

For Immediate Release:
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Hunger-Fighter Finishes Year of Service Aiding Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano
Over 2,000 Hours of Service Achieved

This month, Heidi Kleiner completed her term of service as an Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps volunteer at Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano.

Ms. Kleiner made a significant contribution to Food Bank by recruiting, training, and organizing a specialized group of volunteers to help low-income individuals and families sign up for CalFresh, also known as SNAP nationwide. She undertook the training of volunteers as well as partner agencies on how they could help their clients apply for benefits. She has connected CalFresh clients with local farmer's markets and helped them understand how they can utilize their EBT cards to buy fresh fruits and vegetables. Ms. Kleiner is part of a class of 36 Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps volunteers spanning 14 states and 18 regions with volunteers collectively completing nearly 75,000 hours of service.

Started in 2010, the objective of the Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps is to build the capacity of nonprofit organizations nationwide to enable more eligible individuals and families to fight hunger while empowering them to achieve long-term financial security. Volunteers also work to provide technical assistance to food pantry and soup kitchen operators, assist in fundraising and volunteer recruitment efforts, and work to increase access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, (SNAP) formerly called food stamps.

"Heidi has played a significant role in the expansion of our SNAP Outreach capacity over the last year," said Larry Sly, Executive Director of the Food Bank. "Her role in CalFresh outreach has enabled our organization to take on new opportunities to better serve the community."

"We thank this inspired group of young people for their outstanding contribution to the fight against hunger over the last year," said Joel Berg, Executive Director of the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. "From coast-to-coast, these dedicated, hard-working individuals enabled their organizations to try new projects, expand and improve their existing offerings and provide more services for the 50 million Americans fighting hunger today. These individuals are truly the next generation of leaders and I look forward to seeing what they do next."

From February 2012 to September 2012 the 55 National VISTA's made a significant contribution to the organizations and communities served. Collectively, these 55 individuals recruited 1,611 community volunteers, raised \$3,553,176 in grant funds and \$31,920 in in-kind donations.

The Anti-Hunger and Opportunity Corps is an AmeriCorps VISTA project, sponsored by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Walmart Foundation, the ConAgra Foundation and managed by the New York City Coalition Against Hunger. The VISTA volunteers work in both rural and urban areas.

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