

CALL TO SERVICE

A Publication of the Massachusetts Service Alliance

Ten Years Of Holiday Giving



Volunteers get ready to make their Holiday delivery.

The holidays are a time of gift giving and fun for many, but not all, seniors. Happily, volunteers make all the difference for less fortunate seniors by providing and delivering gifts and a smile through the Minuteman Senior Services Holiday Gift Project.

The Crafty Yankee in Lexington started the Minuteman Giving Tree ten years ago for their customers to purchase needed items for fifty seniors. By 2004, they handled 460 gift requests! Some donors take their gift tags and distribute them to the Scouts, schools, faith groups, and employers for use as holiday service projects. The requests are for basic needs - a new pair of slippers or pajamas, sheets for a hospital bed, a portable phone to help with mobility problems, or gift certificates for food, books, or music.

The project begins in the fall when Minuteman Case Managers write gift requests. The descriptions present a personalized, compelling picture of seniors whose disabilities and income keep them somewhat isolated in their communities. Donors appreciate the connection with a real person whose needs are verified by a reputable organization. Many gifts include substantially more items from generous donors than originally requested.

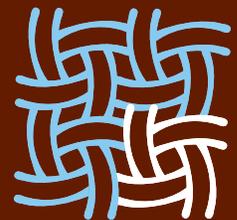
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MASSACHUSETTS



SERVICE ALLIANCE



“Thank you
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Dear Friends

In this issue of *Call to Service* we are delighted to roll-out the registration and workshop information for the **Massachusetts Conference on Service and Volunteerism**, which takes place on Tuesday, November 15, at the Best Western Royal Plaza in Marlborough. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the Conference Planning Committee, over thirty workshops will provide tools and ideas to help each of us become more successful in our delivery of service & volunteer programs.

With millions called to service each year, this Conference will help us to mobilize volunteers and explore ways to increase our capacities and capabilities. I am confident that, with your participation, we will be able to continue to expand the scope and depth of service and volunteer programs while helping to instill a spirit of service throughout the Commonwealth.

With this issue, we are also thrilled to unveil the new look of the Massachusetts Service Alliance. Thanks to the pro-bono efforts of the talented people at Allen & Gerritsen (a-g.com), we have a revitalized brand with new colors and other design elements affecting an array of collateral material. Special thanks to George Spowart and his team at Allen & Gerritsen for their countless hours of discussion and design during the past few months.

As we all begin a busy fall schedule, we at the Massachusetts Service Alliance salute you and your organizations. We are proud to be affiliated with so many of you who contribute to the rich fabric of our Commonwealth each and every day. Thank you for making Massachusetts a better place by delivering a vibrant tapestry of high quality service and volunteer programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Judge".

John Judge
Board Chair

Highlighting The Nonprofit Sector

The Massachusetts nonprofit sector has experienced significant growth over the past decade and currently represents a vital force in social and economic impact. The sector's 20,000 plus organizations represent \$62 billion in revenues, \$128 billion in assets, and the largest employment category in Massachusetts. From catalyzing community change through employment, investment, and civic engagement, to invigorating communities with cultural vitality, to supporting individuals and families with needed services, the nonprofit sector is a vital part of the state's economy, an important community player, and a first rung employer for newcomer populations.

Despite these powerful statistics and its societal importance, the sector's impact is not always understood or recognized by the public, policy makers, the state legislature, and even the media as the major force to address social issues affecting communities. While there exists strong regional and sub-sector trade associations, there is an absence of a common agenda and strategy for working together, and no collective voice which speaks on behalf of the entire sector.

Addressing this critical need is the **Massachusetts Nonprofit Working Group** (MNWG), a statewide coalition of nonprofit leaders, stakeholders, and practitioners. The group represents many different sub-sectors that all agree on the necessity of a statewide effort to affect public policy and direct the attention of legislators and the general public toward the needs of the nonprofit community and the constituency it serves. MNWG is working to improve public awareness of the sector's contribution to the economic, social, and civic health of our communities, examining how to best strengthen and reposition the sector, and developing a set of common goals and an action agenda to allow the sector to speak effectively with a common voice.

Since 2004 MNWG has worked to develop a network of coalitions across the state, bound together by a collective agenda and a commitment to collaborate. This spring, the group held a series of regional outreach and information gathering events across the state which allowed MNWG to communicate its overarching goals regarding a potential Statewide Nonprofit Action Agenda and to harness valuable ideas and information from nonprofit leaders. This fall, MNWG will host a two-day event where the Action Agenda will be formalized and implementation strategies identified.

The Massachusetts Nonprofit Working Group is open to all participants interested in giving a voice to their constituents and contributing to the strength, collaboration, impact and public awareness of the Massachusetts nonprofit sector. For more information, contact Anand Dholakia at adhokakis@mass-service.org or visit www.mass-service.org.

Seniors - continued from page 1

The Crafty Yankee starts the Giving Tree right after Thanksgiving. They accept and store the beautifully wrapped packages until Minuteman's Volunteer Coordinator can pick them up. Volunteers register all gifts and sort them by town for delivery.

Gifts are delivered over a two week period by 40-50 volunteer drivers and Minuteman staff to seniors in the 16 towns served by Minuteman. Some volunteers add a bit more to the holiday offering. One woman called Minuteman to ask if the seniors on her route could have apple pie, which she made and brought along with the gifts!

After the holiday, phone calls and letters from clients or their families tell of their pleasure and appreciation to all whose kind hearts and helping hands brought holiday cheer. One daughter called to explain that her mother couldn't wait, and opened the gift box right away. She was so thrilled with her cozy new bathrobe that she stayed wrapped up in it all day!

Minuteman's services are available to any senior or family member living in one of the communities served by Minuteman. To learn more, please call 781-272-7177 or visit www.minuteman-senior.org.

Written by Debbie Barr, Volunteer Coordinator, Minuteman Senior Services.

Recent Governor's Points of Light Award Recipients



The Governor's Points of Light Award is presented monthly to individuals who exemplify the power of service and volunteerism. This award is available to Massachusetts residents of all ages who have served their community for at least one year. The service rendered should meet a critical community need and have long-term impact.

Nominations can be submitted on an ongoing basis. Official nomination forms must be used.

A panel of judges appointed by the Governor evaluates the nominations and makes recommendations to the Governor's Office.

For a list of past Award recipients, or to obtain an official nomination form, visit our website at www.mass-service.org or call Molly Goggin at 617-542-2544 ext. 220.

Brenda Addy - July 2005 Recipient **Oxfam and Red Cross Volunteer**

Originally from West Africa, Brenda has made an impression at Taconic High School as a leader in community service. She is always the first to volunteer and get involved. She has been a part of the after school service-learning leadership program since September 2004 and has spent a lot of her free time outside of school volunteering at the Oxfam Hunger Banquet and the Pediatric Development Center.

Robert Breault - August 2005 Recipient **Jeremiah's Hospice, Inc.**

For over 20 years, Robert has dedicated himself to Jeremiah's Hospice, a social model recovery home for men which provides emergency food assistance and education around the issues of hunger and homelessness. Over the years he has become very close to the residents of the Hospice, serving as an important part of their support network by listening to their stories and personal struggles.

Leonard Radin - September 2005 Recipient **North Adams Public Schools Volunteer Program**

For over 20 years, Leonard has shared his love of the theater with the students of Drury High School. In addition to providing formal drama instruction, he also produces and directs dramatic presentations. Thanks to his volunteer service to the Drury community, the students have been able to experience first-hand what it takes to stage a theatrical production.



Robert Breault receives his award from Governor Mitt Romney.

Volunteer Profile - Michele K. Pfannenstiel

How did you first get involved with The CASA Project?

I have always wanted to volunteer where I knew I was making a difference and directly affecting change in someone's life. I actually read about The CASA Project in a magazine and immediately wanted to get involved. When I found out that many children were waitlisted and in need of advocates, I signed up for the next available training session. The CASA Project is the perfect place to volunteer because they provide each advocate with a supervisor who provides limitless support and guidance. The CASA Project is always in need of more volunteers and I can't think of a better place to serve.

What's are your responsibilities as a volunteer?

I spend roughly 15 hours each month on children's cases, making sure they have voices within the judicial system. Basically, I ensure that their best interests are represented at every stage of their cases. I meet with or observe the children that I'm working with at least once each month and am in constant communication with their support networks (parents, teachers, therapists, social workers, etc.). Advocating on behalf of the children, I help to determine if permanent plans have been created and whether appropriate services have been offered. I do my best to make sure that their voices are heard.

What are you learning by being a part of this program?

When children are removed from their homes, they lose more than just their connection with their parents. They lose their siblings, clothes and toys, beds, friends, schools, and pets – everything that's familiar and important to them. Their fates rest with overburdened courts and child welfare agencies. As a result, these children may get lost in the system and drift from one temporary placement to another – often for years. Being a CASA advocate has been an eye opening experience, allowing me to truly come to terms with the needs of these children and how important it is for them to have someone on their side. The great thing about being a CASA advocate is that you do not hold alliances with the lawyers, the court system, DSS, or the parents. Overtime, children begin to understand that your sole purpose is to be there for them and to listen to their needs.

What does it feel like to give back to your community?

I can literally see the change that I am creating in children's lives by advocating on their behalf. There is nothing more rewarding than being able to support people who might not otherwise have voices. I like knowing that because of my advocacy as a CASA volunteer a child might be sleeping just a little bit better somewhere.

What is the CASA Project?

CASA stands for Court Appointed Special Advocates. That is the official name for a group of people who care deeply about children who are involved with the Department of Social Services and the Juvenile Court because they have been abused and neglected. The CASA Project relies on trained community volunteers who provide a powerful voice in the lives of these vulnerable boys and girls.

A CASA volunteer conducts an independent investigation for the judge, advocates for the child in the court and child welfare system, and monitors the case until the child achieves safety and permanence.

"The CASA Project is one of the most important tools ever conceived in order to make sure the children before the court have a legitimate voice on their behalf."

"The Worcester CASA Project has an outstanding reputation for its effective efforts on behalf of the children before the court."

"Preservation and expansion of the CASA Project is integral to improving the quality of life for children and their families."

The Honorable George F. Leary
Associate Justice of the
Worcester Juvenile Court

Join Voices For National Service

Voices for National Service is a coalition of service programs and allies whose mission is to support the growth and development of AmeriCorps and national service by mobilizing the field to educate our nation's leaders and the American public about the power and impact of national service.

Voices for National Service needs your help in securing the future of AmeriCorps and expanding service opportunities for all Americans.

There is no cost to join. By becoming a member, you will be kept updated on national service legislative activities. You will also be able to participate in events such as Voices for AmeriCorps and the Friends of National Service Awards.

To learn more, or to become a member, visit

www.voicesforservice.org

Older Americans - An Untapped Natural Resource

The Massachusetts Coalition on Vital Aging (MCOVA) promotes the involvement of people over age 50 in personal renewal through civic engagement. As a statewide coalition of approximately 300 individuals in nonprofit, government, institutional, agency, business, and professional settings, MCOVA acts to broaden public awareness and to catalyze new initiatives and collaborations that enhance opportunities for older adults in our communities. They seek to become a model for creating a broad-based social movement that results in the innovative and widespread involvement of older adults in meaningful and measurable civic engagement and community service.

MCOVA is currently an all volunteer organization. Their Volunteer Coalition Coordinator and Advisory Committee are looking to expand their network as they formalize their committee into a leadership group of stakeholders and working committees that will aggressively address the organization's objectives.

The number of older adults in Massachusetts is growing. Currently, more than 17% of the State's total population is over age 60. This represents roughly 1 million of the healthiest, most active, best educated, and longest living older adults in our history. The vast majority (87.8%) report no impairment in performing the activities of daily living. Experts project that by the year 2010, the percentage of people over age 60 in the Commonwealth will grow to 19.1% - the State's only growing natural resource. This population represents a tremendous resource of time and energy and should be valued as an essential part of society.

Many of these individuals are searching for ways to support and give back to their communities. MCOVA is hoping to take the skills and interests of this population and use them in service and volunteer initiatives that will improve local communities throughout the State. Our older adults have a lifetime of knowledge and experience that, when put to use in meaningful ways, can greatly enhance the lives of everybody.

For more information on how to get involved, contact Shirley Selhub at selhub@rcn.com.

AmeriCorps Funds Are Available For The 2006-2007 Program Year

The Massachusetts Service Alliance announces that funds are available for the 2006-2007 AmeriCorps program year. Grant applications can be obtained after October 1, by visiting the *Funding Opportunities* page of www.mass-service.org. For more information, call 617-542-2544 or 888-710-8099 ext. 214 or 219.

AmeriCorps is a national service program which engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in team-based, results-driven service in the areas of public safety, the environment, and human needs, with special emphasis on serving children and youth. AmeriCorps members receive a living stipend and an education award for post-secondary education expenses upon completion of their term of service.

This funding allows agencies to sponsor AmeriCorps members who serve to implement community and service initiatives. Eligible agencies include community-based nonprofits, state and local entities, and school districts. Agencies that apply must be able to demonstrate their capacity to administer a federal program, have a detailed plan of action, strong connections to the community, a real need for the proposed service within the community, and the ability to raise the required matching funds.

Outreach session will be held throughout the Commonwealth during October. A listing of session locations and dates can be found below. Please visit the *Funding Opportunities* page at www.mass-service.org for additional information.



Outreach Sessions Locations & Dates

Oct. 3	Worcester Community Foundation
Oct. 5	United Way of Pioneer Valley
Oct. 6	Braintree Library



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**NATIONAL &
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SERVICE** ★★ ★

Join us for the
**Massachusetts Conference on
Service & Volunteerism**

Tuesday, November 15, 2005
Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel
Marlborough

For more information,
see the insert in this issue or visit
www.mass-service.org

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