

## NEWS RELEASE

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## **New AMERICOPRS-VISTA Program Fights Poverty in Kansas**

(Leavenworth, Kan.)— Eight AmeriCorps-VISTA (Volunteers In Service To America) volunteers traveled from all parts of Kansas on March 8 to meet at the University of Saint Mary for training. The VISTA team met for the first time as a complete group since the program's inception in August 2004.

In only six months of service, six VISTAs mobilized a number of community resources to sustain multiple program initiatives generating over 1,000 hours of service performed by community volunteers—including University of Saint Mary students.

The VISTA program is sponsored by Kansas Campus Compact, an organization of 17 colleges and universities established to encourage and support campus engagement in the community. Through programs like VISTA, Kansas Campus Compact supports the development of campus-wide student and institutional participation in community and public service. VISTA is a full-time, year-long national service program for men and women who commit themselves to increasing the capability of low-income people to improve the conditions of their own lives.

Since the first VISTA arrived at the University of Saint Mary in August of 2004, 509 student participants, 48 faculty and staff, and 31 community partners have joined in completing service-learning projects, including service-learning class components, alternative spring breaks, and other service projects. The Service-Learning Office, staffed by two VISTA members, recently hosted a service-learning fair (also on March 8) with displays from each project in order to highlight and celebrate the service learning accomplishments achieved throughout the academic year.

During training at the University of Saint Mary, the VISTA volunteers reflected on six months of service and the progress they still have to complete. Mary Hale Tolar, executive director of Kansas Campus Compact reported, "We are proud of the outstanding contributions our VISTA members are making in our state and local communities."

Learn how to serve with Kansas Campus Compact as a VISTA volunteer by contacting Joseph Mclean, AmeriCorps-VISTA leader, at 758-532-3475, [jmclean@ksu.edu](mailto:jmclean@ksu.edu) or by visiting [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org) or [www.ksu.edu/kscc](http://www.ksu.edu/kscc).

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