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## **Martin Luther King VISTA**

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### **2011-2012 Project List**

Updated 11/16/11

## **Approved Sites**

### **Jewish Family Service**

Jewish Family Service was founded in 1892 with the purpose of serving Jewish immigrants and community. Today, they offer wrap around services for the community serving thousands of individuals each year in the tradition of helping others help themselves. JFS has many different programs ranging from domestic violence services, children and youth programming, offering services for folks with cognitive disabilities, LGBTQ family workshops, as well as running a local food bank.

JFS Food Bank, located in the Central District of Seattle, serves over 1300 duplicated households each month or over 4,000 unduplicated households over the course of the year. All of those served are at 50% or below the area median income. Over 50% of those served by JFS' food bank also use other food banks. In 2010, JFS Food Bank developed a 3 year plan to offer more fresh produce to those who access their food bank.

### **Project Description**

#### **Food Sustainability Project**

The AmeriCorps VISTA member will help create projects aimed at improving access and increase availability of fresh food for JFS food bank clients. JFS VISTA will create new community partnerships with various projects/programs such as Lettuce Link and P-Patch with hopes to be fully up and running by Spring 2012; develop a farmer's market gleaning project at an additional second to be fully in place starting in July 2012; and build the investment of food bank clients in healthy eating through educational forums focused on improving healthy eating.

## **Low Income Housing Institute**

The Low Income Housing Institute (LIHI) develops, owns and operates housing for the benefit of low-income, homeless and formerly homeless people, and administers a range of supportive service programs to assist those we serve in maintaining stable housing and increasing their self-sufficiency. Currently, 11 of our housing sites are dedicated to housing people transitioning out of homelessness. Participation in a two-year transitional housing program gives our residents an opportunity to access stabilization services, including employment assistance programs in the community. Unfortunately, many of our residents report that the vocational programs they participate in are not helping them succeed, as they either are unable to address specific population needs (cultural, economic) or meet the volume of demand for the services. A volunteer-powered program offering highly customized employment search assistance and skill building coupled with targeted training sessions and internship opportunities would empower LIHI's transitional housing residents to pursue vocational and educational advancement and help them escape the cycle of poverty.

### **Project Description**

#### **Employment Resources Project**

VISTA Member will be to plan and develop a pilot volunteer assisted vocational training and placement program for residents in LIHI housing. Their work will be focused on outreach to four LIHI transitional resident communities and to identify barriers to employment by doing in-person outreach, creating surveys and compiling data and results and organizing resident community meetings; build a resident advisory council to ensure that tenants have continued input; develop a volunteer-powered employment assistance, training and internship program; lastly, evaluate the pilot phase of the employment assistance, training and internship program through collecting and compiling people's stories and experiences with the program and documenting the successes and lessons of the pilot.

## **Seattle Young People's Project**

The Seattle Young People's Project is a youth-led, adult supported social justice organization that empowers youth (ages 13-18) to express themselves and to take action on the issues that affect their lives.

Youth are on the forefront of every social and political movement for justice. Youth have the powerful ideas and skills needed to make social change. SYPP supports youth in turning their ideas into action. SYPP provides a youth owned organization with resources, office space, and organizing training so youth can work to change the system and be the leaders of our movement for social justice!

### **Position Description**

#### **Justice for Youth Coalition Coordinator**

A number of organizations have identified that poverty continues to exist in Seattle in part because of discipline policies in the Seattle School District that disproportionately push youth of color and low income youth out of the school system. These discipline policies push at-risk youth away from a path towards graduation and therefore remove a crucial pathway out of poverty. The existing efforts to address lower graduation rates within poor communities have been fragmented.

The VISTA will develop a plan for outreach and building community partnerships to share tools, ideas, and resources towards changing policies that keep these trends in place. The project coordinator will do research developing tools for popular education around the school to prison pipeline as well as alternatives. They will also research and submit grants to support the work of the coalition.

Our goal of the coalition is to empower and educate community members, parents, educators and other organizations about this critical aspect of the problem that contributes to increasing poverty. The Justice for Youth Coalition will educate people, unite community organizations in partnership to pool resources, information and to work together to advocate for policy changes that will decrease poverty in Seattle.

## **Volunteers of America**

Volunteers of America includes nearly 16,000 paid, professional employees dedicated to helping those in need rebuild their lives and reach their full potential. Through our thousands of human service programs, including housing and healthcare, Volunteers of America helps more than 2 million people in over 400 communities in 46 states as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The Volunteers of America Greenwood Food Bank serves over 3,000 individuals on the north end of Seattle.

### **Position Description**

#### **Food Security Community Advocate Coordinator**

The VISTA project will develop a sustainable infrastructure of volunteers and food advocates to educate, empower and engage new partnerships and resources in the community to ensure that children, seniors, adults and people with disabilities receive nutritional food to meet their most basic of needs. The coordinator will develop a system for collecting feedback from new and existing donors, continuing to expand community outreach efforts. To increase the sustainability of food bank resources, they will also develop new relationships with business and organizations to act as food advocates. The VISTA will also develop a training curriculum for volunteers.

## **Pending Approval**

### **Catholic Community Services Youth Tutoring Program**

The Youth Tutoring Program is an after-school educational enrichment program for vulnerable first through twelfth grade students who live in six low- and mixed-income housing communities in Seattle. Begun in 1991 as a partnership with the Seattle Housing Authority, the tutoring centers provide youth with a safe, positive, and stimulating environment to explore learning and experience academic and personal success.

#### **Position Description**

##### **Capacity Project Coordinator**

The Youth Services Capacity Building Project will improve fund development systems by working with staff and volunteers in researching, cultivating, and applying for new or increased sources of sustainable funding such as grants. This will include doing research on current giving and new, relevant census data. They will also help in planning and carrying out the Dream Big Fundraiser, smaller open house fundraisers, and building a donor development plan.

## **The Children's Museum (Seattle)**

***The 40 Developmental Assets*** ® by The Search Institute are positive factors in young people, families, communities, and other settings that have been found to be important in promoting young people's healthy development. Absence of ***The Assets*** ® is most dramatic in low-income communities of color, even though research shows that developmental asset building can be a particularly effective strategy for advancement of low-income students.

The Children's Museum, Seattle is dedicated to solving this gap by providing quality exhibit education programming, filled with asset building opportunities for low income youth in schools, community centers, and crisis centers throughout the community. We utilize the structure of our 22,000 sq ft facility on the Seattle Center Campus and our programming of those exhibits and core competency areas of Age 0-3, literacy, math, art, culture, wellness and home science as a springboard for ***The Assets*** ®.

### **Project Description**

#### **Children Museum Exhibit Educator**

The AmeriCorps VISTA member will be focused on building the capacity to work effectively across cultures and socioeconomic status by establishing community partnerships and encouraging the development of *The Assets* with low-income children and families. The VISTA will work collaboratively with staff and community committees of low-income families on how to administer *The Assets* and Mobile Museum Moments; develop collaboration with external community-based organization and how *The Assets* can support their mission; cultivate volunteers and youth leadership while using *The Assets* to build relationships and training; continue to research local, statewide and national discussion and activism around education equity, poverty, community empowerment and youth organization.

## **City of Seattle, Human Services Department**

Washington Connection is the state hosted electronic portal that allows low-income households to apply for multiple Federal, State and City of Seattle public benefits all at one time.

### **Position Description**

#### **Washington Connection Capacity Coordinator**

The project will expand the number of community and faith based agencies that are familiar with the advantages of using the online portal; and provide technical assistance to a network of agencies selected in 2011 to pilot the portal with their clients. By using best practices in research and evaluation, the VISTA will identify underserved populations, determine the best course to engage them in this project, and learn what agencies and clients think about the experience using the new online application tool.

## **Gilda's Club**

During our combined 45-year history, Gilda's Club Worldwide and The Wellness Community have made a positive difference for people affected by cancer. Both organizations have established solid reputations in the cancer community and share an unwavering commitment to excellence and integrity. Gilda's Club Worldwide and The Wellness Community shared a vision where all people affected by cancer have access to the highest quality psychosocial care. Most importantly, it is a vision which recognizes that family and friends are also affected when there is a cancer diagnosis. As a united organization, our vision remains the same – to offer support to all people with all types of cancer, as well as their families and friends, so that no one has to face cancer alone.

### **Position Description**

#### **Community and Cancer Outreach Coordinator**

The “Cancer and Community” training is a curriculum developed for teens to talk about and deal with cancer and cancer prevention. The outreach coordinator will be working to broaden community access and partnerships for the Cancer and Community training, especially in underserved communities. This includes doing research and community outreach to identify cultural, socioeconomic, and other barriers to accessing resources around cancer. The outreach coordinator will facilitate meetings and develop new partnerships with other community organizations. They will also work to develop a trainer’s training and an evaluation survey towards improving the curriculum.

## **Homestead Community Land Trust**

Homestead is dedicated to expanding opportunity, strengthening community, and empowering future generations by providing permanently affordable homes in Seattle and King County. By offering a smart, low-risk path to homeownership, Homestead bridges the gap between dream and reality for many of the area's first-time homebuyers.

### **Project Description**

#### **Homeowner Engagement Program Coordinator**

Homestead's Homeowner Engagement Program supports Homestead's low-income homeowners by hosting classes on home maintenance, financial management, identify, recruit and create training curriculum for Homestead homeowner leader candidates, and safety issues relating to being a homeowner. The Homeowner Engagement Program also includes building client-driven, self sustaining, peer-to-peer support by identifying community leaders and building homeowner resource repository.

## **Neighborhood House**

The mission of Neighborhood House is to help diverse communities of people with limited resources attain their goals for self-sufficiency, health, financial independence and community building. Neighborhood House has embarked on a journey to transform based on the goal of more sustainable future. Most importantly, Neighborhood House wants to ensure that low-income and moderate-income communities are included in this sustainable future because they are the ones who often suffer first and suffer the most from environmental decay. One of the Neighborhood House's central commitments in the High Point Neighborhood Center's Living Green Project. The Living Green Project (LGP) is teaching environmental stewardship to the High Point community – traditionally one of the highest concentrations of poverty in King County that has now been redeveloped into a mixed-income, refugee neighborhood. Neighborhood House provides its core of critical social services to families through the High Point Neighborhood Center while also implementing a model environmental education project aimed at increasing knowledge among an ethnically and economically diverse community.

### **Project Description**

#### **Living Green Outreach Manager**

The AmeriCorps MLK VISTA will be responsible for expanding High Point Center's volunteer opportunities and creating training opportunities for program recipients with a focus on YELS (Youth Empowered for Leadership Strengths) youth. Develop leadership infrastructure and create and enhance community education curriculum such as financial literacy and English as a Second Language (ESL). In respect to the Living Green Program, increase and diversify resources for the program as well as develop communication strategy to cultivate funders.

## **YMCA of Greater Seattle (Downtown Seattle YMCA branch) Young Adult Services**

Research shows that young people in foster care are far more likely to endure homelessness, poverty, compromised health, unemployment and incarceration. Statistics show that the Seattle/King County area has more than 1300 homeless young adults aged 18-21. Major causes of homelessness for young adults are lack of financial resources, emotional vulnerability, past traumatic experiences and mental health concerns. The YMCA's Young Adult Services specializes in providing resources, opportunities and mentorship to youth and young adults. The YMCA holds a lot of experience and knowledge around youth and young adult transition to independence particularly through development of jobs, internships, mentors and resources by recruitment of community businesses, members, and corporations which will provide long term opportunities.

### **Project Description**

#### **Community Engagement Specialist**

The AmeriCorps VISTA member will develop and strengthen YMCA's Young Adult Services volunteer recruitment and retention of young adults who've faced homelessness and/or have had experiences with the foster care system, creating a youth volunteer program that develops youth skills through volunteer opportunities including a speaker's bureau, as well as engage corporate community in philanthropic support and job training for youth.

## **White Center Community Development Association**

White Center is a proud, peaceful and civically engaged community strengthened by ethnic and economic diversity and served by a vibrant, safe neighborhood. The White Center Development Association (CDA) promotes a vibrant neighborhood and high quality of life for White Center residents and stakeholders through the development of authentic leadership opportunities and community-led, neighborhood initiatives.

### **Position Description**

#### **Volunteerism and Donor Development Coordinator**

The VISTA will develop formal processes and policies for volunteer recruitment, surveying current volunteerism. Using this foundation and creating outreach and marketing strategies, they will recruit and train new volunteers. They will also do support work planning and carrying out an annual fundraiser and a number of smaller donor events throughout the year.

**More sites to come!**