

NATIONAL SERVICE, LOCAL CHANGE.



**JULY  
2017**

# **ROCHESTER YOUTH YEAR**

**10TH ANNIVERSARY IMPACT REPORT**

# A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR



When I became the first full-time director of the Rochester Center for Community Leadership in 2008, we had just been awarded the AmeriCorps VISTA grant to support Rochester Youth Year,

a new initiative that sought to reconnect universities with local organizations. I myself served with VISTA in the state of Wyoming and as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia. These first-hand experiences with national service programs have been crucial to understanding the challenges and rewards of this work. We now have the privilege of partnering with 16 members and host sites, a number that has grown from three, in our pilot year in 2007.

As we celebrate our 10th Anniversary this year, I continue to be amazed at how committed our fellows are to community-based work. VISTA has helped sharpen this focus toward capacity building projects and brings over half a century of experience in design and implementation of sustainable initiatives, which we have greatly benefited from. The work of alleviating poverty in the community is complex and challenging. It is not something that any one person, or even one organization, can do alone.

Rochester Youth Year is built on collaborative relationships and mutually beneficial partnerships with community organizations, area colleges, funders, and community members. Our fellows learn how to collaborate effectively and to be resourceful in the face of myriad obstacles. We've been very successful in creating a strong cohort-based model for leadership development, and as a result, we've achieved high rates of retention through the fellowship and beyond. Many RYY fellows choose to stay in or return to Rochester to pursue their careers. With almost 100 alums of the program, we have developed a critical mass of leaders and change makers in Rochester and around the world.

My greatest satisfaction with our program is seeing the trajectories of our alumni, and where their lives have led them: a medical doctor who is now specializing in refugee health care, a social media specialist for the local NPR affiliate, entrepreneurs, lawyers, researchers and Peace Corps volunteers. All of their careers are informed by this experience, and they give me hope for the future of this community and any community that they will inhabit. Thank you to all of our partners and funders for enabling us to flourish over these 10 years!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Glenn C. Cerosaletti".

**Glenn Cerosaletti**

Assistant Dean of Students and Director,  
Rochester Center for Community Leadership  
University of Rochester





## OUR VISION

We envision a future where poverty in the Rochester community is not a barrier to health, economic, or educational success.

## OUR MISSION

We engage and empower local graduates to strengthen the capacity of community agencies, in order to better serve the Rochester area.



## OUR STRATEGY

We have set the following five priorities in order to achieve our mission:

1. **Recruit talented and qualified graduates** from local institutions to partake in an impactful and developmental year of national service.
2. **Build capacity and sustainable systems** for local organizations to allow them to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of their initiatives.
3. **Garner and leverage community buy-in** for AmeriCorps VISTA and national service to increase impact.
4. **Foster a strong alumni network** to provide substantive personal and professional connections for Rochester Youth Year VISTA members.
5. **Conduct thorough assessments** to accurately measure RYY VISTA Impact, in alignment with a collective impact framework.



## A NATIONAL SERVICE PROGRAM

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a U.S. federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through its core programs: Senior Corps and AmeriCorps.

AmeriCorps, in turn, engages more than 75,000 Americans in intensive service each year with community agencies across the country. AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) focuses on building the capacity of local organizations to meet community needs.

For 51 years, VISTA helped bring communities and individuals out of poverty. Today, approximately 8,000 VISTA members serve in hundreds of nonprofit organizations and public agencies throughout the country. Members provide indirect, capacity-building service to support sustainable solutions to poverty while receiving a monthly stipend, an education award, and other health and subsistence support.

Since its inception, Rochester Youth Year has placed 93 talented recent graduates from Rochester-area colleges at community-based organizations for one year to create or expand initiatives that alleviate the effects of poverty on Rochester youth and families. Rochester Youth Year has been sponsored by AmeriCorps VISTA since 2008. Thank you to CNCS and AmeriCorps VISTA for enabling us to thrive!



# ROCHESTER REGIONAL NETWORK

Rochester Regional Network is made up of 8 college representatives in the area. Together they act as an advisory board for the Rochester Youth Year AmeriCorps VISTA Fellowship, while also connecting and working together for the greater good of students and residents in the Rochester Area.

Thank you to our Rochester Regional Network members:



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**“The more RYY Fellows we equip, youth we empower, and agencies we befriend, the more of an impact we can make to enrich communities.”**

**Brenda Myrthil**

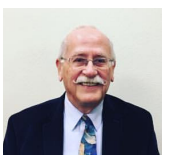
Associate Dean, Student Programming & Leadership  
Roberts Wesleyan  
Founding RRN member, 10 years



**“Rochester Youth Year provides graduates with an amazing gap year opportunity to remain in the area and engage in critical anti-poverty initiatives. The RRN members are a wonderful group of colleagues dedicated to making our communities better places to live and work.”**

**Tom Matthews**

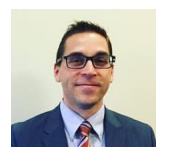
Associate Dean of Leadership & Service  
SUNY Geneseo  
Founding RRN member, 10 years

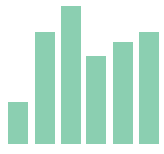


**“As a result of learning from other institutions, we all approach the work of civic engagement and service with a depth of knowledge and understanding greater than the work of just one of us.”**

**Adam Lewandowski**

Associate Director, Center for Civic Engagement  
Nazareth College  
RRN member, 9 years





# OUR IMPACT

Over the 10 years of Rochester Youth Year:

**93**

**Fellows**

**83,000**

**Hours served  
by volunteers**

**7,400**

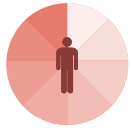
**Volunteers  
Recruited &  
Managed**

**\$1,770,000**

**Raised In kind and  
Cash Resources**







## PARTICIPANT DEVELOPMENT

*The RYY Program provides professional development, leadership training, and networking opportunities throughout the year to build the fellows' skills and connections, thereby increasing their value to partner organizations.*



*The following list is based on qualitative surveys from VISTAS collected after their service:*

### PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Communication Skills
- Resource Development
- Grant Writing
- Volunteer Recruitment & Management
- Community Outreach & Marketing
- Program Evaluation
- Research
- Public Speaking
- Networking
- Problem Solving
- Database Management & Data Analysis
- Curriculum Design
- Strategic Planning
- Asset-based Youth Development
- Event Planning
- Project Management

### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Career Development & Direction
- Advocacy for Self & Others
- Flexibility & Persistence
- Budgeting and Money Management
- Commitment to Public & Social Equity
- Cultural Humility & Competency
- Empathy
- Confidence & Independence
- Collaboration & Teamwork
- Broader Understanding of Various Work Environments
- Professionalism Skills
- In-depth Understanding & Knowledge of the City of Rochester





## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Rochester Youth Year AmeriCorps VISTA alumni go on to pursue a diversity of careers.

### Higher Education

- **Medical School:** University of Rochester, University of Buffalo
- **Graduate School in Education:** University of Chicago, Warner School of Education
- **Graduate School in Public Health:** Northeastern University, McGill University
- **Graduate School Social Work:** Boston College, Hunter College, Nazareth College
- **Graduate School in Humanities:** University of Pittsburgh, St. John Fisher College
- **Graduate School in Policy:** New York University, Brandeis University
- **Law School:** Case Western Reserve University



### Professional Experiences

- **City Government:** Office of Innovation, Mayoral Staff, Department of Parks and Recreation
- **Hired by Host Sites:** M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, East Upper and Lower Schools, Cornell Cooperative Extension
- **National Service:** AmeriCorps, City Year, AmeriCorps NCCC
- **International Service:** PeaceCorps, BECA (Bi-lingual Education for Central America)
- **NonProfit Work:** Urban League, Compeer, WXXI
- **Higher Education:** University of Rochester, Northeastern University, Alfred State

“During Rochester Youth Year, I learned how to navigate different communication styles. The work experience at my site definitely better prepared me for graduate school and my future career goals.”

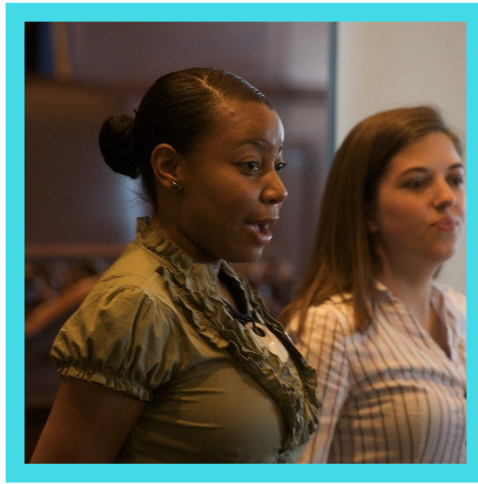
~ Hannah Canale, RYY Fellow 2016-2017





# ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

*Organizations, institutions, and projects apply for a Rochester Youth Year fellow each year, but successful and supportive projects are usually awarded 3 consecutive VISTAs that complete the VISTA Cycle.*

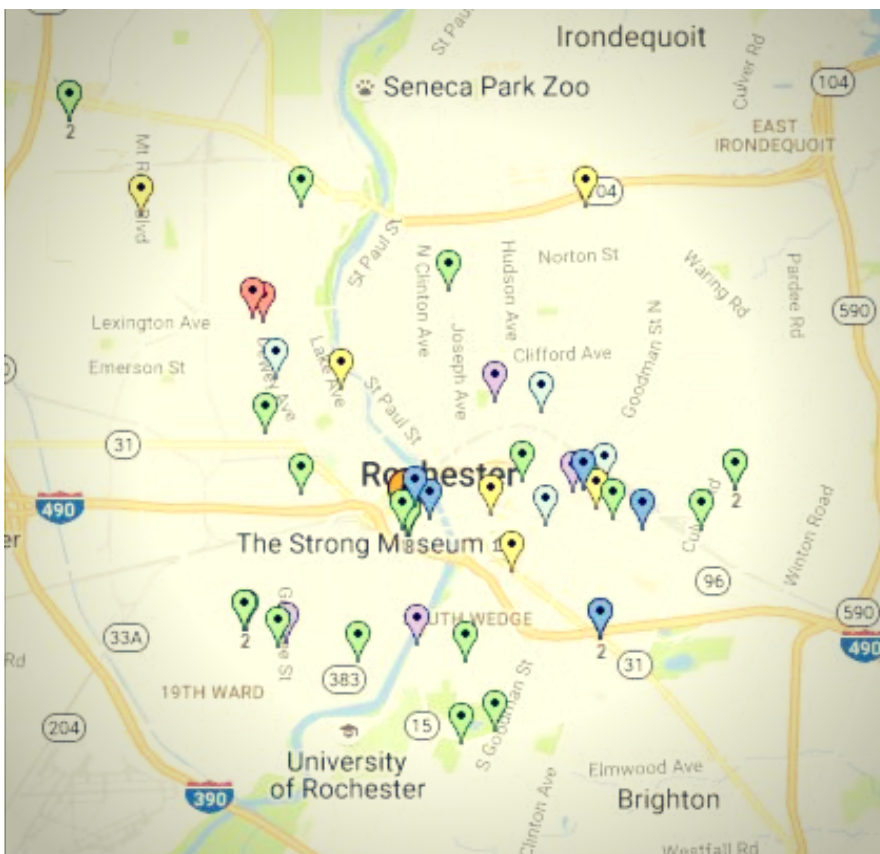


## HOST SITE PLACEMENTS

*Over 10 Years, by Priority Area*

**53**  
projects

*The Corporation for National and Community Service regularly identifies priority areas for AmeriCorps projects to address. Below are the priority areas that Rochester Youth Year has focused on over the past 10 years.*



- Health and Wellness/Education
- Economic Development
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Health and Wellness
- Healthy Futures
- Public Safety/Community Development

Capacity-building activities enhance the mission and strategy, as well as the systems and infrastructure, of an organization. This indirect service enables organizations to provide strong and sustained direct services that address community needs.

**“We could not do what we do at the Crisis Nursery without the support of VISTA and the program they've helped us build and sustain. Because of the capacity we've built, we are moving to open another site in Rochester.”**

~ Faith Davignon, Assistant Director of Counseling and RHY Services,  
Center for Youth



## QUICK LOOK: Some Accomplishments

Due to Rochester Youth Year AmeriCorps VISTA Fellow capacity-building support:

- **Rochester City School District (RCSD)** hired 34 additional reading teachers for the 2015-2016 school year, based on RYY fellow research and data analysis.
- The **Crisis Nursery of Greater Rochester** is expanding to a second site as a result of the successful creation and management of a volunteer program, saving the Nursery about \$50,000 a year.
- **Discovery Charter School** has successfully developed a Library Culture, indexed by the 35 students who now have Library cards, the 200 books that students have checked out from local libraries, the 208 students who have served as Library Ambassadors, and 150 parents that were engaged through Family literacy events.
- The **M.K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence** secured over \$180,000 in grants and resources to support the School Climate Transformation Initiative.
- **Greater Rochester Summer Learning Association** developed a model for incorporating additional sites into their Horizons consortium and implemented a new website.
- **East Upper and Lower Schools** created a food pantry for low-income students and a community volunteer program within the school.
- **Anthony Jordan Health Center** conducted a year-long Needs Assessment Report and a Youth Focus Group to inform them of best practices, models, and community input, and created an internship for program for college students to address these needs.



# ✓ GETTING INVOLVED:

## Become a Host Site:

Hosting a Rochester Youth Year Fellow is a great way for non-profit organizations to benefit from a talented and motivated full-time team member. As AmeriCorps VISTA members, RYY Fellows are valuable resources in the development, implementation, and assessment of new projects that increase the capacity of organizations to more efficiently meet their goals and advance their mission.

## Become a Fellow:

Rochester Youth Year allows recent graduates to establish deep roots and form a vast social and professional network by collaborating with residents, nonprofit organizations, government leaders, and educators to make Rochester a more vibrant city. A position with RYY guarantees members highly valuable, hands-on experience through true community engagement, enriching them personally and professionally. Employers and graduate schools recognize and appreciate public service, making RYY alumni attractive candidates for a variety of positions!

## Become a Funder:

Do you want to support the leaders, thinkers, and citizens of the future? Your tax deductible donation supports a variety of organizations focused on health, economic opportunity, and education by giving them the capacity to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of their services. Your contribution also enables the employment of local college graduates to serve the Rochester community in a sustainable manner, all while investing in the socially engaged, civic leaders of the future.

Contact [Rochester@youthyear.org](mailto:Rochester@youthyear.org) or visit [www.youthyear.org](http://www.youthyear.org) to get involved!



# Happy 10th Anniversary, Rochester Youth Year!

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## STAY CONNECTED



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