

AmeriCorps VISTA CDT (Continued Development Training)
March 18-19, 2009
Marriott Eagle Crest Hotel
1275 South Huron Street, Ypsilanti, MI 48197
Phone: (734) 487-2000

Day One: Wednesday, March 18, 2009

- 9:00- 9:45 a.m. **Registration and Breakfast (Please do not arrive later than 9:30 a.m. if at all possible).**
- 9:45 a.m.-10:00 a.m. **Welcome, introductory remarks, and review of Agenda and logistics from Evan Albert, State Director and other state office staff**
- 10:00 a.m. ***Asset-Building* Training Begins with Jim Conway, Trainer**

[this is an all-day interactive training. We will break for lunch as well as for an afternoon break/snack]

ASSETS IN ACTION: A JOURNEY OF COMMUNITY CHANGE
An Introduction for Community Teams

Asset building is a process that encourages people living in poverty to accumulate, develop, and preserve all types of assets. Some assets are financial (credit, savings and investment) but this training is focused on the development of *human and social* assets, through personal determination, knowledge and skill building, and community networks.

This training is designed for VISTAs and other community-based leaders who are interested in and committed to playing an ongoing role in a community-wide asset-building initiative (using the resources and opportunities in your community to make a difference in the lives of the people you serve as a VISTA). As a result of this training participants will:

- **Understand and be able to describe the assets (resources, networks, opportunities) in our communities and understand the principles for guiding a community's asset-building efforts;**
- **Once we understanding these assets, how can we use them in our own communities to start or continue a process of community change;**
- **Explore action strategies for starting and supporting long-term community change;**
- **Understand and apply the categories of developmental assets to our own work as VISTAs with youth and communities.**

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- **Explore the power of community sector linkages (how are the various assets/resources in your community connected to each other); and**
- **Learn from stories and concrete examples (from you or from the trainer) of community and program-based asset building and consider how to apply them to your own VISTA efforts.**
- **Explore the possibilities and barriers to being an individual asset builder.**
- **Develop and commit to your next steps as a VISTA for growing a community-wide movement.**

Noon-1:00 p.m. Lunch

Break/snack (sometime in the late afternoon- to be determined by the trainer).

Conclusion of the day-long training: 4:30 or 5:00 p.m. (probably closer to 4:30).

Trainer Bio: James (Jim) Conway

Jim Conway is a veteran trainer with over 15 years experience providing training and consultation to youth serving professionals and volunteers in educational and community-based organizations in the US and abroad. He also served for 15 years in leadership roles of various programs for children and young adolescents.

Jim has delivered hundreds of presentations including workshops and keynote addresses. In addition to numerous local and state organizations and institutions, some of the national organizations with which Conway has made major presentations include: AmeriCorps, Children's Defense Fund, National Middle School Association, Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC), National School-Age Child Care Alliance, YMCA of the USA, Public/Private Ventures, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Work/Family Directions, Family Resource Coalition, National Park and Recreation Association, Boys Town, International Reading Association, Center for Ministry Development, and National 4-H.

Conway has also served as a member of the national training team, National Institute on Out-of-School Time, Wellesley College, MA

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Day Two: Thursday, March 19, 2009

- 8:30- 9:00 a.m. Registration and Breakfast (Please do not arrive later).
- 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. We will break into 3 groups to have **“Community Conversations”** as part of the **Michigan's Defining Moment Public Engagement Campaign** sponsored by an organization called *The Center for Michigan: A Forum for Our State's Future*. This is a multi-year effort to heighten public awareness of the significant challenges and opportunities Michigan faces and tighten the focus of statewide leaders on a common ground agenda best suited to help Michigan achieve a new era of sustainable prosperity.
- Nearly 2,000 people - from top business leaders to everyday citizens - participated in the campaign's first year, from May 2007 - May 2008. It's now our turn as VISTAs to have a voice in this process.
- The meetings offer an easy-yet-in-depth way for interested residents to understand the challenges facing Michigan and voice their opinions on how best to move the state forward.
- You can watch a You Tube video about this process here: <http://www.thecenterformichigan.net/community-conversations/>
- 11:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. Break
- 11:15-Noon Overview/Description of the next activity – Poverty Simulation (see next page for more info)
- 12:00-12:45 p.m. Lunch
- 12:45 to 3:00 p.m. Poverty Simulation – run by VISTA Sponsor Kalamazoo Poverty Reduction Initiative www.haltpoverty.org and current VISTA Maggie Hiatt with assistance from 28 Foster Grandparents from the Washtenaw County Foster Grandparent Program (Susan Sweet Scott, Program Director).
- 3:00-3:15 p.m. You will receive your training Certificate of Completion

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Come and live a "month" in poverty...

The Community Action Poverty Simulation (CAPS) is an interactive and sensitizing experience where the participants have an opportunity to actively discover the realities and effects of living in poverty.

During a simulation, participants role-play the lives of low-income families, including single parents and senior citizens on Social Security. During four 15-minute "weeks", those assigned adult roles try to maintain their home, feed their family, send children to school, keep their utilities on, make loan payments, pay for daily expenses like transportation, handle unexpected emergencies and figure out how to access local support and resources. Participants playing children clamor for attention, go to school and imagine the trials of poverty from a child's perspective.

The staff who play the community resource representatives are often people who have direct experience living in poverty. They draw from their real-life experience to portray representatives from the local utility company, Mortgage Company, grocery store and child care facility, among other agencies.

Each simulation takes approximately 3 hours that includes an introduction and briefing, the actual simulation exercise and a debriefing period at the end during which the participants and volunteer staffers discuss their feelings and experiences. Participants will also learn what role they can play in reducing poverty (See how NPR describes "[How a Poverty Simulation Works](#)"). Participants report that they gain a better understanding of the obstacles faced by low-income families.