



#WeAreAmeriCorps in Tennessee: 2021 AmeriCorps Week

AmeriCorps Week is held every March to celebrate the impact of AmeriCorps programs and to offer thanks to those who serve. During AmeriCorps Week 2021 (March 7-13), Volunteer Tennessee and Tennessee National Service programs shared service stories and highlights. Read on to hear how AmeriCorps is making an impact in the state and to meet some of those who serve.

- [Appalachia CARES](#) AmeriCorps Members Help Seniors Connect During COVID

The unprecedented global COVID-19 crisis has been difficult on all, but the pandemic's challenges hit harder for many isolated individuals. Seniors and others who are confined to their homes for health reasons were immediately cut off from their normal support systems and families as the pandemic swept through Appalachia.

Appalachia CARES AmeriCorps Members helped Clinch-Powell's Cares Connection program distribute 530 tablets to seniors and shut-ins in 19 Tennessee counties this winter! These tablets helped them connect with family, friends, community services, and for medical care. The program was funded by the CARES Act through the Governor's Tennessee Community CARES Program funds awarded to Appalachian nonprofit network, Fahe.

“Our Appalachia CARES AmeriCorps members made it possible to find those in need and get the tablets deployed in a very short period of time,” Clinch-Powell Executive director, Lindy Turner says. AmeriCorps members Beverly and Samantha helped process applications, identify community partners, and distribute tablets from Clinch-Powell’s main office in Rutledge, TN. AmeriCorps member, Sarah Moore, facilitated delivery of tablets to deaf and senior individuals in Chattanooga, Tennessee, with the help of Chattanooga Partnership for Families, Children & Adults. Twelve tablets were provided specifically to hearing-impaired individuals, with additional training and tools to support their ability to connect with the surrounding community.



Photos Courtesy of Appalachia CARES AmeriCorps

- **Meet Dylan Green –**[Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness \(ARCH\)](#)
AmeriCorps Member serving with Chattanooga Homeless Coalition

“Being an advocate for the community and folks experiencing homelessness that don't have anyone to speak for them, has been my favorite part of my AmeriCorps experience. Just being able to be there for people that have no one else, especially during the challenges they faced this past year due to the pandemic, has been so meaningful. Also having the opportunity to use news media and social media to reach new people has been a fantastic experience. I had never done that before, and I saw the results of it through new donations and hearing from new people that wanted to get involved in what we are doing. For the recent Point in Time Count event, I enjoyed the experience of learning how to organize volunteers.



I have gained some planning and leadership skills and received many valuable trainings while serving. For example, I received Narcan training, and I carry lifesaving kits with me during outreach. There have been a few times that I thought I was going to need to use it, and it is good to know that, if needed, I can save a life due to my training. I also trained on human trafficking and learned that I had a limited understanding of what human trafficking is and now have new resources to share. I have also gained skills in case management. Basically, I was given the freedom to explore a lot of different roles and responsibilities that I never thought before I would be able to do. I love my service experience”

As part of his service, Dylan was recently interviewed in a local news piece on the local efforts to measure homelessness rates through the Point in Time Count. Read more here [Annual PIT count measuring homelessness rates - WDEF](#).



Photos Courtesy of Appalachian Regional Coalition on Homelessness

- **Meet Joelle Thompson – AmeriCorps Member with [BRIDGES USA](#), Memphis TN**



Photos Courtesy of BRIDGES, USA

“I chose to serve with AmeriCorps because I wanted to have a gap year of work experience that was meaningful and impactful for communities that deserve it most. I was a Bridge Builder growing up, and that experience reminded me of the opportunities I would have to accomplish my goals for doing meaningful and impactful work. At BRIDGES, serving youth has expanded my knowledge on the issues youth face, their passions and interests, and how to propel them into community building. AmeriCorps has allowed me to tailor my interests to my work, do a significant amount of internal work and learn how I show up in my community through service.

As a native Memphian, and a future Public Health professional, I have a fiery passion for health equity, social justice, and community development in all areas of disenfranchised communities. Memphis, being a majority black city, has given me the tools and the inspiration for giving back and serving, and I believe youth development is the best way to attack the cycles of disparities and issues that plague our minority communities. As an advocate, I have been able to build youth leaders through my service term and develop my own advocacy skills that I do not believe would have happened anywhere else. I am forever grateful for my AmeriCorps and BRIDGES experience this year, especially through the troubling times of today.”

Want to hear from more BRIDGES AmeriCorps members about their service? [Watch the video “What Service Means to Me: AmeriCorps Week 2021 at BRIDGES”](#)

- **Meet Darian Boyd – AmeriCorps Member with [Impact America](#) Tennessee SaveFirst team lead in Memphis.**

“After graduating from North Carolina State University in May 2019, I knew I wanted to take a gap year to explore my interests in public service and travel if possible. Impact America was the perfect solution that allowed me to directly address a variety of issues contributing to economic and healthcare disparities while also immersing myself in a part of the country I'd never experienced before.”





- Meet Anita Feild– AmeriCorps Member with [Relay New Teacher Pathway](#), 2nd Grade Teacher in Memphis, TN

What does service mean to you?

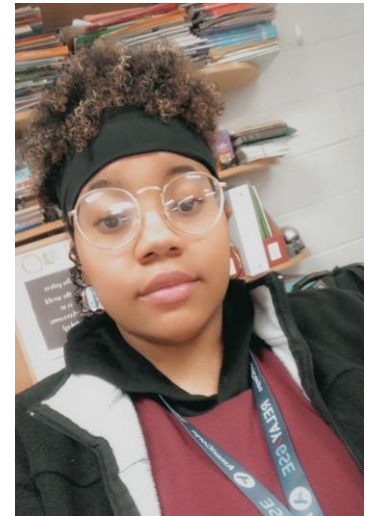
To me service means giving my time and expertise in order to help anyone that needs my aid.

What do you love about teaching in your community?

I love the Northaven faculty and its leaders and administration team. Teachers are encouraged to support one another, be selfless, understand that our students take priority over everything else (teaching and learning is student centered), and to give grace. And it works!

How has the Relay Residency Ameri Corps Program helped you prepare for life after graduation? What are your future plans?

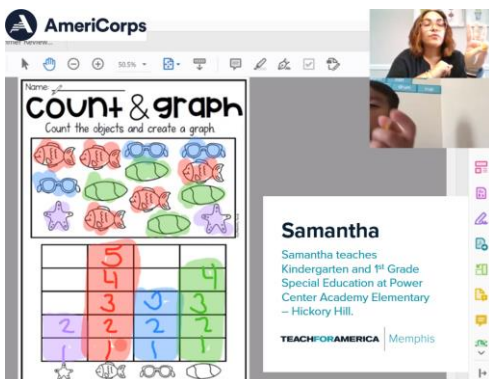
The Relay Residency AmeriCorps Program has helped and is still helping me by equipping me with the skills and techniques to effectively teach students. My future plans are to continue to serve the youth in my community by teaching.



- Meet Samantha Davis – AmeriCorps Member with [Teach for America-Memphis](#)



“I joined Teach For America to help future leaders reach their full potential and truly create, follow, and fulfill their dreams. I was looking for a way to make an impact on an issues like education, that affect all of us. I teach Kindergarten and 1st Grade Special Education at Power Center Academy Elementary – Hickory Hill in Memphis, TN. This is my second year at Power Center, and it has certainly been a school year like none other. I am thankful to my Teach For America and AmeriCorps networks for supporting me in ensuring my scholars are still receiving excellent education in a virtual format.



It is unbelievable to think we are already into the second half of the school year! My scholars are staying strong in their learning as we prepare to move to the next grade soon. Developing strong reading skills is super important for my first-grade scholars. Together we practice reading short stories and answering questions about what we remember to build our skills in analyzing texts. In math, first graders are crushing it with number bonds and double-digit math! My scholars have shown so much engagement in virtual classes this year.


My kindergarten scholars are working on blending sounds and saying CVC words. In math, my kindergarten scholars are getting really good at counting numbers all the way to ten! It is a joy working with kindergarten students at the start of their education journey.”




- **Tennessee AmeriCorps State Program Impact Data**

For AmeriCorps Week, Volunteer Tennessee also highlighted some of impact made by Team Tennessee AmeriCorps programs in the previous program year.




In the previous AmeriCorps program year,

29,084 Tennessee students were served


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In the previous AmeriCorps program year,

47 Tennessee nonprofit organizations received capacity building services

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In the previous AmeriCorps program year,

5,872 acres of public land and 128 miles of trails or waterways were treated

#AmeriCorpsWeek 

Thank you to all who shared their service stories for AmeriCorps Week! Across America, 270,000+ AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers are getting things done through national service each year. We were excited to be able to share just a few stories and examples of how national service is making a difference in Tennessee.

Thank you again to all the AmeriCorps members, AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers, alums, and program staff for improving our communities through national service!

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[Volunteer Tennessee](#) is a 25 member bipartisan board appointed by the Governor to encourage volunteerism and community service. Volunteer Tennessee pursues its mission through administration of AmeriCorps grants, training and collaborations and coalitions with public and private organizations interested in volunteerism and service. Connect with us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

AmeriCorps, a federal agency, brings people together to tackle the country’s most pressing challenges, through national service and volunteering. AmeriCorps members and AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers serve with organizations dedicated to the improvement of communities. AmeriCorps helps make service to others a cornerstone of our national culture. Learn more at [AmeriCorps.gov](#).