



## MAINE VISTA PROJECT

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# MAINE VISTA PROJECT

2011-2012

## MVP MEMBER

YEARBOOK



### VAN BECKMAN

Van is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving at Healthy Androscoggin in Lewiston, Maine, building community support for the Let's Go 5-2-1-0 Initiative which promotes healthy behaviors to combat childhood obesity.

- Awesome member of the MVP Service Group!
- Van's quiet purpose has led by example.



“My favorite thing about this past year has been getting to work at an amazing host site in a state where I truly feel at home, on a project where my accomplishments are highly visible and appreciated.”

- Very level-headed organizer and a really dependable guy.
- Committed, hard-working and knowledgeable intellectual and scientist waiting to be discovered for the next big idea, movement, or maybe even invention.



- Van is a very intelligent and motivating person.
- Van is purpose driven and focused on a future of serving his community.
- VISTA Veteran.
- Van exudes quiet confidence and gentle warmth—neat qualities in a man.



One thing Jennifer would like her fellow VISTAs to know is: “Stick to your work plan!”

- A financial whiz with a purpose who likes having fun while getting things done and being financially responsible with a very strong character and ability to present ideas and change lives.
- Brave, determined, focused.
- Professional, capable, always enthusiastic and always willing to help. I'm very grateful to have had Jen as my associate.



- Fabulous teacher!
- There's a time to focus on the task at hand, a pressing need and desire to serve . . . But also there is times to set those worries aside and simply have fun. Jennifer knows both.
- Resilient, kind, hard worker



• Presenter extraordinaire!  
 Jennifer's future plans include: **another year of service**, but as an AmeriCorps Member so she can get the direct service experience in community financial literacy.



### JENNIFER WILSON



Jennifer serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at Community Financial Literacy in Portland, Maine, creating and organizing a framework for volunteers working with immigrants and refugees.

- You are one of the most dedicated workers I have ever met. Thanks for being an endless source of support!

Jennifer’s favorite thing about this past year was exploring Maine.

- Amazing individual. I respect her courageousness for moving across the country to do a year of service.
- Encouraging and organized.



- Jen is brilliant, funny, and wonderfully candid about her service and whatever is on her mind.
- Jennifer is a fireball of positive energy.
- She seems so unassuming, but Jen is a powerhouse of knowledge and ability.

One thing Van would like his fellow VISTAs to know about him is “If you’re ever feeling discouraged, hang in there. You may not feel like your work is having an impact, but for someone, it is—or it will.

- Funny, dedicated, and a true team player.



- Van has accomplished an amazing amount of things this year.
- Van is always constant and always has something interesting to say.
- Genuine, friendly, kind.
- Proud to know him—he has done great service both this year and in the past. Awesome person!
- Creative, smart and well-adjusted.



Van and Redy with Congressman Michael

Van’s future plans include attending graduate school to obtain a Master’s in public health - something he decided on as a result of his experience with this project.

## EMILY BAER



Emily is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving at The Telling Room in Portland, ME, helping them to raise their profile in the community, garner more sources of support, and increase the number of students enrolled.

“My favorite thing about this past year is being able to go to work every day knowing that the work I do is making a positive impact on the community around me.”

- Talented, fun; and always has a smile.
  - Is always able to lighten up MVP conferences (not to say they were boring).
  - Full of piss and vinegar and ready to take on the world.
  - Wicked Writer.
  - Fun and energetic and I’m glad I got to meet her.
  - Very sweet, nice, dedicated to making that difference while seeing the best in people with her generous spirit.
  - We had a bright idea for a crazy LAMP!
- You are my fellow abstract random pal! I look up to you so much and hope we can collaborate together in the future!

One thing P.J. would like her fellow VISTA’s to know is: “I admire them, their character, their commitment, and their accomplishments.”

- Dedicated, patient, kind.
- PJ never fails to ask all the best questions—I always want her on my team!
- I wish I could have spent more time getting to know you.



- PJ is sweet, interesting, and a hard-working single mom.
- Professional, caring, dynamic.
- Marvelous Mother.
- Hardworking individual who always wants to learn more.
- Excellent voice and saved my computer from theft.
- You have a very peaceful, calming presence and you articulate yourself very well.

P.J.’s future plan: I am going to **serve for another VISTA year** and begin taking graduate level classes. “Farther out, I hope to self-actualize and put my many experiences to work for the world.”



### P.J. STEWART



P.J. serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the Searsport District Middle School/High School in Searsport, Maine coordinating extended learning opportunities for students.

P.J.'s favorite thing about this past year was the feeling of being creative and making a difference and being in contact with those who make a difference.

- A loving and dedicated Mom who has much experience, a soft touch, and brings lots of intuitive, thoughtful reflection to her service.



- The class was always more interesting if P.J. was in it.
- P.J. is totally groovy!
- She will leave no child behind as long as she can continue advocating for those without a voice to be heard, but a story to be told.
- I want to be just like you when I grow up.



One thing Emily would like her fellow VISTAs to know is how much you have each changed and inspired her.

- I really appreciate Emily's conviction—a great moral compass!

- Emily really cares and it shows.
- A kind, driven, creative person with a big heart.
- I always feel good talking with Emily because she always brings a smile, good questions and her special sparkle of genuine interest.
- Funny person, good sense of humor.

Emily's future plans include **one more year of VISTA** at The Telling Room before heading off on the next big adventure.





**Laurie Beane**

Laurie Beane is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving at MSADs #35 & 57 and Kittery Schools to build capacity around service-learning and extended learning opportunities for students.

- I wish I could have spent more time getting to know you.

Laurie’s favorite thing about this past year has been finding out the latest and greatest news in Education and priority issues for Maine and sharing opportunities, information and resources locally.

- Laurie is always willing to share what’s on her mind.
- Always positive, and I like how you aren’t afraid to ask questions.
- Laurie brings her own unique blend of optimism, curiosity and experience to any gathering.



- Laurie is one of a kind.
- A great mom, a perpetually happy person, and a wonderful advocate for service-learning.
- Laurie is dedicated to the cause.
- Loveable Laurie.
- Creative, unique individual.
- Passionate, engaged and enthusiastic.

One thing Kate would like her fellow VISTAs to know is: “I’ve learned so much from each of you.”

- A sweet, fun and bright educational star who will bring her leadership skills and pleasant demeanor to make a lasting difference.



- I can always count on Kate to do what she says she will do.
- Friendly, kind, open-minded.
- Kate will thrive and bloom wherever she plants herself.
- Very smart—will do great things in her life.
- You are such a sweetheart and a great listener. I wish I could be as put-together as you are.

Kate’s future plans include going to grad school next year and attending American University’s School of Public Affairs in Washington, D.C. She will be working towards receiving a Masters in Public Policy and will be specializing in science, technology, and environmental policy.



**KAITLYN RICHARDSON**



Kate serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the MDI Regional School System on Mount Desert Island, Maine, supporting teachers as they work to provide quality service-learning experiences for students.

- Generous, patient, funny, kind, brave, inspiring.
- Kate is the model of a well-balanced VISTA: driven, passionate, talented and unflappable.

Kate’s favorite thing about this past year was: “Packing up and moving to a state I’d never been to before . . . And having Acadia National Park in my backyard has been a nice bonus.”

- We had a bright idea for a crazy LAMP!



- Kate is quiet, but lights up when she’s with her friends.
- Kate is even-keeled.
- Driven to succeed, moved by a community of strangers and capable of taking on new challenges with minimal guidance.
- Very thoughtful about what she does.



One thing Laurie would like her fellow VISTAs to know is: “It has been a privilege getting to know the many wonderful, cool and fun works that each of you do in your communities of service. It’s an inspiration for the community and for me personally to know that my children, their friends and countless other kids and families in Maine will benefit from the service of the 2011-12 MVP VISTA works all over the State of Maine.”



Laurie’s future plans include sharing her experience with her family, community and others while supporting educational, economic and financial health of our communities, businesses and individuals through business and/or philanthropic endeavors.

- Warm personality with her heart and energy set on making the lives of all children in her community appreciated for who they are.
- An inquisitive and kind person.
- I love Laurie’s resourcefulness and the fact that she created her crazy lamp with her son shows many wonderful things about her.
- Laurie has amazing energy, an inquisitive mind, and a truly genuine nature.

**GENNA CHERICHELLO**



Genna is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving with the Knox/Lincoln Counties Cooperative Extension in Waldoboro, Maine, focusing on service-learning opportunities related to farm to school programming.

Genna’s favorite thing about this past year has been hitting the ground running in a field of work that is so important to her. She says : “The network of support I had from the beginning made it possible for me to do work I feel so strongly about in a community that I have grown to love.”

- Your business is going to be so successful!



- Genna has taught me so much—I really respect her.
- Genna is incredibly passionate about what she does!
- Selfless and giving while being dedicated to serving those less served.
- She has strong passion and interest in gardening, Food Corps, etc. and I believe she’ll go far with her passion.

One thing Monika would like her fellow VISTAs to know is : **Hot n Cold** by Katy Perry :

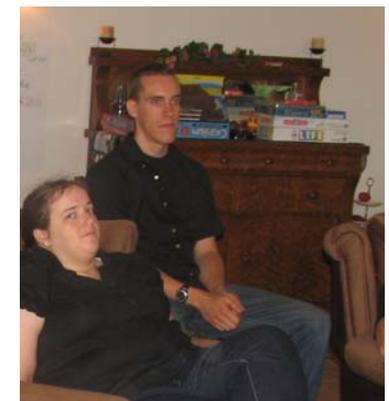
“ . . . Cause you’re hot then you’re cold, You’re yes then you’re no, You’re in then you’re out, You’re up then you’re down, You’re wrong when it’s right . . . ”

- Another champion and go-getter who will try anything and work hard to achieve goals that she sets for herself and her family.
- When I met Monika at the start of this year she seemed within herself. She has turned into a beautiful butterfly.
- Cares about her work, good networker.
- Accomplished Author.
- Monika is dedicated, committed and creative and a thoughtful, resourceful person.



- Dedicated and involved.
- I really admire Monika’s honesty and directness; she doesn’t sugar-coat, which keeps things fresh and grounded for the rest of us.
- Good luck on your book!

Monika’s future plans include a **second VISTA year.**



### MONIKA PARDON



Monika serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the Southern Maine Agency on Aging in Scarborough, Maine, assisting SMAAA with maximizing the service of its volunteers.

Monika’s favorite thing about this past year has been getting to know everyone who works with her at her site and at the Maine VISTA Project.

- Self-motivated person— budding author.
- Cares deeply about what she does.
- You are a very courageous person and have been a helpful resource.



- Monika’s fierce attention to detail is remarkable.
- Monika is someone who gets things done.
- Amazing strength during a period of adversity that will carry her forward to great accomplishments.



One thing Genna would like her fellow VISTA s to know is “Thank you for your support and company along the way.”

- You seem very informed and driven. You are a great presenter and someone I want to get to know more.
- Passionate, creative, and inspiring.
- I love Genna’s style—so effortlessly brilliant and obviously passionate about her work, but with such great flair.

- Genna is awesome—bohemian chic girl with a big heart.
- Creative, dedicated, networker, teacher.
- When I first saw Genna, all I could think about was how cool her hair is! Now that I have interacted with her, I see Genna is brilliant, charming and directed—WOW!
- My Favorite Farmer.



- A rock star in the Farm to School initiative— bringing healthy habits to the hearts and minds of school communities in Maine.

Genna’s future plans are to continue working in this field and in this community in a slightly different capacity.



MICHAEL COSTELLO



Michael Costello is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving at the UMaine VETS Program in Orono, Maine, helping to increase recruitment and retention of low-income veteran students.

Michael's favorite thing about this past year is being an important part of the Flagship University of Maine campus community and working for and with a wonderful, resourceful group of student veterans.

- Humble, driven, engaged.
- Always ready with a useful piece of info, an encouraging comment, or a helpful gesture—an invaluable team player.



- Michael is a stand-up guy—someone I would trust anywhere.
- Mike is the ultimate team player.
- Wonderfully Wise.
- Michael is a true professional among us. I would like to work at an organization with him.

One thing Amy would like her fellow VISTAs to know: "This year has been an amazing experience and all of my fellow VISTAs and the staff at the Maine Commission have been a gigantic part of making that happen."

- I love all your animals!
- We're all lucky to have known you.



- Amy knows all the best wine and is awesome and wonderfully accepting of everyone for who they are.
- Amy is amazingly resilient and able to see the good in everything. She could be a spiritual leader!
- Very conscientious and accountable worker.
- I instantly felt comfortable with you and your warm and caring personality.

Amy's future plans are : to possibly continue with **another year of service**, to find a job in a non-profit that allows her the ability to make change. And, perhaps down the road, to pursue another Master's degree or my Doctorate.



AMY NIGEN



Amy Nigen serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at MSAD #54 in Skowhegan, Maine, assisting in the organization of a variety of student opportunities for extended learning, community mentoring, and community service.

- Amy takes being a VISTA to the next level. One can immediately tell she pours her heart and soul into her work, and those surrounding her are much the better for it.

Amy's favorite thing about this past year is meeting so many like-minded people who believe that we can make a change.

- A very fine professional and human being who lets her true colors shine and makes a meaningful difference for those who come in contact with her good works!



- Amy's personality can't be beat.
- Amy is a passionate and caring person.
- Give her a role, send her a cause, and clear the way because she will not be stopped.
- Adores Animals.
- Generous, patient, kind.



One thing Michael would like his fellow VISTAs to know is: Get on board with your VAD expectations early on and don't assume to understand without questions.

- Dedicated, wise and committed to the many people and things that are important to him and his family.
- I wish I could have spent more time getting to know you.



- Mike is smart, intelligent, dedicated, and a compassionate person.
- Hard-working, funny, and truly making a difference for Vets in his area.
- Shares his experiences and knowledge with the group in a very positive way.
- You have such a big heart and are very easy to talk to.

- Michael sort of became the MVP "guru" - our spiritual leader, so to speak—he has such a peaceful energy he brings to the table.

Michael's future plans include: "Well that's a good question. I am actually living in my future already and will follow the money as long as the trail remains close to this Orono community."



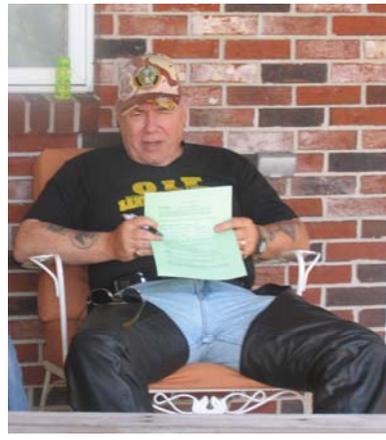


**JERRY DeWITT**

Jerry DeWitt is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving at Tri County Mental Health Center in Lewiston, Maine, working to educate and reach out to military veterans and their families about services available to them.

Jerry's favorite thing about this past year is the monthly reports—NOT!

- I believe that having Jerry in my corner would be an amazing and intense feeling of support and energy.
- Perseveres—great example for others.



- Maine veterans have it a lot better because of Jerry's endless energy.
- Someone that marches to the beat of his own drum and I think that is great!
- Invested in his cause, dedicated to spreading awareness.
- Valiant Volunteer.

Harry would like his fellow VISTAs to know that life after VISTA may seem daunting at first, but after you sit down and really think about what you want in life it's very easy to come up with a plan on how to get it.

- Harry makes me laugh.
- What young boy would not love to grow up to be another Harry. . . And who would want to stop them from trying.
- Good sense of humor, cares very much about his work.
- Charismatic and committed to the earth, Harry will be an inspiration to all he teaches.
- Crazy mountain man
- No one makes a job look easy quite like Harry—he is one of a kind!



Harry's future plans include: immediately leaving to paddle the Northern Forest Canoe Trail and then go hunting for wild boar in Louisiana at the end of January. In June he plans on returning to school for a master's in secondary science education.



**HARRY LEAHEY**

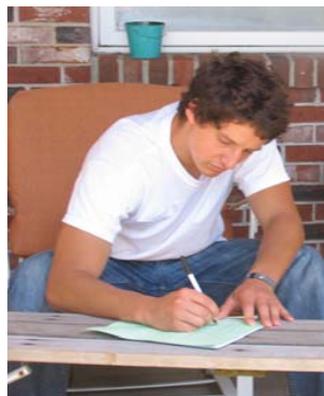
Harry Leahey serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at Bryant Pond Cooperative Extension in Bryant Pond, Maine, supporting service-learning and extended learning opportunities for Oxford County schools and communities.



Harry's favorite thing about this past year was watching a group of middle school students in a pilot experiential education program progress from troubled adolescents to curious, motivated students.

- I admire your easygoing and good-natured sense of adventure (even when canoes are involved)!
- Mango Pie.

- Harry is MVP's resident mountain man, and only Harry would smile while talking about the death rattle of a bear during lunch.
- Harry is a Wildman!
- Mason Man.
- Ranger Rick—I want him around if I'm in the wilderness—he knows what to do!
- Fun to have around and great at sharing his naturalist knowledge.



One thing Jerry would like his fellow VISTAs to know is it only takes one person to change the world.

- You are a firecracker with so many stories! Your passion for service was evident from day one.
- A PASSIONATE AND ENGAGED ADVOCATE



- Jerry always knows how to sneak away from MVP meetings and conferences, and is always an advocate for Vets and their issues.
- Will not leave a fellow vet behind and will walk a mile in his shoes to make things right for one.
- Passionate about his cause.
- A wildly "out of control" yet, committed service-professional— in perpetual forward motion and champion of Veteran's services!
- Jerry is constantly amazing me with his eclectic talents, endless drive to help others, infinite goodwill, and immeasurable ability to accomplish.

- WOW—you certainly showed us all that age is no indicator of energy level or capacity to do good.
- Your motorcycle is awesome!

Jerry's future plans include:  
 "I plan on working this Veterans VISTA program **ONE MORE YEAR.**"





**Caleb Gilbert**

Caleb Gilbert serves as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the University of Southern Maine VETS Resource Center working to assess the needs of the student veteran population and develop an implementation plan to grow and enhance programs and services.



Caleb's favorite thing about the past year is working day to day with great men and women who have served our country.

- Caleb is the genuine article: earnest, dedicated, and always willing to help.

- Caleb is funny and respectful and easy to like.
- Smart, kind.
- Caleb is a great advocate, a hard worker, and a really nice person.
- Caleb is intelligent and self-possessed.
- Focused and engaged.

One thing Kerrie would like her fellow VISTAs to know is :  
 “You have all affected me personally and I wish you the best in your future endeavors.”

- Kerrie is just plain awesome—selfless, talented, and full of positive energy.



- Kerrie is talented and has a great eye for fashion, and is very good with people.
- Very driven, hard worker.
- Kerrie's creativity and project development skills will take her far. I expect to see her name again, in print, in lights, somewhere!
- Great smile and presence.



Kerrie's future plans are to translate her professional passions into tangible projects, AKA start my own art & literary publication, curate community art/writing projects, advocate for the power of poetry, find a way to work with kids again, travel, open a cheese/bread shop or pretzel factory, start a side freelance proofreading business, write more screen plays, and go back to school one day.

**KERRIE KELLER**



Kerrie is an AmeriCorps VISTA serving at Catholic Charities in Portland, Maine as a Volunteer Specialist—strengthening the capacity of Catholic Charities to utilize volunteers to assist in providing services.

- We had a bright idea for a crazy LAMP!

Kerrie’s favorite thing about this past year is meeting so many inspiring people and getting things done!

- A fun, committed task-master who keeps getting things done – master marketing collaborator.



- Kerrie is inspiring.
- The leader of the pack. No job too tough, no task too burdensome.
- Best blueberry Pie.
- Awesome person. Doing great work. Great energy. Very positive.
- Energetic, funny, generous, adventurous, inspiring.



What Caleb would like his fellow VISTAs to know : “It has been a pleasure working with you all and I wish you the best of luck moving forward.”

- Committed to helping veterans while also serving in the military himself.
- You made me think about student veterans in a different light, and I really value that.
- Respected Reservist.
- Like a brilliant Clark Kent on the outside with a Super Hero mystique.
- I wish I could have spent more time getting to know you.



- Caleb always looks like he has the inside track to the secrets of the universe.

Caleb’s future plans include getting his masters in social work and becoming a licensed social worker, working with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as a mental health counselor.





**MOLLY HALEY**

Molly Haley is serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA at The Telling Room in Portland, Maine, working with staff, students and volunteers to sustain and expand their afterschool free literacy, creative writing, and arts programs serving youth ages 6-18.

Molly's favorite thing about this past year has been working with the mentors of the Young Writers & Leaders Program.



- The first thing you notice about Molly is how she looks you straight in the eye.
- Molly is a calming influence.
- Give me a lampshade, extension cord and a team of like-minded girls and I can change the world.
- Sweetest Smile.
- Molly has such great humor and a winning attitude, two indispensable qualities.

One thing Molly would like her fellow VISTAs to know is: "I have thoroughly enjoyed the sense of community and wish them all the best of luck!"



- I wish I could have spent more time getting to know you.
- Molly is a fun, hard-working, and dynamic person.
- Molly exudes self-confidence and capability.
- The best.
- You have a great laugh and are so composed on camera.
- Very committed to her work and her service, smart, funny & sincere.
- Ay yay yay! Passionate, dedicated, and inspiring.
- Molly will change the world someday—she probably already has!

Molly's future plans include continuing on at The Telling Room as a salaried employee.

