

THE MLSA VISTA QUARTERLY

September 2010 Edition



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New VISTA Project Coordinator Joins MLSA



In June, Aubrey Laverty joined the team at Montana Legal Services as the new MLSA VISTA Project Coordinator. Aubrey is from Farmington Hills, a suburb of Detroit, Michigan. She attended the University of Michigan, where she majored in Sociology with a sub-concentration in "Social Inequality: Race, Class and Gender," and minored in mathematics.

This past April, Aubrey completed her VISTA term of service in Roseburg, Oregon, where she was the Community Educator on Poverty at United Community Action Network (UCAN). She served as a part of the UCAN VISTA Coalition, a three-county VISTA team in Southern Oregon. During her term of service, Aubrey worked on a variety of special events, including co-chairing the state mandated Douglas County Homeless Count.

Welcome Aubrey!

MLSA Welcomes New VISTA Members

On July 23rd, Montana Superintendent of Public Instruction, Denise Juneau swore in a new class of VISTA members, 13 of which joined the MLSA VISTA Project. The new members will serve in communities across the state, focusing on projects specific to asset development, domestic violence, or poverty law.



MLSA is excited to welcome the following individuals to the MLSA VISTA Project.

Rebecca Barger - CASA-CAN in Helena

Kimberly Deriana - Red Feather Development Corporation in Bozeman

Kelly Driscoll - HAVEN in Bozeman

Kenneth Hirsch - Montana Credit Unions for Community Development in Helena

Tara Ivanovitch - Missoula Family Violence Council

Kayla Parker - Legal Services National Technology Assistance Project in Helena

Marie Phillips - S.A.V.E. in Helena

Alyssa Reget - Office of Consumer Protection & Victim Services in Helena

Sarah Russ - Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana in Kalispell

Jared Schmidt - Powell County Victim Services in Deer Lodge

Shanna Ungate - YWCA of Missoula

Sarah Vedolich - Domestic and Sexual Violence Services of Carbon County in Red Lodge

Adelle Webb - Native American Development Corporation in Billings



The VISTA Experience: Sarah Cline's Story



As a VISTA at Rural Dynamics, I have been given the opportunity to experience the three crucial components of motivational theory: autonomy, mastery and purpose. For every single project I have undertaken, I have been granted immense trust (and by extension, empowerment) in pursuing its completion. Through the affirmation I receive, I am encouraged to continue taking initiative and acting at a level of autonomy. I have been able to conquer the learning curve and thereby 'master' knowledge of facilitating roundtable projects, collaborating with regional partners and coalitions, building consensus, implementing strategic plans and framing communications. Above all, I have gained a profound sense of purpose in the work I do at Rural Dynamics. I am intensely passionate about the communities of this region, for in their stories, I hear that based on our love of place, we come from a framework of abundance and accountability-recognizing our assets, or shared values, our own value as members of our communities, our innovation and our hope for a vibrant, sustainable future-and in this, we are stronger, empowered and interconnected.

The experiences I have gained have made me all the more confident and directed in the pursuit of my goals for the economic and cultural prosperity of our rural and Native communities of the Northern Plains. My

colleagues and directors have instilled their values in me and have continually invested in my growth-allowing me to attend important trainings and events such as the National Rural Youth Assembly and the Midwest Rural Assembly, where I presented as a member of their youth panel. Having completed one year in this position, and having reaped innumerable benefits thus far, I am overwhelmed by the thought of the opportunities this additional year holds.

Over the course of this next year, I will continue to build upon my current projects-seeking to revitalize momentum around the Northern Plains Initiative (NPI) by giving it renewed meaning and value throughout the region while expanding its reach through greater collaboration with State Asset Building Coalitions and State Fiscal Analysis Initiatives (SFAIs). Internally, I will work to consolidate our successes and gain new ground by recruiting new Advisory Council members, revamping our website and communications strategies, preparing for community trainings, and providing timely and pertinent policy-driven reports and technical assistance to our partners across the region. I will also continue to organize community assessments in the form of policy roundtables as a means of ensuring that our Initiative keeps its finger to the pulse of regional needs.

Looking to the 2011 legislative session, I will work with the BEST Montana (Building Economic Strength Together) Coalition to facilitate thoughtful discussions around our policy agenda, as well as provide support for the various initiatives that will be going forth throughout the region with NPI (re: State Earned Income Tax Credits, Low-Income Limited Liability Corporations (L3C), Anti-Predatory Lending, Children's Savings Accounts, etc).

Re-enrolling for another term at Rural Dynamics has multivalent opportunities for me-both personally and professionally. I could not be more pleased with my decision to come and serve Montana, as it has opened my eyes to a world of opportunity-and I mean that with all sincerity. Coming from undergraduate studies in economic development and then being able to engage in the various strategies I had only read about has been immensely rewarding.

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