



Media Release

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Arkansas AmeriCorps Members Honored with Award, Inducted into Program

AmeriCorps members from across Arkansas were honored Thursday for their service and new members were inducted into the program during the Eighteenth Annual AmeriCorps Opening Ceremony.

The Department of Human Services' Division of Community Service and Nonprofit Support (DCSNS) Arkansas Service Commission sponsors the AmeriCorps Opening Ceremony each year to recognize members from all streams of service, including AmeriCorps*State, VISTA, Foster Grandparents, RSVP, Cities of Service, and National Direct programs such as City Year, Habitat for Humanity and Food Corps. AmeriCorps members dedicate a year or more of their lives to serving in communities throughout the state in areas such as adult and child literacy tutoring; in-school translation and family support services for Spanish speaking families; and education and promotion of healthier lifestyle choices for school age children.

Skip Rutherford, Dean of the University of Arkansas Clinton School for Public Service, delivered the keynote address. He spoke about the call these members feel to serve.

"It's encouraging to see so many people here and ready to serve our state," Rutherford said. "Arkansas would not be the state it is without the dedication and hard work of volunteers and AmeriCorps members."

Armida Stokes, a member of Arkansas AmeriCorps, was presented with the J.C. Babbs Award for Outstanding Achievement. Armida serves with Ozark Foothills Literacy Project. In addition to her full time job as a translator, Armida tutors adults learning to read or learning to speak English.

The ceremony concluded with the swearing in of more than 200 new members who will serve with AmeriCorps*State in 2013-2014. The AmeriCorps*State program brings more than \$2.2 million dollars in federal funds into the state.

“Arkansas is so fortunate to have this program. Members provide services that these communities might otherwise do without. We are so proud of every single one of them,” said DCSNS Director Sherry Middleton.

The DHS Arkansas Service Commission serves as the conduit for federal funds from the Corporation for National and Community Services to AmeriCorps*State programs in Arkansas. Governor Mike Beebe appoints 25 advisory commission members from across the state to serve as advisors of these funds.

For more information on the AmeriCorps program, contact Marilyn Henderson at 1-501-320-6451.