the San Francisco community through our websites, video projects and collaborations with other non-profits who serve the poor in this city. In order to reach more potential clients, Ellen has also begun a community outreach project to raise the visibility of HPP in our new location. She has created flyers inviting local residents to attend classes in the CTC and avail themselves of other HPP services

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Ellen has impressive skills in the areas of film, and community development. This month she began work on videotaped interviews of our clients and staff members. She is preparing the interviews herself and will also be doing the filming and editing. HPP plans to use these videos to document the strengths of our program. We will use them in public relations and outreach materials. Segments will be downloadable from our web-sites.

After attending a special introductory training given by the San Francisco Public access station, Ellen has also produced a public service announcement for HPP which will be aired on the station. She also hopes to air the interviews she is video recording if she is given permission by the subject clients and staff.

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CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Create and monitor a blog specifically for the use of the English-speaking client community at HPP.

Comment: Ellen researched and created a client blog that was to be a part of the class for the English speaking clients. However, the blog has not been used due to 2 factors: First of all, we did not get enough participation in the class to keep it on our program calendar, and secondly, upon deeper consideration it became apparent that a client blog could create privacy issues for these clients, since many of them are addressing substance abuse and domestic violence issues. Since Ellen had spent some time researching these blogs, we also played with the idea of creating a staff blog where HPP staff could explore client issues and organizational questions. However, the staff felt that they had enough opportunities to collaborate in person, and that once again, a blog could create privacy issues. So the blog is also no longer part of Ellen's work plan.

Activities

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1 (Qtr 1) Research use of blogs by other low-income communities in order to identify best-practices for creating a blog with high appeal and usefullness.

Comment: Ellen did research and create a client blog that was to be a part of the class for the English speaking clients.

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2 (Qtr 1-2) Install blog on HPP server and facilitate the development of an online community which provides support and incentives to members to reach stability in their lives.

Comment: Ellen did install a blog on the HPP server, but was not able to create an online community due to low attendance in the English speaking class, and privacy issues.

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3 (Qtr 2-4) Monitor the client blog stimulating areas of interest by members, and introducing topics and resources which will encourage clients to reflect on their circumstances and seek sources of strength and assistance in the larger community. Also encourage the use of the blog for the sharing of efforts by members to find education and employment.

Comment: As indicated above the blog was not used and there was no need to monitor it.

Results

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1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] A blog designed to meet the needs and concerns of the english speaking client community.
[INDICATOR] Number of regular and occasional visitors to the blog
[INSTRUMENT] Participation records
[TARGET] 20 regular visitors to the blog

Comment: The blog was created but not used. There are no participation records.

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2. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 20 members of the English speaking technology class will receive training on the use and etiquette of blogs.
[INDICATOR] Completion of in class training on use of blog
[INSTRUMENT] Class attendance and participation in the blog
[TARGET] 20 class members will complete the training

Comment: There was no in class training on the use of the blog

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3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] A publication of highlights from the blog with critiques and commentaries from participants to be used in future outreach and design efforts for the blog.
[INDICATOR] Participation by blog subscribers to the creation of the publication
[INSTRUMENT] Attendance of meetings and completion of assigned tasks.
[TARGET] 8 members of the blog community will actively plan, edit and compose the publication

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Comment: There was no participation in the blog.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Develop and promote a technology class designed to fit the needs of our primarily Afro-American English-speaking clientele.

Comment: 1. Ellen worked very hard to recruit English speaking students to classes in the Technology Center. She met with case managers and several of the support groups to focus on the client's needs and desires for technology training. She developed a curriculum, and created announcements. She visited the support groups that served these clients and told them about the classes, and she reminded the case managers to tell the clients about the classes. However, we just did not get the attendance that we needed and we now use the hours set aside for these classes to train staff and for open lab one-on-one assistance to the clients. Needless to say this has been disappointing to HPP and Ellen as well. We firmly believe that technology training is an important component of family stability in the digital era. We will continue to seek ways to enroll these clients, but it is no longer part of Ellen's work plan.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Create an outreach program to motivate women from the HPP's English speaking support groups to avail themselves of the resources in the computer lab

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Comment: Ellen visited the support groups that served the English speaking clients on many occasions. She told them about the classes, and she sent many reminders to the case managers to tell the clients about the classes. She also posted announcements in the community inviting people to come to HPP and use our technology center.

---

2 (Qtr 2-4) Pilot a bi-weekly class on basic computer skills, the use of the internet to find education, housing, and employment and and job readiness.

Comment: Ellen developed some curricular materials for the class. She has been using these materials in the staff technology training as well as the Spanish speaking tech class.

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3 (Qtr 1-2) Develop a protocol for case managers to refer clients to the CTC, and for the CTC to report client attendance and progress to case managers

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Comment: Ellen updated our referral system whereby case managers refer clients to the CTC. She made the referral form easily accessible to the case managers by installing it on an on-line paper forms generator which she developed. HPP has decided to report class attendance through the client database. Ellen is participating in the discussions for revising our client database in order to report class attendance to the case managers.

Results

1. (Qtr 2) More clients will use CTC to learn the uses of technology and job readiness.

Comment: 1. According to attendance records, 45 new Latinas have enrolled in our 2 hour, twice a week classes. From September 2005 to January 2006, an average of 17 students per month have attended these classes. They have developed skills in Microsoft Office, email and internet usage, job research and resume writing.

2. (Qtr 2) More clients will use the CTC to research health, education, housing and employment.

Comment: Ellen has tailored computer training for English speaking clients in a one-on-one fashion. From September 2005 to January 2006, an average of 30 clients have utilized our technology center to apply for jobs, search for housing, and research information they need to help themselves and their families. Ellen has assisted individuals in resume writing and internet searches. One African American woman gained a staff postion at HPP through the computer skills that Ellen has taught her.

3. (Qtr 1) A referral form for case managers and a client progress report form to be sent to case managers

Comment: The referral form in English and in Spanish was created and distributed to case managers. Attendance and progress reports are to be replaced by posting class records on the client database. Ellen is participating in the revisions to the database.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-2) Expand and strengthen our job readiness program by developing a directory of all the vocational and educational training programs in the San Francisco Bay Area which can serve our clients.

Comment: The directory is an important resource for our job readiness training in the CTC. Clients and Case managers can use the directory to find educational and employment programs that fit the client's profile.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-2) Identify, contact and visit educational and training programs who can serve our clients

Comment: Ellen continues to identify and contact educatonal and training programs to assess their suitability for inclusion in our directory. Time has not permitted visiting the sites.

2 (Qtr 1-3) Develop referral and feedback protocols for these programs and HPP Case Managers.

Comment: She has developed a referral form and protocol for HPP Case Managers. We are reassessing what form feedback protocols should take.

Results

1. (Qtr 3) A directory of all local educational and vocational services available to our clients

Comment: The directory has been completed and distributed to all our case managers. It is also available online.

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2. (Qtr 2) A referral form and protocol for sending clients to educational, voacational and employemnt service agencies.

Comment: The referral form is complete, we has been distributed to all the case managers and also make available online for case managers to print from their workstations.

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3. (Qtr 2) A feedback from and referral from these agencies regarding the disposition and progress of our clients.

Comment: We are still developing this protocol and are now favoring the idea of requesting feedback by email, since the agencies seem resistant to more paperwork.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) Expand our capacity by raising the technical skills and efficiency of our case workers through the the creation of a staff development program in the CTC.

Comment: Ellen has expanded our program by developing and coordinating a staff development technology training curriculum and class schedule in the CTC. At this time she is training the community health workers and interns who form the first line of service here at HPP. She is teaching skill sets in the use of the internet, email, calendars, our client-based website and the client database. In the future she will be training this group and other staff members in common forms of business correspondence.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Develop an on-line assessment tool to establish a baseline of the technology skills of all staff members.

Comment: Ellen has administered a paper self-assessment to members of the staff technology training class to establish a baseline of the technology skills of the staff members. We have not put the assessment online.

---

2 (Qtr 1-2) Analyze on-line assessments and develop and coordinate skill set workshops tailored to staff needs.

Comment: Ellen has used the assessments to identify the skills that should be included in the staff trainings.

Results

1. (Qtr 2) A database of staff technology skills, which establishes a baseline and will be used in the future to monitor progress.

Comment: We have filed self-assessments in individual staff folders, and will use them to monitor progress. We will not be creating a database.

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2. (Qtr 1) A staff development program in technology with a calendar of skill-set workshops.

Comment: We have initiated a very succesful staff development program in technology. Classes are held on Tuesday mornings and Thursday afternoons.

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) Expand the recognition and use of our client-based website, helping-sf.org.

Comment: Originally the work plan called for a separate workshop and PowerPoint presentation to introduce our clients and case managers to our client-based website, Helping-sf.org. However, we have found that a better way to deliver this information is by including short training segments within all technology classes given to staff and clients. Ellen has found that navigating the actual website in English and in Spanish using the LCD projector is a more effective teaching tool than developing a separate PowerPoint presentation.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-2) Develop a workshop to introduce helping-sf.org to new users, both clients and case managers

Comment: Instead of a workshop, short training segments on the Helping-sf.org are included in all technology classes given to staff and clients.

---

2 (Qtr 1-3) Create promotional materials such as email announcements and posters

Comment: Ellen has set up posters in our lobby and tech center to direct clients and guests to visit our web-site. We also have handouts and postcards which display the homepage of our website and describe its use.

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3 (Qtr 1-4) Work with other volunteers to develop a separate homepage, navigation system and additional features just for case managers.

Comment: Our client-based website, Helping-sf.org, assists low income and homeless families in finding the resources they need to face crises and stabilize their lives. The site has also proven itself to be useful to case workers in San Francisco who work with this clientele. By creating a homepage especially for case workers and by promoting the site throughout the city we will be making these resources available to more people, increase the efficiency and knowledgibility of case workers and the independence of underserved families. The tech staff has just begun work on the case manager homepage. We are now surveying the HPP staff to identify features they would like to include on the case manager homepage. She will work with the other staff members in the Tech Center to design, write and test the extension to the web-site. Finally, she will develop a training workshop to introduce the use of the homepage and its various features to the HPP staff.

Results

1. (Qtr 3) A Powerpoint presentation which will introduce clients and case managers to the useful features helping-sf.org

Comment: Ellen has found that the PowerPoint presentation is superflous. She gives introductory training by navigating the website itself.

2. (Qtr 2) Promotional materials for helping-sf.org in the form of HTML emails, and Publisher documents such as posters and postcards.

Comment: Ellen has developed and distributed the Publisher posters and postcards.

3. (Qtr 4) A case manager homepage, navigation system and additional features on Helping-sf.org

Comment: The case manager homepage is now in development. We hope to have a pilot version by late spring.

Workplan Revision

In order to replace the objectives that have been removed from Ellen's work plan, we have come up with new projects that take advantage of some of her impressive skills in the areas of film, computers and community development.

1. This month she begins work conducting videotaped interviews of our clients and staff members. She is preparing the interviews herself and will also be doing the filming and editing. HPP plans to use these tapes to document the strengths of our program. We will use them in public relations and outreach materials. Segments will be downloadable from our web-sites.

2. Ellen has produce a public service announcement to be aired on the San Francisco Public access station about the family services here at HPP. She also plans to air her video recordings of clients and staff dependant upon receiving the subjects permission.

3. Ellen has also begun a community outreach project to raise the visibility of HPP in our new location. She has created flyers inviting local residents to attend classes in the CTC and avail themselves of other HPP services.

4. Ellen has taken training in Microsoft Access and she will be an important player in writing new queries and developing a training curriculum for new features in the our client database.

VISTA: Ellen-Rae Cachola

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I have been well accepted into Homeless Prenatal Program because of the warm environment and caring individuals that work here. My position as a technology trouble shooter has given me opportunities to introduce myself and work directly with staff. During the initial months when I was still a fresh face, I had to go around to staff work stations to set up their network accounts. This was because HPP was in a new location and going through organizational changes so I helped many staff members get situated with new computers, new accounts, and other hardware that they needed. The staff has been very nice and happy to have me solve many of their technology issues.

My other position as a technology instructor has also put me front and center with the staff, causing me to be accepted as one source of computer skills knowledge. I have been training new staff, interns and volunteers in MS Office Suite, Outlook, Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. While working with staff, I have bonded with many of them. For example, I have worked with clients to gain positions here at HPP, through helping them write their resumes and cover letters. Now that they know me, they just stop me in the hall, come to the tech center, or call me to ask for help with their projects.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I feel that Mary, my supervisor, has kept me on track with the work plan because she has been good with reminding me to review it. She is also very good at assessing what the technology needs of HPP are, and giving me projects that can satisfy them. However, there have been some changes that re-directed my workplan.

Goal #1. [Priority Area: Community Organizing or Development]
Create and monitor a blog specifically for the use of the English-speaking client community at HPP

This project has not been carried out due to low class attendance of English speaking clients and privacy issues. Many of our English speaking clients choose to come during open lab hours to use the computers for individualized, immediate needs, and blogs were not one of them. Also, since many of our English-speaking clients are addressing substance abuse and domestic violence issues, a blog would have invaded their privacy.

We have attempted to create a staff blog for HPP staff members, but they felt they had enough opportunities to collaborate with others in person, and that once again, a blog could create privacy issues. Although the blog has been created and is ready for use when the right time comes, the blog is no longer part of my workplan.

To replace this project, I am embarking on a HPP video project that will document the positive life transformations of clients and staff who entered the HPP. It will take care of the "new form of technology" that I am introducing into the organization, and will also serve as media material for public relations and staff development.

Goal #2. Develop and promote a technology class designed to fit the needs of our primarily Afro-American English speaking clientele.

The technology class for Afro-American English speaking clientele has not been met. Despite my work of canvassing the community, announcing to HPP support groups, and networking our tech lab's services with neighboring community agencies, English class attendance has been low. I teach many English-speaking clients on a one-on-one basis during our open lab hours, rather than in a class room setting. This is because structured class schedules are difficult for people who experiencing instability and family crisis.

Another factor that may have hindered the English Computer Class is that there has not been resources and support to utilize incentive prizes to lure people into attending the class. Although we can create a Microsoft Office Suite certification program, that has not been projected or received as an attractive incentive. As for material prizes, none have been suggested or offered to me.

Goal #3. Expand and strengthen our job readiness program by developing a directory of all the vocational and educational training programs in the San Francisco Bay Area which can serve our clients.

I am on track with this directory. I have created and also made copies to give to the Case Managers. However, it has been rare that clients access it independently because the directory is not that visible in our tech center. Also, the directory is not in Spanish language. We do, however, refer our clients to it when they ask for vocational and educational training resources.

Goal #4. Expand our capacity by raising the technical skills and efficiency of our case workers through the creation of a staff development program in the CTC.

We have been on track with the staff development program in the CTC. Early this year, we have been training our Community Health Workers, Peer Mentors, interns and volunteers in Microsoft Office, such as Outlook, Word, PowerPoint. Sometimes, staff members ask for assistance in Excel, Publisher, and using the projector, for their own personal projects. However, due to organizational changes at HPP, our staff technology training has decreased from two days a week to one day a week. Technology training has a time conflict with a writing class that new hires must attend. The program director is in the process of mapping out a new schedule that will apply for new hires trainings.

Goal #5. Expand the recognition and use of our client-base website, helping-sf.org

We have been on track with this goal. We have set up posters in our lobby and tech center to notify clients and visitors to visit our website. In our client and staff lessons for internet navigation, we incorporate our web site into the curriculum. In addition, we steer our clients to use our website when they need to find housing, jobs, and other needs. We have added a translator on our website so that all pages after it will be translated as well.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The Homeless Prenatal Program believes that every woman wants to have a healthy child and stable family life. Seizing the motivating opportunity created by pregnancy and parenthood, HPP joins with clients to help them regain the physical and psychological stability necessary to break the cycle of homelessness and make fundamental, positive life changes for themselves and their families.

What inspires me about HPP is their belief in people from disadvantaged backgrounds and communities. Many of their staff were previous clients who positively transformed their lives, out of substance abuse, poverty and domestic violence. Now they are hard working individuals that expand and deepen the services of HPP. It is inspiring to work in an agency that gives opportunities to people of color, who have limited access to education and good jobs, and train them in various skills so that they can continue working--and even excel--in the fields of community service and non-profit work. In addition, the warm, women centered, and supportive environment builds self-confidence in women from disadvantaged backgrounds, breaking cycles of internalized oppression. This motivates them to believe in achieving their goals for themselves and their families. It is amazing to be a witness to this transformation.

My work in the tech center is just one "arm" of their mission, although it is a powerful arm. I come in contact with immigrant and low income community members with varying technology skills. They use the tech center as a resource for finding jobs and housing, searching the internet, using the email, and creating personal projects. This allows them to find stability so that they can take care of their families. In addition, these skills helps them build confidence because computers are intimidating, especially for adults with little education. When they realize that they can use the computer and learn something new, they feel inspired and motivated to continue challenging themselves. For example, I have trained one client to write a resume, and now, she is a Community Health Worker here at HPP. When I first met her, she was not confident in front of the computer. But now, she is entering information on HPP database, using her account, accessing her email without assistance. Working here at the tech center truly contributes to their mission because we build people's confidence in themselves while simultaneously building professional skills they can apply for jobs.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor

and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?

I am receiving support and communication from my supervisor and co-workers because I am always working along side them. We have set up a technical request form in which staff members email the tech staff their technology issues. Then when one of us receives the email, we assign the issue to the person who specializes in the problem. For example, Cali deals with the hardware, network issues. Mary and I deal with training and program trouble shooting. Moreover, our tech staff is relatively open to one another. We also set up a New Hires Checklist that assigns certain tasks to orient and set up the new hire to their computer and our network services (HPP Forms Generator, personal accounts, email distribution lists). Through out the months, I have grown more comfortable with my supervisor and tech staff, which helps me feel more open to ask questions and ask for help when needed.

It has also helped that HPP assists me with the monthly MUNI bus pass. This helped to lower my costs especially with my limited monthly stipend.

I have also gained support in access to trainings. I learned how to do Dreamweaver and Microsoft Access because of paid-for trainings at Compass Point. These trainings helped me to maintain HPP's website and also assist in the database project.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?

3 Biggest Challenges

1) Instructing has been challenging. I had to overcome fear of speaking in front of large groups, organize my thoughts to be clear, and maintain patience in high stress situations. My time here has also introduced me into creating curriculum in both English and Spanish. Since students would excel beyond the curriculum I designed for the day, I ended up having to "free style" the lesson plan by making up new projects to teach. This challenged my knowledge of the program and prompted me to grow further.

2) Instructing in Spanish is a whole different category that just plain instructing. It has been a huge step for me to employ all the things I do for instructing, but then also translating that into the Spanish language has been a big step further. It has been difficult to explain technology concepts in Spanish, then walk the students through steps even when the whole program is written in English. I wondered: "Where is the Spanish version of Microsoft Office?" Another thing that was also challenging was needing to know formats of how people wrote letters and resumes in different countries, and having to teach them the formats here in America. There has been barriers in encouraging Spanish students to write resumes because of their limited knowledge of the English language and grammar, but we have managed to help them borrow pieces of resumes from previous clients.

3) Understanding and being sensitive to the social and cultural conditions of my clients has been a challenge. When I first started at HPP, I thought I understood what it meant to be low income and immigrant because I had an idea of what their histories were. But, I would find myself frustrated because first time computer users couldn't catch on to easy computer skills like using the mouse, reading buttons on the computer screens, etc. I think it has been a great challenge for me, which I am still overcoming, to be sensitive to the technology levels of those in low income and immigrant communities. I realize that I have been privileged to know how to use and be comfortable with the computer. I realize that others have had limited resources because of their station in life. It has been challenging to be cultivate patience and tolerance.

3 Significant Accomplishments

1) I have expanded my Spanish language and computer skills. I can tell because I can also translate complex concepts into Spanish. Also, many clients and staff have told me that I speak Spanish very well. That is an accomplishment because I know that my skill as a technology educator is well rounded. Not only do I understand the applications, but I can explain it in regular language in Spanish and English. I have expanded my computer skills. Now I am advanced in Microsoft Office. I learned how to do Dreamweaver and Microsoft Access. I also have gained experience in camera work for interviewing and Microsoft Movie Maker for video editing.

2) I have built great relationships here at HPP. People are comfortable asking me to help them with their technology issues and project. I am comfortable helping them and also telling them if I can't. A lot of staff members think that I am very reliable and competent in completing any

request. This is significant because I have made a name for myself in this agency and in the community they serve.

Through my relationships with staff members, I have also learned a lot about social and cultural conditions in low income and immigrant communities. For my HPP video project, I have had the opportunity to document and hear the stories of individual staff members. I learned a lot about their struggles as a woman of color living in poverty, among drugs, and despair. This helped me understand the conditions facing low income and immigrant communities and how important community services are. I have gained more indepth knowledge on what it's like to live in poor communities, without the luxuries of in-home computers and accessibility of education that I have gained.

3) I have learned a lot about how technology can facilitate organizational development and systems. Since HPP has been going through physical and organizational changes, I have been involved with restructuring the way they do things. I have created a forms generator that allows all staff members to access all HPP documents. I have also linked the technical request form to this forms generator so that all technology issues would be communicated to the tech staff. I have designed forms that documents actions being done within the organization. I am spearheading a video project that will document the work here at HPP, and be used for public and staff relations. My experience here at HPP has helped me integrate technology skills into organizational development and management.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
It really helped when the Project paid for my Microsoft Access training. I think that is useful because the knowledge I gain from that can be applied for tasks that the organization needs, but is not yet specialized in. I would like to see the Project invest more in their VISTAs, especially through seminars and conferences that relate to the innovative work they must provide to the agency. It would be good if the Project kept track of upcoming workshops, seminars, and conferences within a VISTA's location, and listed them on the website. By doing this, I feel that VISTAs would be more comfortable and supported in breaking new ground for the agency.

I think the blog and emails were useful too because it helped me stay up to date with new open source materials and other projects that other VISTAs were using/doing. This network was a resource that I have tapped into for knowledge. I have emailed individuals who I knew were experienced in a certain program that I was unfamiliar with.

I feel that CNS and Regional leaders should facilitate and pay for more physical interaction among VISTAs regionally and/or nationally. The weblog is very effective in sharing discussion and experiences. However, it would be even more powerful to exchange knowledge by visiting each site where a fellow VISTA works. It would be beneficial for VISTAs to exchange ideas by experiencing the context of the community they visit, and then return to their location of service to apply what they have learned according to the similarities and differences between the communities.

Marcus A. Foster Educational Institute/OTXWest, Oakland, CA

VISTA: Jeff Benton
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/jeff_benton/

Supervisor: Bruce Buckelew

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Jeff has taken the lead role in building our second classroom. This was completed the middle of February. We have now used the classroom twice in support of our home computer program, particularly for Project SOAR. Project SOAR is a GEARUP project focusing on the class of 2011. Jeff's primary accomplishments, in addition to the second classroom, has been to be an integral part of our staff. Jeff is very effective in identifying what needs to be done and completing it with quality. He is an integral part of all aspects of our home computer program including scheduling and coordinating families in our classes, coordinating the work of adult and youth volunteers, and many, many other things that are needed in a small organization with a big mission.

Jeff has also attended a KQED workshop on digital story telling and is working with Domingo Vaszuez, a multimedia professional, to finalize the curriculum for our upcoming digital story telling pilot workshop. The workshop has been scheduled, 20 students have been selected, and all is a go for the week of Spring Break, April 10-14.

We are currently working with project SOAR to schedule 200-300 7th graders into our summer technology workshop. This one week workshop, for 6 separate sessions, will run from June 26 to August 4. We will be updating our first classroom to also accomodate the students. The curriculum we will use will be that piloted in April. Jeff is involved in every detail of this large, (and new to us) endeavor.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Putting the second classroom together was a challenge for a number of reasons. First is the use of refurbished everything: computers, tables, chairs, projectors, scanners, etc. etc. Jeff showed patience and perserverance in leading our young high school intern in construction of the lab.

Probably the second difficulty is the difficulty in finding the time in our busy week for Jeff to focus on the classroom. We serve hundreds of people every week and Jeff is involved in all aspects.

The third difficulty has worked out well. Focusing on what we are exactly going to do in the digital story telling workshop, and scheduling the students. Using Spring Break as a pilot for the summer is a good match of our readiness and the expansion of the program to a large number of students.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Jeff could probably use more interaction with other Americorps fellows. We tend to have too much to do to do as much networking as I would like. Perhaps the coordinators could help in this regard. Is there a forum for the Americorps fellows to share what they are doing?

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
We have trained well over 1,000 people in Oakland since Jeff came on board, over 500 families. Jeff has facilitated and managed over 300 volunteers that make or program work. He, with staff, has developed an exciting multimedia curriculum that we plan to use with a large number of middle school students. Jeff's efforts have allowed us to double our capacity to train students and families. What more can I say.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
See above. He has been integral to the continuing quality of our offerings to families, from training, computer preparation, computer distribution, technical support, volunteer coordination and development of exciting new offerings.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

We have had staff out for extended periods of time due to disabilities. Jeff has stepped into the breach and filled hundreds of gaps. He is accomplishing the project we set out to do, but he has done much, much more to advance our assault on the digital divide in Oakland.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Build the capacity at OTXWest to deliver multimedia training, and specifically digital story telling capability, to Oakland youth.

Develop and pilot a digital story telling and other multimedia workshops for Oakland youth.

Develop capacity to offer more advanced multimedia development opportunities to Oakland youth including the construction and use of a community

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Comment: Jeff has completed construction of our multimedia lab. It has now been used twice for classes. He, with staff, is completing our digital story telling curriculum. We will pilot it during Spring Break, April 10-14, and roll it out to 200-300 students this summer.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Working with OTXWest staff and volunteers, but acting as the lead person, turn our second classroom into a true multimedia lab capable of offering trainings to up to 25 students in beginning digital story telling.

Comment: This is complete. The classroom has been used twice and is scheduled for its first digital story telling workshop April 10-14.

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2 (Qtr 2) Using curriculum that was developed for and used at Roosevelt Middle School in Oakland, develop curriculum for a pilot workshop in "digital story telling" using the lab from activity 1 and the home computer model developed for this purpose by OTXWest. Students should be able to create simple digital stories both at OTXWest and at home.

3 (Qtr 3) Using the experience of activity #2, develop recommendations for followon plans, including:
- More advanced workshops
- Development of an open access model where student can get specific help on their project during regularly scheduled "open access" time.
- Develop a plan to offer the basic digital story telling curriculum to a larger number of students.

4 (Qtr 4) Depending on the success of #2 and the recommendations of #3, implement at least one of the recommendations made in Activity #3, that is, "multimedia open access", an advanced workshop and/or, additional basic classes.

Results

1. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Complete setup of our multimedia lab.
[INDICATOR] Lab up and running.
[INSTRUMENT] Lab will be assessed.
[TARGET] Lab up and running.

Comment: 1. Complete. We still have glitches to resolve...electrical, air conditioning, ventilation, installation of cdburners and high end scanners.

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2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Train at least 25 students in basic digital story telling and complete project with at least 10.
[INDICATOR] We will be counting the number students trained and the number of projects completed
[INSTRUMENT] Students will be trained in our lab and their projects will be preserved.
[TARGET] Twenty five students will be trained. Projects will be collected from at least 10.

Comment: Scheduled for April 10-14

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] At least 25 students will be trained and produce a digital story. The lab will be capable to be used on an ongoing basis. We will have implemented at least one of the recommendation for continuing the activity...more basic classes, open access and/or advanced classes/facilities.
[INDICATOR] Classes, visits during open access.
[INSTRUMENT] Continuous measurement.
[TARGET] At least 25 youth will participate in the beginning program. At least 5 will advance to the followup activities.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Outreach to the community. Goal is to make sure every school that is eligible for our home computer program has received our material and decided as to how they will implement the program. OTXWest and the school will have setup and initiated the outreach to each school community and the City at large. As a result of this outreach, train and distribute at least 1000 computers to families, including at least 100 of our new multimedia computers. This is included as a Community Network goal as it is necessary to get Internet ready computers to our students as a first order of community networking.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Working with OTXWest staff, support the recruitment, training and distribution of home computers to all students, grades 6 and up, in the Oakland Public Schools.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) At least 1000 students and their families receive training and an Internet ready home computer. At least 100 families will receive our newest home computers with enhanced multimedia capability that allows developing of digital stories at home.

Goal #3. (Qtr 3-4) Establish at least one community access lab with a local non-profit or charter school.

Activities

1 (Qtr 4) 1. Build lab and train personnel for non-profit community access lab...non-profit, charter school or community housing.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) At least one community lab will be built that is capable of running classes and supporting students who have multimedia home computers. This lab will include all of the software available on multimedia home computers.

2. (Qtr 4) At least one community lab will be built that is capable of running classes and supporting students who have multimedia home computers. This lab will include all of the software available on multimedia home computers.

Workplan Revision

None

VISTA: Jeff Benton

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I can say without hesitation that I have been well recieved at OTX West and have become an important part of the team here.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
For the most part, to this point we are well on track to meeting the goals as stated in the workplan. However, some delays in meeting the goals were caused by dealing with the eccentricities of donated hardware, as well as the pressures of more immediate concerns. For example, I spend a good amount of my time working with volunteers and supporting the Take Home Computer Program.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I don't think there is a way to more directly address the Digital Divide than to put computers in the homes of students. You can workshop people to death, preaching the gospel of the digital revolution, but if a person doesn't even have the most basic tool to begin with, all your efforts will have been in vain. OTX West is for bringing the greatest good to the greatest number.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Certainly, there is always room for improvement in any relationship, humans being the imperfect creatures they are, but I don't have any concerns in the area of communication. That said, I wouldn't be opposed to a regularly scheduled planning session.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?

Occupational Training Services Inc./SDCTC, San Diego, CA

VISTA: Rodrigo Pacheco-McEvoy
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/rodrigo_pacheco-mcevoy/

Supervisor: Kimberly Paul

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
In Quarter 1 Rodrigo was expected to collect the monthly reports from all the staff at 7 FLOC sites. Although monthly reports were submitted regularly as we went through the collection process we found discrepencies between sites. Rodrigo work diligently with the staff and myself to establish an accurate reporting system. He created a report that we later were unable to use due to wanted to stay with the same report because of the annual Statistical Report. We didnt' want to change reports in mid-year. We will utilize his report after our fiscal year.

What difficulties have you encountered?
I have not encountered any difficulties. Rodrigo has done an outstanding job in assisting OTS with dense statistical data that is complicated to not only, collect from 7 different sites but to format into one report. He helped in all phases of the creating the Statistical Report.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Everyone of the Project staff have been responsive and helpful.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
The AmeriCorps*VISTA program is one of the best ways a non-profit can benefit with outreaching to the community in which they serve. This program allows an opporunity for a person to learn about disinfranchised and/or under served communities and their needs.

Our AmeriCorp*VISTA at OTS has conducted Art workshops in low-income apartment communities for disadvanted youth. If our Americorp*VISTA did not think beyond his workplan, these youth would not have been exposed to art in such a way that opened their minds. As a result the youth who have developed an appreciation for art. Our AmeriCorp*VISTA was also able to learn from our youth that everyone comes from various education and socio economic levels but we can work together.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-3) Goal 1: To create a new statistical database that will produce accurate information resulting increased programming and curriculum support for the 7 FLOC sites
Occupational Training Services

Comment: Rodrigo has done an outstanding job with providing statistical data in our FLOCs. He provided demographics by charting the number of children, racial breakdown, income levels, languages spoken, and interest in all OTS' core program areas.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Research and collect the monthly reports for all the staff for the last fiscal years for the 7 FLOC sites (June 30, 2004-July 1, 2005)

Comment: Rodrigo again has done an outstanding job with collecting the reports over a 12 month period of our 7 FLOCs. This was difficult because we had a change of center staffing and our reports changed over the year and trying to collect this information posed its challenges.

2 (Qtr 1) Organize reports received from each FLOC site and convert data into statistical information for migration into a database

Comment: OTS has an annual report highlighting the FLOCs and Rodrigo collected all the data and put the information into a Statistical Report.

3 (Qtr 2) Conduct staff trainings at each FLOC site on usage of new database in coordination with the technology committee

Comment: Rodrigo held art workshops in the center. OTS discovered a hidden talent and wanted him to have the ability to share his talents with the teens. His workshop have been a success and highly attended by the youth.

4 (Qtr 3-4) Create and distribute a standardized evaluation to FLOC users participating in the 7 case management services, (computer literacy, after school programs, educational enrichment, workforce development, financial literacy, No Child Left Behind program, & ESL classes) categorizing the information and uploading the results into the new database

Results

1. (Qtr 1) 120 reports and summaries will be collected and analyzed, with staff feedback and comments, from the 7 FLOC sites in San Diego

2. (Qtr 1) All pertinent data collected from the 120 reports will be converted into statistical and quantifiable information, migrated into the new database for each of the 7 FLOC Sites

3. (Qtr 2) 3 staff members from the technology committee will be trained on the new database and how to review and analyze the information for future technology curriculums that will be presented at the 7 FLOC sites

4. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] 15-20 residents and end-users at each FLOC site will be evaluated on technology skills with the results being uploaded into the database producing statistical points on what specific programming and curriculum to be applied at each site.
[INDICATOR] end user technology skills
[INSTRUMENT] New database tracking application
[TARGET] 15-20 end-users computer literacy evaluation stats being uploaded into the database for comparison

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) To increase programming and curriculum resources for FLOC sites

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Perform a local environmental scan at 5 different community technology centers or non-profits in reviewing their computer skills curriculum
2 (Qtr 1) Gather all curriculums used at each FLOC site and determine which programming points are not shared by all FLOC sites
3 (Qtr 2-3) Work with Director of Community Development, technology, and education committees to create a standardized computer skills curriculum that can be utilized at all FLOC sites for workshops and trainings
4 (Qtr 4) Organize and develop 3 technology based mini-workshops hosted at FLOC sites for the residents and end-users lead by the FLOC staff on the technology committee

Results
1. (Qtr 1) 5 program and curriculum examples will be colleted and studied for review by the technology committee
2. (Qtr 1) Compare and contrast 5 program and curriculum examples from other organizations with 2 community development division programs (specifically-NCLB & Computer Literacy)
3. (Qtr 2) 1 curriculum manual will be published for use at all 7 FLOC sites based on the in-source and outsourced curriculum examples
4. (Qtr 4) 3 mini-trainings will be organized by the AmeriCorps*Vista, but the trainings will be led by the staff (train-the-trainer) using the new curriculum with an average attendance of 10-15 residents & end-users for each mini-training at the FLOC sites

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Educate the broader non-profit community about OTS programs and FLOC sites through outreach
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Create and organize information, success stories, program updates, etc for a new quarterly OTS E-newsletter
2 (Qtr 2-4) Research and identify e-mail hosting services and send out First OTS E-newsletter to the San Diego community technology list serve
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Gather 2 success stories per quarter with news and updates on OTS with production of an E-newsletter
2. (Qtr 2) Identify a E-hosting company (for example, www.constantcontact.com) and train lead staff and technology committee to send out to OTS constituents as specified by the Director of Community Development. (Q2, Q3, Q4)

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) To increase funding opportunities for FLOC sites
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Research the needs of each FLOC site and determine common needs that can be met through grants, including hardware, software, and programming capabilities
2 (Qtr 2) Research possible grant opportunities to meet the needs of the FLOC sites
3 (Qtr 3-4) Draft 1 grant proposal to provide either increased services with to leverage partnerships and/or increased hardware/software/ capabilities
Results
1. (Qtr 1) The 7 FLOC sites will be researched in their capabilities in regards to funding for the following fiscal year
2. (Qtr 2) 3-6 grants proposals will be reviewed for application to the FLOC sites
3. (Qtr 3) 1 grant proposal will be submitted for the FLOC sites or 1 FLOC site with regard to a specific hardware, software, or programming need

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Establish an online repository (knowledge base) for both internal documentation as well as resources shared by the community. **San Diego Community Technology Coalition**

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Relocate shared SDCTC data documentation to one server for staff use
2 (Qtr 1) Combine the various database lists of community technology centers in San Diego
3 (Qtr 2-3) Upload information on CTC sub-categories obtained from membership/outreach and compiling electronic copies (word documents, curriculum, etc for shared use by CTC staff
4 (Qtr 4) Move data to new online repository for shared access

Results
1. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Relocate 300 shared internal and external SDCTC files and documents for use by SDCTC and San Diego CTC staff for programming and curriculum purposes [INDICATOR] The files migrated over to test environment for new database application. [INSTRUMENT] Excel/Access files migrated to the test environment will be tracked by AmeriCorps*Vista and technology director. [TARGET] 150 files for external use for access by CTC staff end-users.
2. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Combine 3 database lists: Constant Contact SDCTC E-Newsletter, San Diego community technology list serve, & the CTC Map in creating a standardized list from which to send all SDCTC community resources [INDICATOR] Number of organizational contact information files combined frome the database lists to create the new master list [INSTRUMENT] Website administrator will keep track of number of files. [TARGET] 200 organizationl contact files to be migrated over to the new master list for immediate usage on the website by end-users
3. (Qtr 2) Upload the 300 internal and external shared files into specified categories in the online repository
4. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Move online repository to the SDCTC website with page and links for external access by San Diego CTC staff and announce on website and the San Diego community technology listserve [INDICATOR] Number of hits by end-users to the SDCTC website. [INSTRUMENT] End-users will create a profile for logging on to the repository which will track number of end-users [TARGET] 50-100 end-users accessing the SDCTC website within the first week the knowledge repository is operational.

Goal #6. (Qtr 1-4) Commission a study on the state of CTCs in San Diego that will quantify the discoveries made by the SDCTC, which will then be shared with our stakeholders including funders that continue to make decisions that benefits CTCs in San Diego
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Research and identify specified lists of CTCs in San Diego through membership/outreach
2 (Qtr 1) Work with specified research non-profit agencies or Universities to develop an in-depth standardized evaluation targeting CTC programming points
3 (Qtr 2-3) Release evaluation to CTC staff for input and receive results
4 (Qtr 4) Methodically compile and evaluate results based on the specific study points with review by outsourced firm or institute of education
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Research and target the 150 CTCs in San Diego as specified by membership/outreach
2. (Qtr 1) Work with 2 community development (City Height Community Technology Center, Sandag, or San Diego State University) agency's staff to develop the in-depth evaluation based on the 3 programming points of Curriculum, resource sharing, and technical support
3. (Qtr 2) Deliver evaluation to the 150 specified community technology centers for review and completion in hard copy or electronically.
4. (Qtr 4) Provide hard copy, and updated electronic copy of study of San Diego's CTC resources based on the 3 specified programming points of programming, curriculum & technical support

Goal #7. (Qtr 1-4) Improving the quality of workshops, trainings, and resources offered to CTCs, and implementing more rigorous evaluation measures to ensure success
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) based on the education technology survey programming points of the 2004-2005, provide workshops and trainings for CTC staff
2 (Qtr 1-4) Send out after action evaluations to CTC staff for pluses & EBIs (Even better ifs)
3 (Qtr 1-4) Analyze and share results with directors and advisory council
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Improve the quality of workshops, trainings, and resources by offering 4 quarterly workshops taught by instructors who are specialists in the related technology field to CTC staff. (Q1, Q2, Q3, & Q4)
2. (Qtr 4) Send a minimum of 10 post evaluations to the attendees of SDCTC trainings to ensure success in providing excellence training materials, resources, and feedback. (Q1, Q2, Q3, & Q4)
3. (Qtr 4) Create 2 bi-quarterly summaries on points of discussion reported in the post SDCTC training evaluations (Q2& Q4)

Goal #8. (Qtr 1-4) Develop, in conjunction with the SDCTC directors and advisory council, three proposals for continued funding of SDCTC activities
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Identify possible funding sources for the SDCTC in 2006-2007
2 (Qtr 2) Communicate with possible funding sources to determine feasibility of future funding for 2006-2007
3 (Qtr 3) Draft, in conjunction with the board of directors funding proposals to ensure continued funding for SDCTC programs and activities
4 (Qtr 4) Lead discussion with board of directors to revise the operating plan which can be implemented without funding
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Identify 3-6 possible funding sources for SDCTC in 2006-2007
2. (Qtr 2) Communicate with 3 possible funding sources to determine feasibility of future funding for 2006-2007
3. (Qtr 3) Draft 1-2 funding proposals to endure continued funding for SDCTC programs and activities
4. (Qtr 4) Devise in a written summary 3 recommendations to revise the current operating plan which can be implemented without funding

Goal #9. (Qtr 1-4) Develop three "Tech Days: Done in a Day with SDCTC" volunteer opportunities for improving CTC's allowing volunteers and SDCTC members to come together and provide technical, procedural and programmatic support.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) Using criteria set up by SDCTC to identify three CTC's to target for the "Done in a Day" Community Technology improvements
2 (Qtr 3-4) Collaborate with SoCalFreeNet.org at least one Tech Day to include wireless installation in low-income housing facilities
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Set three dates throughout the year, and make sure all posts are included on website and announce in E-Newsletter
2. (Qtr 3) Gather relevant information regarding wireless installs for CTC's and related projects on website, including synopsis of the "Tech Days" successes

Goal #10. (Qtr 1-4) Build partnership with San Diego State University's Educational Technology Certificate and Graduate Program

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Set up small presentation catered to EDTECH students to recruit volunteers and educate regarding our program
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Each semester have a minimum of 1 student participate in curriculum building and creation specialized for our CTC's

VISTA: Rodrigo Pacheco-McEvoy

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel as though I've been very-well accepted at Occupational Training Services (OTS). I attend the bi-weekly meetings which rotate among the seven Family Learning and Opportunity Centers. I've worked closely with the staff at these centers over my course as a VISTA. I am truly enjoying the collaborative work that comes out of my intereaction with these individuals.

With the San Diego Community Technology Coalition (SDCTC), I also feel very-well accepted. This organization is much smaller, so my interaction with the other players at SDCTC is more crucial. In my opinion, we make a great time.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
Yes, I do. I meet with my OTS supervisor every Monday and Wednesday morning. We review my workplan and organize my projects. This is a huge motivator in sticking to the schedule and goals of my workplan. With SDCTC, I also have weekly meetings with my supervisor so this keeps me on track. The only difference between these two organizations is that I have much more flexibility in the way I carry out my objectives with OTS.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
Both organizations aim to empower individuals and communities by maximizing access to the Internet and other technologies. While this statement is a bit broad, it inspires me because I believe that my work, while it may have a tiny impact on the state of the digital inequality in San Diego, has a positive effect on the lives of the individuals with whom I come in contact.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Absolutely!

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Three biggest challenges:
1. Sometimes it is difficult to balance my work between OTS and SDCTC. Sometimes one of my organizations' projects become a bit overwhelming and I fall short on completing my projects for the other organization. This has not been the case lately, but it happened pretty often towards the beginning of my term.
2. One of my project goals for OTS is to streamline the curriculums for all the seven Family Opportunity and Technology Centers. The challenge here is that the dynamics of each center are so different that it seems almost impossible to have each center operate under the same curriculum.
3. A challenge I've had particularly with SDCTC has been my lack of knowledge regarding technology. I've come in contact with a lot of new (new, at least to me) words revolving around technology. However, I have learned a great deal since I began work with SDCTC, so while this third point has definitely been a challenge, it's been one with a positive outcome.

Three most significant accomplishments:

1. Personal accomplishment - Learning HTML and other technologies; publishing an e-newsletter all on my own!
2. Completing the OTS statistical annual report. Took A LOT of work and is the culmination of several little steps.
3. I've been able to form truly rewarding relationships with individuals at the Family Learning and Opportunity Centers through the art workshops that I host (given the flexibility that OTS allows).

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
On the occassions in which I've had questions regarding my status as an Americorps, the Project staff has been speedy in responding to my inquiries. I feel comfortable knowing that I am backed by a great team.

Pangea Foundation, San Diego, CA

VISTA: Mike Denegal
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/mike_denegal/
VISTA: Daniel Richardson
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/daniel_richardson/
VISTA: Sandra Hike
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/sandra_hike/

Supervisor: Kristin Berry

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Pangea has been able to reach over 550 affordable housing sites with community networking technology with the help of our VISTAs. Our VISTAs provide 100% of the technical traning and support for this project. Additionally, with their direct interaction with our clients, they help us to design new features for using technology to serve low income residents.

Our VISTA's will also serve in this role as we prepare to launch a new community network system for foster youth this spring.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Our clients can be difficult to work with at times, as some of them are using technology for the first time. As they integrate web-based applications into their daily operations, they can get frustrated, and naturally take this out on our trainers.

Our foster youth project has been very slow to get started this past year, as a grant we expected was delayed, so we started and stopped the project several times, which has been very frustrating! Nevertheless, it is moving forward.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
We are well equipped with Mike Denegal on our staff!

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Our VISTAs were the first members of our staff to design our resident service coordination network (4 years ago). Each year, the project has been held together with CTCNet VISTAs. Today, with a modest user fee and 550 properties, our elderly/disability system is fully sustainable! This represents about 50,000 - 60,000 residents.

Because of this success with elderly/disability housing, we have also received an endorsement that will encourage over 500 properties of family housing sites to use the family service coordination system we are launching in May. This system is expected to have similar results as those of our elderly system.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our VISTA are invaluable to our organization as we would not have been able to start bringing technology to low income housing without their assistance. By providing the most valuable aspect of our technology programs - the training and technical support - we are able to use of resources to develop applications for effectively integrating community technology into areas such as affordable housing.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Our VISTAs continue to be the key players in our organization. Since they speak with our end users more than any other staff, they represent us to the public and our clients the most. This is outstanding that our VISTAs are our community interfaces, as represent Pangea and AmeriCorp so well!

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] Create a community network system that links local area agencies providing support services to foster youth "aging out" or emancipating for the child welfare system.

Comment: The system has been created as a prototype with the input of over 30 local organizations and 15 community leaders, include HHS, Housing, Workforce Partnerships, The County Office of Education, and many other agencies.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Contact local area foster youth service providers to participate in R&D for pilot.

Comment: Over 30 local agencies have been contacted and up to 50 will participate in the pilot this year.

2 (Qtr 1-2) Visit local agencies to get feedback on system design for Abilities-4-FosterYouth.

Comment: We visited with over 30 agencies to develop a prototype.

3 (Qtr 2-3) Develop version 1.0 of Abilities-4-FosterYouth with Pangea Software Development team.

Comment: Version 1.0 has been developed as a prototype, but needs to be refined and tested. It is conceptually working, but not ready for release.

4 (Qtr 3-4) Implement pilot of version 1.0 with 50 local agencies, including government, community and faith-based foster youth service providers.

Comment: Will start Q3

Results

1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Fifty agencies will participate in the pilot community network system.
[INDICATOR] The number of agencies that participate in the pilot project.
[INSTRUMENT] The number of agencies participating in the pilot that use the system at least 4 times per month. This will be tracked via the database in the community network system.
[TARGET] Fifty agencies will participate in this community network.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] A community wide database will be implemented that will promote resource sharing to provide timely resources and services to foster youth who are aging out of the system.
[INDICATOR] The successful development of an network/information system that can be piloted by community agencies.
[INSTRUMENT] The number of foster youth that can successfully transition to homes, jobs and/or higher education, and financial security. This will be tracked via databases integrated into the system.
[TARGET] Local agencies will be able to collaborate to help foster youth overcome the dire circumstance and potential poverty they when they reach the age of 18 and lose government support.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Foster Youth aging out of the system in San Diego will be able to successfully transition to independence, without having to face hardships of homelessness, poverty, and unemployment.
[INDICATOR] Decreases in homelessness, poverty, and unemployment by foster youth 18 and over.
[INSTRUMENT] The community network system will track participant outcomes. Baseline data on the foster youth is aleardy available. We will compare the results to this data.
[TARGET] 25% less foster youth will be homeless at age 18
25% less will be unemployed at age 18

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Enhance capacity of resident service coordinators at affordable and public housing facilities to use technology to deliver health and social service to low income and disabled residents.

Comment: We are up to 550 properties with great new features being added every month!

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Provide technical support services to residents service using Abilities-4-RSCs to identify, link, and monitor health and social services for residents.

Comment: Our users receieve support almost on demand (unless our VISTAs are helping other people), and we have integrated new features to link and track health and social services. To date, 510,907
service have been delivered via the system. This reporting period, 179,780 health/social support services have been delivered.

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2 (Qtr 1-4) Assist with update training materials in both print and online format.

Comment: Our VISTAs assist with all training materials.

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3 (Qtr 1-4) Provide training to new users, and provide training to existing users when new features are added.

Comment: Since Sept, 250 new users have been added, and 5 new features that VISTA members provided training with.

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4 (Qtr 1) Preparing training materials and training plans for October 2005 conference in San Diego where 1,000 Resident Service Coordinators will attend.

Comment: The material were prepared and the conference was a huge success. Pangea acknowledged CTCNet VISTA at the opening breakfast!

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5 (Qtr 3-4) Interact with resident service coordinators at conferences, seminars, and follow up phone calls to identify new features and technical services that can be integrated into the system to assist with using technology to serve low income residents.

Comment: We speak with over 200 RSCs per month! Mainly, our VISTAs are talking to RSCs.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) Five hundred public and affordable housing facilities across the nation will benefit from technical support services.

Comment: Alreardy at 550 and it was only Q2!!

2. (Qtr 4) 50,000 residents will benefit from these techinical assistance services.

Comment: Already at 50,000 - 60,000 by Q2.

3. (Qtr 1) 500 resident service coordinators will receive training and technical support.

Comment: Already at 550!

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Provide support services to VISTA Members at local and national programs via our site's VISTA leader.

Comment: Accomplished through Mike D. He is very active in support VISTAs. We fully support any amount of time he puts toward this effort!

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Contact VISTA Members to inquire about their needs and questions

Comment: Mike contacts 12 CTCNet VISTAs monthly to inquire about their needs and provide support.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Visit VISTA Members, locally and nationally, as funds permit to provide support and network with other agencies.

3 (Qtr 1-4) Network with other National and State VISTA programs to leverage resources available from The Corporation.

Comment: Unfortnuately, we have not pursued our partnership with our State VISTA program, as we have been so busy just taking care of the immediate needs of our community. We will try to reignite this soon.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) VISTA Members will be provided with support needed to succesfully complete their assignments.

Comment: Mike D. has done an excellent job here!

2. (Qtr 4) More awareness and collaboration of State and National resources will be achieved.

Comment: Unfortnuately, we have not pursued our partnership with our State VISTA program, as we have been so busy just taking care of the immediate needs of our community. We will try to reignite this soon.

VISTA: Mike Denegal

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I have been accepted very well by the staff at Pangea Foundation. They have been very supportive in all aspects of my work in dealing with the various projects ranging from training to technical support

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I believe I am on track to the meeting goals assigned in my work plan by Pangea Foundation this year. In regards to goal 1 in creating a community networking system for foster youth, with the exception of a hold up in funding, the logistics and planning is completed and my role of leading outreach & training for the project is set in place. I have exceeded expectations in regards to goal 2 in providing excellent training and technical support to service coordinators using Abilities-4-RSCs thereby allowing them to coordinate social services more effectively to their residents. I have also continued to be a source of assistance to the other vistas in the CTC Vista project in my role as Vista leader. Currently my goal of having good communication between the vistas located in the Pacific & Northwest region and HQ is being met by leading monthly conference calls and sending in regular reports to HQ in a timely manner.

The key factor that has been effective in allowing us to stay on track is good communication at the workplace. I am in constant communication with my supervisor, Kristin covering all aspects effecting projects at Pangea, making sure she is in the loop, and asking any and all questions when difficulties arise. Another factor is professionalism at the office. The atmosphere of professionalism at Pangea is awesome in that the staff provides an excellent working environment in which you can focus on your projects without distraction.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
Pangea Foundation's dedication to providing technology capacity-building among underserved and low-income communities is a great example for non-profits in that it does not offer direct services to communities but instead serves as a central point in providing technology to organizations creating community development projects for their communities.

This model of non-direct service is an inspiration because it gives an ideal of self-impowerment for those persons and organizations working to improve their community, but without having the condescending notions of giving "hand-outs".

I strongly believe that my work in training and technical support is aiding in this mission because in a sense I am not "feeding anyone a fish, but I am teaching people how to fish for a life time". Our projects are aimed at building totally sustainability of community development with the use of technology.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
As I stated before the communication between me and my co-workers at Pangea is 100%. Kristin is so approachable and easy to communicate with, always helping me with any support that I may need on projects. I am blessed, no room for improvement.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
When looking back on my work these past 6-months with Pangea Foundation and as a Vista Leader with the CTC Vista Project I can honestly say that I have not had any challenges, crisis, issues, or regarding my projects this year.

I believe my most significant accomplishment so far has been my improved training skills. I really

enjoy conducting technology trainings and workshops, but my dealings with the different service coordinators have allowed me to focus on my students different learning styles to become a better trainer.

My second most significant accomplishment is my improved Spanish language skills. I started studying 4 months ago in addition to my volunteer work in Mexico on the weekends which giving me more confidence when talking to native Spanish speakers, I am not fluent yet, but I can definitely hold my own in a conversacion

Lastly, I think the accomplishment of just being able to enjoy my work and letting my guard down is significant enough in itself.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The e-mail communication provided by the project staff has been good in keeping everyone up to date with important information from HQ. I think additional assistance should be given to the vistas about AmeriCorps protocols and procedures with regards to health benefits, loan deferments, Ed awards, etc. Of course I know this information is presented during PSO, but if maybe some sort of refresher PSO packet could be put together it would help with any potential problems that might arise (that do arise) during the course of the year with issues dealing from health benefits to food stamps.

VISTA: Sandra Hike

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I work well with the majority of the people in the organization. My skills in organizational management have been put to use in all areas
of my job.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I am well on track for the goals of my work plan. Since coming on board I have been given the opportunity for continued growth and development. I primarily oversee AASC and Abilities4RSC. I assist the team with developing the program and implementing changes.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The clients inspire me as well as Kristin's desire to help others. Everyday I am given the opportunity to help others. As stated above I have also been given the opportunity to expand and grow in other areas I never thought I would excel within.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I have at all times had excellent communication with Kristin Berry. The one area I have had difficulty has been smoothed out and all appears to be going well.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My biggest challengens have been learning the software programs, scheduling appropriately and finding a productive way to work with the software developer. Learing the programs and training effectively have been huge accomplishments. The accomplishments I am most pleased with are in the area of sales.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The project staff has been accomodating and willing to assist whenever I did not understand what was being asked of me. Mike Denegal has been a great sounding board in some tough situations on a daily basis.

VISTA: Daniel Richardson

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Being that I have worked with Pangea Foundation staff and volunteers through another organization before joining Pangea as an Americorps, I have had no negatives in this area.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I feel that most things are well on track. The only problems that occur that obscure my ability to get things done are teachers out in the field. Working along with the schools is always rewarding, but sometimes you have to make up your own times to get things done for the children. Most of the time the teachers seem too busy until it comes to, "will you fix my computer," which also isn't a problem. Other than that, most things travel along quite well.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I am inspired by all of Pangea Foundation's mission. I help directly assisting in all aspects of the mission besides software development. Computer donation, from training, to assistive technology, I have helped out with about all there is to think of when it comes to schools.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
For the most part, yes, but I have nothing negative to say.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My the biggest challenges would have to be communication in time with teachers, not always understanding what needs to be done inside the office, and figuring how to relive the foundation of all our extra hardware. On the other hand, my accomplishments in Americorps have seemed like a lot, but on the other hand, a lot of the same. Since I have been working with most of these people already, I have already accomplished a solid relationship with whom I work with in the field, and their needs. I have accomplished many things among the schools I work with that helps give Pangea Foundation a good name. As well, I can name a couple of things I am happy about. I have created protocols for some of the assistive technology so students in the blind community all over San Diego County can use the internet with 90% more ease. I have donated computers to some of the less fortunate students, and I have eased a lot of work for quite a few of the special education staff in a couple of different schools.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I have needed no outside assistance during this time with Pangea Foundation because I work with a lot of the same people and schools as I did before I joined Americorps.

The San Diego Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender Community Center, San Diego, CA

VISTA: Morgan Sully
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/morgan_sully/

Supervisor: Lindsay Sullivan

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:

What difficulties have you encountered?

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Develop capacity of our two community technology centers focusing on youth digital media programs, through volunteer recruitment, digital media curriculum,and volunteer training. **The Center**
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Review Policy & Procedure manual for main lab, and identify gaps
2 (Qtr 1-2) Review and modify at existing curriculum developed by volunteers
3 (Qtr 1) Establish a Community Technology Committee of The Center made up of volunteers.
4 (Qtr 1-3) Create "train the trainer" curriculum specific to digital storytelling focused for Hillcrest Youth Center digital projects.
5 (Qtr 2-4) Establish four monthly "Salon Digital" forums for the sharing of digital stories with a focus on youth produced materials, produced at The Center and Hillcrest Youth Center. The forum will serve to bring together digital story projects across departments and through other community technology programs
6 (Qtr 2-4) Create mechanism for program evaluation
7 (Qtr 3-4) Using existing Cyber Center Website as template, expand scope of site to include resources relevant to the clients at the HYC
8 (Qtr 2-4) Have a film night to promote stories produced by youth quarterly wiht attendence by families, other youth, and community members.
Results
1. (Qtr 2) Create content for existing gaps. Replicate manual for HYC lab, changing procedures where necessary to produce 2 complete manuals
2. (Qtr 4) Generate and input materials into a consistent template, including instructor and student versions. Clearly label and document all materials. Output curriculum will cover four areas, workforce development, education (GED), digital storytelling and technical training.
3. (Qtr 1) Recruit at least 6 members for the committee. Come up with a replacement plan for volunteers when they leave, structure, and meeting times for the committee and work plan for volunteers for the coming year
4. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Using existing Digital Storytelling manual modify instructor and student guide focused on LGBT youth and homeless youth. With purchased Digital Storytelling Production Software (Adobe Premiere Elements) create training materials specific to our goals. [INDICATOR] Completion of train the trainer manual and student booklet. [INSTRUMENT] Burned CD with curricuilum content, ability to access online by SDCTC members. [TARGET] Manual had copy distributed, and modified version established in the SDCTC repository
5. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Confirm dates and speakers for four quarterly workshops. Create and distribute flyers and press release quarterly for event. Recruit three youth leaders to help in the advertisment and planning of events. Show at least 2 youth produced media projects at each salon. [INDICATOR] Improved self-image of youth participating in digital project. [INSTRUMENT] For each project or digital project completed during a public showing, youth will be surveyed to show attitudes. Participating youth will receive same survey conducted before the commencement of the project to track attitudes changed. [TARGET] 70% completetion rate of digital project (30%) drop off rate, and of those participating 50% satisifaction with project and/or improvement of self-image.
6. (Qtr 4) Modify existing forms for evaluation and create a system for updated monthly reporting of evaluation. Evaluate first quarter evaluations and create a report with recommendations and overall summary
7. (Qtr 4) Update monthly with new classes and information and document the procedures for updates and assign volunteer roles to allow for continual updates. Complete pages with online training by adding a minimum of 20 external online classes, and link to online versions of Center developed curriculum catered to eLearning. Adapt a minimum of 4 classes in a SDCTC template for upload to their digital respository

8. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Through public viewing raise awareness of issues faced by LGBT youth and allies.
[INDICATOR] Participation of families, community members and non-LGBT youth in forums at digital media viewing events.
[INSTRUMENT] At all events and viewings distribute surveys before and after media. At community forums attendees will rate awareness of issues faced before and after viewing.
[TARGET] To have at least 2 stories shown in 2 community college courses, 3 high school classes or gay-straight alliance groups and 4 university seminars. Also by having 3 public viewings with a community forum.

Goal #2. (Qtr 4) Research costs and steps associated with creation of wireless community hub in the main center and in the new youth housing project to serve clients and community.
Activities
1 (Qtr 4) Research current wireless projects in San Diego to benchmark project
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Create a report outlining steps needed and costs associated. Publish report for use by SDCTC and SoCalFreeNet

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) [Community Organizing or Development] Establish an online repository (knowledge base) for both internal documentation as well as resources shared by the community. San Diego Community Technology Coalition
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Relocate shared SDCTC data documentation to one server for staff use
2 (Qtr 1) Combine the various database lists of community technology centers in San Diego
3 (Qtr 2-3) Upload information on CTC sub-categories obtained from membership/outreach and compiling electronic copies (word documents, curriculum, etc for shared use by CTC staff
4 (Qtr 4) Move data to new online repository for shared access
5 (Qtr 1-4) Recruit SDCTC members to become active repository uers.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Relocate 300 shared internal and external SDCTC files and documents for use by SDCTC and San Diego CTC staff for programming and curriculum purposes
2. (Qtr 1) Combine 3 database lists: Constant Contact SDCTC E-Newsletter, San Diego community technology list serve, & the CTC Map in creating a standardized list from which to send all SDCTC community resources
3. (Qtr 2) Upload the 300 internal and external shared files into specified categories in the online repository
4. (Qtr 4) Move online repository to the SDCTC website with page and links for external access by San Diego CTC staff and announce on website and the San Diego community technology listserve
5. (Qtr 4) Enlist 50% of member CTC's or 20 CTC's to upload and share curricuilum. Establish a system to have member organizations submit materials quarterly in 2006-2007.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) Commission a study on the state of CTCs in San Diego that will quantify the discoveries made by the SDCTC, which will then be shared with our stakeholders including funders that continue to make decisions that benefits CTCs in San Diego
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Research and identify specified lists of CTCs in San Diego through membership/outreach
2 (Qtr 1) Work with specified research non-profit agencies or Universities to develop an in-depth standardized evaluation targeting CTC programming points
3 (Qtr 2-3) Release evaluations to CTC staff for input and receive results
4 (Qtr 4) Methodically compile and evaluate results based on the specific study points with review by outsourced firm or institute of education

Results
1. (Qtr 1) Research and target the 150 CTCs in San Diego as specified by membership/outreach
2. (Qtr 1) Work with 2 community development (City Height Community Technology Center, Sandag, or San Diego State University) agency's staff to develop the in-depth evaluation based on the 3 programming points of Curriculum, resource sharing, and technical support
3. (Qtr 2) Deliver evaluation to the 150 specified community technology centers for review and completion in hard copy or electronically.
4. (Qtr 4) Provide hard copy, and updated electronic copy of study of San Diego's CTC resources based on the 3 specified programming points of programming, curriculum & technical support

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) Improving the quality of workshops, trainings, and resources offered to CTCs, and implementing more rigorous evaluation measures to ensure success Qtr 1-4
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) based on the education technology survey programming points of the 2004-2005, provide workshops and trainings for CTC staff
2 (Qtr 1-4) Send out after action evaluations to CTC staff for pluses & EBIs (Even better ifs)
3 (Qtr 1-4) Analyze and share results with directors and advisory council
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Improve the quality of workshops, trainings, and resources by offering 4 quarterly workshops taught by instructors who are specialists in the related technology field to CTC staff. (Q1, Q2, Q3, & Q4)
2. (Qtr 4) Enter result here.Send a minimum of 10 post evaluations to the attendees of SDCTC trainings to ensure success in providing excellence training materials, resources, and feedback. (Q1, Q2, Q3, & Q4)
3. (Qtr 4) Create 2 bi-quarterly summaries on points of discussion reported in the post SDCTC training evaluations (Q2& Q4)

Goal #6. (Qtr 1-4) Develop, in conjunction with the SDCTC directors and advisory council, three proposals for continued funding of SDCTC activities
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Identify possible funding sources for the SDCTC in 2006-2007
2 (Qtr 2) Communicate with possible funding sources to determine feasibility of future funding for 2006-2007
3 (Qtr 3) Draft, in conjunction with the board of directors funding proposals to ensure continued funding for SDCTC programs and activities
4 (Qtr 4) Lead discussion with board of directors to revise the operating plan which can be implemented without funding
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Identify 3-6 possible funding sources for SDCTC in 2006-2007
2. (Qtr 2) Communicate with 3 possible funding sources to determine feasibility of future funding for 2006-2007
3. (Qtr 3) Draft 1-2 funding proposals to endure continued funding for SDCTC programs and activities
4. (Qtr 4) Devise in a written summary 3 recommendations to revise the current operating plan which can be implemented without funding

Goal #7. (Qtr 1-4) Develop three "Tech Days: Done in a Day with SDCTC" volunteer opportunities for improving CTC's allowing volunteers and SDCTC members to come together and provide technical, procedural and programmatic support.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) Using criteria set up by SDCTC to identify three CTC's to target for the "Done in a Day" Community Technology improvements

2 (Qtr 3-4) Collaborate with SoCalFreeNet.org at least one Tech Day to include wireless installation in low-income housing facilities
Results
1. (Qtr 1) Set three dates throughout the year, and make sure all posts are included on website and announce in E-Newsletter
2. (Qtr 3) Gather relevant information regarding wireless installs for CTC's and related projects on website, including synopsis of the "Tech Days" successes

Goal #8. (Qtr 1-4) Build partnership with San Diego State University's Educational Technology Certificate and Graduate Program
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Set up small presentation catered to EDTECH students to recruit volunteers and educate regarding our program
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Each semester have a minimum of 1 student participate in curriculum building and creation specialized for our CTC's

VISTA: Morgan Sully

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I think i have been accepted pretty well at the main Center and the outpouring of support for me during the times when i was going hungry were humblingly beautiful. It did take a little longer at the youth center where i work before i felt accepted and i felt kind of like a loner - though i guess i can be. A sense of camraderie took a little longer to develop, but then we're all pretty busy...

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
The goals are pretty specific and i feel a little bit behind, at maybe 70%, though i still have about 50% more of my work plan to complete. Factors contributing to my inability to get on track have been personal, but fixable.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The mission of The San Diego LGBT Community Center is to enhance and sustain the health and well-being of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and HIV communities by providing activities, programs, and services that

   * Create community,
   * Empower community members,
   * Provide essential resources,
   * Advocate for civil and human rights, and
   * Embrace, promote and support our cultural diversity.

I definitely feel the 'create community' part of the mission statement. Through the digital storytelling project i feel like i have been able to greatly contribute to people building bridges to each other. This has been incredibly rewarding and has given me a clearer sense of what i want to do with my life.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I feel it was sufficient, but that i may not have been taking as much initiative as i could have. But i have not asked for any hand-holding either. My supervisor and I met the other day to discuss following up with each other from now on, checking in on things that we both need to do to help the other.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
biggest challenges:
procrastination
distraction
following through

biggest accomplishments:
making the DIY media toolkit
showing people how to use audactiy and windows movie maker
showing lots of people lots of things about technology

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The weblog prompts from Saul have been GREAT. and to know that he's reading our blogs and responding to them has been very supportive. As for useful things, i'd like to not have to ever worry about my health while being an AmeriCorps volunteer and would have liked a little more support in this arena. I think some trainings on stress management/budgeting would have been very, very helpful. We work on such a tight budget.

The Carlos Rosario International Career Center, Washington, DC

VISTA: Mark Betz
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/mark_betz/

Supervisor: Claudia Lujan

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
This year's projects include a wide variety of initiatives. Our goal of integrating technology in the school community and the community at large has been met in many ways through these initiatives. Mark was able to implement an open computer lab at the school that provides basic to advanced technology help to students. With regular lab hours he is able to make himself available on a consistent basis for the entire student body. Mark also helps teachers by helping them with class projects that include working with students on particular software programs or internet research, etc. Responding to staff IT needs, Mark is able to work on a one-on-one basis providing training and helping staff identify ways in which technology can make their work more efficient.

Early on, Mark expressed his interest in teaching and being in the classroom. Since then Mark has been working with the Family Literacy program, an off-site program where we provide literacy classes to parents in partnering elementary schools. With the classes being off-site, it has been a goal to integrate regular use of technology. Mark was given a laptop and began to work with a particular class twice a week in order to incorporate intructional software and technology activities.

Another service that Mark brings to the organization is his support of the Computer Support Specialist Training class. This is a training program that is geared to prepare students for entry level positions in IT and to prepare them to take the A Certification exams. Mark has been able to work in collaboration with a graduate from the program to organize an on-going study group. We are excited to see how this will play out.

Mark has also been instrumental in integrating the community wide technology workshops offered during our Community Days. Community Days take place on periodic Saturdays and are open to the community at large, especially the immediate neighborhood. They offer a variety of educational workshops and social services. During Community Day, Mark was able to hold an open computer lab with activities designed for children, as many of the Community Day activities were family oriented.

In summary, all of the above initiatives, have contributed to this year's goals of capacity building and incorporating more technology into instruction and current programs.

What difficulties have you encountered?
I have been directly supervising Mark since mid-December. Mark shows enthusiasm and is a great team player. Mark struggles in some core areas: time management, organization and professional etiquette and thus needs lots of guidance and supervision. After missing multiple deadlines, appointments, mismanaging data, and not performing at a satisfactory level, Mark and I sat down to seriously discuss the issues. We worked together to identify ways in which we could structure the relationship to best support his weaker areas and implement habits that would help strengthen these areas. Mark received a written warning on February 21. Immediately after the warning Mark showed improvement. He has since then implemented practices that have helped organize himself and his projects. I have since noticed that he has slipped back a bit in performance. We have both discussed this and I hope that he will improve. Mark brings a new energy to Carlos Rosario and I only hope that with some initiative on his part he can maintain the level of performance that I know he is capable of and inturn take his projects to the next level.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
I think assistance would be most beneficial in content areas. What I lack is the content knowledge in technology to be able to provide Mark with that type of guidance. Any ideas on how to best approach this would be appreciated.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)

Mark has been able to fully incorporate his position and his services in the school community. Known as the "computer guy" by students he has been able to outreach into both the immigrant community and the community at large by offering both basic and advanced level technology training. Through his Open Computer Lab hours and his A Study Group, Mark has provided over 18 hours of one-on-one intruction in just the first two months of the lab. Evidence shows that having a basic familiarity with technology and computers is a much needed life skill. Whether it's developing a resume using a Word template or using a touch screen ATM machine, technology is everywhere. With the help of the Americorps VISTA service the Center is making sure that the immigrant and low-income communities have access to this training and learn technology skills that could help to improve their quality of life.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?

The Career Center's mission is to build community wealth in the immigrant communities by providing workforce development, English language training, access to technology and job placement. Mark's contribution and efforts to make technology fun and accessible to every student, no matter what level of education, has helped the Center achieve this mission. Our effort to prepare students for the workforce and for life in this country is such that incorporating technology is essential. Mark has worked on multiple initiatives that address these efforts.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

Mark is an enthusiastiv individual who quickly became part of the Career Center team. He is full of creative ideas and is eager to share how he can help and add the technological piece to any project or program. Because of this he was able to make both staff and students relate to him and the work he does. This definitely brought technology to the grass root level and out of the server room.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) Provide capacity building for the Career Center technology program through a variety of fundraising methods, as well as program research and development.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Identify at least 5 new sources of corporate, foundation or government funding, including grants or in-kind donations.

Comment: Mark has worked on 2 grants that have been submitted. The first is the Microsoft Unlimited Potential Grant, in which we requested 50,000 in order to create a Community Computer Lab. This project is similar to what Mark has created in his Open Computer Lab, but on a much larger scale. We recently recieved verbal confirmation that we received this grant. Mark also worked on the National Book Scholarship Fund which would provide books to our literacy programs. This proposal was not granted. Mark is in the process of getting feedback from NBSF on why and how the proposal could have been improved.

Mark is also working on two small technology related grants, for $500 each. The first would provide support to the Computer Support Specialist classes by funding the IT employability/job readiness skills curriculum. The second would provide support for hardware and software for unique and creative programs that involve technology. Both of these proposals are due at the end of May. We are on track with completing this activity as this leaves us with only one more source left to be identified by the end of the 4th quarter.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Spend at least 5 hours a week helping with the management of the Carlos Rosario Bookstore, the profits of which help fund the technology programs.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Assist with researching and then drafting at least 3 technology-related proposals.
4 (Qtr 1-4) Ongoing collaboration with Carlos Rosario's Computer Support Specialist instructor and workforce development staff about trends in the Information Technology industry and the appropriate development of Carlos Rosario's IT Certification programs.

Comment: Working in collaboration with the Workforce Director, Mark has taken the areas of need and proposed viable solutions to meet those needs. With the Center's need to increase the number of Computer Support Specialist taking the A certification exam, Mark working in collaboration with a graduate, began an ongoing study group.

Mark also has been instrumental in the updating of the Center's sectoral analysis which feeds the need for having a technology certification program. Through on-line research he has provided the Workforce Director with statistics and useful information on the market trends for entry level IT positions. His research has been used in meetings with our IT Advisory Committee.

Mark also helped organize Tech Day, an informational session for community members interested in the Computer Support Specialist Program. Mark outreach to local neighborhood business, churches and organizations in order to help recruit people for the event. In this capacity he had to explain what the goals of the program are and often times get into detail about curriculum topics. We had very successful event with over 25 people attending both sessions.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) At least one grant will be procured through the efforts of the VISTA volunteer.

Comment: We recently received verbal confirmation that the Career Center was awarded the Microsoft Unlimited Potential Grant. Official written confirmation is pending. Mark has begun to review the grant proposal and will begin to think about next steps towards implementation.

2. (Qtr 4) The bookstore will make a profit of at least $2000.

Comment: In the first couple of months here, Mark ran the bookstore and the book sales for the beginning of the year. This in combination with his current sales at the bookstore surpasses our goal of $2,000.

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3. (Qtr 3) The IT workforce development program will introduce at least one more instructional technology workshop that will serve a minimum of 8 students.

Comment: Mark did not hold a workshop last semester for the CSS class because he had not yet developed the comfort level needed to lead a workshop. Now in the second semester, Mark is planning on holding a workshop at the end of this semester. Mark is now more comfortable with leading a workshop and has had time to work with the current students and build rapport.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) The creation of a computer lab that is open to the entire community and which offers training on a variety of goal-oriented computer tasks (e.g. how to do an affordable housing search online and how to post a resume online).

Comment: Limited resources did not allow for the Center to implement this lab immediately. Instead Mark began an Open Lab for students which is a similar project but on a much smaller scale. Still with the goal to create this lab, we applied for the Microsoft Unlimited Potential Grant in order to secure funds to best implement the computer lab.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Research and evaluate similar programs in the area.

Comment: Mark did preliminary research in the immediate area as to what technology services and community computer labs are available. This was research that fed the narrative of the Microsoft proposal.

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2 (Qtr 1) Develop a business model based on the research conducted. The business model should include: how the lab would be staffed, what sort of tutorials it would offer, what age groups it would serve, etc...

Comment: This was part of the research and information needed for the proposal. Mark had to identify the need, the population served and the project objectives.

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3 (Qtr 1-2) If necessary, recruit volunteers from the community to help run the computer lab.

4 (Qtr 1-2) Conduct a pilot workshop and then make changes to the curriculum and set-up of the lab accordingly.

Comment: Mark's Open Computer Lab and his Community Day workshops are both projects that will inform the implementation of the Community Computer Lab. On a smaller scale these projects test recruitment and marketing approaches and techniques and topics of interest that will help inform the design of the lab.

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5 (Qtr 3-4) Continue to oversee and ensure the sustainability of the community lab.

6 (Qtr 3-4) Collect contact information and follow up with past participants to evaluate the effectiveness of the tutorials.

Results

1. (Qtr 3) The community computer lab will open at least two hours a week beginning around January, 2006.

Comment: Mark's Open Computer Lab hours began in February and currently offers 3.5 hours a week. The Community Computer Lab, funded by the Microsoft grant, does not yet have a scheduled opening date as we are awaiting written confirmation of amount and timeline for receiving funds.

2. (Qtr 4) At least 10 people will attend the computer lab to complete one of the tutorials.

Comment:

3. (Qtr 4) A minimum of 70% of the participants will find the computer lab tutorials to have been helpful.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Increase the amount of technology incorporated into the existing ESL curriculum to further student's familiarity and level of comfort with using computers and the internet.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Research and identify several technological developments that would be most helpful to upper-level ESL students trying to improve their employment prospects and language skills.
2 (Qtr 1) From that research, develop at least two different activities that can increase student's technological literacy, such as having students create their own blogs or learning to take and edit digital pictures.

Comment: At the February faculty meeting, Mark and the IT Director both led a bloggin workshop. The workshop showed teachers not only how to start a blog but how blogging might be used as an intructional tool and activity in the classroom. Mark developed a blog to use as an example. He then followed up the workshop by developing a list of bloggin websites and resources for teachers.

3 (Qtr 1-4) Work with the Academic Director and 4 ESL teachers to implement those activities in the classroom.

Comment: Mark has worked with two upper level ESL classes in implementing technology related activities that enhance their instruction. One of the activities included working with a class on how to use Power Point for one of their assignments. The second activity involved working with another teachers on a multiuses blog for her class.

4 (Qtr 1-4) Visit each ESL classroom on an ongoing basis to work on these continuing projects, and possibly develop new projects based on student's interests.

Comment: Mark has built rapport with teachers and is often calle upon to assist in projects. Through this relationship he has also cultivated a few regular appointments with students who come weekly to practice and learn new skills.

5 (Qtr 1-4) Ongoing revision of the technology curriculum based on student and teacher feedback.
Results

1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Between 30-50 upper-level ESL students will learn at least two different uses of technology over the course of the semseter.
[INDICATOR] Number of students who learn about a new use of technology.
[INSTRUMENT] This will be measured through taking attendance and post-surveys at the end of the semster.
[TARGET] 75% of Career Center ESL students will be exposed to this new information.

2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 75% of students taught new technology skills will feel more comfortable with technology and will consider exploring its benefits on their own time.
[INDICATOR] We will be measuring how many students feel as though the incorporation of technology into the ESL curriculum has increased their comfort level in experimenting with technology.
[INSTRUMENT] This will be measured by surveys given in the middle of the program year.
[TARGET] At least three-quarters of the students (75%) will increase their comfort level.

Comment: A survey will be given to the Open Computer Lab students at the end of the semester in order to measure comfort level and impact of services.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] 75% of Career Center ESL students will have increased their comfort level with technology and 75% of those students will report that this has positively affected their lives either professionally or personally.
[INDICATOR] We will be measuring how many students have increased their comfort level with technology and how many students have noticed a positive impact because of that increased comfort.
[INSTRUMENT] We will track this outcome by student surveys taken at the end of the semester.
[TARGET] 75% of students will have increased their technology comfort level and 75% of those students will have noticed a positive impact in their lives as a result.

Comment: This information will be collected from all students at the end of the semester in the student survey.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] For three technology programs developed during the VISTA volunteer's tenure, the program model, curriculum, and best practices will be made available to NCLR for potential distribution to nationwide affiliates.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Become familiar with the National Council of La Raza and the work that this organization does on a national and local level.
2 (Qtr 1-4) Establish a primary contact at NCLR with whom the VISTA would reguarly keep updated on the technology programs being developed. The relationship should keep NCLR aware of the projects being worked on at Carlos Rosario, and will also give the VISTA an opportunity to learn about NCLR's technology needs for its other affiliates.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Work with NCLR to establish the most effective way possible to distribute the model, curriculum, and best practices of Carlos Rosario's technology programs so it can be successfully implemented by other programs.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] The VISTA volunteer and NCLR contact will have regular phone meetings to ensure that both parties are up to date on the technology programs being developed. [INDICATOR] The amount of contact between Carlos Rosario's VISTA volunteer and NCLR. [INSTRUMENT] This will be tracked by having the VISTA volunteer provide the Academic Director with a brief summary of each discussion. [TARGET] A minimum of two phone meetings per quarter will occur.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 100% of the information regarding the model and best practices of three technology programs developed at the Carlos Rosario Career Center by the VISTA will be provided to NCLR.
[INDICATOR] The amount of information on programs provided to NCLR.
[INSTRUMENT] This will be measured by ensuring that documents relaying information regarding the programs developed are passed on to NCLR, and also by NCLR's approval of these documents as being sufficient to assist other affiliates in starting similar programs.
[TARGET] 100% of the information on three programs will be given to NCLR.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] NCLR will have increased their ability to provide technological support and guidance to its nationwide affiliates.
[INDICATOR] The number of resources available to NCLR's affiliates before and after the program year.
[INSTRUMENT] This will be tracked through the monthly phone meetings between the VISTA Volunteer and NCLR.
[TARGET] NCLR will have an increase in capacity and resources to provide other affiliates with at least three technology program models.

Workplan Revision

Goal #4 and its related activities and results is not part of the current workplan. According to our records, it does not appear to be a part of the workplan submmitted by the Center for this year's VISTA volunteer.

VISTA: Mark Betz

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel I've been welcomed by the organization as a whole very well. I enjoy my interactions with the various staff and faculty members, and in that part of what I do is help them with computer concerns, most people really seem to enjoy working with me.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I do, though it has been a struggle at times. My assignment consists of a lot of disparate tasks, that at many times has felt like a bunch of part-time jobs rather than any kind of cohesive position. It can be difficult to switch on the fly from one skillset/mindset to another. Having ADD also makes the organization required by my various tasks difficult. My job description has changed throughout the time I've been here, and my supervisor announced her resignation, moving me to a new supervisor. There was a period of time where those factors led to a real frustration on my part, but my current supervisor and I have worked to put measures in place (weekly meetings, a steady flow of feedback) that do serve to make me feel adequately supported; and I have worked to develop systems that work for myself to be organized, in the context of an office environment. My supervisor's support and willingness to work with me has greatly contributed to what I feel is a real turnaround, and while it's not always "fun," I do work on some exciting projects, and look forward to completing a successful year.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
My organization is a school, the only adult charter ESL school in the country. 700 students go through our doors in a year, learning English, getting their GEDs and/or participating in one of our vocational programs. That inspires me. It's important to me that I work for an organization whose values are in sync with my own, and the immigrant community is one I feel strongly about. I work closely with students and staff, and feel strongly that my work is helping the organization.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Yes, for the most part. As I've mentioned, my weekly meetings with Claudia are a very large part of that. (She's very busy, and so ther are occasions when I can't reach her for immediate feedback, but that's normal.) We work together to devise and revise strategies on all aspects of my job, she provides constructive inmput and I genuinely feel listened to.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
1. Organization has always been a challenge for me. I have ADD, as I've mentioned before, and am currently not on any kind of medication. When I create systems for myself, I can thrive despite it. (Outlook has proven an invaluable tool, for example, for my own time management.)

2. Finances are a big challenge, probably for all of us VISTAs. I don't know what else to say about that, other than poverty is hard.

3. Motivation has been a struggle. I've always felt strongly that Carlos Rosario does good things, and I'm glad to be a part of it, but there was a time period where I really felt taken for granted. Since then, I've been in communication w/my supervisor, and we're working together to strike a balance between what the school's needs in a volunteer are, and how that does and doesn't coincide with my workplan and the stated goals of having a CTC VISTA.

1. We were just informed that a $50,000 grant I helped apply for got accepted. I had never worked on a grant before, and was given the first crack at it. Looking over it again, I was pleased to see and remember how much I really contributed to that process. We didn't receive the application information until really close to the deadline, so it was a real scramble to get it in under the deadline at all.

2. What I'd like to list as the second greatest accomplishment is the student and staff-oriented programs I've been able to initiate and implemente to augment the technical support available, especially for students. I teach workshops on applications, assist classes with computer-related projects, and have conducted a teacher training on blogging in the classroom; in that case following up with several teachers with the creation of blogs as classroom tools.

Thirdly, I count it as a very significant accomplishment that I've been able to take what was for a short time really not going well, and turn it back into a positive experience for both myself and the school. I'm proud of that.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Being so far away from the majority of VISTAs and staff, I've often felt like my own satellite VISTA program. I'm not honestly sure exactly what we can do regarding that, other than renew efforts (on my part) to maintain regular contact w/Saul at VISTA headquarters. I do appreciate that dialogue, and plan to be more intentional about it in the future.

CTCNet Chicago Chapter, Chicago, IL

VISTA: Dave Chakrabarti
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/dave_chakrabarti/

Supervisor: Michael Maranda

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
We have been on a breakneck pace and I rely upon the Vista for a great deal. We've convened several major statewide events: Digital Literacy Showcase, Digital Neighborhoods Fundraiser, the Statewide Conference and the launch of the statewide colaition on Community Tech Day, yet another event. We've also formulated the database staretgy, and a sustainability plan (still being refined and executed). We've made an impact on the vision for the state community technology sector and we've launched a ring of websites in addition to the relaunch of our own site on a content managment system. This makes generation of content much easier, and more easily shared. Additionally we've put certain other webtools and communications infrastructure in place: phplist for our ilctc Bulletin, webforms for feedback and hylafax for blast communications.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Needed to communicate some expectations in more fine-grained manner.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Over-all a great job. I think the priority area coordination will need to evolve a bit further but I dont have anything critical or constructive to add at this point. Community Organizing and Community Networking are fairly amorphous practices and we dont make a strong distinction between the two in our work.... there is much cross-over.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
When you get a Vista that believes in your organization's mission and values and embraces them, and if you treat them with respect, giving them opportunities for growth, great things can happen. Our Vista has emerged as an advocate within our field as much as an advocate for our organization in particular. He's ready to defend our interests and has been ready tp roll up his sleeves along side the Executive Director... it's valuable for leadership development to make room for this activity. When the Vista is ready to go the extra mile, not just for the boss or the organization, but for strategic partners to the organization and to the field as a whole, then you know you can inspire others to support your mission.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
In addition to the basics of meeting our workplan through events and workshops, we are working hard together towards the general sustainability of the organization. The Vista has bought in to the vision and values of the organization in a significant way. Without such buy in, it would just be a job. We need to show others that this is more than a job. We need to inspire them. The Vista has picked up on this and endeavors to advance the organizations interests through its core values.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Vista has specific experience in website design and search engine optimization techniques which has made progress n support of our website much faster. Also it has allowed us to help some connected organizations to advance their web strategy, building the reputation of our organization in the process.

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-2) State-wide conference has strong Chicago area representation and participation.

Comment: More than 100 attendees for two days. Strong Chicago representation. Event conducted as joint conference with Illinois Telecom Conference. Recognized head of CTCNet Board with Midwest Community Networking Award.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-2) Recruit Conference Participants/Presenters.

Comment: The Vista substantially assisted in development of program and particpants. Everything from direct mailing to recruitment via telephone.

Results

1. (Qtr 2) 40% of conference participants will be drawn from Chicago region.

Comment: Approximately 50% of participants were from Chicago region.

Goal #2. (Qtr 2-3) Illinois Community Technology Day has strong Chicago representation and participation.

Comment: Illinois Community Technology Day (Feb 16, 2006) marked the successful public launch of the ilCTC. The event was convened three months ahead of schedule due to the abbreviated legislative session.

Activities

1 (Qtr 2-3) Recruit Chicago participants to Illinois Tech Day 2006.

Comment: Most effective strategy was direct phone calls and faxes to members. 60% of attendees were from Chicagoland. Approximately 75 attended.

2 (Qtr 2-3) Plan Tech Day activities and schedule.

Comment: Schedule for Tech Day was difficult as the Legislature changed the schedule for the day the day beforfe the trip. In general Tech Day was a challenge to put together because it was held three months earlier than the prior year.   Factoring all this in, it was extremely successful despite time constraints and changes to schedule.

Results

1. (Qtr 3) The efficacy of community technology centers as a strategy for addressing the digital divide will gain greater recognition by the public and by legislators.

Comment: As a result of mobilizing for Community Technology Day and ancillary activities there is greater awareness of the new statewide organization. Several legislators called the organization for more information. The head of the organization was later asked to provide testimony to a house joint committee hearing. (Illinois)

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Chapter will conduct regular monthly capacity building and organizational development activities for CTC members.

Comment: On alternating months we have had major events with capapcity building at the core. In intervening months we have had smaller meetings and workshops, including a "fax server" build which was documented for members to replicate.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Capacity building workshops will be held for members organizations every other month.

Comment: In September we worked with Illinois Dept. of Commerce and Econ. Opportunity to support grant applicants in development of proposals/projects. In November we convened a statewide conference where professional development in community technology was the main focus. In January we conducted a series of workshops in partnership with NPOTechs to collaboratively build a Fax Server, documenting the project in a learning-by-doing format.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) Organizational capacity of member CTCs will be enhanced by workshops ranging from curricular development to organizational management and sustainability.

2. (Qtr 4) Attendance at regular capacity building workshops will steadily increase.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) Assist in development and execution of a sustainability plan for the organization.

Comment: This is an ongoing effort. We have made significant progress towards a three-year sustainability plan and are taking pains to execute parts of the plan that are developed.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-2) Work with Exec. Director and Sustainability Chair to outline sustainability plan.

Comment: A general outline of the plan is in place. There are five principle points, and several extended models.

2 (Qtr 1-2) Assist in planning and execution of fundraising event.

Comment: First ever fundraiser for the organization was held October 20, 2005.   Attended by more than 80 persons. Made some money, but more importantly raised visibility of the organization.

3 (Qtr 2-4) Assist in research and writing of proposals.

Comment: We are making progress in writing proposals. Vista is learning a great deal in the process. Initial output is low, but we are building a proper foundation. This includes research on potential funders and development of general vision for which we are seeking funding.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) Work goals developed for sustainability plan are met according to timeline.
2. (Qtr 3) Basic template for proposals for general operating support is completed.

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] CTCNet Chicago demonstrates its relevance as a network to our network of members and to the wider community.

Comment: CTCNet Chicago has taken the lead on three major events... the Showcase with our State Dept of Commerce, the statewide conference and community tech day, not to mention the conference. We are getting more recognition from legislators and from persons in private sector.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) work to build a sense of collective identity for community technologists by facilitating regional activities, and by collecting the informational resources that will serve as the organizational core of the network, and which will be leveraged to the benefit and coordination of the network.

Comment: We have convened meetings around the state: Bloomington, Urbana/Champaign, Rockford and Chicago.   (Other meetings were held prior to Vista joining the organization)

2 (Qtr 1-4) work to advance the "Policy, Advocacy & Public Education" goals of the Illinois Network, informing stakeholders and demonstrating the impact, relevance and need for coordinated community technology efforts in Illinois.

Comment: We have convened several focus groups around the state, including two general meetings in Springfield (at conference and on tech day). More legislators are aware of our work. Academic institutions are interested in partnerships.

3 (Qtr 1-4) assist in convening "stakeholder's events" to promote dialogue on these issues and to educate the public, political figures and philanthropic community

Comment: A meeting of members of statewide network was convened in November, at conference to determine whether to form a coalition. Based upon response the coalition was publicly launched feb 16, 2006.

4 (Qtr 1-4) assist in monitoring legislative, regulatory & funding initiatives or policies, and will work to "map the policy scene" with an eye to advancing the "movement as network" strategy in community ICT.

Comment: We are viewed as having substantial expertise in state community information communications technology policy and community solutions.

5 (Qtr 1-4) research and document the impact of community ICT efforts, correlating data on grants with political boundaries at multiple levels to facilitate the generation of audience specific presentations supporting sensible community ICT policy initiatives.

Comment: The general database effort is still in progress and will form the basis for such presentations.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Four stakeholder events are convened.   [INDICATOR] Number of stakeholder events   [INSTRUMENT] Attendance log.   [TARGET] 4 stakeholder events
2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Stakeholders in Illinois have greater awareness of CTCNet Chicago accomplishments and relevance of community ICT strategies.   [INDICATOR] Awareness and Attitdue towards CTCNet Chicago by major stakeholders: politicians, philanthropic leaders, corporations close to our sector have positive attitude towards our efforts.   [INSTRUMENT] A survey instrument will be adapted to register attitude of stakeholders towards CTCNet Chicago.   [TARGET] 80 of 120 leaders indicate CTCNet Chicago has a positive impact in the community.
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] CTCNet Chicago Community ICT Movement white papers produced.   [INDICATOR] Civic Leaders are taking a position on Community ICT.   [INSTRUMENT] Papers will be published for wider stakeholder audience.   [TARGET] Two policy/position papers are produced

Goal #6. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Web based data resource for the member network will be developed.

Comment: We are working with PrairieNet towards a statewide database for members.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Design and population of database of members.

Comment: We are fnalizing design, in partnership with PrairieNet.

2 (Qtr 1-3) Redesign and launch of organizational website.

Comment: We have established substantial expertise with Content Management Systems and Search Engine Optimization for non-profit websites. We have relaunched our organizations primary website, as well as several others in a cluster of related websites.

3 (Qtr 3-4) Integration of GIS tools with database
4 (Qtr 3-4) Promotion of web resources to wider community (non-members).
Results
1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Website relaunched.   [INDICATOR] Website redesign.   [INSTRUMENT] Website promoted as resource to the city.   [TARGET] 1 organizational website redeveloped.

Comment: We now manage a cluster of websites. They have been relaunched, and we are continually extending functionality.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Website will become more useful to the membership, and to the community.
[INDICATOR] Increase in use of the website.
[INSTRUMENT] Site usage statistics.
[TARGET] Number of hits on website will triple.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Member identity is strenghtened.
[INDICATOR] Satisfaction with network.
[INSTRUMENT] Survey at event.
[TARGET] 35 out of 50 organizations report greater value in membership.

Workplan Revision

There have only been minor changes in timeline. Some events are moved forward. Some of the database develoment is taking longer than expected. We only recruited one vista, rather than the two we sought, but we have achieved many of our organizational goals.

VISTA: Dave Chakrabarti

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Very well...I feel that I've played a number of different roles this year, and am looking forward to continued partnerships with the groups I've worked with.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
Yes. Factors contributing most towards my effectiveness this year have been Michael Maranda's support for my position and for this program, ranging from professional development and educational support for me to making sure I had many networking opportunities throughout my term.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
My organization's mission is to achieve digital literacy, access, and equity. I find this inspiring because it's an ideal I've worked towards with other organizations for several years now. I feel my work has helped my organization in many different areas, from grant writing to event planning and organization to website development and search engine optimization.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Yes...no complaints!

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges:

1. Money management...why are we so poor? It's affected my ability to be effective in this position *several* times.
2. Time management...so much to do!
3. Making the transition from this year as a VISTA into a better-paying position next year, because the VISTA program stipend is so little that I feel my work in this field would be much more effective if I had more financial backing.

Accomplishments:

1. Learning how to use content management systems, especially Drupal, and developing my search engine optimization skills.
2. Learning how to develop grant proposals.
3. The level of networking I've achieved as a result of this position, and the insights I've gained in volunteer management and institutional development.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Project staff have been helpful as a secondary support system, and as a source of information for my options for the future...VISTA Leader, the U. Mass program in Comm. Media & Tech, etc.

Korean American Community Services, Chicago, IL

VISTA: Molly Szymanski
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/molly_szymanski/

Supervisor: Tanya Kellam

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Molly was placed with the Youth Community Technology Program. After the became clear that the unexpected loss of our second VISTA member, to be placed with our Girls Get Digital program, was proving to be a serious blow to that program, Molly met with YCTP and GGD staff members and with the department director and it was agreed by all staff that it would be best for Molly to work with GGD one day each week. Molly had showed interest in GGD from the time she started and had been talking with the GGD Program Coordinator about possibilities for program planning, so this was an easy transition. Because of this shift and because of her strong work ethic, sunny disposition and effective work habits, Molly has had an impact on both programs, and on our department in general.

This has been an exciting 6 months for both YCTP and GGD, and having Molly join our team has made a big difference in what we have been able to do. Some of the general accomplishments have been transitioning a full time staff person into the role of GGD Program Coordinator. This role was filled by Americorps VISTA members for two years and, after much work during those initial years in building the program and finding sufficient funding, we have been able to bring a full-time staff member into that role. Molly had worked with Ria Fay-Berquist, the last Americorps VISTA member (Ria stayed as a contracted employment through December to aid in the transition) and was able to help Samantha Spencer, the incoming GGD Program Coordinator, settle into the program.
YCTP has also been moving ahead in program expansion based on funding needs. (see question #4 for more on this)

In the day to day, Molly has helped to facilitate teambuilding and icebreaker activities with both YCTP and GGD groups. She has also planned and selected short films for viewing in GGD and has facilitated and planned for discussions around the critique of these films. Molly has sought out and applied for film festivals and other opportunities for public viewing of GGD students' work. She was also instrumental in the brainstorming process for the development of both programs this session. Molly has also attended community meetings and events that have benefited both youth programs. She has also contacted potential field trip sites for both programs.

What difficulties have you encountered?
One of the biggest difficulties in bringing Molly into our team was the fact that she was going to be one of two VISTAs joining our department at the same time. Elisheba Fowkles, the second VISTA, disappeared in the middle of the PSO and has had no contact with our program since. Though Elisheba was to have had a separate role from Molly, their initial tasks were to be linked and we had planned to start them out in projects in which they could support each other and work relatively independently as they got settled. Losing Elisheba so unexpectedly definitely created some problems in this plan and I feel that we did not adjust to these changes quickly enough. It didn't seem realistic to give Molly the work of two people, but we didn't have a plan for how to work with her alone so, initially, I feel that we could have managed Molly's time more efficiently. In particular, this change meant that our YCTP Program Coordinator worked closely with Molly earlier on in the year than we had planned. He and Molly took some time to negotiate how to shift a reasonable workload to Molly, as he was initially nervous about giving her too much to do. We quickly learned that Molly is capable of more than we had anticipated. I cover her talents above.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Providing assistance and support for VISTAs placed with our program does, in turn support our program. I know that I have found some wonderful resources on the VISTA listservs (in particular from Nettrice Gaskins' postings), but, in a more general way, knowing that Molly has multiple people supporting her helps us. Having worked with a number of Americorps VISTAs at this point, I understand that different members have different needs, but, whatever the needs, it's good to give them multiple outlets and resources. The personal and professional support helps members by

providing resources to contribute to programs (which is a great way to build the member's self esteem and feeling of self worth and investment related to work with the program) and by giving a perspective of how other programs run. Sometimes this leads to more pride in our programs (when we measure up particularly well by comparison) and sometimes it leads to new ideas to bring into the program.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Molly has provided a second set of eyes for reviewing grant applications for YCTP and was critical to the preparation of the site visit materials and presentation for a United Way vist site regarding 3-year funding. While we will not hear back from United Way until May, I am happy to say that no matter what the response is, from a program perspective, the site visit was a HUGE success. This was the first presentation given by all program staff and there was a lot of anxiety surrounding the preparation. I cannot say enough about the initiative Molly took in helping to make our presentation material professional and organized and her patience and talent in working with program staff to do one on one coaching for staff presentations. She was able to bring her experience and natural ability to bear in this situation and was (and is) a huge asset to the team.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Molly is supporting programs that are directly assisting in educating and empowering community members.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Other than the pleasant surprise that Molly's abilities and energy enable her to accomplish more than we would have anticipated and her talent for bringing a wonderful smile and wry wit to the department, the most unexpected impact of her time here has been, from my perspective, the way she is helping with transitions within the department. First, she eased the transition between Ria and Samantha's coordination of GGD. And now, as I leave the department, I feel confident that Molly will be a positive force in upcoming changes in the department.

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Teach teens how to create digital media through the development and strengthening of Girls Get Digital.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Develop a sustainable system of outreach for our youth technology program studentsby identifying opportunities for outreach to area schools, social service agencies, businesses, etc and maintain existing relationships for outreach.
2 (Qtr 1-4) VISTAs will develop a sustainable system of outreach for our youth technology program volunteers (guest speakers, field trip sites, etc) by identifying opportunities for outreach to area schools, social service agencies, businesses, etc and maintain existing relationships for outreach.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Three Girls Get Digital sessions will create youth media projects.
4 (Qtr 1-4) Develop relationships with and maintain connections with youth media organizations and partnerships nationwide and worldwide.
5 (Qtr 1-4) Develop and coordinate distribution of press releases and a newsletter for KACS technology programs and build relationships with media partners.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Youth are effectively recruited for and served by GGD.   [INDICATOR] Number of students served by GGD.   [INSTRUMENT] Student attendance sheets.   [TARGET] 65+ students served over the course of the year.
2. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Development of volunteer database for ongoing volunteer tracking, management, repeat invitations, and appreciation.   [INDICATOR] Volunteer database   [INSTRUMENT] Volunteer database   [TARGET] Comprehensive volunteer tracking database, including number volunteer hours donated.

Comment: This activity has not received as much attention as others, since volunteer tracking was deferred to the development department. But given departmental reorganization, this activity will likely recieve more time/effort during the second half of my VISTA term.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Three youth media projects will be created.   [INDICATOR] Youth media projects created.   [INSTRUMENT] Youth media projects (web site, video project, photo project).   [TARGET] Three youth media projects will be created.

Comment: One GGD session ended in December after completing a video novela project and a second session is in progress now, working on short video pieces.

4. (Qtr 4) Establish reputation of GGD in the field of youth media and development opportunities for sharing media projects from other organizations with our students (and vice versa).

Comment: Molly has been very active in researching and pursuing ways to spread information about GGD and to get more people to see student work (through film festivals, etc). Identified and entered student work in 7 youth film festivials.

5. (Qtr 2) Quarterly distribution of a department newsletter highlighting program offerings and successes.

Comment: Gathered 5 new success [3 YCTP, 2 GGD] student success stories, that have been included in KACS newsletters as well as grant proposals, other program materials, etc.

6. (Qtr 1) Development of media contact list with current information and methods (timelines, information needed, etc) of contact.

Comment: Expanded/organized department media list with new print and TV resources, also added information regarding deadlines and processes for subitting classifieds/community annoucements.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Teach teens computer refurbishing and troubleshooting skills through the strengthening and development of the Youth Community Technology Program.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Develop a sustainable system of outreach for our youth technology program studentsby identifying opportunities for outreach to area schools, social service agencies, businesses, etc and maintain existing relationships for outreach.

Comment: During outreach Fall

2 (Qtr 1-4) Develop a sustainable system of outreach for our youth technology program volunteers (guest speakers, field trip sites, etc) by identifying opportunities for outreach to area schools, social service agencies, businesses, etc and maintain existing relationships for outreach.

Comment: Maintained existing volunteer outreach by coordinating return of previous YCTP mentors as well as coordinating 4 field trips to previous field strip sites. Also helped recruit 3 new YCTP mentors for the fall and winter sessions. 1 new field trip site was established to local industrial tech. business which will likely continue to be a field trip site for future sessions.

3 (Qtr 1-4) Three sessions of YCTP, including internships providing technical support to local nonprofits and/or working with the Chicago Wireless Community Networks (WCN) project (and ongoing YCTP collaboration).
4 (Qtr 1-4) Research information around issues of the digital divide, including the intersection of technology and socioeconomic status and gender, to create a program Statement of Need for use in grant writing.

Comment: Molly has done some wonderful research into statistics to support the need for our programs. These statistics have already been used in a number of grant applications and will provide a strong basis for our funding requests in the future.

5 (Qtr 1-4) VISTAs will research possible funding streams, will communicate with KACS development staff about all appropriate funders, and will maintain the program funding database with current information about pending, past, and current funding.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Youth are effectively recruited for and served by YCTP.

Comment: Molly has been active in recruitment for YCTP and has done a wonderful job of representing the program. It is difficult to quantify the results of this work, but I believe we will greatly benefit from her efforts to spread information about the program in the coming year.

2. (Qtr 4) Three YCTP sessions will take place, providing youth with technical skills and hands on experience, and providing nonprofits and the Chicago WiFi project with technical support.

3. (Qtr 2) Develop Statement of Need for youth technology programs.

Comment: Molly has done some wonderful research into statistics to support the need for our programs. These statistics have already been used in a number of grant applications and will provide a strong basis for our funding requests in the future.

4. (Qtr 2) Identify four new possible funding sources for youth technology programs and maintain up to date funder list.

VISTA: Molly Szymanski

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel that for the most part I have been accepted as a part of my site organization, moreso as part of the Community Education department than the overall agency. I have been included in all department/program meetings and been encouraged to offer feedback/opinions in most decisions regarding program development, etc.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I feel that I am on track to complete most of the goals outlined in my workplan. The main focus of my workplan is increasing outreach channels for YCTP as well as well as assisting with new funding sources. Communication and support from the program/department staff has helped me to stay on track - letting me know their goals for the programs, projects I can assist with, etc.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
Korean-American Community Services mission focuses not only on celebrating and empowering the Korean community, but also empowering all members of the community, which is the part that inspires me the most. The work I do in the community ed. department with their two youth programs is work that serves mostly the broader Chicago/Albany Park community. So by working to develop/expand KACS youth programming - since the organiztion also recently modified their strategic plan to focus more on youth - specifically that serve the broader community, I feel that I am contributing to the organization's mission in that capacity.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
For the most part I feel that I have been receiveing sufficient support and communication from my supervisor and co-workers. Everyone is very appreciative of the work that I do.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
I definately feel as though my biggest challenge has been to navigate a concrete role within my organization and department. Although I have never felt unwelcome, I have felt underutilized at times, and have found it challenging in a way to try and have a greater amount of autonomy and responsibility when it comes to my day to day activities. I am optimistic about the second half of my VISTA term as I feel I have a greater understanding of both the youth programs I support and will therefore feel more confident in advocating for more responsibility or for my ideas/opinions.
In terms of accomplishments, I was most excited about assisting with 2 United Way site visit presentations, helping organize a new field trip for YCTP, and siginificantly expanding the number of outreach channels the program connects with to get the word out about YCTP.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The semi-regular check-ins from the regional and project leaders as well support, whether via phone or e-mail, have all been helpful. The resource wiki, VISTA mailing lists as well as the project website in general have all provided valuable connections, networks, and resources.

Neighborhood Technology Resource Center, Chicago, IL

VISTA: Taylor Hales
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/taylor_hales/

Supervisor: Jillian Spindle

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
The multi-media project has focused primarily one (1) a video production apprenticeship program at a local public school, Michelle Clark and (2) a Hip Hop Club program at Northwest Tower Apartments. Taylor has developed, adminsitered and created curricula for both programs beginning in September 2005 and both programs have successfully received funding from After School Matters, a local channel for youth program money from the City of Chicago. Youth are benefiting greatly from both programs, learning new technology and becoming engaged with multi-media and creative activities.

What difficulties have you encountered?
We have had some difficulties in getting the appropriate equipment to run the Apprenticeship program due to the fact that After School Matters is purchasing all of the equipment. This has hindered Taylor in his efforts to run the program. We are working to resolve these issues but because it is dependent upon After School Matters and the public school system, certain issues are beyond our control (e.g. upgrading computer operating systems to be able to run the software, etc.). We have worked with ASM to try and overcome these difficulties, and hope that they will be more responsive in the future.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
We have not identified any need from coordinators for help or resources.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
The Northwest Tower Hip Hop Club is primarily attended by African American males that have been traditionally excluded from participating in our new economy. Many of these young boys come with very little hope, yet are inspired by the possibility of becoming a 'celebrity' like other music stars. The Club is teaching them how to become producers rather than consumers of media. Each session, over 15 young men attend desiring to learn more to further their attainment of credible skills that could possibly lead to sustainable employment- all while maintaining their creativity!

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
NTRC's mission is to create public spaces where new technology can be experienced and serve as a catalyst for individual and community capacity development. The NTRC accomplishes this mission by creating programs in collaboration with residents that are practical, relevant and contribute to their digital proficiency. Our long-term vision is that local citizens, community organizations, churches and businesses will have access to and the necessary knowledge of digital technologies and its benefits for the purpose of individual and community development.
Taylor is helping NTRC achieve its mission by creating multi-media curricula and training programs that engage youth with technology and new media. He has been instrumental in expanding our program into a local public school, Michelle Clark, in order to reach more youth than before. He has headed up the Hip Hop Club at Northwest Tower, engaging young males with technology and contributing to their development of technical, writing and musical skills. He has introduced many lab users to new technologies and worked to create curricula that is age-appropriate and relevant to the audience.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
The addition of Taylor to our organization and the skills he brought with him led to After School Matters asking us to run a program off-site, something that was new for NTRC. They had a need for a CBO to run an Apprenticeship out of a local public school, and asked NTRC for its expertise to do this. The addition of our VISTA, Taylor, has helped us to expand our program into new territories, and his skills are unmatched in our organization wtih regard to multi-media development.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] Increase number of North Lawndale residents accessing computers and high-speed Internet in their homes through the Wireless Community Networks Project.

Comment: NTRC originally applied for two VISTAs, one was to be doing work on the North Lawndale WCN project, and the other was to be working to implement media programs at this organization. Taylor Hales applied for and was accepted for the Mutli-Media position, with the idea that he could assume some wireless responsibilities as well. The need for multi-media work outweighed the need for more wireless staff for the year, therefore his time has been solely devoted to Multi-Media.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) Increase community-wide outreach efforts to recruit new families to sign up for the WCN.
2 (Qtr 2-3) Work with CNT coordinators and the WCN technician to determine "best-fit" households for connection, based on proximity to the antenna and other nodes throughout the community.
3 (Qtr 2-4) Schedule installs in coordination with CNT and the wireless technician. Act as a liasion between households and technician.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] 300 North Lawndale residents are connected to the Wireless Community Network.   [INDICATOR] The number of individual households connected to the Wireless Community Network.   [INSTRUMENT] A user database will track the number of households connected to the Wireless Community Network.   [TARGET] 300 households will be connected.
2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] 200 North Lawndale households attend community events that introduce the Wirless Community Network and learn about the project.   [INDICATOR] Number of households attending WCN outreach events.   [INSTRUMENT] Sign in sheets will be collected from all events and registered into a database to track attendance.   [TARGET] 200 individuals will attend information sessions or community networking events.
3. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 150 households fill out surveys to become participants in the WCN.   [INDICATOR] Number of potential participant surveys that are completed.   [INSTRUMENT] All surveys our entered into our potential user database with the date they are entered so that we can track the number of new users entered.   [TARGET] 200 surveys.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Increase number of WCN participants receiving technology training that can benefit their career, household, or financial situation.

Comment: Again, I haven't done any work on this project/ goal yet.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Plan and administer training sessions for WCN participants
2 (Qtr 1-2) Develop appropriate curriculum for WCN training participants
3 (Qtr 1-4) Network with other community based organizations to develop additional training opportunities in the community.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) 100 WCN participants receive basic technology training

2. (Qtr 4) Increased use of Wireless Community Network for life-improving opportunities.

Goal #3. (Qtr 2-4) Create a North Lawndale virtual community to assist residents with collaborating, networking, and obtaining resources to improve their financial, educational, or family situation.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-3) Coordinate resident focus groups to plan web portal
2 (Qtr 1-4) Collect local business and organizational information for web portal
3 (Qtr 3-4) Collaborate with businesses, organizations and web-designer to build web portal
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Development and launch of online North Lawndale web portal
2. (Qtr 4) Increased availability and ease of local information access for North Lawndale residents

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) Create sustainability plan for Wireless Community Network
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Coordinate sustainability committee consisting of volunteers, NTRC staff, and CNT staff
2 (Qtr 1-3) Hold meetings of sustainability committee
3 (Qtr 1-4) Summarize plans for sustainability in report
4 (Qtr 3-4) Determine appropriate funding sources for sustainability
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Comprehensive Wirless Community Networks sustainability plan is developed
2. (Qtr 4) A database of potential funding sources is created

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) (Priority area-Programs for At-Risk Youth- Digital Media)Create youth music oriented media clubs at Northwest Tower for grades 7-12

Comment: Taylor has been working on an audio program at our Northwest Tower CTC since his first week. He has implemented the Hip Hop Club.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Develop and implement hip-hop club

Comment: While attendance at the Hip Hop Club started off slow, Taylor developed a curriculum and began running the program almost immediately. NTRC brought in a former instructor, John Lester, who new most of the young boys at the development as a tactic to increase attendance. Since then, attendance has picked up siginficiantly, and the program has been in full swing.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Teach digital music production to youth

Comment: Taylor has been successful in teaching digital music production to youth.
Taylor is now seeking to inspire more orginality in the teens' work.

3 (Qtr 3-4) Work with youth to create CDs and digital music compilations

Comment: Once the participants have reached a point of creative independence and have created songs independently or with minimal instructor help that they feel are good enough to "release" Taylor will work with youth to create CDs and work with other artists.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) Improved knowledge of digital media production for Northwest Tower youth

Comment: Some youth can now make their own beats and are familiar with industry-standard music production programs. Taylor is seeking ot move the larger group that has just started participating in this program towards creative independence. As it is right now, most of the participants just want to hear themselves rapping over a beat and aren't so interested in learning about how to record, engineer, mix, or even make their own beats.

Since Taylor has started, about 25 boys have participated in the program.
2 have reached a point of self-sufficiency with Reason 2.5 in making beats.
10-15 have recorded raps over tracks made by big-name producers or the program instructors.
None have reached a self-sufficiency with Sonar in recording yet.

2. (Qtr 4) Improved self-esteem, self-confidence and development of talents for youth

Comment: Youth talent has been developed. Working with youth on the dynamics of how to rap has helped them understand how rhythm works at an intuitive level.

There has been a visible rise in the self-esteem of the program participants. While this is hard to measure, most youth living in the building might not get out of their apartments at all were it not for NTRC's programs, and anything "outside" that kids do develops them as social beings and boost their confidence. In addition, having the participants rap in a public setting is a great confidence-booster. Watching the group also provides a great glimpse into how well they support one another.

Goal #6. (Qtr 1-4) (Priority area-Programs for At-Risk Youth- Digital Media) Create curricula for quality after-school academic enrichment activities that incorporate multi-media activities.

Comment: Taylor written curricula and syllabi for the programs I instruct. In the future he will work to adapt these to a more universal form which might be used by NTRC staff.

Taylor has made 2 curricula, one for an audio-video hybrid program (the Clark Digital Media program), and another for a spoken word/ audio recording program (Hip-hop club).

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Develop after-school curriculum for K-8 youth that includes multi-media academic enrichment activities

Comment: Taylor has worked to develop high school level curricula. These curricula will be adapted in the future to suit a K-8 after school program as well, in collaboration with Taylor and NTRC staff.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Coordinate special activities and workshops
3 (Qtr 1-4) Create additional after-school academic enrichment activities

Results
1. (Qtr 4) Improved academic performance of Northwest Tower youth.

Comment: The afterschool homework help is working to improve academic performance. NTRC is seeking to increase contact with teachers, which will help to improve academic performance.

Goal #7. (Qtr 1-4) (Priority area-Programs for At-Risk Youth- Digital Media) Create and implement graphic design and web-design media programs.

Comment: Graphic design and web design has not been a focus of the program so far. Taylor has been dedicated to video and audio production.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Recruit youth for graphic/web design club
2 (Qtr 1-4) Create graphic design and web-design activities tailored for youth in grades 5-12
3 (Qtr 1-4) Work with youth to make original graphics, art, and web-pages
4 (Qtr 4) Coordinate youth digital art showcase
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Improved knowledge of graphic design, web design and digital art for youth participants

Goal #8. (Qtr 1-4) Train other NTRC staff on implementing multi-media programs

Comment: NTRC will setup trainings in Q3 and Q4 to address this item.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Hold curriculum training sessions for NTRC after school staff as curricula are completed
2 (Qtr 1-4) Support NTRC staff in carrying out multi-media activities at our sites
3 (Qtr 1-4) Advise NTRC staff on supplies and technical equipment for program implementation

Comment: Taylor has advised NTRC administrative staff on technology purchases for the NWT site as a whole, and for his programs at Michelle Clark and Northwest Tower.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) NTRC After School staff has increased capacity to administer after-school multi-media activities for youth programs.
2. (Qtr 4) NTRC After School staff has improved knowledge of multi-media technology including music, video, graphic arts and/or web-design.

Comment: No staff have been trained to date.

Workplan Revision

Taylor's workplan had the addition of a 25-teen program, with the goal of teaching audio- and video-production to participants. Taylor and an assistant teach beatmaking and audio recording in

the audio portion, and the comprehensive video portion includes project planning (pre-production) and execution (production and post-production/ editing). The program also incorporates basic film analysis and media literacy components.

The program is now in its second term
--2 video projects were turned out in the first term, completely conceived, shot, and edited by the participants, who started with no knowledge of digital video or audio
--5 video projects are currently near completion (being edited) in our second term, many of which will feature music created by participants. Each project will have produced a script, storyboard set, and final DVD with all the work done by participants.
--All 30-35 participants from each semester have left with a basic understanding of film analysis, media literacy, basic digital camera operations.
--5 participants from last term and all 22 from this term leave with an understanding advanced digital camera operations (aperture, shutter speed, white balance, focus)
--5 participants from last term and the 22 participants completing the program this term will all leave with a basic understanding of Adobe Premiere Pro video editing software including how to edit a timeline, use transitions, do titles, and use keyframes.

VISTA: Taylor Hales

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Extremely well; the entire staff of NTRC has been incredibly warm and accomodating. One of the best things I can say about the organization is that everyone interacts very well. The administrative types (Abby, Jill, etc.) have always done well in making sure that everything was going smoothly and check in on me very frequently.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
As I recall, my workplan was essentially divided into two parts. The first called for me to act as a kind of "media consultant." My basic duties here were to write curricula for media-based programs and provide training to the instructors and consultation on how they might integrate aspects of digital media into their programs. The second part of my duties was funding- and outreach-oriented, and my duties were to be essentially grant-writing and helping to promote various NTRC programs.

Right now in my VISTA tenure, I haven't done much relating to these duties. I have been instead focusing on running a couple programs, the Hiphop Club at Northwest Tower Apartments, and a digital video- and audio-production program at a high school on Chicago's West Side. We are contracted to run both of these programs by After School Matters, a huge funding organization funded by the city is partnered with the public school system. Running these programs and dealing with the immense bureaucracy in the administration of After School Matters consumes a great deal of my energy and my time. This is the main reason that I haven't been able to complete many of the components of my workplan-- the sheer amount of time required to run these programs makes it difficult to do work at many of those duties.

I have done some grant- and RFP-writing, but it has been pretty slight, and only comprises a small part of the work I do here. I am also currently working on writing a grant for one of our CTCs to get computers that are more capable of running digital media production programs. NTRC has a full-time grant-writer, Jill, on staff, and for me to write grants from the CTC at which I work is somewhat difficult given the fact that the geographic distance between our respective work sites makes collaboration difficult.

Part of my workplan, since I looked ahead to the workplan commentary section to review what it entailed, involved promoting the Lawndale Wireless Community Network. This has been impossible for me to do given the fact that I, at least right now, have to be at a site other than that from which the WCN is administered, planned, and organized because the schedule of programs which I instruct demands that I stay at the Northwest Tower CTC five days a week.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I find any attempt to equalize the distribution of access to services otherwise difficult or unattainable to many in our society incredibly noble and inspirational. I think that NTRC's mission of making these technological spaces inviting is necessary and I think that our organization does this incredibly well. We truly have meaningful relationships with all of our clients, and we strive to help people through the tough unfamiliarity of their first encounters with computers by establishing welcoming personal relationships.

I think that my work in the programs I run and at Northwest Tower, I do very well at this, and I'm confident that the "clients" here would agree. I also think that I am helping expand what types of "encounters" with computers and digital technologies the clients of NTRC are having by introducing participants to the creative possibilities of these technologies. I would like to see NTRC expand its media programs and I strongly hope that I have an opportunity to do this in my remaining time as a VISTA.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
The communication I do have is more to check up on me than to give me work to do or help better my programs. I do feel incredibly well-supported on a personal level, but I would like to feel that my programs are more strongly supported. I would love to see the administrators/ directors/ etc. fight alongside me to get what we need to run adequate media-production programs, and to help me

deal with the funders when things somehow get in a mess. I want a little more involvement with our programs on their behalf. NTRC is involved with a number of massive contracts/ projects a combination computer certification and job training and placement program with the Chicago Housing Authority, the Lawndale Wireless Community Network, etc., etc., and I'm sure that this demands rigorous attention and work, but I think it would help motivate me if I felt that I wasn't relatively "alone" in running my programs and being responsible for them.

At a recent all-staff meeting, we discussed a small reorganization that would create a new directorial position. The new director would rove between Northwest Tower, where I work, and the other site that runs programs, Lawndale's Homan Square location. This position would potentially be more in contact with the administrative staff here while also having an intimate knowledge of all the programs that we run from those sites. I think this is a great idea and can fill in the gaps between programs and their instructors and administrators that I see as somewhat problematic.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Biggest challenges:
(1) Dealing with After School Matters.
(2) Motivating the paid apprentices to actually get creative and *work* in a program that, for many of them, is just a way to get an easy paycheck.
(3) Having to become authoritarian while running programs (i.e. punishing kids, yelling at kids, etc.)

Most significant accomplishments:
(1) Dealing with After School Matters.
(2) Creating positive relationships with children at Northwest Tower, most notably with a few children who I know to be having incredibly difficult personal issues with which they are dealing.
(3) Opening up a space for creative output in a space which seems to openly discourage creativity-- Clark High School.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I think all of the communication the Project staff has setup has been quite helpful to me. The conference calls, email lists, and blog site have been very useful both as sources of information (for funding opportunities, locating resources, and providing ideas) and as support. Becky and Saul have contacted me more than enough just to make sure that everything was going well, and, in the midst of a particularly annoying episode with After School Matters which resulted in an infuriated blog post, Becky even called to see if there was anything she could do, like switching my VISTA to another organization. I wouldn%u2019t have even considered this, but still, it was nice to see that the Project staff were concerned with keeping everyone happy to the best of their ability. I think that given the structure of the CTC VISTA Project, the Project staff have done an exceptional job of providing resources and support.

Developing the program was easy for me. I thought out and wrote out a curriculum for the program. The implementation was incredibly difficult. I originally had a notion that the Hip-hop Club should be something rather rigorously structured, with activities planned daily, with software demos and 'lectures' lined up with participants doing activities related to the demo. This immediately fell through.

Westside Youth Technical Entrepreneur Center, Chicago, IL

VISTA: Shaneka Smith
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/shaneka_smith/

Supervisor: Almetris Stanley

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
We have worked on several projects and with the help of Sheneka we have completed "The Mind of a Teen" which is a video documentary created and produced by teens. The teens focused on peer pressure,image and parent/youth relations. The youth also created a sound track with three songs written and produced by the students.
Sheneka has organized and worked closely with the youth in our after school program.
Also,Sheneka is responsible for coordinating and teaching computer literacy to youth and adults.

What difficulties have you encountered?
We havd not encountered any difficulties with Sheneka being at WYTEC.
I first thought she would be a bit challenged by the older teens,however, they respect her to the upmost and works very well with all age groups here.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
I think the project staff is doing a great job by communicating on a regular basis and offering suggestions.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Sheneka has worked in recruiting and registering youth for the many programs offered at WYTEC. Sheneka was born and raised in the West Garfield Community and now she's back serving as a role model and leader for other youth. Since she has joined our team we have registered over 100 youth at WYTEC and have trained almost 30 adults in computer literacy.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our mission is to prepare youth for a productive adulthood through entrepreneurship,technology and life skills education. Sheneka has worked extremely well in helping WYTEC reach and serve 130 individuals. She is an excellent team player and very dependable in getting things done. Sheneka has worked with the older youth in developing their Power Point presentation and implementing the use of technology to improve their businesses.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Sheneka is a natural fit for our community and team. I never expected her to be so interested and willing to wear so many hats in our organzation.She's evening willing to taking additional college courses to improve her credentials to assist us in national certification for our program.

Goal #1. (Qtr 1) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Empower youth to create information about their community using technology.

Comment: WYTEC has been working with a few groups of teens to reach this goal.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Recruit mentors/volunteers

Comment: Shaneka works to assit other staff with mentor recruitment,however, she's not directly responsible for mentor/volunteer recruitment.

2 (Qtr 1) Youth interns will interview local businesses

Comment: Youth completed a documentary video in which they spoke with local business owners about fashion trends and the influence it have on teenagers.

3 (Qtr 1) Creat mission statement for project

Comment: Youth approach projects with a self defined mission, and base projects on thier interest.

4 (Qtr 1) Research perspective industry and community

5 (Qtr 1) Create blogs

Comment: Shaneka has been posting blogs; however,youth have not created blogs at this point. This is something that will occur in a later quarter (Quarter 4).

6 (Qtr 1) Develope a video documentary

Comment: The youth created a video documentary about their views in regards to parental relationships,peer pressure and image. Many of the local businesses allowed footage from their stores to create the video.

7 (Qtr 1) Create a ditigal photo collage

Comment: Several students have completed photo collages using Photoshop and this is something that will continue to be worked on.

8 (Qtr 1) Create web pages

Comment: Students are being introduced to website development and are in the process of using Macromedia Flash and Dreamweaver for website creation. This will be further developed in a later quarter.

9 (Qtr 1) Organize quarterly network event with local Chambers of Commerce and community residents

Results
1. (Qtr 1) Video presentation

Comment: Youth presented thier video documentary, Mind of a Teen, to press, community leaders, community residents, and family. Their work was recognized by a local newspaper, Austin Voice.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 150 students will participate in the project.   [INDICATOR] The total number of youth involved in projected.   [INSTRUMENT] Students particpation will be tracked using the computer.   [TARGET] We expect 150 to participate.
3. (Qtr 1) Digtial Story / Newsletter

Comment: Youth will complete a newsletter during Quarter 3.

4. (Qtr 1) Webpage to highlight process

Comment: This is being further developed and will be completed by Quarter 4.

5. (Qtr 1) Confirm a total of 60 businesses/or mentor (15 per quarter)

Comment: Recruiting business mentors have been a bit of a challenge,however, currently with have about 7 mentors who provide about 30 hours of their time weekly.

6. (Qtr 1) Recruit 60 volunteers to serve as mentors/tutors.

Comment: Shaneka is not directly involved with recruitment of mentors/tutors; however, the number of tutors/mentors are steadily increasing.

7. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Increase school attendance and parental involvment   [INDICATOR]   [INSTRUMENT]   [TARGET]

Comment: WYTEC rquest copy of each youth report card to track school attendance and host monthly family events to encourage parental involvment.

8. (Qtr 1) Youth identify research that lead to job training opportunites(GIS or website creation for local businesses)

Comment: Youth have been involved in After School Matters programs that has taught valuable job training skills including business development.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-2) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Youth intergate technology to create a business based on their hobby, interest and/or skill.

Comment: WYTEC is currently working with a second group of youth involved in creating their own business. Serveral youth competed in The 9th Annual Business Competiton and Conference in Milwaukee,Wisconsin. WYTEC hosted 30 youth and 11 parents/mentors. Two youth entrepreneurs were winners and earned cash to continue to grow their businesses.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Encourage youth entrepreneurial projects with emphasis on art.

Comment: Many youth used the varies software and equipment at WYTEC Intel Computer Clubhouse to incorporate Art into their fliers,business cards and story boards.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Youth register for online BizTech(National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship)

Comment: WYTEC youth on currently using BizTech by National Foundation for Teaching Youth Entrepreneurship Education(NETE).

3 (Qtr 1-4) Visit local wholesale district,and manufacturing business

Comment: In May/June youth will visit the wholesale district to purchase products for their business and learn more about the process of supplying goods.

4 (Qtr 1-4) Workshop presented by Lou holland Investments

Comment: Youth will complete a workshop with Lou Holland Investments in July/August.

5 (Qtr 1-4) Youth participate in State Of Illinois Entrepreneurship

Comment: WYTEC youth will celebrate Entrepreneurship Day for the State of Illinois 5/16/06 at Depaul University. Youth will participate in Business plan competition and workshops.

Results
1. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 30 to 50 youth will participate in youth entrepreneurship training [INDICATOR] youth that participate in youth entrepreneurship training [INSTRUMENT] WYTEC will measure the number of participants who attend and complete program. [TARGET] 30-50

Comment: Twenty five youth have been trained in entrepreneurship education and anticipate 15 to 20 more by the end of June.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Serve 150 youth in entrepreneur center workshops. [INDICATOR] We measure the number of youth participating. [INSTRUMENT] WYTEC will use the computer to track attendance. [TARGET] We anticipate about 150 stydents will participate over a 12 month period.
3. (Qtr 1) WYTEC Youth Advisiory will host monthly entrepreneurial workshops for peers. 80% of youth participating in the program will attend.

Comment: WYTEC Youth Advisory is in the process of hosting monthly entrepreneurial workshops and anticipates reaching its goal by the fourth quarter.

4. (Qtr 1) Recruit 100 volunteers for mentors.

Comment: Mentors are still currently being recurited and we expact the number of mentors to continue to increase.

5. (Qtr 1) Thirty youth will participate in national competition.

Comment: In March, youth participated in the Institute of Entrepreneurship Annual Business Competetion in Milwaukee, WI. Two youth won and were given start up funds for thier businesses.

6. (Qtr 1) 10 youth created businesses will participate in national competition

Comment: 30 youth attended the national entrepreneurship business competition and we exceeded our expected number of youth created business for the entrepreneurship conference.

7. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] 80% of youth involved will continue to develop their business or work and /or stay in school.
[INDICATOR] The number of youth that continue to develop their business or work and /or stay in school following participation in the program.
[INSTRUMENT] School attendance records and follow-up with program participants.
[TARGET] 80% of program participants will continue.

8. (Qtr 1) WYTEC project coordinator will organized culminating event and track each business with online program.

VISTA: Shaneka Smith

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel that from the moment I started I was a part of the team. The other staff members were willing to assist me in any way possible.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
There were several points outlined in the list of task and activities for the VISTA position at WYTEC. The first is to support at risk youth with academics and technology. My task, along with other members, is to always put academics first and I continue to do this. In my opinion, a strong educational foundation is the building blocks for success in all other aspects. I have introduced various software to the youth at my center including MS Office (Word, PowerPoint, and Publisher), some Adobe Photoshop, and Internet Navigation. I, along with other staff members, worked with the youth to complete a commumity talkshow, "Mind of a Teen." I am also teaching an introductory computer course offered to community residents. During the staff meeting, I offer input on development of projects and programs.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I believe that the entire mission inspires me. It is : "To prepare youth for a productive adulthood through entrepreneurship, technology, and lifeskills education." My work with the youth, whether it be helping them develop their business plans, spark their interest with a certain program, or teach them group dynamics, is all helping towards the mission of WYTEC. I am satisfied knowing that I have help them recognize something about themselves that has always been there.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
In order for our program to work, we must stay in communication with each other so that we can know what make projects and programs happen. I believe the lines of communication are working well.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
One of my challenges is learning some of the software, like Macromedia Dreamweaver. Two other challenges are targeting all of the youth interest (we currently have approxmiately 100 youth registered)and developing a unified project between them. Three significant accomplishments have been developing a successful computer basics course for community residents, engaging youth in projects, and learning some software (some Photoshop and Fireworks).

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I believe that trainin on some of the software would have been more helpful.

Boston Neighborhood Network, Boston, MA

VISTA: Alli Shaughnessy
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/alli_shaughnessy/

Supervisor: Jeannine Booton

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Alli has accomplished most of the work on her project list. she has created two PSA Days resulting in 20 PSA's playing on our channel. She has developed Youth Media Club curriculum and implementated forming partnerships with Project Think Different, training teens in production for a BNN/Project Think Different program, and the Posse Foundation, who want to create training for their teens. Alli has also assited in Girl TV training and our Digital Field Production training classes.

What difficulties have you encountered?
There is so much to do here, the workload never seems to end. It always seems that as soon as Alli is able to get a good start on a project I am giving her three more projects to do! She handles it exceptionally, however, and is able to prioritize and use her time productively. BNN is in the process of starting a capital campaign for our new building, which is starting construction soon. Alli is supportive of this enormous project and is willing to help in any way possible.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
I think Nettrice does a great job sharing her expertise with youth and media to all of her VISTA's. That really helps especially when Alli is starting a Youth Media Club for the summer which she has never done before. It is good for her and myself to see examples of what others have done. Also, being able to do this report in such an easy format really helps.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Alli's two largest projects are epanding our PSA production for non profit organizations in Boston and beginning a youth media club. Alli has completed more than 20 PSA's helping to get 20 organizations message out on our channels.
In preperation for her youth media club beginning this summer Alli is assiting our Digital Media Trainer with a girls youth production class, Girl TV, teaching a group of six young women ages 13-16 field and studio production. The result of their work will be a weekly BNNLive studio program where the girls will represent the Boys and Girls Club on their program.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our organizations mission is to give a more direct voice to and fostering understanding among various neighborhoods, groups and points of view, expand the diversity and variety of information on local topics addressing the specific needs of targeted populations, increase the access for residents to educational, cultural, political, health and human resources of the City, strengthen the ability of all institutions to serve Boston%u2019s diverse residents by providing a mechanism through which they can effectively share their resources with the community and providing overall local television programs and opportunities not available on other television venues in Boston.

Alli has helped tremendously throughout her tenure hear with this mission. She has assisted a large number of nonprofit groups in the Greater Boston Area get their message and mission to the public through PSA's that she has produced and gotten on both of our channels, she has assisted with editing for countless members working on their programs to help them ensure the best quality program, she has also helped producers promote their programs by getting press releases to local papers and announcements of shows on BNN's News program Neighborhood Netowk News. Alli has also done a great deal with at-risk youth in Boston, assisting in youth production classes and workshops like Teen TV and Girl TV. Most recently Alli was shadowed by three teens from Bay Cove Academy, she had them make a mock studio show and edit their program. Alli was thanked with a letter from the school and a front page article in the Bay Cove Academy Newsletter.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

Being a community media center and a nonprofit, BNN deals with a diverse group of members from the community. A wide group of races, cultures, personalities and ages, which can be difficult to handle at times. Alli has such a bright and warm personality that she is able to get along and assist everyone that walks through our door. She is often the first person the producers look for when working on a project, knowing that Alli will always be someone pleasant to assist them with any questions they have or someone they can just have a conversation with. Knowing that we can trust Alli to represent our organization to our members, who are a vital part of our mission, is something our entire staff values. She is a pleasure to work with and we can only hope we have given her as much as she has given us.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Assist in further development of BNN's youth media arts and technology services and training, including assessment, curriculum development and general course instruction.

Comment: This is still the current goal. We hope to have a youth media club up and running in the summer. Alli has been working on making this happen by preparing curriculum, critiquing past youth workshops, and building relationships with other community youth organizations.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Review BNN training plan and recent history of youth training; compare to other youth media programs; report findings

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Comment: Alli has contacted a number of youth organizations taht offer similar production training. She has developed curriculum based on her findings and has used this info to improve past youth workshop curriculum.

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2 (Qtr 1-4) Work with BNN staff to determine needs and priorities for providing training assistance and member support at two facilities, relative to other tasks and activities

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Comment: Alli has provided workshop support at both our Roxbury and City Plce facilities. In doing this she has gotten teaching assitant experience as well. Alli has provided support for City Place producers and members daily, giving them assitance with editing and field equipment.

Results

1. (Qtr 1) Submit report, ("1st Quarter Report")incorporating survey info from past youth participants; include recommendations for improvement options

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Comment: Alli has submitted two reports so far with updates on what she is doing and information she has gathered.

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2. (Qtr 1) Establish work schedule accordingly, in order to assist with workshops, provide support to members, and work on other tasks and activities; to be reviewed and adjusted on quarterly basis.

Comment: Alli usually works from 9-5 unless she is assisting witha class, her scheduled is adjusted for those hours.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Outreach to Boston teens, especially at-risk youth, to recruit interest in media-making at BNN. Work with other youth–serving organizations, develop promotional materials (print and video), survey past participants, and assist with planning improvements. Help to organize an advisory group or other mechanism through which BNN may get input from youth community orgainizations.

Comment: Alli has done all of this. She has surveyed past Teen TV participants in the last two years. She has compiled this info and submitted it in her report. Alli has also met and formed working relationships with the Posse Foundation and Project Think Different with plans to develop a teen workshop using BNN facilities this summer.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Survey past participants in BNN youth training workshops to assess their experiences and get their suggestions for improvements; report findings

Comment: see above

2 (Qtr 1) Review BNN's methods and materials of youth outreach; compare to other youth media programs; report findings

Comment: see above

3 (Qtr 2-4) Develop new promotional materials for youth outreach

Comment: Alli has developed a flyer advertising her youth media club that we will begin to circulate shortly as well as a youth music flyer for an upcoming youth music class. She also drafted a letter for Teen TV this summer taht appeared in the Boston Public School newsletter.

4 (Qtr 2-4) Develop process for ongoing contacts with youth participants, in order to track and report their progress relative to education, employment and technological and creative development.

Comment: This will happen once the program is started.

Results
1. (Qtr 1) Incorporate findings and recommendations for improvement options for Activities 1 and 2 in "1st Quarter Report".

Comment: Alli has submitted this report with all of her findings

2. (Qtr 2) Help to organize an advisory group or other mechanism through which BNN may get input from past & present youth participants and from youth community organizations (including Timothy Smith Network). Participate in meetings (ongoing Q2-4), report recommendations.

Comment: This has been accomplished, please see above

3. (Qtr 4) Beginning in Q2 and ongoing throughout the year, create new print materials for mailings and postings, video for channels, multimedia for website
4. (Qtr 4) Establish survey process and database for youth participants, both active at BNN and inactive

Goal #3. (Qtr 2-4) Develop youth media club to provide regular opportunity for sustainable involvement of youth participants beyond duration of workshops.

Comment: Curriculum has been developed, Alli is now concentrating on advertising the club and seeing who is interested.

Activities

1 (Qtr 2-4) Establish regular weekly opportunities for youth to participate in youth media club and work on digital media projects at the BNN Multimedia Center, either after-school, on weekend, or both
2 (Qtr 2) Help determine funding needs for expansion of youth media club, including development of studio production and peer mentor opportunities, training scholarships and weekend hours, and identify potential funding sources.

Comment: BNN has submitted a proposal to the City of Boston to incporporate our youth production calsses into their teen summer jobs program. Alli assisted with the proposal and will be organizing anything we receive.

Results
1. (Qtr 2) One regular weekly afternoon designated for youth media club, initially using existing BNN resources

Comment: Curreently Alli is assisting on Wednesdays with Girl TV

2. (Qtr 1) Submit report, ("2nd Quarter Report") incorporating findings and recommendations for expansion of youth media club, including development of scholarship program, peer mentor opportunities and weekend hours

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) PROJECT PRIORITY GOAL: Develop ongoing BNN television series to feature works of Boston youth, including those produced at BNN and at other schools, youth programs and technology centers.

Comment: This will not happen until classes are at the production stage. Tyhe outcome of Girl TV, which Alli is assiting on will result in an ongoing BN program in our live studio.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Compile recent video and multimedia productions of BNN youth participants for inclusion
2 (Qtr 1-2) Contact Boston schools, youth programs and technology centers (including Timothy Smith Network) to discuss their involvement in providing content produced by youth at their facilities and to promote opportunities for participation in BNN youth media club.

Comment: Alli has contacted both Bay Cove Academy and Boston Public Schools both of which are advertising Teen TV in July.

3 (Qtr 2) Work with media club participants and advisory group to create the series, including name, standard opening and close, policies, procedures and process for selection of segments
4 (Qtr 2) Create two pilot episodes in order to secure weekly timeslot on BNN
5 (Qtr 3-4) Launch and promote new series timeslot
6 (Qtr 2-4) Work directly with participating youth to develop technical and creative skills and to foster self-esteem and motivation to pursue further opportunities for self expression.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Include segments produced by youth at BNN, including 2005 Teen TV and other youth workshops, in pilots and series. (Q2-4)
2. (Qtr 4) Include segments produced by Boston youth outside of BNN in pilots and series. (Q2-4)
3. (Qtr 2) Policies and procedures will define any content restrictions, technical standards, copyright and release issues, and procedures for inclusion in series.

4. (Qtr 3) OUTPUT: In order to request regular timeslot for Spring quarter on Channel 23, first pilot will be completed and cablecast (INDICATOR) before March 2006 (TARGET). (INSTRUMENT: videotaped programs will be seen on BNN-TV and archived)

Comment: Pilot target is June 1

5. (Qtr 3) INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME: Regular, ongoing weekly series will premiere (INDICATOR) in first week of April 2006 (TARGET). YMC will assist in press releases and promotion. (INSTRUMENT: videotaped programs will be seen on BNN-TV and at www.bnntv.org and archived along with press clippings and promotional materials.)

Comment: This will coincide with our Teen TV program, which will not begin until July 5

6. (Qtr 4) END OUTCOME: Participating youth will remain involved in the further development of technical skills and in the production of their own creative expressions.
INDICATOR: The percentage of youth participating in the production of one series program that remains involved in additional episodes.
TARGET: 25% will be involved with the production of more than one program of the series and/or other digital media/video production or workshops.
INSTRUMENT: Quarterly summary report of production credit data, youth media club participation and youth survey and training data.

Workplan Revision

The workplan has remained the same, however the project dates have been pushed back.. we want to merge the Youth Media Club with our teen TV program which is scheduled to begin on July 5. We feel taht doing this will ensure teh Teens participating in Teen TV will keep their interest with the youth media club.

VISTA: Alli Shaughnessy

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel as though I am part of the team of employees here. I know that my coworkers value my opinions and my work.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I am a bit nervous that this after school program will never get off the ground! There always seems to be something else that needs my attention... so I've been wrapped up with editing for the most part.

I have begun meeting with a few youth organizations around the city that are interested in collaborating with us. They provide kids with content, we provide kids with the TV training, sort of thing. Those meetings are somewhat shaping the ideas I have for formatting the youth program here.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
"BNN's primary goals are to serve the City of Boston and expand the constitutional rights of freedom of expression for all people."

Our mission is so inspiring to me because we allow for common people to voice their opinions. Voicing one's opinions and concerns to such a wide audience or via the media is typically not a luxury generally available to all. BNN offers its technology and forum for anyone and everyone.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Yes. We have monthly staff meetings in which we all come together to discuss projects, concerns, and progress. If I require additional support, however, my supervisor and most staff are readily willing and able to meet with me.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges:
1- Staying on course with my Work Plan while other responsibilities need my attention as well.
2- Lack of equipment/unavailable equipment sometimes makes it hard to complete projects on time!
3- Finding fresh ideas for PSAs! I've been producing so many lately--I don't want them to all look the same!

Accomplishments:
1- PSA DAYs! They are such a hit! I've brought in some money for our organization with this service, and I love it because it supplies me with plenty of editing projects (my favorite!)
2- Assistant training our Girl TV workshop. I love working with these girls because they are sincerely interested in their projects. I like being a part of that!
3- Being part of the team that won the Alliance for Community Media's Overall Excellence Award last year!

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The Project Staff have always been so helpful to me and BNN. They are ready with answers to any questions I have ever had and have genuine concern for my happiness and success with my involvement with Vista.

CEDC-SM, New Bedford, MA

VISTA: Brian Pastori
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/brian_pastori/

Supervisor: Corinn Williams

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:

CTC Net VISTA Brian Pastori has been involved with several areas providing technical assistance and capacity building activities benefiting non-profit organizations and networks serving the low-income communities of Greater New Bedford. He was able to create a comprehensive database for the Community Building Mini-Grants Program, a network of over 225 all-volunteer based organizations. This database was essential to create mailing labels and an e-mail listserv to help organize a 10 Year Anniversary Celebration of the Mini-Grants family. The database also includes data Brian used to create a member resource directory to allow groups to share information of group skills and needs. Brian also created a needs assessment survey distributed to the Mini-Grants database and also to another local grassroots network website on Southeast Mass Activist. Brian also tabulated results of the workshop checklist included in the Mini-Grants application for the last funding cycle in the Spring 2005.
Brian provided direct technical assistance to Sister Rose the director of the Market Ministries homeless shelter. He assisted Sr. Rose on many occasions to help her with equipment configuration and set-up with on-line report and grant submission and with creating outreach materials.
A private family funder convened a grantee group of 25 youth providers for meetings to address common issues such as transportation, youth violence and funding collaboration . Brian set up and administers the listserv for the group to allow members to post announcements for upcoming events and comments.
Brian also presented a mini-workshop in the benefits and uses of listservs for an audience of 85 at the regional conference of Southeastern Mass. Agricultural Commissions.

What difficulties have you encountered?
CEDC has faced some daunting challenges during the last six months. CEDC director had a very serious family emergency in early October which required her to work remotely for 2-3 weeks away from the office. Brian assumed responsibility for many of the day to day activities to keep our programs and services going during this difficult time. We also lost some significant program space we had intended for workshops and negotiated a lease for a new, larger space at a new location. The space challenge limited our ability to provide the trainings we had originally intended. Brian was invaluable in mobilizing Board members and volunteers to help us move into our new space and worked tirelessly to move us to the new location.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Project staff could be helpful in sharing curriculum for training topics geared to the needs of non-profits and grassroots organizations. Project staff could also provide some guidance around fund raising and sustainability of the project. We are currently developing a business plan for the teleconference project. We could use some planning and guidance in this area.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Brian became fast friends with Sister Rose, director of the Market Ministries Homeless Shelter. Market Ministries serves over 150 meals a day at the soup kitchen and has 25 beds available for homeless men in recovery. Sr. Rose is 64 years old and is quite intimidated by technology. Funding from the state now requires on-line reporting that is less than user friendly. Reformatting grant proposals in word processing also presents a challenge for Sr. Rose. Brain did not hesitate to work with Sr. Rose, first when she came in to the CTC for assistance and then to make house calls at the shelter to help Sister Rose to configure her new computer equipment and printer. Brian's role as a resource and technical assistance provider for this non-profit ultimately benefits our community by helping a local non-profit on the front lines of serving our most vulnerable population.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?

Brian is very committed to the mission of our organization to empower the low income community with tools and resources to crate a more just local economy. Brian has been an incredible resource for the CEDC serving in a wide array of areas including maintaining e-mail correspondence with the CEDC Board of Directors, as an assistant with our Computer Recycle and Refurbish After school Program, providing computer literacy tutoring in English and in Spanish during open access hours, and helping with technical and program support for our VITA Earned Income credit tax preparation program. Brain has been working with the director and a student intern to reconstruct our organization's web page after we made a change of ISP. As part of our work with the immigrant community, we have established a contact with a CTC in Quiche, Guatemala where family members of our CTC students live. We recently tested a web cam video conference service that we hope to expand. Brain was instrumental with the technical configuration of Skype and the webcam.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

CEDC as an organization has had to streamline our staffing structure since the elimination of state funding to CDC's and severe cutbacks in CDBG and private funding,Programs we run tend to be volunteer driven or with contracted staff with a narrow scope of serves (i.e. After school instructor). Having a VISTA staff person for 40 hours per week to assist with other program coordination duties has been a tremendous advantage for the organization to build our own capacity and to help us plan for a more sustainable future.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Technical Assistance to Non-profits] The VISTA project will coordinate training for up to 150 low-income individuals affiliated with local non-profits serving the low-income community to build their capacity in fundraising, grants management and recordkeeping, membership and volunteer development among other topics.

Comment: due to space constraints and other schedule challenges we were unable to schedule trainings. We intend to schedule trainings for April-August

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Activities

1 (Qtr 1-2) conduct comprehensive needs assessment of area non-profit groups. We will contact at least 360 non-profit groups and we will complie existing needs assessment data from 43 non-profit and all-volunteer-based groups.

Comment: Survey was e-mailed to Mini-Grantee database, posted on the SEActivist web site workshop topics complied from Mini-Grants applications

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2 (Qtr 1-3) recruit community and student volunteers to conduct workshops. At least 5 students and community volunteers will be recruited as trainers.

Comment: 4 students and community volunteers recruited so far.

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3 (Qtr 1-3) design outreach materials

Comment: Quarter 3-4

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4 (Qtr 1-4) schedule workshops

Comment: Quarter 3-4

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5 (Qtr 1-4) recruit workshop participants

Comment: Quarter 3-4

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6 (Qtr 1-4) sponsor and conduct 12 workshops with 10-20 participants each workshop

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Comment: Quarter 3-4

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7 (Qtr 2-4) evaluate workshops through surveys and follow-up

Comment: Quarter 3-4

Results

1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] skills of workshop participants will improve as a result of the training
[INDICATOR] ability to use computer software
[INSTRUMENT] workshop evaluations, follow-up contact and technical assistance interviews
[TARGET] at least 65% of workshop participants will apply what they learned into practise

Comment: for Quarter 4

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] at least 50% of workshop participants will have raised more funds as a result of fundraising training
[INDICATOR] annual budgets of organizations prior and after training
[INSTRUMENT] e-mail survey
[TARGET] at least 20 organizations will have raised more funds as a result of the training

Comment: activities for 3rd-4th quarters

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] low-income members of non-profit organizations will become more effective in carrying out the missions of their organization and will be more effective in addressing local issues of concern (such as poverty,youth violence, education)
[INDICATOR] # of groups participating in training
[INSTRUMENT] e-mail and/or phone survey
[TARGET] at least 25 groups will have reported a measurable increase in their effectiveness

Comment: activities for 3rd-4th quarters

Workplan Revision

We are requesting a reduction of numbers of workshops from 12 to 8 due to space and scheduling constraints.

VISTA: Brian Pastori

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel I have been accepted into the organization, I work very closely with the executive director and with members of the board.   I am trusted with my work and not heavily supervised. I have gained the trust of my organization and have projects such as literacy classes, which I am free to do what I deem as appropriate. I am able to collaborate with other groups on behalf of the CEDC and half a serious input in decision making at the organization. We (the board, staff and director) function as a team where everyone%u2019s input is discussed and brought into consideration.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
Our work plan has been delayed significantly, due to events out of my control. Very early in my term the director%u2019s son sustained serious head injuries and leaving the director out of work for several weeks. My time then was occupied with just keeping the office running, taking messages, and keeping some of the programs going. After the director returned we started on the needs assessment, while still working on the assessment. The CEDC moved to a different location at 181 Hillman St. in New Bedford this move was a very long and labor-intensive activity, which we just finished this month. Some problems on my end are the lack of responses to email from community groups. Having to work around that for communication and needs assessment work.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The mission of the Community Economic Development Center is very large.
The part that interests me is to create a community-based economy where money made locally stays here locally. We help assist small business and self-employed people either get started or set up a business plan. Also promote the earned income tax credit, which puts more money in our local economy. I feel my work is very important with this part of the mission I am able to assist people in learning computer skills, and develop marketable skills so that they are able to better earn a living. Either from using word and excel to rebuilding and refurbishing computers, to using the internet to look for work, or teaching computer skills to immigrants.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Yes, my supervior and I have a very good working relationship where we discuss projects and impact on the community and then plan out what it would take and cost for the CEDC to get these things done. I not until two weeks ago had any co-workers many different volunteers in which most do there own thing either running a class or doing taxes. Some people we contract work out to are very good people to work with and help me and the CEDC out with doing jobs above and beyond they are paid for.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My three biggest challenges, one has been the move from Williams St. to Hillman St. along with all the normal problems to moving an office we were dealing with time constraints and working to get our tax program up and running. The second challenge has been working to get our computer center up and running we had problems with printers and running wires, the new office is a lot bigger so there needs to be rewiring done. Then installing the tax program, which we use for our Volunteer in Tax Assistance (VITA site). The final challenge has been the constant flow of people and calls to the office some times inhibits completing work in a timely manner. My three most successful accomplishments at the CEDC have been, working to get organizations on mailing list with either setting up or promoting a mailing list. I created the United Way%u2019s Mini Grants Program mailing list and a new group of New Bedford youth organizations (which hasn%u2019t been named) along with going to the Agricultural commission of SE MASS and promoting their mailing list along with answering any questions about using yahoo groups at their conference. Another Success that I thought was significant was here at the CEDC we have just recently had our first successful videoconference using Skype from here to Guatemala this took a lot of coordination with a computer center in Guatemala and some learning of new programs in order to make this happen. This program will allow people to see relatives/ friends who still live in Guatemala. My Final significant accomplishment has been helping individuals learn basic computer skills I run a

class on Wed. night and am able to help folks access the Internet do desktop publishing and other computer tools.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The updates on new equipment and technology are key to our staff; with items like Skype we have been able to do our video conferencing. I think that geographically I am kind of isolated from the Boston folks so meetings and training do not happen for me but in general I think they are a good Idea. Things that could be improved would for me be the volume of emails I receive from CTC net and other List serves should be reduced.

Community Software Lab Inc., Lowell, MA

VISTA: John Miller
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/john_miller/
VISTA: Kamala Kalluri
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/kamala_kalluri/

Supervisor: Dan MacNeil

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
We have grown from serving 25 organizations to serving 35 organizations. We have made many subtle improvements in our service such as not requiring people to remember seperate passwords for email and for updating their websites.

What difficulties have you encountered?
John has had some health issues and that effected his ability to work. He is on the mend now and his work has been quite good.

Chuck decided he did not like our culture and left.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Generally, I'd say the project staff was doing a good job. Saul is clearly the VISTA advocate & sympathetic ear. I feel comfortable going to Paul with problems and of course we would not exist without Peter.

The priority area coordinator, jillaine smith has presented some interesting and potentially useful ideas. (Ad-Hoc can be ok, cmu capacity maturity model applied to IT, etc). I guess it would be worth an additional $50 sin our fees to continue to be exposed to this sort of thing.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
John is a big part of our growth from 25 to 35 organizations.

Three program directors have told me almost exactly: "Without John, I wouldn't have learned how to update my websie."

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Given our mission we will become irrelivant if we aren't constantly growing better infrastructure.

Without VISTAs, we could maintain the status quo but we couldn't grow.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
From his background and resume, I'd expected John to be pretty adept technically. I wasn't expecting the quiet and subtle but powerful effect he has on creating a positive "vibe" here.

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Technical Assistance to Non-profits] Increase Community groups served from 25 to 100

Comment: To be on track with this goal we would now hosting 62.5 organizations instead of 35.

We're behind schedule for (3) reasons:

1) The goal was at the start an arbitrary one, based on our desires rather than a cold rational accessment of what was possible.

2) We realized that before starting a big training/marketing push, we needed to have some infrastructure in place to support the growth. Right now we couldn't handle 100 organizations.

3) About 30% of our talented labor force (Chuck) left.

Activities

1 (Qtr 2) Create 50 minute training module to present to non profit groups, to increase general awareness of Internet technology and specific awareness of the free Internet services we offer.

Comment: We haven't done this because we realized that we shouldn't try to increase usage of our services until we could handle the new load.

I'd say odds were about 50/50 that we'd get these modules developed in the next 6 months. -- We're not going to start until We built the prerequisite infrastructure to support new growth.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Deliver training module (10) times to non profits and groups of non profits.

Comment: We haven't done this because we realized that we shouldn't try to increase usage of our services until we could handle the new load.

There are 2 more quarters to go in the year, so theoretically we could still deliver 5 trainings. 1-2 traininsgs is probably more realistic.

3 (Qtr 3-4) Deliver training module at (2) regional or national conferences

Comment: quarters 3-4 haven't come yet

4 (Qtr 2) Improve help/support infrastructure by creating a user to user help mailing list.

Comment: We are not finished with this.

5 (Qtr 4) Improve help/support infrastructure by implementing a help ticket tracking system.

Comment: 4th quarter hasn't come yet

6 (Qtr 1) Review (with our users) documentation and procedures to improve the usabilty and usefulness of our services

Comment: We finished survey text, but we haven't asked people to take the survey yet.

7 (Qtr 1) Prepare and send (4) paper mailings to non profit organizations

Comment: We have sent (1) paper mailing, and don't want to do more until we have infrastructure to support growth.

8 (Qtr 1) Prepare a paper brochure describing our software development services

Comment: Done

9 (Qtr 1) Revise text of existing paper brochure describing our free services

Comment: Done

10 (Qtr 1-4) Spend some small time doing tech support to become aware of the needs of the people we serve.

Comment: Done

11 (Qtr 1) Improve procedures for migrating people from non-free services

Comment: Some work done, more to do.

12 (Qtr 1-4) Evaluate and revise curriculum

Comment: Not done, no curriculum created to revise or evaluate

Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] 75 additional non-profit organizations served [INDICATOR] The number of nonprofit organizations served. [INSTRUMENT] We will count the number of organizations we serve [TARGET] 75 additional non-profit organizations served

Comment: Qtr 4 has not arrived

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 2-4 trainings, 1 mailing per quarter [INDICATOR] The number of trainings and mailings delivered [INSTRUMENT] We will track trainings, mailings [TARGET] 4 trainings per quarter 1 mailing per quarter.

Comment: Qtr 4 has not arrived

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Organizational efficiency is increased in anti-poverty agencies.
[INDICATOR] Increase in organizational efficiency
[INSTRUMENT] We will ask new organizations if they feel their organizational efficiency has increased.
[TARGET] A majority of new organizations we serve will feel that their organizational efficiency has increasedW

Comment: Qtr 4 has not arrived

Goal #2. (Qtr 2-3) Increase & Improve UMASS Lowell / community anti-poverty community groups

Comment: Goal should read: Increase

Activities

1 (Qtr 2-3) Create web based database to allow students, faculty and staff to make service learning, volunteer research and consulting connections to community groups and to each other.

Comment: We have made sold progress in improving the aesthetics, organization and usability of the main service learning website of of the university.

We have an almost production ready draft of a service learning website for the engineering school

We do not have a database ready.

2 (Qtr 1) Setup electronic mailing lists and Wiki-webs to help make connections

Comment: Done

3 (Qtr 1-4) Promote our tools at community meetings.

Comment: We're going to present at the June NPA meeting

Results

1. (Qtr 2) A useful database

Comment: We have had trouble working with the end users to create usable specifications

2. (Qtr 2) A Database people use

Comment: (see previous)

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Make it much easier for non techs to update and create web pages.

Comment: Beyond a few hours research, we've not done much with this.

Activities

1 (Qtr 2-3) Investigate Content Management systems that are easy to use.

Comment: Beyond a few hours research, we've not done much with this.

---

2 (Qtr 2) Test possible CMS with organizations

Comment: We have not done this.

---

3 (Qtr 3) Install and configure CMS

Comment: Not 3rd quarter yet.

---

4 (Qtr 1) Prepare 50 minute training module for CMS

Comment: Beyond a few hours research, we've not done much with this.

---

5 (Qtr 2-4) Deliver 2-4 training sessions.

Comment: Beyond a few hours research, we've not done much with this.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) Community organizations will keep their websites up to date

Comment: Not 4th quarter.

---

2. (Qtr 1) Create effective system for fund raising through grants

Comment: This shouldn't be listed as a result. --looks like a duplicate of the goal below

---

Goal #4. (Qtr 1) Create effective system for fund raising through grants

Comment: We've written a few grants, but still have no system.

Doing fee for service, may be a better model for us.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Investigate existing grant tracking databases

Comment: Not done.

2 (Qtr 1) Write a simple grant tracking database if nothing available meets our needs

Comment: Not done.

3 (Qtr 1) Investigate grant opportunities, place grant info (deadlines, contacts,etc) into the database.

Comment: Not done.

4 (Qtr 1-4) Write grants and create procedures and materials for future grants.

Comment: We've written a few grants, but still have no system.

Doing fee for service, may be a better model for us.

Results
1. (Qtr 1) We will have a useful grants database

Comment: Not done.

2. (Qtr 4) $25,000 worth of grants received in 2005/2006

Comment: Not 4th quarter

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) Increase number of effective volunteers from (3) per year to (5) by evaluating potential volunteers more carefully and providing more formal training to new volunteers.

Comment: We have increased the number of effective volunteers, but this probably has nothing to do with the boot camps we haven't done.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Create curriculum for intense 3 day training on Linux, Apache, Postgresql and Perl.

Comment: Not done, activity is shifting to helping to teach a open source software development course for the CS dept.

2 (Qtr 1) Encourage people with aptitude for Linux, Apache & Postgresql to attend boot camps.

Comment: Not done.

3 (Qtr 1) Offer (2) Boot Camps

Comment: Not done, activity is shifting to helping to teach a open source software development course for the CS dept.

4 (Qtr 1) Evaluate participants and encourage successful participants to volunteer

Comment: Not done, activity is shifting to helping to teach a open source software development course for the CS dept.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) We will present (2) three day boot camps in 2005/2006

Comment: Not 4th quarter

2. (Qtr 1) The number of productive volunteers we work with in a year will increase from (3) to (5)

Comment: There has an been an increase, but it has nothing to do with boot camps.

Workplan Revision

We will prepare a detailed plan of the hardware, software and support infrastructure needed to support 100 organizations.

This plan will probably include among other items, creating a control panel to allow users to make simple administrative changes themselves, a ticket system and self help user group.

VISTA: John Miller

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I'm an integral part of the CSL's work. Without my contributions, the lab would certainly still exist, but work would be done slowly. Dan and I get along pretty well, and it's nice to be trusted with root access to all our servers.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
The goals for my service with the CSL have been fairly ill-defined. Projects that seem valuable one week are of less value the next. As an organization, our larger goals of improving infrastructure are well-defined, but we lack a more detailed plan of how to reach those goals. It might also be that I'm simply unaware of the CSL's plans. Because of this, I feel that I'm making contributions to the lab, but not at an optimum level.

My own personal issues have also played a role in getting on track. It's quite unfair of me to pin blame on the CSL when I have difficulty getting out of bed or difficulty concentrating properly.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I applied to do my VISTA service specifically with the CSL because I believe wholeheartedly in the Free Software/Open Source principle that information should be accessible to all. Can I use my talent for abstract/technological subjects to do something other than sell something unneeded? The CSL satisfies these desires.

The CSL seems to be moving towards its goal of being a more stable and secure web/e-mail host. My work is helping to ease administrative burdens and give our users more freedom to meet their needs. In that sense, I feel that I'm helping the CSL.

I do not feel that I'm helping the CSL become more connected to the community, be it Lowell, the Merrimack Valley region, or the non-profit community as a whole. We could do a better job in reaching out to the organizations we serve--learning their needs and being more proactive in meeting them. On the other hand, outreach is pretty difficult with a small staff. Getting more volunteers is a slow process. I feel Dan is correct that having good volunteers/employees is far better than having a large number, but we could use more people on our staff.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Our communication here is quite good. Most of it takes place via direct e-mail or via mailing list, which suits me rather well since I prefer the written word to the spoken word. Projects could stand to be better-defined, but it's hard to define a project well if you don't know much about what you want, which is the case much of the time. Communication is better than sufficient.

Dan's support has really improved in the last several months. When I first started my position, I felt like my work was not quite good enough, even though I was performing tasks for the first time. As the months have gone on, I've felt more comfortable in the job, and Dan's support has gotten better. He seems more pleased with my work, or at least more demonstrative in his support. On a personal level, Dan's support has always been wonderful. He has nothing but understanding for my health problems, for visits from family, and for the typical VISTA issues of food stamps, fuel assistance, housing, etc., which have sometimes required time away from work. To describe Dan's support as merely sufficient would be a gross injustice.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges:
1) On a personal level, keeping a consistent schedule when it isn't strictly necessary for the work I'm doing.
2) Staying abreast of changes in technology. It seems that everyone has his/her own area of technological expertise, and it's difficult just to know what things mean sometimes. Knowing about all of AJAX, SpamAssassin, Sender Protection Framework, backup strategies, user interfaces, Perl, PHP, CSS, and new Linux distributions is difficult enough. Being able to make this stuff useful to people is much harder.
3) Remaining connected to the community and remaining interested in community affairs. It's all

too easy to sit down here in the basement and become engrossed in creating a new website or adding e-mail addresses. I often know people by their usernames on our system rather than by their faces or by the organizations they work for. "How can I be of service to the __community__?" Not "how can I create a new e-mail address or get a new web program to work?"

Accomplishments:
1) Integrating our web/cvs/nfs server with the LDAP directory server used on the rest of our network. Before, everyone had one password for e-mail and another for their web space. Now everyone can use the same username and password.
2) Teaching students and community members about computers. It's been fun answering the questions of UMass Lowell Computer Science students (with whom we do a fair amount of work) about Linux and the Internet. It's also been fun and rewarding to teach basic web design to various community members who have come to the lab for an afternoon or two. They've been able to take control of their own websites, rather than having to rely on a web designer to make changes for them.
3) Increasing my knowledge base. Before I started here, I knew about Linux: how to use it, how to set up a network, and how to program, but since arriving, my skill level has improved and I've learned about technologies (LDAP, spam filtering, list servers) that are relatively difficult to implement at home. My programming ability probably hasn't increased much, but I now feel comfortable hunting through a program's source code (PHP, Perl, C, JavaScript) to fix it or better understand how it works. I no longer fear these things--it's so easy to hear about some new technology and think: "Oh, no--I know nothing about this," but usually it turns out to be straightforward, and the new words are just that--new words.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Paul, you were extremely helpful in getting my paychecks arranged at the start of my service, and have been helpful answering other questions. Having a listserv has helped me stay connected with the other Project VISTAs, some of whom have become my friends. I haven't had many technological questions for the Project, but the Project has been important in answering the "This is what it means to be a VISTA" questions.

Perhaps the Project could set up some form of online knowledge database--skills important to VISTAs. Could be organized by priority area--perhaps have each coordinator understand each VISTA's job (there aren't _that_ many of us), and post resources that would be of use.

CyberY (YMCA Boston), Boston, MA

VISTA: Jisoo Lee
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/jisoo_lee/

Supervisor: Matt Crichton

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Jenny has contributed to the work at Wang YMCA in many ways. She has:
· Brought some order/schedule to the CyberY overall
· Conducted computer training for the preschool teachers
· Created open hour for seniors
· Worked on the Wang YMCA web site and e-newsletter
· Overcome cultural/organizational barriers
· Taken the lead in creating the first formal newsletter for Wang
· Tutored children in the afterschool program
· Conducted projects (Scratch, flipbooks) with the weekend Passport program kids
· Helped write application and been accepted into the MIT/Astronomy afterschool training program
· Created a computer history timeline that is displayed in the CyberY
· Created a web resource with links for fitness, health, games, kids, preschool, teachers, teens and training: http://del.icio.us/wangcybery/
· Established relationships with kids and staff through all these activities

What difficulties have you encountered?
I think the model of having two supervisors, one who is at the YMCA all the time, and one who is a floater between different branches is difficult. Jenny did not have the confidence coming in to jump right in and start building relationships, which is so important in this work. Other relationship building skills needed were not there in the beginning: assertiveness, communication, negotiation skills. There was not enough buy in from the YMCA staff as to what Jenny was trying to accomplish. Other structural and organizational barriers made progress slow. We found that the original workplan was not in synch with reality%u2014it did not meet with the YMCA needs. Also, Jenny was originally focused on just the computer lab, when there may be other activities that can lead to better buy in to using the computer lab%u2014thinking more broadly works much better.
We have changed a few of the goals to reflect that reality.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
· Make a more intentional effort to check in with supervisors on a regular basis%u2014especially newer supervisors/supervisees. (a mentor?)
· Make it more intentional to have a %u201Cproject buddy%u201D for the VISTA (a VISTA alumni?)
· Strategies for building confidence in VISTAs
· Training for the VISTA: leadership primer, group dynamics, networking, building relationships, politics in the workplace. Some required reading?
· Have a floater (VISTA project staff person) that comes to YMCA to talk with Jenny%u2014not just by phone/email. Seeing the reality is important.
· %u201CHow can I make supervising more a priority?%u201D as an example of one question.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Jenny took the lead to create Wang%u2019s first real newsletter. This was a huge step and it was well received by the Chinatown community, including staff and members. Everyone thinks it is a high quality product that will be used in many different ways. It was the jumping off point with a project Jenny can say %u201CI did this.%u201D Jenny was nominated as February%u2019s employee of the month. Jenny conducted staff interviews as part of the newsletter to get information, and I think it was a good way to begin/continue building relationships with the staff. This was a huge contribution. The numerical results cannot be measured yet--but would be the

number of new members, donations, etc.

The other big overall contribution has been her efforts to bring some law to the %u201Cwild wild west%u201D computer lab. Before Jenny arrived, the lab was always open, and no one really took responsibility for it. Jenny has created a schedule of different classes and activities. It has helped the Wang community change the way they view the computer lab%u2014having some structure can work in this environment.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
The mission of the YMCA is to build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities. Jenny is helping to achieve this mission by:
· Tutoring kids and helping them in the computer on school work
· Training staff/members on computer projects/tasks
· Increasing community awareness of the YMCA by completing the newsletter. The increased community awareness will possibly lead to more interest in the YMCA, and then more involvement.
· Being an excellent role model for the girls at the YMCA

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Jenny has personally grown through her work at the YMCA. The newsletter is probably the biggest unexpected impact. Jenny took this project and went above and beyond what was expected. This project was not initially planned for her.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Plan, implelment, and evaluate the ICAN tax assistance project.

Comment: From discussions with staff at Wang YMCA, we learned that doing an organized tax assistance program would not be viableâ€"mainly because many Chinatown residents receive under the table money for work. Jenny has advertised other tax assistance programs located near the YMCA.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Talk with VISTA who implemented project last year.
2 (Qtr 2-3) Create a plan based on last year's experiences and plan.
3 (Qtr 1-2) Gather any resources needed.

Comment: Jenny gathered the list of organizations offering tax assistance near the YMCA, and displayed/distributed them.

4 (Qtr 2-3) Recruit six volunteers.
5 (Qtr 2-3) Advertise in the community.
6 (Qtr 3) Document steps to success and lessons learned from challenges, including tangible outcomes.
Results
1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] A written plan for successful implementation. [INDICATOR] If we have a plan for future years. [INSTRUMENT] The written plan. [TARGET] One written implementation plan.
2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] 20 families have increased income through EITC. [INDICATOR] Number of families that complete filing for EITC. [INSTRUMENT] A log of families that have filed. [TARGET] 20

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Working with afterschool staff to bring computer-based educational activities into their programs.

Comment: Working with the afterschool program has proved difficult, so Jenny has found ways to work with school aged children in other capacities. She has introduced new projects to the weekend Passport kids, and is learning the needs of afterschool children through the tutoring she does with them.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Talk with VISTA who implemented project last year

Comment: Jenny had discussions with Michelle at Egleston and learned what made the Egleston program work.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Talk with afterschool staff at each branch to determine best approach.
3 (Qtr 1) Create a written plan based on last year.
4 (Qtr 1-4) Gather any resources needed.

5 (Qtr 4) Document steps to success and lessons learned from challenges, including tangible outcomes.
6 (Qtr 2-4) Implement three project-based learning activities at each branch.

Comment: Jenny has found it easier to work with the preschool, and has completed three projects using pbskids.org. Jenny has also conducted training with preschool staff. She has also worked with the Passport kids to do projects with the Scratch programming language and flipbooks.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) Two afterschool staff at each branch prepared to deliver educational technology activities in afterschool programs.

Goal #3. (Qtr 3-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Implementing a technology summer camp developing digital media skills with at risk-youth that include such things as the MIT/Chandra space project, Kinetic City, blogging with children in another country, and exploring two different open source programs.

Comment: We have learned that doing complete technology summer camps will not be feasible at Wang YMCA. We are looking at implementing the MIT/Astronomy project as the summer tech activity. There will be one set of summer tech activities at Wang only. The model has changed from a VISTA being shared across two branches to the VISTA working at one YMCA.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-3) Talk with VISTA who implemented project last year.

Comment: Jenny talked with Michelle about the summer tech camp at Egleston.

2 (Qtr 2-3) Create a detailed implementation plan that builds on 2005 summer camp experience.

Comment: We've learned that Wang does not have the same situation/resources as Egleston did for their summer camp. We are not doing the same exact model. Jenny is in training at the MIT/Chandra Astronomy project, and will be offering that program at Wang. This includes a detailed implementation plan.

3 (Qtr 2-3) Launch partnerships and collaborations and gather needed resources.

Comment: Jenny helped complete the application for the MIT/Chandra Astronomy project. She is currently in training, and will offer the program over the summer. We are currently determining the structure of the summer technology activities, and looking to recruit 10 kids for these activities.

4 (Qtr 2-3) Recruit 12 tech camp volunteers.
5 (Qtr 3) Enroll 40-50 at-risk youth.
6 (Qtr 4) Document program steps to success.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Four vacation technology camps for at-risk youth in Boston. [INDICATOR] Number of kids. [INSTRUMENT] Camp enrollment forms. [TARGET] Four camps serving 40-50 at-risk youth.

2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Training completed for YMCA staff involved in delivering tech camp.
[INDICATOR] Number of staff trained.
[INSTRUMENT] Attendance sign in sheets for tech camp training.
[TARGET] Eight staff--two per branch.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Camp participants and staff will increase skills and apply them in a positive way in order to increase community assets.
[INDICATOR] Digital media skills and projects.
[INSTRUMENT] Pre and post skills inventory.
[TARGET] 48-58 staff and youth participants.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) Creation of a CyberY advisory board.

Comment: We have discussed this, and a â€œformalâ€• advisory board probably wonâ€™t be feasible, but we are working to get informal feedback from usersâ€"possibly something of a focus group.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Recruit interested/committed low-income youth, staff, and community parterners/members involved with CyberY programs, meeting the project's goals.

Comment: We are working on identifying possible people who would be interested.

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2 (Qtr 1) Create a profile of who/what/when/where/why for advisory board.

3 (Qtr 1-4) Set up regular meetings.

4 (Qtr 4) Document outcome, steps to success, and lessons learned from challenges,.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) 12 people that are a good representation of CyberY involvement.

Workplan Revision

We are dropping the goal of the ICAN/tax assistance program, and would like to add a goal of documentation. Jenny would create â€œprogress notesâ€• or a â€œguide book,â€• with the goal being that the next person would be able to see the progress/partnerships/relationships that have been built and see what the next steps may be.

[Results]: Written documents/notes/activity guides that outline progress made.

  1. comment
[OUTPUT] The guidebook.
[INDICATOR] The guidebook can be used by next yearâ€™s VISTA
.[INSTRUMENT] Some reflective questions
.[TARGET] 2 pages of notes for each project in progress/completed; a week of activities for appropriate age groups; three 2-hour projects for Passport program kids.

VISTA: Jisoo Lee

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I think I have been fairly well accepted by the organization although it took a long time for it to happen. Among the staff most did not and still a few do not know that I am a VISTA and that I would only be here for one year. I think what helped the most was being open to working with other departments, offering help when they needed it, thus demonstrating being a team player.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I am on track with some of the goals in the workplan but for the others it had shown after time to be unrealistic and not feasible. I feel that some parts of the workplan had not been applicable at all or to this particular position from the beginning before I even started and so it was difficult to know what exactly I would or should be doing. I was also unclear on how strictly the workplan was to be followed. No one at the site besides my supervisors even knew about the workplan and what was outlined in it and it felt that my supervisors saw it as a formality in paperwork but the project considered it very serious.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The YMCA's mission is to build strong kids, strong families and strong communities. Since this Y is such a strong community presence and is open to different kinds of people and creates positive relationships I believe that it does help build strong community members. And I feel that the things I do as part of my VISTA responsibilities and outside of it is going towards carrying out that mission.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I am receiving sufficient support from co-workers but my supervisors tend to take a laissez-faire approach to supervising me. Although I can direct myself and I can manage with the amount of support and communication so far I don't think it would be improved by more time together but rather attempting to communicate better.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My challenges:
1. trying to implement curriculum in the afterschool program. The director was not open to adjusting the schedule to allow for regular computer programming even though that was one of my workplan goals that I really felt was important in doing and the kids could benefit from. Even after several meetings with her where she agreed that the kids should do more structured activities she ultimately was not interested in working with me and taking any steps to implement any changes.
2. an upcoming challenge is implementing the summer camp for teens. The Wang Y has a history of issues with its teen members in the recent past and recruiting a sufficient number of interested teens to run an effective and successful program will be a challenge for me as well as the branch
3. one that has been mostly resolved is making people aware that I am a VISTA not an employee of the Y. At the start nearly all of the staff did not know that I am a volunteer and what being a VISTA meant.

My accomplishments
1. working with Passport youth. I had the opportunity to do structured activities with these kids over several months and I feel that because I am here they have the chance to do different and interesting things on the computer and internet. Before my arrival there was no adult or staff person who monitored these children in the computer lab which was not safe or prevented them from spending most of their day in the lab rather than using the other Y facilities and interacting with their family.
2. working with childcare staff and adult members. I did computer training for the childcare staff but also worked with them whenever they needed help with personal or school work and I also helped other adults who wanted to learn more. I really value that people find me as someone they are comfortable with asking questions and know that I would take the time to work with them one-on-one. Through that I think some have really improved their computer proficiency and the things that they choose to learn become very valuable to themselves.
3. being a constructive "employee" at the Y. I've also done things that were beneficial in doing outside of the technology focus to assist the organization like helping in different departments,

campaigns and events. It has also been a good opportunity for me to learn how a non-profit organization works and gain professional experience and adapt to working with different kinds of people.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Of the Project staff Saul and Danielle have been very helpful to me. Saul has been very supportive and understanding especially in the beginning of my service year. Danielle having worked in a similar setting has been a very good source of advice and reassurance in sharing her own experiences and difficulties.

HOME Inc., Boston, MA

VISTA: Dean Gransar
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/dean_gransar/

Supervisor: Alan Michel

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
This year HOME, Inc. has established three Community Media lab partnerships one each at the Social Justice Academy in Hyde Park, The Media Communications and Technology High School in West Roxbury and at the English High School Media and Arts Small Learning Community. At each school we have developed an after school program that meets once a week and is supported during school hours at an Advisory class time when students are allowed to work on their projects and receive credit. We have developed a new course called Mosaic and partnered with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Boston Public Schools to produce a regional one day conference on media literacy in October. We have published our e-newsletter four times with one supplement and have expanded our emailing list from 1,000 to nearly 4,000. We have developed outreach benchmarks at each of the new media lab programs and produced promotional materials such as posters and flyers to recruit students and involve teachers and administrators in our progress. We have initiated projects with teachers at each of the schools , including partnering with a chemistry teacher to develop a course on forensics that looks at how the media impacts public opinion and can affect how a case may be tried in court. We are also working with a teacher to develop a magazine format program that will involve three classes in its production.

There have been several specific ways that Dean has helped us achieve our mission. As I mentioned earlier in this report, our e-mail list has increased four fold since the summer. Dean has taken on much of the design and all of the layout and publishing tasks for the e-newsletter. This is a sustainable effort since we are working with templates and databases that are updatable. Dean helped with the outreach for our first regional conference on Media Literacy for K-12 educators and was key in helping us to attract over 125 attendees.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Our main difficulties have been in gearing up for each of the schools. This includes getting all of the equipment in on time and reaching out to teachers and students to let them know what we are doing and how they can get involved.

Some of the red tape at the school department has made it hard to track purchases. But we seem to have that problem solved for now.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
The project staff has been very helpful in thinking through some of the interpersonal conflicts that developed early in the program. I think this is valuable and important because it provides a support mechanism to help both the agency and the VISTA to get beyond any adjustments that are needed.

The e-mail communications and updates about resources have been helpful and useful in establishing a supportive and sharing CTC VISTA program. I know that Dean feels that there are many resources that he can tap, particularly with the other VISTAS.

Project staff might become more familiar with each of the programs, either through site visits or quarterly meetings that would provide more connection and dialogue. That could lead to more ideas and options for collaborations, joint fundraising, and promotion of the program.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
There have been several specific ways that Dean has helped us achieve our mission. As I mentioned earlier in this report, our e-mail list has increased four fold since the summer. Dean has

taken on much of the design and all of the layout and publishing tasks for the e-newsletter. This is a sustainable effort since we are working with templates and databases that are updatable. Dean helped with the outreach for our first regional conference on Media Literacy for K-12 educators and was key in helping us to attract over 125 attendees.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Dean expressed an interest in working directly with students and took on the task of developing his own version of our Mosaic class at the Social Justice Academy. He has been creative and thorough in developing his curriculum and classroom activitites. This is very valuable work for us since he is documenting his accomplishments and helping us to develop new teaching strategies and approaches.

Deans outreach efforts have been very successful. He has established personal relelationships with teachers, administrators and students at each of the schools and is building on those relationships. One such relationship is with Laurina Morgan, a Special Needs Teacher at English High School. Dean has helped us set up our prototype Intellitools
work station for students in Laurina;'s classes and he has worked with Laurina to get her up to speed in using the system. Dean continues to make himself avialable to her and her students and this has become a potential component for the other two Community Media Lab Partnersh.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Dean is a charming dedicated VISTA who's generally upbeat, can do attitude clicks with the other staff at HOME, Inc and at the schools.

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] Outreach VISTA- To build community input and support for the Media Lab Project
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) To convene and sustain a Project Coordinating Committee- composed of one teacher, one student, one parent , and one administrator, and to meet informally or formally as needed around media lab projects throughout the year.(at least four times)
2 (Qtr 1-4) Visit local schools, youth agencies, churches and other organizations to recruit teens for the media lab.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Maintain and manage our monthly e newsletter and website data and uploads
4 (Qtr 1-4) Recruit volunteers to present workshops
5 (Qtr 1) Develop measures and feedback mechanisms to evaluate and improve program performance.
Results
1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Active and consistent involvement of teachers, students, parents and other community stakeholders in the Media Lab. [INDICATOR] Attendance at the lab of students in school projects, after school projects, and teacher involvement either individually or with their classes [INSTRUMENT] Attendance records, flyers and posters. [TARGET] The media lab will actively engage a minimum of 75 students and a minimum of 10 teachers throughout the year.
2. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Develop a group of talented and committed volunteers to enhance course and activity offerings at the media lab. [INDICATOR] A list of active and available volunteers with schedules, contact information and a system for orientation and evaluating performance. [INSTRUMENT] An active list with scedule of involvement and volunteer job descriptions and schedules. Volunteer feedback survey. [TARGET] A minimum of 10 volunteers
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Increase teacher, administrative, and neighborhood support for the media lab [INDICATOR] Number of attendees at media lab events and activities, to include teachers, administrators,parents, students and neighbors [INSTRUMENT] Attendance records, posters, flyers, surveys, press releases, news coverage [TARGET] We would expect to have a minimum of 8 events or mini events during the year. These could include mini workshops, student presentations, assemblies, open houses and exhibitions.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Engage teachers and administrators in supporting student work and help to prescribe activitites that encourage student academic performance.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Use school planning time to involve at least 10 teachers to track program and student performance, and make recommendations to further improve program and student outcomes.
2 (Qtr 1-4) Organize workshops and resources for in school training.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Assist the Lab Coordinator with workshop materials, promotional materials and assessment tools.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Student portfolios of work will be consistently of very high quality. Projects will mirror the learning that is taking place in school. [INDICATOR] The quality of the student work will be measured by a rubric. [INSTRUMENT] Student portfolios, analysis of work based on a rubric [TARGET] At least 75 students will work on at least five projects during the course of the academic year.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Fundraising and Development VISTA- Develop prospective private and public funding sources for the program.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Organize and maintain funder data base.
2 (Qtr 1-4) Complete basic research for proposals
3 (Qtr 1) Assist in developing and writing proposal sections.
4 (Qtr 1) Coordinate and assist in assembling all proposals
5 (Qtr 1) Assist in developing a major donor list.
6 (Qtr 1-4) Develop a plan and regularly scheduled communications with donors and potential donors.
7 (Qtr 1-4) Develop at least 3 minor and 1 major donor activity at the media lab throughout the year.
8 (Qtr 1-4) Develop and place at least three articles for publication
9 (Qtr 1-4) Develop and maintain press and trade publication contracts
Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Submit proposals to new and different funding sources [INDICATOR] Number of proposals and number of funding sources [INSTRUMENT] Spreadsheet [TARGET] 6 Proposals to 40 funders
2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Increase private donor participation by a minimum of 150% to $ 4,500. [INDICATOR] Number of donnors and size of donations [INSTRUMENT] Spread Sheet, letters of thanks, inquirys, [TARGET] individuals who are interested in supporting public education, tehcnology and meida literacy
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Increase Foundation and Corporate giving by 25% or $ 25,000. [INDICATOR] Total foundation giving. [INSTRUMENT] Spread sheet, Foundation contributions, and New sources. [TARGET] Increase number of foundation supporters, and total grant funding by 25%

VISTA: Dean Gransar

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?

Lowell Telecommunications Corporation (LTC), Lowell, MA

VISTA: Ben Sheldon
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/ben_sheldon/

Supervisor: Peter Bull

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
In my own role as a VISTA, from September 2004 through August 2005, my goal was to develop the technical infrastructure of the DigitalBicycle as a platform for PEG access centers and independent media producers to publish and share their work online. I was successful in this venture, but we encountered some difficulties in our initial beta launch of the system, mostly stemming from the lack of planning in the areas of user interaction and workflow. The system worked -- it was just too much trouble for the average user, and so widespread adoption was unlikely.

Since Ben's arrival, we have refocused on a number of goals to simplify the system and integrate it with other intersecting projects, including the Project for Open Source Media (POSM), and Participatory Culture Foundation's DTV/Democracy project. Ben has been instrumental in working closely with both of these organizations to communicate our intentions and align our goals.

The Project for Open Source Media aims to develop an open-souce digital media system, and Ben is working with the director of that project to secure the DigitalBicycle's place as a content provider for their system. In turn, the systems developed by POSM will provide much needed bandwidth and storage to aid us in content distribution.

The DigitalBicycle is currently scheduled for a public launch at the national Alliance for Community Media conference in July, preceded by a second beta unveiling at the Beyond Broadcast conference at Harvard's Berkman Center in May. In anticipation of this, we recently re-launched our informational web site at http://digitalbicycle.org. This freshly polished site was designed by Ben.

What difficulties have you encountered?
The biggest challenge we have faced has been managing the ever-increasing scope of the project with limited resources and manpower. My own personal difficulties are rooted in my attempts to balance my day-to-day duties of managing LTC's IT department with the requirements of the DigitalBicycle project.

The difficulty of our limited resources was only compounded with the departure of Daniell Krawczyk from the organization. Daniell played a key role in getting the project off the ground at LTC. When he announced that his wife had accepted a job offer out of state and that he would be leaving LTC, it was a bit of a shock. It was necessary for both Ben and I to take on aspects of Daniell's job, and Ben has done an incredible job at handling these added responsibilities.

Additionally, I have come to recognize shortcomings in my own abilities as a supervisor. This is the first occasion that I have been in a position to directly oversee a coworker, and I don't think it would be as positive an experience were it not for Ben being an incredibly capable self-starter who requires little direct supervision. I have great confidence in his ability to communicate the goals of the project, both within the organization and to third parties, and to represent the DigitalBicycle, LTC, and the CTC VISTA project.

I attempt to provide Ben with assistance and feedback when he needs it, whether in addressing some technical detail, or in assessing the greater goals of the project. But it has been my experience that when he brings such things to my attention, they are generally issues that require some serious thought, and not easily solved.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
It may be that I am in a relatively unique situation, being that I am a recent former CTC VISTA, whose supervisor was a VISTA, and I am supervising a second-year VISTA, within an organization that has been host to several VISTAs. (Now say that three times, fast.) So I feel that the relationship between myself and the CTC VISTA project is pretty well grounded, and I'm not lacking in resources or communication from the Project staff.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)

In a cross-pollination of Ben's interest and previous experience in mapping, his PHP development work combining Google Maps with Drupal, and his relationship to the PEG access community, he has been working to build a web site to potentially plot every community media center in the country on a web-based map. This web site, called Mapping Access, currently contains data for over 900 PEG access television stations.

Once completed, Ben's work in developing the Mapping Access web site will provide a source for individuals to identify and contact their local PEG access stations, as well as learn about the programs and facilities that are available to them. Additionally, this system will expose a web service that can tie this information to other related web sites, such as the DigitalBicycle web community and OurMedia.org.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?

LTC's primary mission is to serve the community of Lowell and provide the community with a platform for free speech and open communication, and in that vein, the DigitalBicycle plays a role as a distribution mechanism for LTC's member base. But as television moves more and more into the realm of digital media, the DigitalBicycle serves a greater role, as it has the potential to simplify and streamline the work required to play back programming.

LTC is close to launching a new channel -- Channel 95 -- that will be almost entirely comprised of digital media, played back using a server-based system. Live programming will be recorded directly to hard drive for replay, and pre-recorded media will be encoded to the server as well. Once the media is available in digital format, the steps to then distribute it via the DigitalBicycle will be almost trivial.

Ben's work on this project is directly affecting the future of LTC, as we push towards new and innovative methods of content distribution, especially while PEG access as a whole faces legislation that could severely threaten the funding that keeps community media centers thriving.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

Ben has been instrumental in taking on aspects of the DigitalBicycle project that were previously handled by Daniell Krawczyk, most importantly handling the communication with and representation to outside resources, including POSM, Participatory Culture Foundation, our peers at Cambridge Community Television and Manhattan Neighborhood Network, the OurMedia project, and Harvard's Berkman Center for Internet & Society. He is also helping to

Beyond the requirements of the DigitalBicycle, however, Ben is doing other great work using, developing, and evangelizing Drupal, the web framework upon which the DigitalBicycle web community is build. The DigitalBicycle informational site and the Mapping Access site were both constructed by Ben using Drupal, and he is providing technical support for the ACM Boston conference web site as well. He has plans to participate in a panel on Content Management Systems and Drupal at the CTCNet conference in July.

Ben also taught a community mapping class this month, that by all indicators was quite successful.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] Develop Critical Planning Documentation. Includes business plan, fundraising proposals, usage guides/how-to's, and other assorted project documentation that will increase our capacity to assist community based organizations in working collaboratively
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) Develop business plan outlining future sustainability plans

Comment: We are working closely with an outside organization, Jericho Road, that specializes in assisting nonprofits develop sustainable programs and projects. Ben has taken the lead in our communication with Jericho Road.

2 (Qtr 2-3) Develop fundrasing proposals that can be submitted to appropriate foundations and other potential funders

Comment: While this was on hold for a while, it has become clear that foundation and/or grant funding may be necessary until we have established a sustainable system.

3 (Qtr 3-4) As part of development team, launch toolkit for organizational implementation of DigitalBicycle technologies
4 (Qtr 2-4) Develop detailed documentation for Content Publishing, Automated Delivery, and Workflow Implementation.

Comment: Much of this will come out of the online community itself, through the use of listservs and forums. While we have established workflows for publishing content, additional workflow may differ between users, and this will be addressed post-launch.

Results
1. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Clear plan for program sustainability will be developed and can be used in conjuction with funders or clients [INDICATOR] Sustainability of Business Plan [INSTRUMENT] We will have the business plan evaluated by team members and outside consultants. [TARGET] 1 Sustainable Business Plan

Comment: Numerous possibilities are being considered at this time to address long-term sustainability, but these are still in the planning and brainstorming stages.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Fundraising proposal submitted to potential funder to expand capacity of project and organization. [INDICATOR] Number of fundraising proposals created [INSTRUMENT] Proposals will be counted [TARGET] 3 potential funding opportunities researched and 2 followed up on.
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Detailed Documentation for organizational workflow implementation of publishing, subscription/delivery, and channel playback. [INDICATOR] Number of organziations utilizing the documentation to participate in the DigitalBicycle project [INSTRUMENT] We will track usage through our members community. [TARGET] 5 centers utilizing the documentation

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-3) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Implement Customized Organic Groups module (PHP/Drupal) for use in Youth Media Portal and other collaborative projects

Activities
1 (Qtr 2-4) Research and Develop Linux Based Video Playback soultion for use by Youth Media Portal moderators and participating cable access stations

Comment: This is one of our goals with the integration of DigitalBicycle content with the POSM system. We do not have the resources in-house to develop such a system, but can achieve this by partnering with POSM, and providing alternatives such as PCF's Democracy Player or FireAnt to provide access to Youth Media content.

2 (Qtr 1-3) Expand partnership and serve as liason with Project for Open Source Media (http://posm.tv)

Comment: Ben has taken on Daniell Krawczyk's role as liason to POSM.

3 (Qtr 2-4) Develop and utilize privacy features in Drupal and Organic Groups module to allow certain content to be accessible only to other members
4 (Qtr 1-2) Install and evaluate Osprey (http://osprey.ibiblio.org) for use in metadata/permaseeding infrastructure.

Comment: On hold, to be reevaluated as time permits.

Results
1. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Private Beta launch of Youth Media Portal [INDICATOR] Knowledge learned on existing bugs, workflow issues, and interface deficiencies. [INSTRUMENT] We will utilize a bug reporting system for technical issues and a surveying process to evaluate overall ease of use issues. [TARGET] 5 recognized, changable areas of improvement to be fixed by public launch
2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Formal intergration of DigitalBicycle services/content into organizational and home playback systems [INDICATOR] Number of "supported" home and organizational playback systems [INSTRUMENT] Level of intergration will be determined by members of DigitalBicycle team and will be deemed "supported" if it can be effectively supported with existing tech support infrastructure [TARGET] At least 1 home and 1 organizational supported playback system
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Critical Mass of Teen Moderator Team [INDICATOR] Number of teens serving as moderators in Youth Media Portal [INSTRUMENT] We will evaluate teens on moderation ability and our system will provide specific details on the number of teen moderators and their specific output/service. [TARGET] 12 teens serving as regular moderators

VISTA: Ben Sheldon

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I have actually been very impressed with the welcoming I have received by staff and supervisor. I have a good office, computer and am invited to an equal number of meetings as other staff. I feel like I am treated by as a peer.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I feel like I am on track with goals that are commensurate to those laid out in the workplan, though several factors have contributed to this:

* Ability and skills in different areas than originally emphasized - My workplan originally emphasized more planning and strategic support, though, due to priorities, once it was clear that my software development skills could be well utilized, more emphasis was placed on that.

* Changing staff - With our department's director, Daniell Krawczyk, leaving, I have assumed many of his day to dat responsibilities, which while actually being more in line with my workplan, take on a different nature as I am completing them in a primary, rather than supporting, role.

* Having a better understanding of how the organization operates - Despite the diversity of the nonprofit sector, LTC is a rather odd bird in that it's funding stream is relatively secure. Because of this, a lot of the expectations I had about how my skills coming in would benefit the DigitalBicycle have been reevaluated and adjusted to fit the circumstances, which has been a learning process.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I really like the local sense of community that our center offers and embraces in its mission. I very much like seeing how members innovate and use our resources and equipment. I am eagerly awaiting the launch of the DigitalBicycle to see how it is used in manners we are not expecting.

I definitely feel my work is helping to achieve this mission and also to redefine what constitutes our community; changing the definition from one of geographic exclusiveness to a much broader and inclusive community.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I am definitely receiving sufficient support from coworkers and especially my supervisor. Peter Bull is an excellent supervisor.

We have had some difficulty in successfully communicating the benefits of our development model to management and our board. We're currently working on trying to bring them into the process in order for them to form a better understanding of what it is the DigitalBicycle is doing.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges:
1. Communicating DigitalBicycle related goals, benefits, and needs to management and board
2. Making sure things get done with very limited resources
3. The commute

Accomplishments:
1. Level of cooperation we are working developing between DigitalBicycle and other organizations
2. Improving my level of competence in online development
3. Teaching a class on Community Mapping

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The CTC VISTA web presence and VISTA mailing lists have been invaluable. The indirect support the VISTA Project has made by building out this infrastructure and letting VISTAs easily communicate with one another is perhaps the best part of being with the Project.

I can't think of anything specific that would be of additional assistance right now. I do though feel greatly supported by the Project such that in the future, should I need assistance, that I would get a quick and helpful response.

UMass Boston College of Public and Community Service, Boston, MA

VISTA: Saul Baizman
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/saul_baizman/
VISTA: Shannon McCue
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/shannon_mccue/
VISTA: Danielle Martin
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/danielle_martin/

Supervisor: Paul Hansen

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
DANIELLE MARTIN
In her capacity as Assistant Editor of "The Community Technology Review" (www.comtechreview.org), Danielle ably undertook a wide range of responsibilities including taking over the reins from the previous Associated Editor and completing all organizing and author communication already in the works, coordinating sections and writing a substantial number of articles for the fall issue. She oversaw the development and production of the online version, dealt with university printing services in arranging for hard copy printings, and did author/contributor follow-up. Following this, she was helpfully involved in working with the Advisory Committee in undertaking future planning, and when the decision was made for the publication to go on hiatus and be replaced in the interim with the Project newsletter/report, she accepted oversight responsibility and published the first issue (see www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/newsletters) in its entirety. She has followed this up with taking primary responsbility for planning future issues for the remainder of the project year, including coordination with the Priority Area Coordinator materials, as that dovetails and integrates with her work with them in developing curricular material for the project that can be integrated with the College's Community Media and Technology Program (www.cpcs.umb.edu/cmt). In addition to these things, she has proved to be a key and invaluable member of the project leadership team at office headquarters. -----Peter Miller

Danielle serves as liason between the Community Media and Technology Program curriculum building efforts and the VISTA project's content focused learning groups. She has been extremely effective in working with faculty in curriculum design, making real connection between the field work of the VISTA's and the CMT curriculum. She has also worked to assist me in the Tactical Media project, a project-based learning initiative of the program, in coordinating planning and research, presentations and communications flow for the project. She has also taken the leadership in creating and presenting a number of new media workshops, digital storytelling, for example. Along with her VISTA partner, she coordinated a digital media mini conference for students, faculty and staff. Danielle has undertaken extensive curriculum research for a study on community media our program is doing in conjunction with the Benton Foundation, as well research for the development of future courses in the College of Public and Community service. Danielle has performed at a very high level of thoughtfulness and strategic insight. Danielle has made an enormous contribution to the CMT program's development. -----Fred Johnson

Danielle has quickly become an important part of the Project headquarters team. She has shown admirable persistence in her efforts to draw some useful 'curriculum' from busy VISTAs and under-utilized 'priority area coordinators.' I actually think that she has accomplished more in this area than she gives herself credit for-- mostly through her exchanges with VISTAs in the field but also through her (and Shannon's) efforts to get VISTAs involved in workshops and events related to the CMT program. She has in some sense become an unofficial VISTA leader through here extensive contact with VISTAs across the country. She has also done a good deal of evangelizing for the Project-- a number of new organizations will be applying as a result of these efforts. She's a gifted/natural-born communicator and that's just so helpful in so many ways. -----Paul Hansen

SHANNON MCCUE

Shannon McCue has served successfully as the technical manager of the Taylor Center Media program. She continues to manage the equipment flow, checkout and maintenance process. She provides technical and production assistance to both faculty and students, conducting one on one

and workshop instruction in the use of video, computer and web production and editing. Along with her VISTA partner, she coordinated a digital media mini conference for students, faculty and staff. Shannon also has worked with her VISTA partner, Danielle Martin, to set up and schedule a number of production workshop and learning events in the course of the year [video blogging, video lighting and sound to mention just a few] in addition to working effective in the on-going maintenance of communication flow, production planning and coordination of the Tactical Media project, a project-based learning initiative of the program. Shannon is extremely trustworthy and thoughtful in carrying out her duties. Shannon has made an enormous contribution to the CMT program's development. -----Fred Johnson

SAUL BAIZMAN

Saul has continued to lend his considerable technical skills to a number of projects-- some to the benefit of the college others to the benefit of the Project. The addition of the reporting system to the Project's 'online application system' has been an enormous help and was pulled-off pretty much without a hitch. Reports were submitted by participating organizations largely on-time! This was unheard of in the past and represents a huge leap forward in efficency. He continues to work on the application system. Currently he is revising it so that organizations can have and access more than one application-- for multi-year projects. This revision is proceeding slowly however. In the role of VISTA Leader (and as the Leader of the other Leaders) Saul has performed well. Communication between the Leaders could be better (more frequent perhaps) but the improvement over previous years has been considerable largely due to his coordinating efforts which began well before the August 2005 PSO. Saul also plays a vital role as the person whom I bounce my ideas off of. As I often have bad ideas, the value of this cannot be underestimated. -----Paul Hansen

What difficulties have you encountered?

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) Solidify the management capacity of the CTC VISTA Project to better meet reporting and VISTA and Supervisor support needs.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Assess staffing needs in light of budgetary considerations and continuing project staff, consultant, and VISTA leader resources, and get set with management TEAM for project year.
2 (Qtr 1-4) Upgrade project Communications and Management Information System to better meet project administrative needs and provide a model for other similar programs.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Improve project management system for required administrative matters as identified internally and in the Corporation site visit report, focusing initial efforts on performance measurement support.
4 (Qtr 1-4) Continue to develop CTC VISTA blogs and web sites in conjunction with local operating site supervisor reporting system.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] Increase the capacity of approximately 25-35 community technology centers and related programs to develop and implement their individual programs targeted to their particular low-income communities through the recruitment, placement, and ongoing support of 40-50 AmeriCorps VISTA members.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Develop and clarify four project priority areas, bring on board area consultants, define performance measure standards for each area, and establish communications system for all affiliated organizations.
2 (Qtr 1) Finalize workplans and assignment descriptions for local and national recruitment for 40-50 VISTA members (including VISTA Leaders).
3 (Qtr 1-2) Develop a PreService Orientation (PSO) program for VISTAs beginning at the end of August; a recruitment plan for second PSO as needed; 1-2 supervisor orientation sessions as needed.
4 (Qtr 1) Finalize agency agreements/memoranda of understandings regarding local reporting and management, participation in common resource development, and supervision support strategies for the year.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] 25-35 project workplans specifying performance measurements in one of the four priority areas [INDICATOR] Project workplans [INSTRUMENT] Reviewing applications w/workplans [TARGET] 25-35 workplans
2. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Reported measurements of intermediate outcomes in each priority area as defined in the project workplans. [INDICATOR] The intermediate outcomes of participating projects. [INSTRUMENT] Review of reports submitted by affiliate programs. [TARGET] 25-35 intermediate outcome reports.
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Reported measurements of end outcomes in each priority area as defined in the project workplans. [INDICATOR] End outcomes of affiliated programs. [INSTRUMENT] Final Project Progress Reports submitted by affiliated programs. [TARGET] 25-35 end outcome reports.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Develop collaborative training and support mechanisms for strengthening local and national community technology initiatives with at least four other multi-site community technology organizations.
Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Develop the MetroBoston affiliate model program and support structure through collaborative work with area project operating sites including the Timothy Smith Network, CTCNet New England, the MA state and Northeast Regional boards of the Alliance for Community Media, and the metroBoston Community Wireless Network project as it may develop.
2 (Qtr 1-4) In collaboration with CTCNet, the Association for Community Network (AFCN), the Alliance for Community Media (ACM), and the Nonprofit Technology Enterprise Network (NTEN) produce and distribute two hardcopy and online versions of the Community Technology Review.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Undertake online and in-person program support efforts with the Ohio Community Computing Center Network and the National Service Resource Center.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) Build local capacity to lead and staff community technology programs.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Assist in the development of the Community Media and Technology Program at UMass/Boston's College of Public and Community Service through the curriculum development work associated with each project priority area and publicized in the two issues of the Community Technology Review.
2 (Qtr 3-4) As funding may be generated or otherwise available, plan and implement a community media and technology leadership institute focused on resources developed in the four priority areas.

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) Increase the sustainability of the CTC VISTA Project and its ability to recruit, place, and support AC*VISTA and AmeriCorps members for project year six and beyond.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-3) Research and meet with appropriate Corporation staff and others in developing continuation and sustainability plan for the post August 2006 future.
2 (Qtr 1-4) Further develop the CTC VISTA Project Advisory board to meet its goals of continuing on a national scope with a more diverse base of support.
3 (Qtr 1-4) Develop and submit at least three proposals to additional funding sources to provide support for the CTC VISTA Project and its related support efforts.

VISTA: Saul Baizman

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
My only real complaint about being accepted is my first complaint: the legacy of awkwardness that resulted from not sending out a letter of introduction to the rest of CPCS when I first came aboard. There are still faces familiar to me who have no idea what I do here at CPCS. Or who think that I fix anything (computer-related or not), anytime, for anyone. Most of those familiar faces do not know my name and I don't know theirs.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
The first half of the year, I was pre-occupied with applying to graduate school and took much time off. I also think the repetition from year-to-year and lack of novelty my third go-round contributed to the decrease of my overall enthusiasm and interest in my work, which negatively impacted my motivation (and other VISTAs in ways both small and big). So my VISTA leadership role has somewhat diminished.

On the other hand, I've been slowly working on building up the resources on the VISTA wiki and improving the weblog interface and expanding the reach of the vista photo gallery. The supervisor listing has also been added to the directory section of the vista website. A newer version of the directory is also in the works.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I'm inspired by the possibility that the CTC VISTA Project can play a role in spreading technological and media literacy to those who would otherwise not experience it. Media and technology are powerful communications tools everyone needs to master, both as smart consumers and producers.

I don't think my work directly helps the Project achieve its mission, but from a distant perspective it does. Creating websites and administering mailing lists and writing software to facilitate communication between VISTAs and supervisors and alumni and Project staff makes things work more smoothly and streamlines the exchange of ideas.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Whenever the shit hits the fan, Paul is there to talk to. We usually agree on the proper course of action, and sometimes Paul goes to bat when it should be me. Since we share an office and the mutual love/hate relationship with email, we are constantly communicating, sometimes after hours.

My co-workers are great, too. When there are scheduling issues with the Taylor Center or editing suite technical support requests, Shannon always discusses what she needs from me, though I'm not always able to respond immediately. Danielle too has no problem letting me know when she has problems or questions regarding the various CPCS systems. They are also available when I need to consult them about issues.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges

- Being in closer touch with my VISTAs. This tends to be very time-consuming and yields few immediate rewards, though it is crucial to know a VISTA well when they run into trouble and call me for help. The VISTAs can also be very difficult to get ahold of (some do not have home phones), further complicating the matter.
- Being in closer touch with the other VISTA Leaders. My communication level with the other leaders has been minimal when it should have been maximal. Again, coordinating schedules has proved unusually difficult, as a conference call back in November between the three of us proved.
- Being more outgoing in the community. I feel that I ought to attend more conferences and trainings and workshops -- doing more networking -- but my personal comfort level with strangers interferes with this desire.

Accomplishments

- This reporting system. It's pretty thanks to Paul, and it works thanks to me! It should restore Paul's sanity at the 7 and 13 month marks when reports are submitted to the Corporation.
- The Metro Boston CTC VISTA monthly meetings. With Paul's blessing, the format and content of the monthly meetings has been changed to make them something people enjoy and look forward to. VISTAs are freely discussing their work and passions and sharing their knowledge with others.
- Getting Project alumni more involved with the Project. Though I've hardly begun, it's a big step to creating a closer-knit community and delivering more value to volunteers post-service. I hope to host reunions and perhaps assign alumni buddies to incoming VISTAs in order to show them the ropes. A college alumni model is definitely the way to go.
- The Digital Media Week workshops. Okay, it's number 4, but it deserves some mention. Even though I myself didn't put it on, I was present providing technical support for it (my Final Cut class was unceremoniously axed from the line-up -- you reading this Shannon   Danielle?). I'm proud of it because the types of activities which happened in the Taylor Center were what Reebee talked about with me two and a half years ago. And I'm pleased that we have staff competent enough to finally do something like the Digital Media Week.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I am Project staff! We have too many mailing lists. And "Priority Area" is a terrible internal term which should never have been released in the wild. We need something more better. I suggest focus area, which is 500% more intuitive than the current lingo.

VISTA: Shannon McCue

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
From day one I have felt very welcome at my organization. My supervisor and co-workers were very good at "showing me the ropes" and it helped me feel more at home in my new work environment.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I actually feel that I've already met the goals described in my workplan and then some. My project was to support the students of the CMT program and to create and maintain a check-out system for the video editing equipment, which I feel that I have done. In addition to the projects in my workplan I'v also worked on projects that I took on myself, like creating a website that includes rules and policies for using the video editing suite and checking out the equipment, it also includes tutorials (some of which I created myself) for iMovie and Final Cut Pro.
Some of the factors that have contributed to my ability to get on track and to stay on track were my co-workers and my supervisor who were always there when I had questions.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
Working for the CMT program I really like how they value project based learning, which I think is the best way to learn anything that has to do with multimedia. Also, the sense of community and collarboration is very inspiring to me. Working with people who have never touched a computer before to people who have worked on major documentary films has been quite a learning experience.

I do feel that my work has helped my organization achieve it's mission because before I got here they had all these resources, like video editing software, video equipment etc. that was not being used and now that I have put a system into place for these resources they are being used. Students have been able to check out equipment for there classes to work on projects and schedule time in the editing suite and I can assist them if they have any questions. Staff and faculty have also taken advantage of the resources that are now available to them to work on various media projects.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I feel very lucky to be working here at the project headquarters. Not only are two of my supervisors (Paul and Peter) here to support me but my VISTA leader (Saul) is here as well. Anytime I've had a problem with anything there always right down the hall to answer any questions that I have. My co-workers are great as well. Without Saul here to support me in the technical side of things I think I would have been in so much trouble. My other co-worker Danielle has been sort of like a mentor to me, she came hear with a wealth of knowledge and I just enjoy learning from her.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
I would say my biggest challenges would be overcoming personal fears (public speaking, communicating my needs), learning how to become technically savvy, and learning how to tutor people so they actually get something out of what your trying to teach them.
My first most significant accomplishment would have to be helping to organize Digital Media Week here at the Taylor Center. Not only did I learn how to organize a big event like this but I also got to teach a workshop on basic video camera, it was a great learning experience. My second would be developing a check-out system for the video equipment and the editing suite that people actually use and creating a website that includes the rules and policies for video equipment usage.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I would say them helping with paying for transportation to and from work has been a huge help.

VISTA: Danielle Martin

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
The CTC VISTA Project has been a very friendly environment to work in and very accepting. It has been a bit vague about how the Project fits into the larger College of Public and Community Service and I never got more than a introductory tour of the offices and introductions to only a few key staff. I do wish we had a better connection with the falculty & staff of the College, other than just meeting at the printer every once in a while.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
The goals set by my work plan were vague to begin with, (as were who specifically is supervising me on several of the elements) so much of my work plan has changed based on whom I have been working with directly and my own interests. It has been a continued challenge getting a consensus from everyone involved on the exact nature of the "curriculum" and any expectations of outputs of the curriculum. It has also been a challenge working with the priority area coordinators because their duties/expectations were vague to start with as well. Mostly, I have re-written my work plan on my own and gotten little feedback on it.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The mission of the CTC VISTA Project inspires me because I see the great need for non-profits for VISTAs to do technology projects and I thing the Project as the organizer and trainer of these VISTAs as a great way to create continuity in a program where people leave after a year. There seems to be great potential to create resources and also to create environments where VISTAs can come in for a year an accomplish tasks, with the help of the Project. I'm also inspired by the work of the Community Media & Technology Program to connect multimedia projects and telecommunications policy reform with community based projects.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I feel like I have very good relationships with my co-workers, especially since I feel like I am sharing my skills with them but also learning a great deal from them as well. I do wish I had more timely feedback from my supervisor, especially around high priority tasks. However, I do appreciate having the freedom to attend outside meetings and explore ways to connect my contacts with the Project and my work here.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My biggest challenges are (1) determining concrete deliverables from a vague work plan, (2) getting timely direction/feedback from my supervisor, and (3) juggling all the projects that I want to work on. My biggest accomplishments so far have been learning about and utilizing new media technologies, organizing several successful digital storytelling workshops, and providing resources and support to VISTAs right when they ask for it.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Not applicable - I work for the Project.

United Teen Equality Center (UTEC), Lowell, MA

VISTA: Nathan Biggs
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/nathan_biggs/

Supervisor: Gregg Croteau

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:

What difficulties have you encountered?

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] To build the capacity of other multimedia staff and teen leaders to deliver and sustain video production programs.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Create and implement a weekly forum for all UTEC teens engaged in video production.
2 (Qtr 1-2) Conduct research to identify resouces available for training youth workers in multimedia instruction.
3 (Qtr 2-4) Assist in the instruction of a weekly class (or more) for a minimum of 8 students.
Results
1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Facilitate a minimum of 5 different train-the-trainer workshops for teens in video production.   [INDICATOR] The number of train -the-trainer workshops conducted.   [INSTRUMENT] The workshops held will be documented by attendance sheets and feedback surveys.   [TARGET] 5 train-the-trainer workshops.
2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Plan and create a manual/guide along with teen participants and respective staff for how to carry out this type of video production program in the future by UTEC and other similar youth work organizations.   [INDICATOR] Whether or not the mulitmedia program manual was created and type of participatory planning process implemented.   [INSTRUMENT] The creation of the manual will be an ongoing process over the course of the year. During regularly scheduled reviews, progress on this project will be evaluated.   [TARGET] The creation of the (1) mulitmedia program manual.
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] To provide valuable work skills for young people so that they will be better equipped to gain employment in a related field or advance in their educational pursuits.   [INDICATOR] The number of youth engaged in media production programs that develop marketable skills.   [INSTRUMENT] Attendance records will document participation. Follow-up interviews with UTEC members will track their success in finding employment based on the skills developed in these programs.   [TARGET] 70% of all out-of-school youth (minimum of 50) complete their GED, with 50% of all students going on to attend higher education; and 70% of youth enrolled in a multimedia program(s) find employment in their appropriate field upon completion of their training.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) [Alt. Priority Area: Youth Media] To increase sustainability of UTEC's multimedia programs through a diverse development-based approach.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Research funding sources to support the youth media programs.
2 (Qtr 1-2) Write a boilerplate grant for the support of youth media programs.
3 (Qtr 2-4) Write variations on the boilerplate to fund different components of the media program.
4 (Qtr 1-3) Research/explore how the youth participating in the program might contribute to the financial sustainablity of the program through the work which they produce-- investigate & evaluate entrepreneurial program models.
5 (Qtr 1-4) Document fundraising activites so that multimedia staff and teen leaders can carry out development and fundraising activities in the future.
6 (Qtr 3-4) Assist in providing a minimum of 4 different trainings on grantwriting, public relations and other fundraising topics for both staff and youth leaders.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Raise at least $60,000 in private foundation grants over the course of their year-long commitment.
2. (Qtr 4) Submit no less than 20 grant applications.

3. (Qtr 4) Create of a fundraising manual which documents the strategies and activities employed in fundraising for the multimedia programs.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) To enhance the visibility and PR of UTEC's multimedia programs.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Work with a team of youth leaders to produce 4 newsletters and an annual report over the course of the year.
2 (Qtr 1-4) Develop a database of current and potential UTEC supporters and local press who will receive the newsletter and annual report.
3 (Qtr 1-2) Explore options for delivering the newletter via email.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) The creation of a quarterly newsletter and annual report.

VISTA: Nathan Biggs

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
During the almost 10 months that I have been at UTEC, I feel everyone at has been very supportive. I do not believe many of the people here look at me as being an Americorps member as much as they see me as a staff here at UTEC. Being accepted here has been by far the easiest and one of the most enjoyable parts of my experience.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
The goals that my supervisor and I set at the beginning of my service have somewhat changed due to the needs of my position and the organization, but I feel I will have fulfilled my position%u2019s duties when my term is over. Contributing greatly to my ability to succeed in this position has been the guidance and support of my supervisor. I have been able to develop both personally and professionally by being given the chance to work independently, in a team, and with both professionals and youth alike.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?

One of the greatest things about UTEC is that it provides a place where teens can hang out in downtown Lowell. Part of UTEC%u2019s mission is to be a %u201Csafe and multicultural place of belonging%u201D and I believe this policy is the first step in getting teens in the door and involved in UTEC%u2019s programming. The grantwriting, event planning, and youth work that I%u2019ve done has helped staff and provided support to help the organization as a whole to fulfill its mission.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Gregg has been very supportive throughout my time here. Between putting in long hours to help my grantwriting, to involving me in many different projects, I have gained a wealth of experience from my time here. I believe UTEC has a very good concept of what an Americorps VISTA%u2019s role should be within their organization.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My biggest challenges have been (1) having a slow start (2) taking on too large a work load at once (3) needing more organizational skills.
My most significant accomplishments have been (1) helping coordinate a large scale silent auction (2) writing, preparing, and submitting numerous grant proposals (3) getting to work with teens that I have learned a great deal from.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The VISTA project staff have been very useful throughout my term. From answering questions in regards to health care, to offering advice on how to best work with project supervisors, the project staff answered questions quickly and always offered support through check-ins.

ZUMIX, East Boston, MA

VISTA: Samuel Russell
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/samuel_russell/

Supervisor: Stephen Provizer

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Our goal over the past year has been to build a radio program from the ground up: creating a physical space with the proper broadcast equipment, training a radio staff, and implementing necessary computer hardware and software. This has been accomplished, in no small part because of the contributions made by Sam. He has been involved in all aspects of the project-carrying out necessary building projects, mastering the equipment, helping to decide software issues, training radio hosts, hosting a show himself and helping to define the rules of the station. And, as noted,the radio station is only one aspect of the work that Sam is doing at Zumix.

What difficulties have you encountered?
The lag between my first interview with Sam and the time when he was formally approved as a VISTA made things somewhat difficult. I also think that the financial difficulties of working in Boston on a small stipend have added a level of stress to the process.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
As noted above, there was an issue around UMB helping stream our audio. It's beyond my understanding to know whether or not this was something that VISTA staff could have helped to expedite. Apart from that, I can't think of any support that would have been helpful.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Because of the limited hours I can be at Zumix, Sam often finds himself dealing with night time hosts whom I seldom see. The content of the music that one of these hosts plays is often a challenge to the Zumix mission (This music, it should be noted, is very popular among minority youth and would otherwise go unplayed at the station). As a result, there has been some friction between this youth and other Zumix staff. Sam has developed a strong relationship with this youth and has been a key factor in our being able to negotiate what was a volatile situation.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Aside from the concrete tasks detailed above, Sam's approach and temperament have always helped to sustain the kind of positive and empathetic tone that marks the mission of Zumix. I'm confident he has the respect of both youth and staff. His efforts to help start the "Village" program underscore this.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Zumix Radio operates under the mission of Zumix and, as such, has the challenge of making youth staff an intrinsic part of the operation of the station. Sam, while an adult member of the Zumix staff, operates in a way that allows youth to consider him "one of their own," as it were, making it easier for young people to feel as though they have an ownership stake in the radio station.

VISTA: Samuel Russell

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Very well. Immediately I was included in staff meetings both formal and informal. I have always felt that my opinions and input are valued and I routinely represent Zumix in the larger community.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
Certainly. I think everyone is happy with where we are at. Certain marketing efforts have not begun largely because of ongoing discussions regarding our vision for the future and the general readiness of our radio staff. At times funding and collaborations that did not come to fruition have slowed things down but overall we are meeting our goals.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I like the focus on the arts, community, and positive change. I do feel like my work here both inside and outside the radio program is helping this organization achieve its mission. We are providing a means for young people to gain direct access to media and at the same time bringing this community together.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I am.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
The biggest challenges are probably:
1) Coordinating usage of space, maximizing the number of young people we serve.
2) Keeping kids engaged.
3) Dealing with faulty technology.

...accomplishments:
1) The roughly 8 hours of live programming we have each day, while still training new participants.
2) Start of a new program, "the Village", that addresses issues in the community and world, and attempts to instill social consciousness in our youth.
3) Establishing relationships and collaborations with similar organizations.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I have enjoyed the workshops and am grateful to Danielle for organizing them and the support she has provided. Additional support could have been used in streaming our signal which is essential to our success and I also would appreciate the Project staff campaigning against certain unjust VISTA policies, i.e. outside income.

Council for World Class Communities (CWCC), Benton Harbor, MI

VISTA: Rebecca Shuler
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/rebecca_shuler/
VISTA: Gregory Osmun
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/gregory_osmun/

Supervisor: Doug Chapman

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Rebecca Shuler:

Becky has deployed a successful registration system, which is more streamlined than we have previously done. The process is so designed that anyone with 2 minutes of training can use the new system. As for developing and documenting procedures for volunteers, not a lot has been done yet. Becky is currently researching and reading books on recruitment of volunteers and we are looking to send her to a seminar as well.

We have continued to work on identifying students through schools. Becky sent out registration information to each school and will be sending another packet out next month.

Becky with the help of Greg has streamlined our intake process for tech support for computers we have donated to families. The forms and intake process has been redesigned.

Becky has in addition to her current goal set taken on a project to coordinate and put together a 5-year celebration for CWCC. The program may have up to 1000 participants and include a keynote speaker. Becky is working with one volunteer coordinator from the Board of Directors and staff to put together the program.

Greg Osmun:

Computers in the lab have been loaded with the Microsoft Shared Technology Tool Kit and have been running successfully for several months now. All of our PC%u2019s in our lab are running completely trouble free and updates and viruses have not been an issue.

Greg has done an excellent job in developing a manual for the loading process of the computers for the students.

We have hired two high school interns to work with Greg in the loading and PC maintenance part of the lab. Greg is working with them to develop and learn new skills and procedures for refurbishing the computers we donate.

Greg has successfully set up two full remote labs as well as worked with the Boys & Girls Club of Benton Harbor, Boys & Girls Club Teen Center, and New Buffalo High School to coordinate these sites as remote training facilities.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Becky Shuler:

Keeping Becky on task continues to be our biggest challenge in her job. We have started the last several months writing weekly goal outlines and then at the end of the week outlining what was completed and if not why.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Not Applicable.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
With out the VISTA program BDE would struggle to service the number of families that we have. We just graduated our 1000th family. Which means that in the last 3 years we have put that many PC's in homes of students in Berrien County and donated a total of more than $1.2 million dollars worth of computers and software to families.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Becky and Greg have and continue to participate in the restructuring of the Council for World-Class Communities in addition to their duties. They both participated in several planning sessions. We have used the Jim Collins book "From Good to Great" to base the planning and restructuring of the CWCC. Their input and participation has helped our organization grow.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
The commitment by both Becky and Greg continue to excel our program and make a visible impact in the community by continuing to bridge the digital divided in Berrien County Michigan. Greg has done an exceptional job in the organizational structure of our lab, organization with the volunteers and high school interns and we are for the first time ahead on production of our machines.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] Coordinate program operations while developing and documenting the operational procedures in such a way that will enable volunteers and program staff to more effectively operate the program in the future.

Comment: Not a lot has been done on above where the operational side of the program was during the last six months. However, the program has continued to prosper and grow. The 1000 family completed the program in February.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Evaluate areas where additional managment of BDE program is needed. Once these areas are identified we will set stratigic goals to assume the responsibilites of the entire Computers in the Home phase of the project.

Comment: This goal has been completed Becky has taken over all responsiblities in the Computers in the Home phase.

Results

1. (Qtr 1) From this information we will build a understanding for what is left to do with the cordination and management for the Computers in the Home program.

Comment: This work as been done by the compellation of turning all operations to the daily activities of phase one to the VISTA.

2. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Set plan for recruting volunteers for programing
[INDICATOR] We will measure each month the number of diffrent volunteers that participate in the program.
[INSTRUMENT]
[TARGET] The program expects to see the number of volunteers out weigh the number of available teaching positions. A waiting list to teach the classes would be great.

Comment: This aspect of the project has been a continuing struggle for the program we have recruited just a few new volunteers for the program. We have had several volunteer meetings with around 4 people total attending. I have purchased some books on volunteering and recruitment and we are looking to send Becky to a volunteer recruitment meeting in May.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Confidence in the decision making process of the VISTA to allow them to make desisions on their own.
[INDICATOR] Ability to make sound managment decisions.
[INSTRUMENT] Preformace reviews of the progress of the VISTA by the Program Director and the Executive Vice President of the CWCC.
[TARGET] Continue to build skills and give the VISTA opportunities to make decisions and evaluate if they are the best.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-2) Identify remaining students who qualify for the BDE Computers in the Home program.

Comment: Some work has been done but most of the success and registration now comes from word of mouth and from schools.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-2) Compile results of survey of all schools in Berrien County. Then identify schools that did not respond and implement survey to those schools.

Comment: Nothing done yet.

Results
1. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Identification of how many students in Berrien County still do not have computers in their home. [INDICATOR] Comparing the number of respondents against the enroled population in Berrien County Schools. [INSTRUMENT] We will work with the Berrien County Intermediate School District to compare our survey to data that they have about their schools. [TARGET] The closest estimate to the number of students remaining to be served by the BDE program.

Comment: Estimates from the survey last year have compiled but we know the information is not very accurate.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Development of volunteer training program. Recruit and coordinate volunteers for the BDE program.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Identify ways to retain volunteers and build pool that the program can continue to grow from.

Comment: Nothing done.

Results
1. (Qtr 4) The end result of theis assignment will show the number of volunteers increase from where it is today.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-3) Develop follow up procedures with the BDE families.
Activities
1 (Qtr 2) Build realationships with schools to help alow the tracking of participants through the program
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Identify a group of participants that have been through the program and track their childs preformance through school.

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) Assist with management of the BDE computer lab, including software updates, security, and troubleshooting.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) Develope reloading plan for the computer lab to keep the computers up and running and that the families experience the look and feel of what they will see on their computer at home.
Results

1. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] The comuter lab is easily reset after any of the classes or other types of classes that we hold in the lab.
[INDICATOR] Ease of reloading or reseting the computer lab to the default settings.
[INSTRUMENT] Visualy inspect the logon screens of any of the computers after a BDE class is over.
[TARGET] Seeing that the lab is reset and ready for a new class.

Comment: Done.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Increased utilization of our CTC computer lab.
[INDICATOR] Better utlization of the technology lab.
[INSTRUMENT] Using Microsoft Outlook as a scheduling tool and then compare the utlization to the utlization durring the previous year.
[TARGET] See a larger percentage of the time the computer lab is utlized durring the week. Currently we utlize it less than 11% of hours of operation.

3. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Develop more hands on training tools that the various volunteer instructors can utlized. This should be done by building step by step instructions that the families can follow along with. This would include setting up and learning about their comptuers.
[INDICATOR] Number of technical support call we receive after sending home computers
[INSTRUMENT] We have a detailed database that tracks service calls and technical support issues. The VISTA will develope a tracking method to compare last year to the current years service requests.
[TARGET] See a 75% reduction of technical support calls and service request after classes finish.

Goal #6. (Qtr 1) Develop a more streamlined and better organized process for loading the computers that will be going out to families.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Fined more effective way to preload software on the computers before they go out. Including updating drivers, internet dial-up information, Windows updates, and antivirus updates
Results
1. (Qtr 3) See a reduction in the number of technical support issues with the computers after they leave the facility.

Goal #7. (Qtr 2-3) Develop a better system for inventory management using existing technologies such as bar codes or RF.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Work with the accounting department to utlize inventory control systems that are being developed for BDE by Andrews University students.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Increase the effectivness of tracking inventory in prpereation of our yearly audit.

Goal #8. (Qtr 1) Develop a training program for the high school tech interns and assist in their training.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Work with all local high school technology programs to offer continued technical training for intern programs.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Increase the technology training opportunities for high school students in Berrien County Schools.

Goal #9. (Qtr 1-2) Develop a better technical support intake process and help implement it.
Activities
1 (Qtr 2-3) Evaluate the current process that were documented into the BDE procedure manual and improve the ability for staff of the BDE program to track the progress of a computer that is in service.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Interview BDE and CWCC staff after new processes have been put in place and report the change in the ability for them to track the progress. A survey of several BDE families that had a computer in for service both last year and durring the improved process period should be done to evaluet the success to the end customers.

Goal #10. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Technical Assistance to Non-profits] Create a plan that will enable BDE to transition away from the delivery direct services and into a role of supporting other organizations which will impliment the BDE program model. (CWCC/BDE will provide computers to the families that complete the BDE training program through these organizations.)
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) Using the survey data collected from every student across Berrien County schools at the end of 2004/5 school year. Identify communities that need more assistance.
2 (Qtr 2) After identifing communities in need of our programing in their communities. Identify the non-profit or other institutions that can facilite BDE curriculium.
3 (Qtr 3) If needed, help the non-profits or other institutions to develop computer labs that can properly deliver the BDE programming.
4 (Qtr 3) Run pilot program at 2 or 3 locations under direct BDE supervision to determine if the facility is capable of delivering the programming by our standards.
5 (Qtr 3-4) Make adjustments from the pilot program and start community wide roll out of the BDE remote programming.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Using the data collected from the county wide survey show areas and school systems with the most need.   [INDICATOR] How many school children in areas across Berrien County still are without tehnology in their home.   [INSTRUMENT] At the end of the shcool year of 2005/6 we will implement another survey to idenfiy if the program is having a success and desiered impact.   [TARGET] This project should place a percentage of families impacted or not-impacted by the BDE program.

Comment: Evaluating this project.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] End result from this project will be to move the BDE program from directly delivering 95% of the programing in house to 80% to 90% off site. While keeping the quality and standards of the program.   [INDICATOR] Number of families at the end of next school year without a home computer.   [INSTRUMENT] Initiating a end of the school year survey of the 32,000 students in Berrien County Schools.   [TARGET] BDE commitied to having a comptuer in the home of 90% of all the students by the end of the 2006/7 school year. Through the results of the yearly surveys we would like to see us geting closer to that goal.
3. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] When school starts back up the VISTA will offer up some of the remote classes that BDE has done in the past. This will allow the VISTA to see the process from the previous years and see what types of issues and hurdles that are faced with holding classes at remote locations.   [INDICATOR] Success of the programing heald outside of our facility.   [INSTRUMENT] By using comparisons of the exit surveys from remote classes we held this year aginst the remote class surveys done in house.   [TARGET] A report of quantitaive data of the success of the remote classes.

Comment: Started we are going to start having classes in the next few months for the remote classes.

VISTA: Rebecca Shuler

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I think I've been accepted quite well. Perhaps a little too well sometimes. ;)

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I feel I am on track with pretty much everything except for my weakest area, which is volunteer recruitment. I do ask for help, but the help I'm given isn't really very helpful. Sometimes it feels like I'm automatically expected to know how to do these things. In a way I feel bad because I know what I'm supposed to do but I'm not doing it as well as other people could be doing.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I firmly believe that having equal access to technology is becoming a basic need, much like food and clothing, and it is the commitment of my organization to erradicate the digital divide and what that entails that inspires me. I would like to think my work is helping the mission, only because I'm pretty much running the show now.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
For the most part, the support here is fantastic. Admittedly there have been times when I felt a bit isolated or when the communication isn't like it should be, but some of that comes from having staff in two different places.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges:

1) Volunteer recruitment- Before I started working here, there was a robust volunteer program. Now, I have a hard time getting anyone to commit to teaching. Since things were better before I was here, I have a feeling that the problem is me. I'm not sure what it is I'm lacking save for an outgoing personality, and I can't seem to get people to rally behind the cause. That makes me feel, in some ways, inferior.
2) Personality clashes- I won't elaborate too much on this one except to say that dealing with the personality of one of my coworkers has been, at times, very emotionally trying.
3)Time management/saying "no"- I have enough stuff to do on my own, yet I seem to take on lots of additional tasks. I'm not the world's finest manager of time, so all that extra work taxes me.

Accomplishments:

1)Getting all the crap done for the 5-year anniversary dinner that just happened. Trust me, it was quite a monster.
2)Running the program on my own with little help from Doug save for the financial stuff.
3)Nothing else really stands out. I do a bunch of stuff but none of it really seems so exemplary that it's worth mentioning.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I can't think of anything specific, only because we haven't needed a lot of help, but I think the availability of the staff is really great. Keep doing what you're doing!

VISTA: Gregory Osmun

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel that I have been accepted quite well as part of my organization. In most respects I feel more like an employee of the Bridges to Digital Excellence program than an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer. My co-workers are very accepting and supportive of my ideas.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
Yes, I feel on track. The continued support of both my supervisor and co-workers has made this possible.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The idea of eradicating the "Digital Divide" and creating more equal opportunities between people of all classes is what most inspires me. By providing computers and knowledge to people that could not otherwise own or operate a computer, I feel this helps to achieve our ultimate goal.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
For the most part I am, however we are all deeply involved in our own areas of responsibility and are constantly in and out of the office. I find it inconvenient at times to touch base with other individuals regarding ongoing projects within the BDE program. Our parent organization of CWCC has weekly meetings to help keep everyone on track. A similar meeting, just with the BDE staff, I think would help in this regard.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My three biggest challenges are:

1. The continued reorganization and refurbishing of donated computers and equipment.
2. The training and commitment of volunteers.
3. Maintaining the consistency in quality of our refurbished computers and services.

My three most significant accomplishments:

1. Devising a set of standards for the loading and testing of computers to be given to families.
2. The general reorganization of our onsite facilities for the accepting of and refurbishing of donated computer equipment.
3. The setting up of two remote computer labs for the training of BDE students and their families.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I think the ctcnet e-mail listserv has been the most useful. Our organization has not had to utilize it a lot but the information of new ideas and sharing of knowledge has been very insightful at times. I can't think of any other assistance that would be required at this time.

Grand Rapids Community Media Center, Grand Rapids, MI

VISTA: Emily Kerkstra
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/emily_kerkstra/

Supervisor: Linda Gellasch

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
We have started the MOLLIE Drop-in Center providing an after school program for local teens giving them the opportunity to learn video production and editing and to produce other regular programming for GRTV.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Since schools can't afford to pay for the MOLLIE program to come into their classrooms, finding ways to help cover the cost of MOLLIE coming to their classrooms has been a challenge.

The after school program has been a challenge too. The main problem is consistency is attendance. You find yourself continually having to start over in the teaching process or constantly going back. The teens that do come regularly find that frustrating too and we have been working on developing a peer mentoring program that would give these teens a leadership type roll in the program.

Another difficulty was the fact that the original supervisor resigned their position in December. It%u2019s always hard to change horses in mid-stream. Expectations and directions changed during this process and it took a while to get comfortable in our new rolls and relationship. Emily wasn%u2019t putting in the hours she had committed to. She was often absent without notice and hours were random. We%u2019ve discussed the issue and she is improving.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Since I didn't go through the original training with my VISTA, I wasn%u2019t sure who or when to contact someone on your staff with questions.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Emily was instrumental in starting the MOLLIE after school program called MOLLIE Zoom. She developed lesson plans, video projects and helped promote the opportunity to local middle-schoolers in our neighborhood.   She worked with the local neighborhood association who brought in a group of over 40 students to make a video about the neighborhood. There were children of various ages from grade school through high school who would not normally have access to video equipment or computers. We have served over 100 students at the drop-in center since the fall of 2005.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
On a daily basis, Emily is helping us to fulfill our mission of providing the tools, training and means of transmission to at risk teens, inner city residents and the community at large. Without the help of our VISTA Volunteer, much of this work would not be possible. She is helping us strengthen a key relationship between the Community Media Center and the Grand Rapids Public Schools that remains crucial in positioning the CMC as a perceived provider of digital education in the area.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Since Emily is our seventh VISTA, we were already aware of the tremendous impact a VISTA can have on an organization. MOLLIE wouldn't be the program it is today without them and we appreciate all of her efforts on our behalf.

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-2) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Identify new segments of the underserved community, create leasons that will inable CMC to bring services to these areas.

Comment: Achieved.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1) Canvas new neighborhoods, identify contacts in schools when new session begins.

Comment: Achieved.

Results

1. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Dialogue with these significant members in these underserved segments of community
[INDICATOR] New contacts, leasons
[INSTRUMENT] individual contacts
[TARGET] 3 new school contacts identified
3 new leasons in community

2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] New members added to the organization who can then use our facilities. 20
[INDICATOR] Number of people coming to facilities
[INSTRUMENT] membership tracking, using addresses to determine if from new neighborhood targeted
[TARGET] 20 new members to use facilities

Comment: Since starting our after school program and opening our neighborhood computer lab, 206 people have used the lab since and drop-in center since the Fall of 2005. We have 28 new members.

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3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Members using facilities for education, making media
[INDICATOR] Use of facility resources
[INSTRUMENT] Number of class participants, equipment use (20 from new neighborhood)
[TARGET] Classes taken, programs aired, program participation

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Goal #2. (Qtr 2-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Be bringing tools, training and transmission to 3 new schools

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Comment: Achieved.

Activities

1 (Qtr 2-4) Take MoLLIE into schools, create vidio projects with youth

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Comment: Mollie is continuing to take the means of video production and editing into the schools producing a weekly television program, The MOLLIE Matinee with the videos produced by our students.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] MoLLIE will have created 3 new curriculum related video and editing projects in the school system
[INDICATOR] Schools seeking to take part in MoLLIE
[INSTRUMENT] Video productions created, # of youth educated in this technology
[TARGET] Youth will be able to use these technology tools, and be equipped to communicate their messages, be equipped in an additional technology medium

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Youth video used as outreach to neighborhood
[INDICATOR] youth involved via schools
[INSTRUMENT] Youth media projects draw 50 people neighborhood to theatre to view projects, and become inspired to participate in our services
[TARGET] Youth making media to be publicly presented

3. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Students working through school curriculum due to excitement in new technology via MoLLIE
[INDICATOR] Youth taking part in MoLLIE video/editing projects
[INSTRUMENT] actual numbers involved
[TARGET] 45 students complete project, learn new technology

VISTA: Emily Kerkstra

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?

Twin Cities C-CAN/CTEP Project, Minneapolis, MN

VISTA: Roxanne Johnson
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/roxanne_johnson/

Supervisor: Jeff Streier

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
2005-06 CTEP Accomplishments (Quarter 1: Sept. %u2013 Nov.)
22 AmeriCorps members at 18 sites:
31 new community volunteers provided 1081 hours of service
3 new multi-lingual websites are underway
11 new tech literacy classes started, serving 766 people
3 Public Service Announcements underway
12 CTC multi-lingual outreach materials developed
11 new technology curricula projects begun
9 technology capacity assessments completed

Roxanne has supported all members in accomplishing this. She helped plan and deliver the member acceptance letters, handbook, and Pre-Service Orientation (she focused more on the esprit de corps than the administrative). She has answered many questions from the members on many topics related to their service, thus setting them up to accomplish our mission. This includes 6 one-on-one, more in depth check ins with members, one regarding youth media. She has helped plan and facilitate Corps Days where AmeriCorps Members participate in formal and informal training, speakers, workshops, field trips, etc. She has prepared and delivered media literacy training with 2 AmeriCorps CTEP members for the statewide MLK Day AmeriCorps conference. She and two AmeriCorps CTEP members prepared and delivered a technology literacy workshop for the All VISTA Conference (which she also helped coordinate with MN VISTA Leaders). She has also moderated our online message board, created her own blog and encouraged member blogging. Finally, she has been the advisor to two CTEP member committees, media and communications.

Roxanne has contributed to the ability of three CTEP sites to move beyond the %u201Ctech center as babysitter%u201D mentality by assisting them to use technology resources to give youth a voice via digital media. At SPNN, she has lent her media literacy mentoring to the youth department where teens are creating a TV program for a teen audience. At the YWCA, she and Ken nelson provided a video submission opportunity to the staff and youth, and provided them with the curriculum, which allowed the youth to complete a video to submit. At Intermedia Arts, she has assisted in the identification and securing of hardware and software to implement a digital media center, and complimented this with assisting in the curriculum development and program planning.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Roxanne found it difficult to have limited time to become familiar with the many youth media resources and programs locally (and nationally).
Also, Roxanne hit the wall, she burned out. This was totally understandable considering this is her third consecutive year of national service. She handled it very well, although needed help with it. She brought it to my attention before it became a large problem. She took one day off, and since then, has really done an outstanding job; I did not lower my expectations, and she has since made me confident that I can give her more responsibility.
Starting new programs/projects at sites/organizations that don%u2019t fully utilize the time and resources of the partner (Roxanne/CTEP) is always a problem, but Roxanne has been careful to discuss expectations and responsibilities of each partner prior to starting a project.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Continue or expand your leadership in the priority areas. For example, it has been essential to have effective ideas and resources from some of the brightest people in the field of youth media not only available, but actually delivered (email, web) to Roxanne and I. It is through this collaboration that we are all able to grow rapidly and therefore remain relevant. The low-income,

new immigrant youth we serve are always relevant, valid. But it is only when they are up to speed with cutting edge media technologies and literacy that they have a voice. Continue to encourage and ensure collaboration by giving the contributors (VISTAs, supervisors) time and space to do it, and a fearless leader (priority area coordinator) to collect, compile and redistribute the wealth.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
At the Martin Luther King Day conference in January 2006, AmeriCorps members from various programs in Minnesota gathered to share their expertise with fellow national service participants. CTEP VISTA Leader, Roxanne Johnson, and two CTEP AmeriCorps members facilitated a workshop on media literacy for youth workers. The goal of the training was to give youth workers experience in deconstructing media messages and an opportunity to construct their own counter-advertisement, so they could replicate the workshop for the youth they work with. Youth are a mixed bag when it comes to media, sometimes influenced or confused, sometimes skeptical and exceptionally critical. The workshop also sought to demonstrate that media literacy and creation can be a small, low-tech, 90-minute training, or a complex, high-tech, full semester project. 15 AmeriCorps (including 4 CTEP) members left the workshop not only with enhanced personal media literacy, but also with the skills to create such a learning opportunity within the framework of their programs for the youth they work with.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our mission is to improve technology literacy within the many diverse, low-income, and new immigrant communities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN. Technology literacy is knowing what tools exist, what to use technology for, and how to use it. For social and civic empowerment, media projects give youth a voice in a world they often perceive as controlled by wealthy white adults. For example, economic empowerment: media projects teach skills that are employable, sometimes self employable, and encourage learning and academic success. Roxanne has focused on youth media by being a "priority area coordinator" for the CTEP Corps and sites, similar to the role of Nettrice for the CTC VISTA Corps. She has researched, compiled, and redistributed relevant, effective uses of media with youth, free or affordable tech tools, and curriculum for teaching all of the above (including resources from Nettrice, Morgan, Twin Cities Youth Media Network, other VISTAs and others). Additionally, because she is local and available, she has often assisted in making use of this wealth, often teaching staff and youth by demonstration.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
She understands the mission and vision of our organization so well that she often gives me very solid advice on difficult decisions or situations. She also has had a strong positive impact on the esprit de corps, forming very friendly relationships with members while holding them to high standards. Finally, we expected her to be working with existing CTCs to do youth media programs. She has done this, and contributed to the creation of a new media CTC at Intermedia Arts, which will focus on youth and the larger community.

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] 5 new youth media programs will be developed and implemented, in collaboration with other CTEP AmeriCorps members, over the course of the service year.

Comment: Roxanne has collaborated with three AmeriCorps CTEP members on youth media programs. One new program was developed and implemented at the YWCA of St. Paul. One existing program was expanded slightly with Roxanne's help at St. Paul Neighborhood Network. Finally, Roxanne has helped develop the new youth media center and program at Intermedia Arts. Roxanne will be collaborating on at least two more programs in the second half of her service year in order to meet the goal of 5.

Activities

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1 (Qtr 1-4) The CTCNet VISTA member will develop and disseminate monthly program specific communication materials (e-news, websites,etc.).

Comment: Roxanne has utilized email, the CTEP message board, and blogs to communicate to AmeriCorps CTEP members regarding trainings and resources. The regularity has varied, often more than monthly, on an as needed basis for projects or, as info arrives to Roxanne, she distributes it right away instead of holding it for a newsletter. This is mainly due to the local nature of our program; often it is more efficient and effective to communicate at our regular in person meetings. However, she has also contributed to the content and creation of a general CTEP Newsletter, a project of the Communication Committee.

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2 (Qtr 1-4) The CTCNet VISTA member will develop conduct 4 trainings for AmeriCorps members- in youth media program development -over the course of the service year.

Comment: Roxanne has developed and conducted 3 trainings thus far in youth media program development, and we anticipate at least 3 more. She has trained one AmeriCorps member at the YWCA of St. Paul, 15 members at the MLK Day Conference, and one member at Intermedia Arts. In addition she contributed to two trainings facilitated by the CTEP Media Committee, and Andrea Quijada of the New Mexico Media Literacy Project.

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3 (Qtr 1-4) Coordinate and implement 5 new youth media projects (website, video, etc.)in collaboration with other CTEP AmeriCorps members at host sites.

Comment: Addressed in goal comment.

Results

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1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] 50 Low income youth will learn to create media projects.
[INDICATOR] We will measure how many new programs are initiated, and how many youth participate.
[INSTRUMENT] Outside evaluator will interview member and visit host sites to acertain progress in the area of new youth media programming.
[TARGET] 10 media projects by youth participating in 5 programs, will be created as a result of this initiative.

Comment: Thus far, Roxanne has contributed to two programs that have implemented two media projects with youth, YWCA and SPNN. This has involved approximately 12 youth at SPNN and 11 at YWCA. The YWCA project technically began with youth in March, putting it outside the reporting period. We will be better tracking in the second half of the year with these efforts and more.

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2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] CTEP AmeriCorps members will receive training in developing youth media projects.
[INDICATOR] We will measure AmeriCorps members participation in youth media training activities, and how many members begin youth programs at their sites.
[INSTRUMENT] Outside evaluator will review quarterly reports, survey and interview members at host sites, and conduct site visits.
[TARGET] 5 members will initiate new youth media progamming at their agencies host sites.

Comment: Three AmeriCorps CTEP members have participated in training and initiated new youth media programming at their site: SPNN, YWCA, and Intermedia Arts. Intermedia has not begun working with youth yet, but are closer every day. YWCA implemented their youth media project in early March (not technically within the reporting period).

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3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] 50 Youth will gain media production and media literacy skills
[INDICATOR] We will measure an increase in youth particpants, individual skills development, and finished media projects among youth participants.
[INSTRUMENT] Youth media projects will be displayed on CTEP website.
Youth media skills will measured by pre-and post assessment testing covering software and hardware competency, and media literacy knowlege.
[TARGET] 5 completed youth produced media projects (videos, website, blogs, etc.)

Comment: One video project has been completed by 11 youth with help from the AmeriCorps member at the YWCA, CTEP staff, and Roxanne in early March. Youth media skill and knowledge will be measured in the second half of the year.

Workplan Revision

Addition:

Goal
AmeriCorps CTEP members will receive preparation and support to successfully complete service term.

Activities
VISTA Leader will assist with member Pre-Service Orientation including acceptance letter, preparing, and facilitating orientation.
VISTA Leader will assist with 1st and 3rd Friday Corps Days for CTEP members.
VISTA Leader will assist with providing ongoing, as requested support to members regarding AmeriCorps and Community Technology.

Results
100% of enrolled members will complete the PSO.
100% of members will complete 12 Corps Days
90% of enrolled members successfully complete their term of service.

VISTA: Roxanne Johnson

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I feel that I have been fully accepted into my organization. My previous experience as a corps member of the Communtity Technology Empowerment Project has really enabled me to hit the ground running in terms of knowing the staff members and my familiarity with the work that the organization does.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I do feel on track to meet the goals of my workplan. I think I made a concious effort in the beginning to come up with a personal interpretation of my workplan, and I try to spend my time doing tasks that further my progress on those goals. I have done a lot to create infrastructure that will enable me to meet my youth media goals. This includes research, networking, assessing interest and capacity of CTEP sites, developing partnerships and planning. I am just now starting to form ideas about actual youth media programs and how to make them happen.

One major factor contributing to my ability to get on track is that I meet with a lot of people who are very knowledgable and dedicated to their work in youth media. They are always willing to take the time to help me talk out ideas and concepts, and share their experience with me. I also have maintained relationships with some of the kids I worked with on youth media last year, which motivates me to keep going.

Another factor that really keeps me on track is that I have regular meetings twice a month with all of the CTEP corps members, so the member support segment of my position has constant feedback. The corps members motivate me through their work and their dedication.

One factor that challenges me is the ambiguity of my position. It is self-defined to some extent, and there is a lot of flexibility for me to make it what I want it to be. Sometimes I don't know what I want it to be or what would be best for the people we serve. It is also challenging to work in an organization where everyone is extremely busy and there are many priorities.

Another challenge is that there are many parts of my position that don't really overlap, and sometimes I am not certain how to prioritize tasks. In many cases, meeting with my supervisor helps me with these challenges.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
CTEP's mission of bridging the digital divide in low-income and new immigrant communities throughout the Twin Cities manifests itself differently in the minds of each corps member, staff member, partner and community member. For me, my experience last year where I worked mostly with Somali immigrant youth has really influenced what this mission means in a broader sense this year. I made personal connections and relationships with people at my site, and I feel that I have made a difference in some of their lives. Probably not as big of a difference as they have made in mine, but a difference nevertheless. This year, it has been neat for me to see each of the corps members making those connections at their sites, and being able to see the value and impact that this program has on people's lives- the people we serve and the corps members.
I feel that my work is helping CTEP achieve this mission because I have this unique perspective. I am hoping that I can help members to take a step back and see that broader picture, and also to see how amazing their work is- because it's hard to see when you do it every day.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
I recieve support and communication from my supervisor and other CTEP staff members. We have weekly staff meetings so that all four of us are kept up-to-date on everyone's projects and priorities.

I also meet with my supervisor when both of us can allocate time for it. It might be helpful to me for us to meet at scheduled times so that I can plan and prepare for the meeting. It also helps me budget my time better if I know what tasks or input he will need from me ahead of time so I can plan time for those activities.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?

Biggest challenges:
1. It is challenging for me to try and figure out the most effective way to do what I'm supposed to get done; it has taken a lot of asking around, research and trial and error. I see the goals on my workplan, and it is difficult to choose a path to achieve those goals. I think this is the reason I end up planning and planning and not actually doing as much as I could be doing.
2. I struggle with working on my own so much; last year as a corps member I worked very closely with a Vista in the youth department of my organization. Together, we designed programs and worked on collaborations, which was great because I always had someone to brainstorm and talk logistics with. My solution this year has been to seek out who I can talk things out with, whether it's Jeff, a CTEP partner site supervisor, a corps member or another member of the Twin cities Youth Media Network that CTEP belongs to.
3. It is challenging to me that there is always so much going on. I struggle prioritizing which projects are the most important or most likely to succeed. Sometimes I think I choose to do a lot of member support because I am already comfortable doing that work, when I should be initiating projects that will meet my youth media goals. Also, the whole staff has a lot going on and we don't always keep each other in the loop on everything; we meet weekly but often it's only to update each other on our own projects and not work together as much as I'm used to.

Most significant accomplishments:
1. I feel like I am successfully supporting the CTEP corps members. I think they are comfortable asking me questions, and I feel like my work has made it at least a little easier to be a corps member. I have done trainings, written policies, helped with the member handbook, answer questions, plan fun days, advise two committees and just chat with corps members about their service. I really enjoy the corps members, and their work is amazing so I make sure to tell them that. It's also good that I see them every couple weeks.
2. I am working with a partner site (Intermedia Arts), specifically the CTEP member Linda and her supervisor Marlina and then another CTEP staff member Ken who also works with IBM's Teaming for Technology program. The four of us have put together a multimedia lab at Intermedia, and it will be the base of my youth media trainings for CTEP members. We all work really well together, and putting together this lab and programs to go with it is very exciting. CTEP is hiring another member to work specifically with the lab, and I plan to continue my involvement there.
3. Our CTEP office moved in December, and I feel that I did a good job making the new office as welcoming as possible. I helped paint the walls, helped design what was going into the space, and made our offices unique. I also started chatting it up with our suitemates- a bunch of film makers and other digital artists. I like that it feels like a creative space.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
I really dig Nettrice's Youth Portal. I love the collection of resources, and I'm glad we have a bulletin board. The first half of my service, I have been doing a lot of research in youth media to see what is out there and what resources are available. Having these examples, resources and ideas to work with has been immensley helpful.
I also like that we have the listserv, so that I can keep tabs on what other Vistas are doing. I have taken Morgan's digital media toolkit and plan to adapt it for the CTEP corps to use, and have heard about some great websites and programs from other Vistas.

Saul has been extrememly helpful with regards to being a Vista leader and supporting my corps members in their service. Danielle Martin has also been of enormous help in terms of resources and digital storytelling information.

The project staff always gets me what I need when I ask for it, so I can't complain. It would be useful to me if Boston were closer to Minneapolis.

Durham Literacy Center, Durham, NC

VISTA: Vahid Nourani
Website:

Supervisor: Lizzie Ellis-Furlong

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
The Durham Literacy Center%u2019s network system has been well maintained by Vahid. In Addition, Vahid has provided leadership and training for other staff. Daily postings on our web site have been a wellspring of information sharing, contacts and leads. With the help of Vahid, we continued support on an informal basis, to our several primary partners. In addition to maintaining 4 off-site computer labs, a new 4-computer lab (constructed and computers installed by Vahid) adds a second location in our building for public access to internet and educational programs. With the exception of web site postings, Vahid is the only person maintaining DLC office computer systems and four off-site laboratories.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Very few problems have been encountered. Part of the project was arranged to be done in conjunction with TechAction. This did not fully materialize. This was due partially to TechAction%u2019s inability to raise funds to maintain programs. DLC actually benefited from this because we had Vahid%u2019s services almost full time.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Communicating directly and more often with the project supervisors will bring to focus the importance of information technology and it%u2019s planning and fulfillment of DLC%u2019s vision and mission.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
A Rwandan refugee family of four was helped to settle here in Durham by DLC. Vahid upgraded and refurbish a PIII computer for them and provided introductory computer lessons. Vahid has maintained contact with them and been to their house 3 times to help train them on internet connection issues.
Vahid also donated a refurbished PIII computer to a disabled social service client of Durham and has maintained mentoring and contact with her. She has been helped to blog her articles online by Vahid. Here is her first blog: http://brenda.eponym.com/ another lead is:
http://www.rtpnet.org/lists/rtpnet-learn/msg00068.html

Vahid has trained volunteer University Students and staff of partner organizations to maintain DLC computer laboratories located in schools, a community center and a church.

In addition, Vahid converted a former storage area in our office into a four station computer laboratory for students and the general public. Work included construction and electrical wiring as well as installing computers.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Vahid keeps up our IT communication infrastructure which we cannot survive without.
The cost of hiring an IT coordinator to replace Vahid is prohibitive for us at this time. However, we do see a light at the end of the tunnel. After one more year we hope to be in a position that we will be able to pay for out IT services.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
One positive unexpected impact is that Vahid is capable and willing to help us in many different ways of our IT setup and planning. He also has extensive knowledge of other disciplines such as electrical wiring, copy machine maintenance and maintaining air quality in our facility. Vahid, in addition to being a wonderful person, has been a joy to work with. He is truly a person who cares

about empowering the disadvantaged.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Technical Assistance to Non-profits] -Provide leadership for the agency's technology infrastructure and its partners

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-2) Recruit and train six technical volunteers to address needs of non-profit organizations

Comment: DLC has recruited and trained several volunteers to help maintain our computer laboratories. This activity is on-going.

2 (Qtr 1-4) Provide technical leadership, support and advice to non-profits.

Comment: Technical support is being provided to Kestrel Heights Charter School, St Paulâ€™s Methodist Church and Little River Community Center. In addition, donated computers have been refurbished for several NGOs.

3 (Qtr 3-4) Document technology plans for agencies and finalize volunteer technology training plans.

Comment: This has not yet been done.

4 (Qtr 1) Develop framework for interactive website management

Comment: The DLC interactive website is functional and continually being upgraded and modified. All staff are involved in blogging.

5 (Qtr 1-4) Train a minimum of 12 non-profit staff members in new technology applications.

Comment: Several individuals trained. This is an on-going activity.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Completed technology plans for six non-profit organizations. [INDICATOR] Agencies' ability to plan and manage technology [INSTRUMENT] Surveys, planning documents and final technology plans [TARGET] Six comprehensive technology plans in place

Comment: [END OUTCOME] (partially complete)
[INDICATOR] (partially complete)
[INSTRUMENT] (partially complete)
[TARGET] (partially complete)

2. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Computer labs at six satellite labs and non-profit organizations operating at optimum performance levels. [INDICATOR] Improved functionality and use of computers at various computer labs. [INSTRUMENT] Plans and reports [TARGET] Happy and healthy computers at six computer labs.

Comment: [INTERMEDIATE OUTCOME] (four operating)
[INDICATOR] (completed)
[INSTRUMENT] (partially complete)
[TARGET] (partially complete)

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3. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Increased use technology
[INDICATOR] Staff use of programs and systems
[INSTRUMENT] Surveys, reports and feedback from staff and managers
[TARGET] Staff use of interactive website, increased efficiency and output. Example: staff to use blogging feature will increase fund-raising

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Comment: [OUTPUT] (complete)
[INDICATOR] (partially complete)
[INSTRUMENT] (partially complete)
[TARGET] (complete)

Workplan Revision

 The original work plan called for collaborative work with TechAction. TechAction was providing service to several NGOs in the area. TechAction will no longer exist after April 1. Hence, the number of institutions projected in the original workplan will reduce by 25 to 30 percent.

VISTA: Vahid Nourani

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Very well. Co-workers here are very friendly, responsive, respectful, and hard working.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
In general, yes. One part of the work plan that is training of six technical volunteers, which was set to be supervised by Warren Fuson of TechAction never got started and I don%u2019t anticipate that it will be. The fact that I%u2019m not micromanaged gives me impetus to stay on track. But the office air quality which is very moldy retracts and diminishes my energies hence I%u2019m not able to gallop on the track.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
DLC educate the members of our society who have fallen through big faults in social fabric and nothing but education can remedy this ailment. The fact that I%u2019m solving technology hurdles every day and explaining its solution gives me the feeling that I%u2019m contributing to the organization, training its members, and I%u2019m well in need.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
The level of communication and support is fantastic here at DLC.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges: Office poor air quality. Old/used machines that break frequently. Not enough knowledge of Linux.
Accomplishments: Have set up a new computer lab in DLC. Did set up a new computer lab at a family resource center. Solved two network major printing problems

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The CTCnet listserv helps a great deal in providing resources and keeping up with new information.

EmPOWERment, Inc (for Pa'lante Inc.), Chapel Hill, NC

VISTA: Chris Anderson
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/chris_anderson/

Supervisor: Maxeine Mitchell

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Youth Creating Change has found a new location that's affordable. The center has reopen with regular hours and programming activities. The VISTA as set a computer center with internet access but still needs to network them and set up a password system. We have a video production training program that we are using to produce shows focusing on teen issues.

What difficulties have you encountered?
The difficulties that Youth Creating Change faced in the 1st quarter was:
1. Our departure from Palante.
2. Aquiring a new location that was affordable.
3. Getting the youth back involved with our program.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
It would be helpful if we could have more commication with the project staff, especially around problems we are having with the VISTA worker.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
No specific stories at this time.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Chris helps to open and supervise the center. He has established rapport with the youth at the center and has good communication with them.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Chris biggest challenge has been paying attention and following through on assigned tasks, and completing project goals.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Produce/broadcast weekly youth radio program
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Meet with youth, members of the community and agency personnel to determine interests and needs for broadcast.
2 (Qtr 1-2) Recruit and train volunteer engineers and producers (including youth engineers).
3 (Qtr 1-4) Coordinate and supervise engineers and producers.
4 (Qtr 1-2) Develop measurement instruments, including volunteer rosters for training and production, announcement and song rotation, and listener feedback.
5 (Qtr 2-4) Develop and maintain database of measurements obtained.
6 (Qtr 1-4) Develop and advise youth radio committee.
7 (Qtr 1-4) Coordinate podcasting of radio program.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] A youth-produced Spanish language radio program will be broadcast each week.   [INDICATOR] Weekly programs   [INSTRUMENT] We will keep an attendance roster for planning and training meetings and broadcasts.   [TARGET] 8-14 youth will participate regularly in developing and airing the radio program
2. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] The Orange County (NC) Latin American immigrant community will have a consistent, frequent source of information about people, events and services in their local community.   [INDICATOR] The variety of our announcements and news items   [INSTRUMENT] Roster of news items and announcements.   [TARGET] We expect to broadcast 3-5 new announcements about area news, services and events each week.
3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Members of the local Latin-American community will view the radio program as an opportunity for communication with other members of the community and a vehicle for community organizing.   [INDICATOR] Listeners   [INSTRUMENT] Listener feedback (phone calls, letters, emails)   Listener participation (contests, dedications)   Possibly listener attendance at an event sponsored by the program.   [TARGET] We expect to hear from 20-40 listeners by the end of the broadcast's first year.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Youth will manage an Internet lab.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) VISTA will interview youth to find out what types of projects/technologies are of interest to each individual.
2 (Qtr 1) VISTA will research existing teen technology training curricula.
3 (Qtr 1) VISTA will help youth develop a computer lab use policy.
4 (Qtr 1-3) VISTA will train youth on maintaining the desktops and network.
5 (Qtr 2) VISTA will investigate youth-led technology committees of other youth organizations.
6 (Qtr 2-3) VISTA will initiate and train a youth-led technology committee charged with maintaining the organization's technology infrastructure while accessing guidance of an adult volunteer.
Results
1. (Qtr 3) At least 10 youth will be able to perform tasks such as scanning for viruses, downloading and installing software, and installing and networking computer equipment.
2. (Qtr 1) The youth will write and agree to honor a use policy that includes using the equipment properly, sharing the space, avoiding inappropriate (obscene) Web sites, and following the law regarding the use of intellectual property.

3. (Qtr 4) A technology committee of at least 4 youth will maintain the organization's technology infrastructure.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Youth will help design and learn how to maintain organizational Web site.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) VISTA will hold group sessions with youth to discuss the purpose and design of the organizational Web site.
2 (Qtr 1) VISTA will introduce youth to award-winning Web sites and familiarize them with design issues and the possibilities for the technology.
3 (Qtr 3-4) VISTA will train youth on implementing the design of the Web site.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) Pa'lante will have a functional, appealing, and informative youth-maintained Web site.
2. (Qtr 4) At least three youth will be charged with updating the Pa'lante Web site.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) Club Neon will have a stable, funded, up to date technology infrastructure.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) VISTA will analyze current technology infrastructure, partnerships with volunteers and institutions, and organizational needs.
2 (Qtr 1-2) VISTA will coordinate computer and networking services between Club Neon and other institutions and businesses and negotiate the best options for Club Neon.
3 (Qtr 1-4) VISTA will investigate and advise on technology funding opportunities.
4 (Qtr 1-4) VISTA will stay abreast of developments in technology and legal issues.
Results
1. (Qtr 4) The youth of the community and their parents will have a place to go to to use the Internet for education, community organizing and entertainment.
2. (Qtr 4) Pa'lante and Club Neon staff will have a robust technology infrastructure that will contribute to their work.

Goal #5. (Qtr 1-4) Club Neon management will have access to and use technology to support the information management and growth of the center
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) VISTA will analyze current management technology use and needs
2 (Qtr 1-2) VISTA will develop database and other management tools
3 (Qtr 2-4) VISTA will train management and volunteers on the use of the tools
Results
1. (Qtr 3) Information management will be streamlined and coordinated among center staff

Goal #6. (Qtr 1-4) Center management will have performance statistics to provide to funders
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-2) VISTA will determine center operations and goals that are measureable.
2 (Qtr 2) VISTA will develop measurement instruments
3 (Qtr 3-4) VISTA will administer measurement instruments
Results
1. (Qtr 3) Center will be able to write stronger grant proposals

VISTA: Chris Anderson

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Extremely well, i have enjoyed a great sense of involovement in all facets of my host organizations

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
due to unforseen restructuring of my host organizations, (switching from Palante/YCC to YCC/Peoples Channel) we had to re-evalutate timelines but i feel like we are back on track now.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I enjoy the mission goals in both of my host organizations. I feel that once i have our training space allocated in the peoples channel, i will be able to better impact our mission.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
yes- i am receiving sufficient support.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
my biggest challenge has been paying attention to task follow through, and completing project goals.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Other than restructuing my host organizations 4 months into the americorps commitment, i haven't really had any issues that required project staff involovement. That, however, was executed very well and supported by the project staff. making the transition as painless as possible. (thanks!)

NetCorps NC, Durham, NC

VISTA: Aliya Abbasi
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/aliya_abbasi/

Supervisor: Matthew Latterell

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
To date, this project has accomplished much. Aliya has worked with a variety of nonprofit organizations in Greensboro and the surrounding community, offering direct assistance with technology training, implementation and support. She has coordinated a number of trainings and outreach events, exposing a significant population of nonprofits to this project. She has made connections with other community organizations and foundations, helping to lay the groundwork for making this project a more permanent part of the nonprofit landscape in Greensboro.

What difficulties have you encountered?
We have had staff turnover that directly impacted the management of this project and the supervision of Aliya. This slowed down some of our efforts in implementing a number of the specific project strategies. Aliya's resourcefulness and independence, however, quickly compensated for the staffing issues we faced, and has handily kept the project on track.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
More "proactive" support and resources coming from Project staff would be helpful--stories from the field, lessons learned, etc. This would help us see our project as part of a larger effort, which I think would be inspiring.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Our AmeriCorps*VISTA project is helping us serve a community of nonprofits that would otherwise not have access to technology assistance. It is also helping educate area technology assistance providers to the needs and unique requirements of nonprofits. Through AmeriCorps*VISTA, we are able to bring cost-effective, passion-driven capacity building resources to area nonprofits, helping them increase their efficiency and effectiveness.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our VISTA experience, a very positive one to date, is helping our organization in a number of ways. Aliya's placement in Greensboro is allowing us to work with organizations we would not be able to serve otherwise. She is exploring and implementing new strategies that others in our organization can now also use in their own work. She is helping to identify other community resources to take the project beyond its original scope, making sure that the organizations served will continue to benefit long after this project ends.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Some of the implementation projects originally discussed have changed/evolved to better fit the needs of the community. Other programs in our organization are now also thinking of how a VISTA could potentially improve our work and delivery of services to our community.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Technical Assistance to Non-profits] Conduct in-depth technology projects with 15 nonprofits per VISTA.

Comment: We are on track with this goal and will likely exceed it at the end of this project year.

Activities
1 (Qtr 2) Research Technology Assessments, shadow NetCorps staff in conducting an assessment.

Comment: This has been limited, due to staff changes in our Durham office. Aliya has received significant support from our other field staff in other parts of the country, which has mitigated this to some extent.

2 (Qtr 2) Interview staff of nonprofits that participate to assess workflow and tech solutions.

Comment: Going well.

3 (Qtr 2) Conduct inventory of current technology.

Comment: Aliya has inventoried the technology of several organizations as part of technology assessments.

4 (Qtr 2) Create assessment reports based on interviews and inventories with suggestions for technology projects to be implemented.

Comment: Aliya has created assessment reports for several groups to date, and is working on conducting five additional reports at the present time.

5 (Qtr 2-4) Conduct technology projects as indicated in assessment reports.

Comment: Aliya has conducted a phone system installation, several website projects, a number of office technology implementation projects, all coming out of technology assessment reports.

Results
1. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Identify 15 nonprofits across NC. (Identify 15 nonprofits in Triad: Greensboro, High Point, Winston-Salem for other VISTA.) [INDICATOR] The number of nonprofits that will receive in-depth technology assistance with regards to their infrastructure, database and other information and communication management tools. [INSTRUMENT] Each interested group will sign a contract indicating their interest in participating in an assessment project. We will count the contracts. [TARGET] We expect to find 15 groups for each VISTA to assess.

Comment: The process of identification has taken longer and required multiple points of entry (referrals, trainings, attending community events, etc.). Flexibility and patience, though, has yielded more than 15 organizations with which Aliya is working.

2. (Qtr 2) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Assessment reports will be created and given to nonprofits.
[INDICATOR] The current state of and need for technology in the participating nonprofits.
[INSTRUMENT] Project manager will review each assessment and keep track.
[TARGET] A 6 to 10 page report with suggestions and proposed technology projects for each group.

Comment: Aliya has produced assessment reports for several of the organizations so far. Not as many organizations are requiring this product as originally anticipated.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Implement 2 to 3 projects for each nonprofit as outlined in assessment report.
[INDICATOR] The number of in-depth technology projects conducted at each nonprofit.
[INSTRUMENT] The VISTA manager will review VISTA reports, timesheets, and follow up with participating nonprofits to check that promised work was delivered.
[TARGET] 2 or 3 projects complete at each nonprofit.

Comment: We are moving forward with this goal and several organizations have already implemented projects based on assessments.

VISTA: Aliya Abbasi

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
NetCorps has been exceedingly accepting and supportive of my position. All staff, without exception, welcomed me as part of their team. I had expected to be the sole person in the Greensboro location and was prepared to face the positional isolation that would no doubt be a part of the job. Turns out, that I am sharing office-space with a busy community-based non-profit organization and NetCorps staff across all locations is in constant communication with each other.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
I am on-track with the goals specified in the work plan. Over the past six months I have assisted over 15 organizations in North Carolina (across three counties) with technology projects ranging from installing wireless telephone systems, to website critiques, to website creation and updates, to setting-up web-hosting services, training, computer networks, technology assessments, computer support and maintenance, and technology consulting services.

Although I am heading in the right direction now, for a couple of months soon after I joined, I had to divert and refocus a little. Initially my work plans had to slow down because of depleting non-profit purses and the approaching holiday and tax seasons, which was not very surprising since I started my VISTA-term in the last quarter of the year. In addition, two months into my assignment, NetCorps%u2019 Durham-NC office was without regular staff, quite a few incomplete projects, and renting idle office space. I refocused my energies to the Durham office by completing a few of the projects and reorganizing the Durham office to vacate the extra space. Now, NetCorps is accepting applications for staff to assist with their projects in the triangle area and I have expanded the scope of my services to include another county where the non-profits need technology assistance.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
NetCorps assists environmental, social justice, and community-based organizations increase their capacities through the application of communication and information technology. I feel that by helping the community-based non-profit organizations use technology efficiently, I am contributing to and furthering their causes, which is the core of NetCorps' mission.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
As I mentioned earlier, NetCorps has an extraordinary support culture. NetCorps' staff at all locations Medford-OR, Eugene-OR, Portland-OR, Durham-NC (while it had staff) and Greensboro-NC offices are in constant contact via emails, phone, and messenger.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
This is slowly changing but the three biggest challenges have been:
1. The staff in non-profit organizations not being comfortable with technology: using it and talking about it
2. Non-profit organizations do not appreciate the technology they have so it is not being used to its potential
3. Non-profit organizations do not budget for technology so they end-up spending more to put-out-the-fires

Three major accomplishments are:
1. We started NetCorps' Technology Exchange Club in February 2006, to provide a platform for non-profit organizations to interact, explore, and exchange ideas about technology
2. By immediately addressing the crisis at NetCorps' Durham-NC office, we have maintained NetCorps' reputation in the Triangle area as a trustworthy technology assistance provider for non-profit and community-based organizations
3. Through the Technology Exchange Club and online survey, we have some idea of the current critical need areas for NetCorps' services

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Project Staff has assisted me by identifying resources, providing a platform for communication to share experiences and ideas with other AmeriCorps VISTAs through web-blogs and with priority-

area coordinators through list-servs, and reinforced the support by periodic checking-in by VISTA leaders.

The phone meetings with our VISTA leader are a great support tool and we could expand that to have similar phone or internet meetings with the coordinator and other VISTAs of the priority-area so that we can exchange program ideas and stay on-track with our projects.

Portland Community Media, Portland, OR

VISTA: Ryn Shane-Armstrong
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/ryn_shane-armstrong/

Supervisor: Carl Kucharski, Laura Craig-Bennett

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
In the past six months, OLLIE has provided digital media training to over 150 youth through 17 projects at 11 community locations. In addition, OLLIE has scheduled projects to serve an additional 180 youth over the next six months. Each %u201Cround%u201D of OLLIE projects has balanced new and returning community partners. Our VISTA has served as a group coordinator for many of these sites, facilitating communication between the OLLIE staff and volunteers, the OLLIE coordinator, and community partners. Ryn has also begun to identify volunteers to support this project. He identified the post-production talents of a community partner and utilized them to finish a student project.

In addition, OLLIE%u2019s curriculum design has evolved. Based on participant feedback, trainer input, and research into youth media best practices; the teaching methods, practice exercises, and time allotments for each segment of production have changed to better serve the youth we work with.   Ryn%u2019s insights about classroom teaching experiences and research into youth media curriculum are of great value to this process. I am looking forward to further utilizing Ryn%u2019s expertise to design and implement our summer intensive %u201CAdventures in Television%u201D sessions. He is one of the leads for this project.

A very exciting part of OLLIE%u2019s evolution is the creation and implementation of a graphic design identity package. Ryn has served as a lead contact in the process of recruiting and hiring a designer, developing a logo, and working with vendors. Currently Ryn is leading efforts to develop and refine copy that will promote the program in print, web, and video materials. Ryn also was able to develop his web design skills to create a first draft of a website for OLLIE: www.ollietv.org. Behind the scenes, he has created extensive outlines for future implementations of a site that will be useful to project staff, community partners, and program participants.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Ongoing organizational changes at both community media centers have often delayed timelines for program development projects. Balancing between being a part of the staff culture at two media centers and getting work done is a continuing challenge for OLLIE. Ryn has made good efforts to get to know trainers from both organizations. His interpersonal efforts have led to better relationships and communication between the project staff from both organizations.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
The Project staff has answered questions from myself and Ryn promptly, which I appreciate. An idea for the future may be to coordinate regional support groups for VISTA, perhaps funding and facilitation for a regional in-person meeting at 4 months into the program that combines time for discussion and support with ongoing training.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
OLLIE is a program that has expanded and evolved with the addition of a VISTA to the staff. The efforts of Ryn Shane-Armstrong to develop program teaching and promotional tools will exist beyond his time as a VISTA and serve to promote the program in the Portland community for years to come.

The benefits of OLLIE come first and foremost in the experiences of the youth participating in the project. In the six-month OLLIE Evaluation Report prepared by Paula Manley Organization and Community Development dated January 31, 2006, an after-school coordinator describes a group Ryn worked with:
%u201CI saw a big self esteem and confidence boost in the students. I heard back from other

teachers that they students were excited about staying after school to work on their projects. Particularly for students with English as a second language, the video projects gave them a different medium for communicating and they flourished.%u201D

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
The OLLIE mission is to provide media and technology training and tools to under-served students in our communities by bringing media tools into the classroom to support educators by building student self-confidence, improving teamwork skills, increasing comfort with technology, and enhancing critical thinking.

Our VISTA is helping to achieve this mission by serving as an instructor and mentor to youth, developing program curriculum, working to enhance the image and awareness of the organization by developing our web presence and print materials, and working with volunteers and community organizations to build and maintain OLLIE.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
Ryn has enhanced OLLIE by asking thoughtful questions and helping to find creative ways to answer them. The support Ryn provided for web development and graphic design was not part of the original VISTA goals, but instead a response to a need he saw within the program.

An amazing thing about Ryn is the way in which he integrated himself into the media center community. He put himself %u201Cout there%u201D as willing to help, learn, and volunteer on his own time to help others and make the media center a better place. He has organized the staff on more than one occasion to attend cultural events and support each other. He is an exceptional asset to the Oregon Learning Lab for Information Education.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Youth Media] Target and build connections with communities in Multnomah County to deliver curriculum-oriented digital video production to youth grades 5-12 through the OLLIE program.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Observe current OLLIE services and gather feedback on them from trainers, students, and educators participating in the program.

Comment: Completed

2 (Qtr 1-2) Use teacher, administrator, and community contacts to target fifteen sites in need of OLLIE training
3 (Qtr 2) Meet with potential OLLIE schools to assess interest in and need for technology training.
4 (Qtr 3) Schedule and coordinate delivery of OLLIE training for fifteen community sites, to serve at least 300 students.

Comment: on track to complete

5 (Qtr 2-3) Develop application process and criteria for community sites, to be used in future OLLIE planning

Comment: Would like to move forward with this goal for Qtr 3-4

6 (Qtr 2-4) Document student and teacher thoughts about technology and media before and after the program.

Comment: Would like to move forward with this goal for Qtr 3-4

7 (Qtr 3-4) Implement application process to plan summer OLLIE projects for an additional 10 sites

Comment: Summer OLLIE has taken a new form that combines a previous youth media outreach effort, Adventures in TV, with the current efforts of OLLIE.

This summer, sixty youth in Multnomah County will be served by 4 weeklong intensive media making courses coordinated by OLLIE. These youth will receive approximately 25 hours of instruction time.

OLLIE will partner with 2-4 community organizations to provide youth, support, and facilities for these programs.

Projects will be targeted towards community engagement. The culminating event will be a gala premiere of the films at the end of the summer.

Our VISTA will be a member of the team that plans the design and implementation of this project.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Students and teachers report an improved attitude towards classroom work during participation in OLLIE.
[INDICATOR] Student attitudes towards classroom work before, during, and after OLLIE.
[INSTRUMENT] Surveys conducted by VISTA, OLLIE Coordinator, and Project Evaluator.
[TARGET] 51% of students report an increase in interest in classroom work and participation.

Comment: July-December 05 survey of project staff and participating community partners completed.

Additional materials to survey students in development.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Twenty five project sites and 500 students will create 100 curriculum-oriented digital video projects.
[INDICATOR] Number of sites, students, and video projects.
[INSTRUMENT] Program records and classroom rosters.
[TARGET] 25 sites, 500 students, 100 video projects.

Comment: OLLIE is not on track to reach the 500 student goal. This is due to smaller class sizes present in after-school and alternative education settings and program capacity. Project capacity/funding issues are currently under consideration by program administration.

OLLIE is on track to provide services to 31 projects with 19 community partners over the course of the VISTA's term of service. This will result in approximately 80 video projects.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Youth in poverty receive digital mediamaking courses to create 100 video projects that build connections within and between communties in Multnomah County.
[INDICATOR] The impact of digital video productions on youth and their communties.

For youth, this may mean taking next steps such as classes, creating projects, using technology for classroom work, internships, or participation in a youth media group.

For the communties, this may mean recognizing youth, participating in dialogue after community screenings, or gaining understanding of an issue in orAt each project site, at least half of the students express interest in technology and media by taking classes, creating around their community.
[INSTRUMENT] Screening reports, follow up surveys with teachers and students, program records.
[TARGET] For students, at least 51% take "next steps" listed above.

For communities, at least 50 communitiy members attend each screening and participate in dialogue with filmmakers and each other that follows.

Goal #2. (Qtr 2-4) Develop ongoing youth-involvement opportunities at two community media centers.
Activities
1 (Qtr 2) Survey interests of OLLIE program participants
2 (Qtr 2) Work with media centers to find facility and staff support for ongoing youth-involvement.
3 (Qtr 3) Begin hosting a pilot project, possibly project-based
4 (Qtr 3) Host community screening of student work
5 (Qtr 4) Evaluate pilot project, make changes, try again.
Results
1. (Qtr 3) A total of twenty youth participate in pilot ongoing youth involvement project

2. (Qtr 4) By creating ongoing opportunities for participants to practice and develop multimedia storytelling skills, the OLLIE project serves as a bridge bringing a new group of voices to the community media centers.

VISTA: Ryn Shane-Armstrong

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
My host organizations have been especially welcoming of me both professionally and personally. I have been included in group discussions and invited to participate in group process. Basically, they let me play in all their reindeer games.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
My old workplan is admitedly out-of-date, but to the extent that a general and irrelevant workplan of this kind can be fulfilled I do feel that I am on track to do so, and much, much more.

The current and most significant workplan, which has not yet been formalized, is much more specific and appropriate for the actual work I have been doing these past six months.

The only factor limiting my workflow within this informal workplan (other than a few massive structural transitions from both host organizations that causes quite a bit of confusion as to the protocal for making changes) is my own inexperience. Much of completing the workplan has been learning what it is to be a youth media coordinator/educator.

I should further note that a major factor contributing to my workplan success as a VISTA has been the near round-the-clock assistance of my immediate supervisor, Laura Craig-Bennett. Her help has not been limited only to the hours when I work. It has been extended to include any personal issues that have arisen in the past (housing, food, transportation, etc).

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I appreciate the "community" aspect of my host organizations' mission statements because it is intended to be a noun and not an adjective, lest we forget. But, sadly, I may be in an increasingly dwindling group of people who actually feel this way.

In any case, I do feel my tangible work with children in the classroom is especially helpful to both host organizations because it shows a concern on their part for the presence of youth voices in digital media production. I also feel that through digital video programs like OLLIE I can contribute, if even on a minescule level, to the development of a generation of truly media literate media-makers. This can only benefit the community media contingency who serve to create a more critical and engaged citizenry. I have seen in small moments the impact one person can have on the heart and mind of a child.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
My supervisors and co-workers are more than sufficiently supportive. I especially appreciate Laura Craig-Bennett, my jefe, who is always kind and honest. She speaks the truth of any given situation, even when it is hard to hear and out of her hands.

Occasionally I am forced to deal with office drama, but I've learned to sit back and enjoy the show, with or without popcorn. Part of working in an organization(s) of this nature is learning how to co-exist and co-create with multiple personalities and visions. I think it will ultimately make me more empathetic with my co-hort group of media advocates around the world.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
My three biggest challenges are (in no particular order) the Pacific Northwest rain (I'm a desert rat), lack of a true opportunity (testing and evaluation) to learn how to develop agency (self-confidence) as a youth media coordinator, and maintaining awareness of all tech and media advocacy issues around the United States (via listservs, online forums, random e-mails, weblogs, etc.).

My three most significant accomplishments include the first bilingual OLLIE production (Spanish and English), the creation of the OLLIE website and new graphic design identity, and a mountain of youth media curriculum research and ideas (in my head and on paper) that will probably only be actualized after my departure from the VISTA system. I nonetheless take pride in the hard work

that has gone into studying and understanding the "media minds" of the next generation. It has been monumentally insightful and rewarding.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Mike Denegal and Paul Hansen have always responded to my AmeriCorps VISTA questions thoroughly and promptly and with great consideration. Nettrice Gaskins, moreover, has been a wonderful source of information and inspiration in regards to all things relating to youth and media education. I will regret the day when I won't be able to call these fine folks colleagues.

As for additional assistance, I can only suggest that the optimism and good-will that was explicity expressed during the orientation week in Boston be expanded to follow the VISTA throughout his/her term. On the ground level, in the reality of community media at least, there is a widespread sense of distrust (maybe even disdain) for traditional systems of political agency, and a relative despair for the future of (youth) media training and education. This comes as a stark contrast to the hopefulness I first felt last August. Cynicism, in any field of work, and despite its evident justification, is an insidious killer for any young American like myself who wishes to preserve the promise of freedom inherent in making media.

Metropolitan Austin Interactive Network/TCRC, Bastrop/Austin, TX

VISTA: Nicholas Lewis
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/nicholas_lewis/

Supervisor: Gene Crick

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
As an unfunded 501c3 offering free online support for other nonprofit groups, we have to strive for powerful but low-cost means to deliver services. Nick has helped completely overhaul our online operations, converting some key servers and sites to new automated Content Management Systems (CMS) software, esp. drupal and civicspace. This conversion has proved very complicated and we have a long way left to go, but without VISTA help it simply would have been unthinkable.

Two examples of productive outcomes are a new national community ICT resource project <www.telecommunity.us> and a local community writing project <www.WriteOnAustin.org>. Though far from perfect they're good programs that would never exist without our VISTA volunteer.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Creating and working within totally new CMS technology environment has proven farm more difficult and challenging than we had initially expected. Seems like almost every time we try to implement a new feature we first have to overcome some quirk or glitch in the software. But as we are finding out, that's just part of dealing with new ICT technologies.

Project completion time requirements have frequently been underestimated due to factors above, mainly because we have little history on which to base projections. Fortunately, since we are a non-commercial operation and charge nothing for services, we aren't having to refund money to our customers.

The pressures from people eager to benefit from our new capabilities (including the Mayor of Austin) can generate work stress for all of us. But we're learning to manage (and reduce) that by improved operating planning and procedures.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
Actually we can find no fault with the VISTA organizational support. We are working in a narrow and highly specialized technical area (CMS web ops for community support) that we don't often need to call for CTCNet VISTA assistance. But when we do, the help is there and it's good.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
The Mayor of Austin is committed to increased literacy and to community awarenes, sharing and history. He wanted an online capability for local people to share written reports of community and individual life. But that is a major challenge and the city has no budget for such a major project.

Working with the Austin History Center (part of the local public library) the Metropolitan Austin Interactive Network was able to develop an online resource for this goal. With vital help from our VISTA volunteer Nick Lewis, we converted a server to automated content management software and created WriteOn, Austin! <www.writeonaustin.org>. This project now serves everyone in Austin, the nation's 18th largest city. (Trivia Fact: During this work I learned from the mayor that Austin is 50% larger than Atlanta. Coulda fooled me.)

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
He has helped completely overhaul our online operations, converting some key servers and sites to new Content Management Systems software, esp. drupal and civicspace. Though the very newness of the software has caused unplanned complications and delays, we're managing to create a great many new content sections and features.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?

when this first VISTA experience began, I thought the "VISTA educational experiences" only meant education for the volunteer. have now come to realize how much learning I am doing as well. Working with the volunteer has taught me much I needed to know about managing and working a very talented younger staff member.

I discovered both "young" and "talented" are significant descriptors. Nick is very capable, with such great enthusiasm that we've had to learn how to most productively meet organizational and project needs. It's been interesting and kinda fun. Don't tell him I said so, but Nick is really a fine young man, with great spirit and intelligence.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Networking] Develop enhanced online tools for community members and local public service organizations, both to support local efforts and to provide a model for other communities.

Comment: We are pleased to report our project is right on track toward its goals. Despite unexpected complexity and challenge, the primary online tool (drupal 4.7 hosting system) is implemented and functional. Now we are refining that system and developing various specific new applications and content.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Implement open source content management software (eg. Drupal and/or Civicspace) to maintain community info online with minimal administration.

METHOD: VISTA will work with our Network Operations Director (Wayne McDilda) and our Web Services Director (Terry Dyke) to learn, configure and maintain new services based on content management software. Under their direction s/he will serve as webmaster for these services, documenting efforts, challenges and best practices.

Comment: On target here as well. We first installed on existing MAIN/TCRC network operating center servers, only to encounter many problems as the new CMS collided with legacy systems in our 13 year old NOC. But we got through it. We substantially upgraded our RedHat Linux version and Drupal 4.6 is powering "WriteOn, Austin!" (our first project) fairly smoothly these days.

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2 (Qtr 1-4) Add new power and capability to online information system (eg. lists, blogs, wikis, info feeds) available both to all individual users and for use within specific groups.

METHODS: Research currently available tools, seeking input from national advisory council; Review with local advisory group for relevance and easy use; Select and install additional tools desired for community benefit.

3 (Qtr 1-4) COMMMUNITY OUTREACH. This VISTA project is about community service; information technology is merely a tool. The volunteer will spend 25% or more time directly involved with community members and organizations, working with others to learn and serve their true needs, not our own perceptions. As time permits, activities below may be included in VISTA efforts.

Comment: From the start we've made sure Nick's work is more than typing code. He spends time visiting sites, talking with users, attending relevant meetings and conferences, plus he stays in constant communication with others in community technical professional area. I'd say this is going okay.

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4 (Qtr 1-4) Help develop and pursue outreach to entire community, especially poor and underserved. Work/teach at our public access sites in Texas Workforce Center and Bastrop Public Library. Research community technology resources, best practices to be summarized into new Community Technology Guide. Help local nonprofits obtain grants and develop revenue/support resources. Work with Austin History Center on new online procedures for non-profits. Serve as liaison with community and partner organizations.

Results

1. (Qtr 3) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Online system for local information and resources, easy to use and to maintain. Provides direct value for community and serves as a model for other communities to adopt, adapt and improve.
[INDICATOR] increased use of online information system by local residents; customer feedback on satisfaction with system
[INSTRUMENT] server activity logs, supplemented by user surveys gauging quality of service and customer satisfaction. TCRC Research Director (Dr. Richard Cutler) will oversee evaluation, analysis, and report.
[TARGET] usage growth: 8% in 12 months/18% in 24 months (allows for outreach, acceptance after online system fully implemented)

Comment: Project milestones submitted in the original VISTA application were deliberately conservative. It's better to go over than under what you promised. And we have. The system is in place and functional, people are using it, and we're adding or improving features almost daily. Usage stats exceed our preliminary goals.

2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Enhanced communication power within community and groups, simplified use and administration. Improved community awareness and services of each nonprofit organization.
[INDICATOR] adoption and use of enhanced 'socialware' communications tools by participating local nonprofit organizations.
[INSTRUMENT] operating center records of new implementations and usage, detailed customer use and satisfaction surveys.
[TARGET] 5 new tools adopted in 3rd & 4th Quarter; 10 new tools in use by end of 24 months.

Comment: Consistent good news here as well. As noted previously we've easily met our milestones... okay, "easily" may be a misleading word, the work was a sonofagun. But every measure indicates we're on target.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Increase in support services provided and online resources available for community members and organizations; widened local engagement in this ongoing community service program.
[INDICATOR] Number of distinct technology-based community services (features) available from MAIN; Number and diversity of online information resources available for users. Awareness and use of online tools and information resources by local residents; customer feedback on satisfaction with MAIN online system services.
[INSTRUMENT] server activity logs, qualitative and quantitative comparison of services (functions) , number and diversity of information resources – compared to beginning date of VISTA project. These supplemented by user surveys evaluating quality of service and customer satisfaction.
[TARGET] By end of project first year: 5 new technology-based functions available; 10% overall increase in information resources; 8% system usage increase; minimum 12% growth in community awareness of services, measured by survey of target community members.

Comment: With "WriteOn, Austin!", "TeleCommunity.US" and "FCC Comments" well underway (installed and functional, with continuing refinements) we are proceeding at about the right pace. Sometimes it seems too slow but that's enthusiasm and impatience talking. One lesson from this project is a personal need to remain realistic in expectations.

Workplan Revision

We're doing more "refinement" than "revision" of the workplan. Since we're meeting our goals, the key is learning to do this more calmly and at a smooth, productive pace. Building "Write On, Austin!" was a blooming nightmare because we had zero experience upon which to base our projections and timelines. Initially, when a tsunami of technical glitches and problems hit, it nearly swamped us. We took longer to implement the site than we had hoped. But we learned. Our workplan now is focused on steady worktime rather than pressure to meeting arbitrary deadlines.

Ironically, we're moving faster this way.

VISTA: Nicholas Lewis

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
Gene Crick and Main.org have welcomed me as though I was a member of the family. At no point have I even for a moment felt as though I was an "outsider", or something of a lowly intern. Beyond our working relationships, we've become great friends.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
The early portion of my VISTA tour was very productive. Then, in mid december, I made the fateful decision to move our active projects to drupal 4.7. This was in many ways a dreadful mistake from the short term standpoint. Over the past 2 months, great swarms of bugs, and my own stupidity have contributed to my work getting off track. However, the long term benefits of keeping our development oriented to Drupal 4.7 more than outweigh the rather infuriating short-term cons. The actual reasons for this are a bit technical(forms API, AJAX friendliness, CCK, Views)...

The chief factors that contributed to us getting of track were:
1. misleading information from the Drupal core developers about 4.7's release schedule. 4.7 is now 3 months past the intended final release date....
2. the risks of moving onto 4.7 were only clear in hindsight.
3. spending a month trying to get 4.7 development sites stable proved to be a mismanagement of time on my part. I should have just worked on tasks that didn't depend on 4.7's stability (such as drupal UI improvements, and training materials).

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
I'm inspired to Main.org's mission of bringing internet access to those who are underserved in my community. My "agenda" has always been using the internet to give voice, to the previously voiceless; to plant seeds of what I hope will one day be a flurishing global culture that could only exist by way of the internet.

I feel my work in creating community-powered websites for a variety of orgs, as well as exploring low-cost, low-overhead hosting solutions for drupal is well in keeping with my organization's mission.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Absolutely.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Three Biggest Challanges:
1. Keeping up with the incredibily fast pace of drupal development in terms of my own programming knowledge.
2. Achieving the critical community interest and mass that is a pre-requisite for success in all of my current projects.
3. Managing my workload, not burning out, and making sure every hour counts.
Three Biggest Accomplishments (I'm assuming these are meant to be personal):
1. Within 6 months, I've gone from novice to fluent in PHP, MySQL, and the unix command-line
2. Through my writings, and proposals, i've managed to gain a significant amount of influence in the direction of open-source projects for non-profits, Civicspace, and CiviCRM in particular.
3. In a lot of ways this experience has been like bootcamp. There were times when stress, overwork, and poverty made me consider dropping out. However, having made it past the halfway point, I'm confident I'll make it all the way through. So, in many ways, I suppose I consider being able to stick with it day by day a significant accomplishment.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
The project staff have been very patient with my shannanogans. They've been very quick to respond, when I've needed assistance -- and really, I can't think of any ways they could improve.

Technology For All, Houston, TX

VISTA: Nichole Payne
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/nichole_payne/

Supervisor: Will Reed

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
With initial funding for equipment and supplies from the United Way of the Texas Gulf Coast and another anonymous grant, TFA has developed a Digital Media program at the Misión Milby Community Technology Center for youth in the East End. Over 60 youth signed up for this program. With the leadership, coordination and facilitation skills of our VISTA volunteer, Nikki Payne, youth in the program are learning skills for movie making, web design and other digital media tools.

What difficulties have you encountered?
The Technology For All infrastructure has recently been reviewed with minor changes resulting in eliminating some of the red tape involved in the VISTA volunteer getting the resources needed in a timely fashion.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
We are looking forward to the 2006 Technology Training Programs and would like to assist with any hands on training in the Mission Milby CDC computer labs. The new online tool,My Improvement Plan will be a great help this year as the VISTA volunteer continues planning program activities.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Through the efforts of the Americorps VISTA volunteer services, nearly 2,000 middle school and high school students in the East End community have benefited from using the Mission Milby CDC computer lab. The lab activities are coordinated by Nikki Payne, Americorps VISTA volunteer. It is expected that this number will double by the end of the program year, in August.

Another example of the Americorps VISTA service benefiting the community was exemplified in Nikki Payne's trip to South America. With a digital media grant obtained through one of our volunteers during our work with Katrina evacuees, Nikki visited digital media programs in Ecuador, Argentina and Chile. Nikki returned with curriculum and digital media best practices for distribution to other community technology centers in Houston.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Technology For All is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to empower under resourced communities through the tools of technology. We do this by partnering with local community-based organizations and local school districts. We create educational, economic and personal opportunities in which they live.

Nikki Payne, Americorps VISTA volunteer has made a significant contribution towards Technology For All meeting our goal of creating dialogue between area schools, recruiting students for various Mission Milby CDC programs i.e. Learn and Earn, Open Lab Activities and was instrumental in securing funds for a cross cultural digital exchange program.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
One of the most unexpected impacts that Nikki Payne had on our program was her ability to secure funds for the digital media cultural exchange project. Another unexpected impact was Nikki's

success in presenting the "Pop Rocks and Soda: Debunking the myths of Digital Media" at the Technology Fall Conference this past November 2005 at the United Way Community Resource Center. This presentation had a positive impact on several community technology center representatives in attendance at the conference.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Technical Assistance to Non-profits] Develop and implement a program that will strengthen and maintain Technology For All's relationship with Houston area Community Technology Centers (CTCs)
Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Research, develop, and maintain a comprehensive contact list of all Technology For All CTCs and all other active CTC's in the greater Houston area.
2 (Qtr 1) Develop a regular contact plan to maintain connections with all CTCs developed by TFA and all other active CTCs in the greater Houston area.
3 (Qtr 2) Organize and train a group of volunteers to make initial phone visits to update program information with all identified CTCs in Houston area.
4 (Qtr 2) Develop follow-up plan based on the responses in initial phone interviews.
5 (Qtr 2) Make selected person to person follow-up visits with key CTC personnel in Houston area to identify the needs of Houston area CTCs.
6 (Qtr 2-4) Develop and implement two ongoing programs that address the most pressing needs identified by Houston Area CTCs.
7 (Qtr 2-4) Organize two initial events to introduce the new ongoing programs. Develop and plan the events, recruit volunteers and resources, and implement the events.
8 (Qtr 4) Evaluate the events and make adjustments as needed in the programs and in future events as planned on a recommended schedule.
9 (Qtr 3-4) Encourage development of volunteers to assist in CTC Development and Support.
10 (Qtr 1-4) Thoroughly document all CTC Development and Support activities and procedures in both digital and written formats so that programs maintained and created can be sustained and continue smoothly through the support of volunteers and others.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) • The TFA database/contact list of Houston area CTCs will be updated and verified
2. (Qtr 4) All 200+ CTCs affiliated with TFA and other CTCs in the Greater Houston area will be contacted at least three times
3. (Qtr 2) A group of ten volunteers will be recruited and trained to assist in extensive telephone interviews with the CTCs identified
4. (Qtr 2) A follow-up plan resulting from the information obtained in the telephone interviews will be developed and presented to the TFA Management Team
5. (Qtr 3) Two specific programs will be organized and developed by to address the needs identified in the CTC Telephone interviews. At least 20 CTC leaders will attend the two initial events to announce the new programs.
6. (Qtr 4) The CTC Vista will develop a program manual in digital and printed formats to document the activities and programs developed during the year of service.

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) (Alternate Priority Area: Community Networking) Develop and implement a program of community engagement and participation that will build capacity for the TFA-Wireless community network project.

Comment: although this was not her priority area Nichole Has made herself a presence in the community, taking frequent meetings with Counsulars Principals and parents.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1-4) Identify and assist in the development of 15 additional mesh box sites in the TFA-Wireless service area.
2 (Qtr 1-4) A documented customer development and implementation plan demonstrating the opportunities for neighborhood residents to participate in TFA-Wireless.
3 (Qtr 1-2) Assist in the development and implementation of a TFA-Wireless customer education plan.

4 (Qtr 1-3) Recruit community residents to participate in the implementation of TFA-Wireless customer development and education plan.
5 (Qtr 1-4) Assist in the development of web accessible information about TFA-Wireless.
6 (Qtr 1-4) Together with community residents and volunteers develop and implement a strategic plan to insure the longevity and effectiveness of the TFA-Wireless community network.
7 (Qtr 1-4) Thoroughly document all TFA-Wireless activities and procedures in both digital and written formats so that programs maintained and created can be sustained and continue smoothly through the support of volunteers and others.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) TFA-Wireless will deploy additional mesh-boxs to augment the wireless canopy across the of the Pecan Park neighborhood
2. (Qtr 1) Trained volunteer and community participants will assist in the expansion of the TFA-Wireless service
3. (Qtr 2) Increased awareness of TFA-Wireless and growth in the customer   base through a systematic contact plan with Pecan Park residents
4. (Qtr 2) Ongoing classes in the community to emphasis the outreach component of TFA-Wireless to the low income families in the neighborhood.
5. (Qtr 3) TFA-Wireless will have an on-line catalogue of Products and Services easily accessible by community residents.
6. (Qtr 4) Creation of a TFA-Wireless operations handbook cataloging the operations parameters learned over the course of the project

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) (Alternative Priority Area: Community Networking) Develop and implement a program of community engagement and participation in the TFA-JobTech Social Enterprise that will build capacity to train and emply neighborhood labor for livable wage jobs created by Technology For All.
Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Gain a working understanding of the JobTech concept and training model.
2 (Qtr 2) Develop a systematic self-sustaining process for making the community aware of the JobTech opportunity and inviting them into the program.. Refine the existing assesment tool to help identify the level at which each participant enters the program. Recruit volunteers.
3 (Qtr 3) Train volunteers to conduct assement interviews and place neighborhood particpants in the proper training classes.
4 (Qtr 4) Involve existing volunteers in the recruitment of additional volunteers. Oversee the existing volunteers in their training of the new recruits. Repeat the cycle.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) The VISTA will have a clear understanding of both the JobTech concept and the training model. From that knowledge they will have the basic understanding necessary to develop a comprehenshive approach to the community.
2. (Qtr 2) A new assessment tool will be developed to better determine exactly where each particpant best fits into the JobTech Program. Five volunteers will be recruited.
3. (Qtr 3) Volunteers will know how to conduct assessment interviews for the JobTech program. They will conduct those interviews and 15 new people will be admitted to the JobTech training program at the appropirate level.
4. (Qtr 4) A new set of volunteers will be brought on to repeat the cycle, thus making the process self-sustaining.

Goal #4. (Qtr 1-4) (Alternate Priority Area: Youth Media Programs)Develop and implement a program that teaches the youth of the East End to use various digital media like photos, movies, newsletters, and web pages to chronicle and catalogue the rich culteral heritage of their immediate community.

Comment: under Nikki's tutelage the students have created movies, Commercials, brilliant photography and documentaries. The program comprises reading, writing mentoring, and discussion about storytelling in a digital era as well as the impact of technology on individuals and cultures. The students learn how to craft engaging stories, analyze and critique each others' stories, work with the tools necessary to present material in digital format, and other skills, all housed in the safe haven MMCTC Mission Milby Community Technology Center. The Program focuses on three areas:

â€¢ Literacy in Digital Media--Understanding the culture and contexts that new media is developing, focusing on Latin America

â€¢ Aesthetics/Grammar/Narrative Voice in New Media--Learning writing and design skills necessary for creating effective digital media, utilizing Latin American Curriculum

â€¢ Tools of Digital Media--Mastering Photoshop, Premiere, Pinnacle and related tools and skills

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Do necessary research and begin collecting of raw materials for media project. Also begin recruitment of volunteers.
2 (Qtr 2) Conduct at least one training event to instruct volunteers on their various tasks, such as, recruitment of students, mentoring, and a knowledge base to be instructors. Begin development of a community leaders list with complete contact information. Develop student recruitment promotional materials. Begin initial contact with community leaders.
3 (Qtr 3) Work with the volunteers in the youth recruitment and registration process. Conduct a six weeks class in which the volunteer teachers and mentors will work with the youth to teach them how to use digital media arts. Conduct meetings with community leaders to issue personal invitations to the media festival. Issue general invitations to the immediate community for the upcoming media festival.
4 (Qtr 4) Students will complete and refine a digital media presentation. Sponsor a media festival in which the students will present their work to local Hispanic leaders and the immediate community.
Results
1. (Qtr 1) The necessary recourses to complete the project will be a known quantity.
2. (Qtr 2) The volunteers will all know their assigned duties and have the capacity to carry out their responsibilities.
3. (Qtr 3) The youth will gain the knowledge, skills and ability to complete a media project. The youth will begin work on their media project for presentation to community leaders. The commuinty leaders will be aware of the project.

Comment: Nikki's Mind over media project created a culture-specific mentoring program using church volunteers, college students, and citizens, to assist and encourage the continued learning of members of their ethnic group utilizing the existing guide procured from Latin America.

Mind over Media included showcasing bottom-up innovations by ethnic group, storytelling, and bottom-up peer mentoring, integrated with community-building themes of school and community technology centers

4. (Qtr 4) The entire community will celebrate their culture through different media presentations from the various perspectives of each student.

VISTA: Nichole Payne

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
very well, I have a key, and participate in the weekly staff meetings and other Technology For All events

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
The workplan was very loosly put together, Because the organization is so dynamic, and responsive. Was spending days at the astrodome serving Katrina Survivors in the Workplan? no. I wear a lot of hats here at Technology For All and in all honesty, I haven't looked at the workplan since my first day here. This is not to say I do not have an agenda. on the contrary. My supervisors are keen on ensuring my success in any of my endeavors with the students.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
they have their fingers on the pulse on the new millineum. They are bold vibrant and young enough to not be stymied by protocol. The work I did in South america, Katrina relief and continue to do with the community members, is invaluable to me and the supervisors are not remiss in relaying to me my value to them.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
For a while, it was complicated. their was alot of red tape a lot of convoluted methodology for the simplest request. but this is the way with organizations slowly but surly finding their place in the comunity and non-profit sector.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
1st challenge communication: communication was almost impossible near the beginning. Their was a chain of command of sorts but it often fell apart in the middle. And sometimes the left hand didn't know what the right hand was doing.
2nd challenge. Efficacy. Getting the students to give a damn was nearly my undoing
3rd challenge staying connected. I wanted to feel "plugged in" to the community and sometimes my position kept me "indoors"

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
They are a fantastic resource whatever you don't know, whatever you're unsure of, you can rest assured your question would be answered within 24 hours. responsive.

RECA Foundation, Kennewick, WA

VISTA: Misty Kesler
Website: http://misty.tcfn.org

Supervisor: Ronda Evans

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
The last six months have been used to put together easy, self passed trainings to use the 4People Information, Referral, and Case Management System. Our VISTA Misty has been extremely instrumental in accomplishing this task. Misty accomplishes tasks in a timely and efficient manor. We look forward to the next six months, and hopefully another year of service.

What difficulties have you encountered?
Misty struggles with here health, but she so willing, with a great since of humor, and extremely easy to be with when we have deadlines and are under stress.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
We have just recently stumbled on to Skype.com.   It would be helpful if the project staff was aware of the new web tools that are available to help CTC%u2019s succeed.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
Misty helped design the Webinar on Lessons learned from Katrina. Here is an example of the impact of her work with the RECA Foundation and 4People.

What is lacking for Katrina evacuees is a grassroots, community-driven resource and case management technology tool to connect, to communicate, to share resources, to share client information, and to maximize the usage of community assets. After Katrina, the larger agencies recognized that they could not do it alone, and found the faith-based communities willing to help. Agencies, LTRT%u2019s, and faith-based organizations want to be part of the recovery effort for the Katrina evacuees and help the less fortunate of the community, and were not provided client information to make this happen.

4People is already connecting communities together, coordinating services, and maximizing community assets through the use of the 4People resources and case management system in eastern Washington. 4People already has thousands of online resources and services listed. 4People is a model that needs to be duplicated in every community across the United States. 4People will continue the work of %u201CConnecting People to Resources and Opportunities". This will leave a legacy of an online community resource database and multiple grassroots, community organizations consortiums that will be able to coordinate, communicate, determine unmet needs, and serve the less fortunate for years to come. And should a disaster happen, 4People will be there to help!

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
Our missions are in our names, and Misty has truly helped to accomplish our missions.

RECA Foundation %u2013 Realizing Every Community Asset
4People.tcfn.org %u2013 Connecting People, Resources and Organizations

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
We are on the verge of expanding 4People to cover the whole state of Washington.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Community Organizing or Development] Develop, promote and implement the 4People database and Case Management System to increase eastern Washington's awareness of community resources, and reduce the number of homeless and low income families through ultization of the on-line mulit agency Case Management system.

Comment: Misty has developed easy to answer web forms to keep track of users, events, etc. Misty has also developed easy step by step online instructions on using the Case Management system. People are beginning to use the Case Management system.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Develop the community resources on-line database through out eastern Washington.

2 (Qtr 1-4) 2. Recruit and train volunteers and non-profits to update their own resouces on line and to participate in the Case Management on-line client coordination system.

Comment: Misty has participated in two trainings to use the Case Management System, and will be responsible to walk new users through the system to use it effectively.

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3 (Qtr 1-4) 3. Develop materials to promote, implement, and monitor on-line resources and Case Management System.

Comment: Misty has developed easy to answer web forms to keep track of users, events, etc. Misty has also developed easy step by step online instructions on using the Case Management system. People are beginning to use the Case Management system.

Results

1. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Develop and implement a promotional and sustainability plan to increase the usage of 4People resource database and Case Management Module.
[INDICATOR] Increase the number of agencies using and participating in the on-line resources and case management system.
[INSTRUMENT] Count of new resources posted on database
Count of number of hits per resource category
Count of number of e-mail contacts
Number of agencies participating in the case management system.
[TARGET] 1000 community resources will be listed.
The number of hits on the web page increase by 10,000.
25 agencies will sign up to participate in the multi agencies case management system.

Comment: Misty has developed the 4People database to easily obtain resources in 19 counties covering 40,000 square miles. Please take a monent and reveiw at 4People.tcfn.org

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2. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Communities and neighborhoods will integrate online community resources information into their webpages and promotional materials.
[INDICATOR] The degree to which participants use 4People database links in their promotional materials
[INSTRUMENT] Number of community web sites utilizing resources from the online website.
[TARGET] 25 Organizations will have links on their WebPage to 4People.

Comment: The numbers of users have doubled in the last six months, with 20 Case Managers signed up on the 4People system.

3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Participating Community Service Providers will increase their capacity to serve their constituents and clients through the use of information technology.
[INDICATOR] Increased number of referrals
[INSTRUMENT] On line and 4People reporting tools
[TARGET] 40% of community service providers will report referrals from 4People.

Workplan Revision

We are extreemly happy with the progress of 4People and Misty's work to achieve this end.   No changes at this time.

VISTA: Misty Kesler

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I was accepted before I even started working with the RECA Foundation. Ronda Evans and Bruce McComb have been just wonderful, and patient with me as I'm adjusting and trying to learn everything they teach me. The patience continues, as I learn new things every day.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
We've made a lot of progress here at the RECA Foundation. Many projects have been completed, and there are many more to come. I do feel that I've met each goal that we set out at a timely pace, and my ability to understand what they ask me to do and be able to do it, and my ability to learn quickly has helped with this.

My Projects have included maintanence of the 4people.org database, developing materials for teaching and training, discovering new resources, be it user friendly programs, or important referral information that would be added to 4people. org. A more extensive outline of Projects worked on can be viewed on <A HREF="http://misty.tcfn.org/workblog.html">My Workblog</A>

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
The help that we provide to our community, makes all the hard work that has been done worth the effort. There are resources that I didn't even know existed, and getting it out there and known by the community and used by those who need the help, is our primary goal. So far we have been able to do that. To be able to provide low-income families with the means to a better life, and to see how greatful they are to us for helping them, gives me an undescribable feeling of goodness.

It really hit me, the huge difference that we make to our community, the night Ronda Evans and I handed out 13 computers to 13 different low-income, mainly spanish speaking families. At first I was overwhelmed by it, I don't know anything other than English, and I didn't know how to communicate with these people. After observing Ronda Evans as she communicated with these families and showed them how to use the beginning computers, it helped me overcome my fears and I was able to help train some of these people on how to use a computer, using my hands a lot, and speaking mainly to the children, who then would translate to their parents. It was a very enlightening experience, and warming to the heart and soul, when after Ronda Evans and I were done with the trainings, everyone gathered around us and thanked us. It was that point, when it hit me fully, how much of a difference that is being made to these people's lives. People of my community can have a better life, because we took the time to help them find a way to meet their needs.

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Ronda and Bruce are extremely supportive of what I do for them. They are easy to get along with, and fun to work with. Our communication is good enough, though it could be better but I don't see any problems that need improvement. Though I'm still trying to get my life in order, and balance my personal life with my work life. (it's been difficult) They've both been very patient with me, and help me when they can. Ronda gives me advice, and suggestions that I had never thought of, and it helps when I feel that my life is starting to get out of control. In turn, I try my best to learn what they take the time to teach me as quickly as I can, and complete my projects with quickness and throughness that shows in the finished outcome.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges:
1) Getting up in the morning, every morning, and going to work. Health problems make it challenging to get up and go to work sometimes. I've never experienced the routine of a stable work enviornment, such as I have experienced here as a VISTA.
2) Tons of new projects at once can overwhelm me sometimes, especially when they need to be done quickly. It can be a challenge to not allow myself to get completely overwhelmed by it.
3) Dealing with people face to face in a leadership type of position - In this job, I don't deal with people all the time, but when I do I find it challenging because naturally I am extremely shy, and in certain situations I have had to take the step and speak out.

Accomplishments:

1) Getting up in the mornings and going into work. - This is a big accomplishment for me. To make myself do what needs to be done has been good for me, both mentally and physically, and even spiritually, I have made vast improvements. The routine, day to day, schedual helps me keep an order to my life, and though I am still learning what I need to learn to succeed in the future, I feel I'm well on my way to the goals I have for my life.

2) All the things I have learned, and will be learning. - I've learned so much in the time I've been here, and yet there are things that I didn't realize I knew until I utilized those skills. I still have more to learn, but my self-confidence in my abilities has blossomed since I became a VISTA, and I'm confident that I will do just fine.

3) Successfully completing every project that comes our way, always makes me feel good. And to know that I'm helping make a difference in my community I feel is the biggest accomplishment of them all.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?

That I was given a chance to proove my worth, was the best thing that has happened. I have no degree in anything and everything I have learned in the past, I taught myself. I'm so blessed that I was accepted into this program, and I honestly cannot think of anything better than what this project has done for me on a professional, emotional, and spiritual level.

Since I've become a VISTA, I have changed a great deal. I've blossomed into a person I never thought I would be. Becoming involved with AMERICORPS and working with the RECA Foundation has been the best thing. We get along extremely well both as employers/employee, and friends.

DANEnet, Madison, WI

VISTA: Blake Hall
Website: http://www.cpcs.umb.edu/vista/blog/blake_hall/

Supervisor: Eric Howland

Please summarize your project's accomplishments and your VISTA's contribution in particular:
Although Blake has been involved with a number of projects, his time has primarily been involved with:

- Working on the DANEnet Day of Service. Which was a success in the fall of 2005.

- Working with the EPICS service learning program at the University of Wisconsin. There Blake is working both to teach the current students (the reality of nonprofits and low income citizens [fall term]; Web programming [spring term]) and to develop a program transitioning the student created projects to DANEnet for long term maintenance.

- Working with the Youth Resource Network to create a Web portal for youth serving activities/agencies.

- Blake helped to write a successful Youth Visions proposal and he has been the day-to-day DANEnet presence on that grant.

What difficulties have you encountered?
In retrospect we were slow getting Blake the training he needed. The request/opportunity to use his experience to orient students to the world of nonprofits and low income citizens conflicted with some training that he could have gotten. Fortunately, he has been able to learn much of what he has needed and he is now part of the team offering the technical training team that he might have taken. All workers are most valuable when they understand the tasks that need to be done and have the skills needed to do them. In the fall we had Blake doing less skilled jobs, now we can have him acting more independently. I don't think we have done as good a job of integrating him into the sort of technical support that we were doing before he came. On the other hand he as expanded our capacity to do projects that we could not have attempted without his skills.

How could the Project staff (including the priority area coordinators) best assist you in your work? What resources would be helpful?
This is hard to say. I think Blake's idea of having conference calls where people share their projects may be a good way to foster cross fertilization. As it is we don't know enough to know who is interested in what so as to collaborate on projects or share resources.

Ultimately we are trying to create a local program and get Blake involved in local programs/projects. Largely it is up to us to make that happen. Fortunately, with everyones good will it is not only happening but snowballing.

Please share any stories that might effectively communicate to the public how AmeriCorps*VISTA service has benefited your community. (Particularly helpful are stories that include numerical results and sustainable solutions.)
In July and August of 2005 a school district near Madison was upgrading their computer infrastructure and they contacted a computer recycling company to dispose of the computers. When the fees turned out to be beyond the district's budget they turned to DANEnet to see if these computers could be recycled into the nonprofit community. Fortunately most of the computers were from the Windows XP era so we were pleased to accommodate them. Several models of distribution were considered and the decision was to distribute them as part of a day of service associated with DANEnet's 10 year anniversary. It requires a lot of work to recruit volunteers needed to prep the computers, install the operating systems, install free software and to distribute the computers to nonprofits. Blake was there providing everything from inter-agency collaboration, organization, down to the gritty jobs of hauling computers into and out of basements.

The day was a big success. Accomplishments include 200 hours community service (Day of Service) from 32 volunteers provided to 22 agencies in which 107 computers were deployed.

How is your VISTA helping your organization achieve its mission?
DANEnet is using Blakes talent to develop in three areas: 1) Web programming with Mambo and Drupal Web frameworks. Examples of this include both the Youth Resource Network portal and the Web programming classes Blake teaches at the EPICS program. 2) Multimedia programs using the Youth Visions grant as a springboard. And 3) outreach/grant writing which includes some of his work with the Youth Resource Network, some of his work with the EPICS program and some of his work with the Day of Service.

What unexpected impact has your VISTA had on your program or organization?
It may not be totally unexpected but Blake's age and interest in hip-hop culture has provided a bridge to some of the gang/hip-hop culture discussions that have been happening in our community. His demographics (and personable aproach) have also elicited more involvement with the university based service learning students than we had had in other semmesters.

CTC VISTA Project April 2006 Report
Project Workplan with Commentary

Goal #1. (Qtr 1-4) [PRIORITY AREA: Technical Assistance to Non-profits] Provide technical assistance to agencies that work with low income residents of Dane county, enabling them to expand their services and educational programs.

Comment: Blake's involvement with the DANEnet Day of Service, as DANEnet's representative to the EPICS (Univ of Wisc service learning program) and direct support to the Youth Resource Network have all supported this goal.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Provide support to agencies trying to build multimedia computer labs.

Comment: We have built one of these labs and just recieved notification of funding to build two more labs.

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2 (Qtr 1-4) Expand the number of agencies serving low income clients that are partnering with DANEnet.

Comment: In 2005 DANEnet expanded the number of agencies by 18% (11 agencies)relative to 2004 some of this expansion came from agencies connected to the Day of Service that Blake worked on and some came from mailing and calling agencies which Blake also worked on.

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3 (Qtr 1-4) Provide 400 hours of requested technical support.

Comment: Some of these hours will be direct service (about 30 as of the end of February) and more have been as part of the service learning classes that Blake has been involved in (192 hrs of Blakes time and more than 1,500 hours of student time by of the end of February).

Results

1. (Qtr 4) Establish multimedia labs at 3 community center.

Comment: 3/14/2006 We have established a lab at one community center as part of the Youth Visions program and just received funding for two more centers.

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2. (Qtr 4) Train 45 students to use media centers

Comment: 3/14/2006 As part of the Youth Visions program Blake is training 10 students. The summer program will train more students.

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3. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Output] Reach out 10 to Youth Resource Network members to describe projects we can do with them.
[INDICATOR] Add 10 Contacts in contact database.
[INSTRUMENT] Contact database.
[TARGET] 10 new contacts in database

4. (Qtr 1) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: Intermediate Outcome] Build Web application for Youth Resource Network Agencies.
[INDICATOR] Agencies putting information onto Web application.
[INSTRUMENT] Agencies adding information to Web application.
[TARGET] Establish 20 accounts established for Web application

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Comment: The March 20, 2006 presentation was the official roll out of this application.

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5. (Qtr 4) [PERFORMANCE MEASURE: End Outcome] Create partnerships with 10 new agencies
[INDICATOR] partnerships with agencies
[INSTRUMENT] Contracts or Proposals
[TARGET] 10 Contracts or Proposals

Goal #2. (Qtr 1-4) Support high quality technical afterschool programs for agencies serving low income youth.

Comment: The presence of gangs in our community has been big news. These programs are important both for the students and also to decrease the demonization of minority youth.

Activities

1 (Qtr 1-4) Run Earn/Build your own computer afteschool/summer programs.

Comment: We are scheduling one session scheduled for early April with Bridge Lakepoint community Center and we are working on a schedule with Urban League for Summer of 2006. Blake has helped us submitted a grant for an intergenerational EYOC which will take place in the fall.

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2 (Qtr 1-4) Support the DANEnet Technical Challenge

Comment: Currently (3/22/2006) we have no funding for this program.

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3 (Qtr 1-4) Expand the DANEnet Robotic Challenge

Comment: Currently (3/22/2006) we have no funding for this program.

Results

1. (Qtr 4) Have 30 particpants successfully graduate from Earn/build your own computer program.

Comment: 3/22/2006 still in scheduling.

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2. (Qtr 4) Have 40 students involved in DANEnet Technical Challenge (Civillisation IV program)

Comment: This will be dependent on funding.

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3. (Qtr 4) Enrole 30 students in DANEnet Ropotics Program.

Comment: This will be dependent on funding.

Goal #3. (Qtr 1-4) Expand DANEnet Volunteer program

Comment: Blake has been doing this in three ways. 1) Working with the EPICS service learning program. There Blake is working to develop a transition the nonprofits from student run projects to long term maitenance from DANEnet.

2) Working on the DANEnet Day of Service. Which was a success in the fall of 2005.

3) Working with the Youth Resource Network to create a Web portal for youth serving activities/agencies.

Activities
1 (Qtr 1) Organize DANEnet Day of Service October 15.

Comment: Our final count was 32 volunteers working on projects at 22 agencies, for a total of 102 volunteer hours. In total, 107 computers were deployed plus hundreds of feet of network cable run, numerous databases created and a couple of passwords cracked.

2 (Qtr 2-4) Organize monthly followups for Day of Service volunteers

Comment: We have had followups, but when Blake shifted to the service learning class the responsability was shifted to other staff and unfortunately the frequency has suffered.

Results
1. (Qtr 1) Recruit 20 new volunteers.

Comment: We had 32 volunteers at the day of service. We have about 18 of those were new to DANEnet. In the fall of 2005 Blake worked on a volunteer program with a University of Wisconsin course and arranged for about 95 additional volunteers. This spring the same course will involve more than one hundred volunteers. Blake's role this spring will be less direct organization of the volunteers and more technical training of the volunteers.

2. (Qtr 4) Organize 9 volunteer events

Comment: This was initially envisioned as working with the Community IT projects (community volunteers) but Blake's role has been to work with the EPICS (Univ of Wisconsin service learning) volunteers (college students). The EPICS volunteer program is a larger program and Blake has been representing DANEnet as part of that program. In the fall of 2005 there were 10 volunteer projects by 10 teams. In the spring there will be as many as 12 projects involving 110 students.

Workplan Revision

The summer program is still in flux due to funding. We will definitely be doing Multimedia work and some EYOC projects.

VISTA: Blake Hall

How well have you been accepted as part of your organization?
I have felt extremely welcomed by both DANEnet's staff and Board of Directors. I have been invited and included in any and all projects/discussions I have been interested in participating in. While being a VISTA is certainly different from being a "regular" staff member I have felt nothing but accepted by everyone involved with the organization.

Do you feel you are on track to meet the goals described in your workplan (and/or those which you set with your supervisor since your service began)? What factors have contributed most to your ability or inability to get on track?
To date I have helped secure funding to develop our multimedia curriculum (including a CTCNet Youth Visions Grant), and to install multimedia labs in the Madison area. In addition we are nearly ready to launch a website for the Dane County Youth Resource Network (yrnetwork.org). This has entailed learning and installing drupal, including customized user registration forms and a community forum space. I also feel like I have helped support all programming that has been presented to me, in addition to helping further the discussion of future programming areas (and agency growth). While I could have better utilized my time in the first couple of months, I think it took us a while to find an area of synergy where we could have the most mutually beneficial relationship.

What in your organization's mission inspires you? Do you feel your work is helping your organization achieve its mission?
It seems to me that one of the most critical hurdles any non-profit faces is efficiency. I feel like the technical support we provide (in addition to our Roundtable discussions) help NPOs increase their efficiency. Another area I have been more actively involved in is our education programming. I think technology (and digital media specifically) is a great way to engage learners that may not otherwise use computers. I feel that at lot of the development work I'm doing is at the edge (or fringe) of the organizations mission, and rather than be a detriment it has actually made me feel more useful (grant writing, developing potential service models, increasing our relationship with ePICS, etc).

Are you receiving sufficient ongoing support and communication from your supervisor and co-workers? If not, how could it be improved?
Most definitely. I communicate with Eric on a daily basis. While my fellow DANEnet employees and I may not communicate as often, I feel they are responsive to my needs and requests. For someone new to the group it may be useful to have more regular staff meetings, but I'm not sure they would benefit anyone but me.

What do you feel are your three (3) biggest challenges? What do you feel are your three (3) most significant accomplishments?
Challenges (no particular order):

1. Our Space - since we primarily provide services to other agencies we don't have facilities of our own (aside from a small office with conference room space). I think technology programming is much more successful when you have an ongoing relationship with the learner. While I think we do a great job with the episodic programming that we do, it's difficult to be certain when our programming doesn't maintain that relationship (via follow-up). Ultimately this is a typical non-profit resource shortage challenge (since we don't have the funding to maintain those relationships).

2. Virtual Office - like the first challenge, since we work mostly virtually (at least as far as communicating among staff) I have had to adjust and learn new organization techniques to stay focused. While this has been a challenge I would also say it's been a blessing, making me a more disciplined and focused worker.

3. Time / Knowledge - The world of LAMP administration is huge, and at times I have felt overwhelmed trying to tackle some of the issues we've faced over the last six months. That being said, this challenge has also allowed for my greatest area of growth and professional development. I've been able to experiment, and learn things I never would have been taught in expensive training courses.

Accomplishments (no particular order):

1.YRN website - I am working on a civicspace/drupal web portal for an organization I was involved with last year, the Dane County Youth Resource Network. This website will be one of ~10 alpha testers of a civicspace ASP. While still a work in progress I have had the opportunity to learn a lot about web development, linux server administration (DNS, Bind, Apache configuration, MySQL, webmin, PHP, et al), and drupal. Ultimately I think this will help shape some of my future work (whether it be with DANEnet or freelance) in the coming years.

2. Youth Visions - I helped write a successful proposal for the CTCnet Youth Visions program. The program is, in some ways, the beginning of DANEnet's expansion into youth multimedia training and programming that will continue through other grant-funded programs (especially with the soon-to-be-completion of a low power FM radio station in town).

3. ePICS - I have helped write a long term sustainability plan which, if successful, will provide DANEnet with potential volunteer and revenue streams tied to the e-Projects in Community Service course in the Engineering department at the University of Wisconsin. Through ePICS I have also been able to teach web development and advisor interdisciplinary teams of undergraduate students, helping NPO's with technology projects.

What assistance from Project staff has been useful to you and your organization? What additional assistance would be useful to you and your organization?
Eric and I were able to have an enjoyable and productive conversation with Jillaine in the fall/winter. I also like the email list's potential for resource sharing. One thing that would be helpful to me, is if, in addition to VISTAs, supervisors & vistas were connected in some manner. Maybe it could be a quarterly conference call? Just something so that we all know (roughly speaking) what each other is working on, and what our collective strengths are. This may also be relevant across "priority areas". I think allowing an organization to opt-in to as many priority areas that apply would also be beneficial, since the lines (at least for me) are rather blurry.