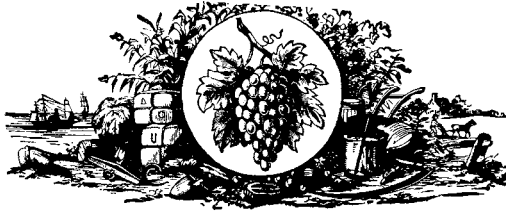


VINEYARD

Island of Martha's Vineyard, seven miles off southeast coast of Massachusetts. Winter population, 15,007; in summer, 105,624. Twenty miles from city of New Bedford, 80 miles from Boston and 150 miles from New York.



GAZETTE

Devoted to the interest of the six towns on the Island of Martha's Vineyard, viz.: Edgartown, Oak Bluffs, Tisbury (Vineyard Haven), West Tisbury, Chilmark and Aquinah. These, with Gosnold, constitute Dukes County.

FRIDAY, MAY 13, 2011

VINEYARD GAZETTE, MARTHA'S VINEYARD, MASS.



CHRIS CZAPLEWSKI AND MAEVE CZAPLEWSKI WITH ZEUS THE STEER AND KELSEY SMITH.

AmeriCorps Volunteers Digging the Island

By ALISON L. MEAD

It's a cold and rainy spring day on the Island as AmeriCorps National Community Civilian Corps (NCCC) team Raven One breaks for lunch around a table at the Farm Institute in Katama. Dressed in cargo pants, black work boots and gray sweatshirts bearing the AmeriCorps logo, these nine young corps members have been on the Island for about two weeks working on projects to support a variety of local nonprofit organizations. The Farm Institute, Vineyard Voyagers, Island Grown Schools, Whippoorwill Farm, Island Cohousing, Native Earth Farm, The Trustees of Reservations and The Martha's Vineyard Charter School have all benefited from the volunteers' help in improving infrastructures, assisting with sustainability efforts and

development of young leaders.

Raven One was invited to the Island by the Stone Soup Leadership Institute and the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative, which will sponsor the team for the two months that they serve on the Island. In bringing Raven One here, Stone Soup founding director Marianne Larned said that she "wanted to give back to all of our partners who out of the goodness of their hearts want to share with the kids their green initiatives."

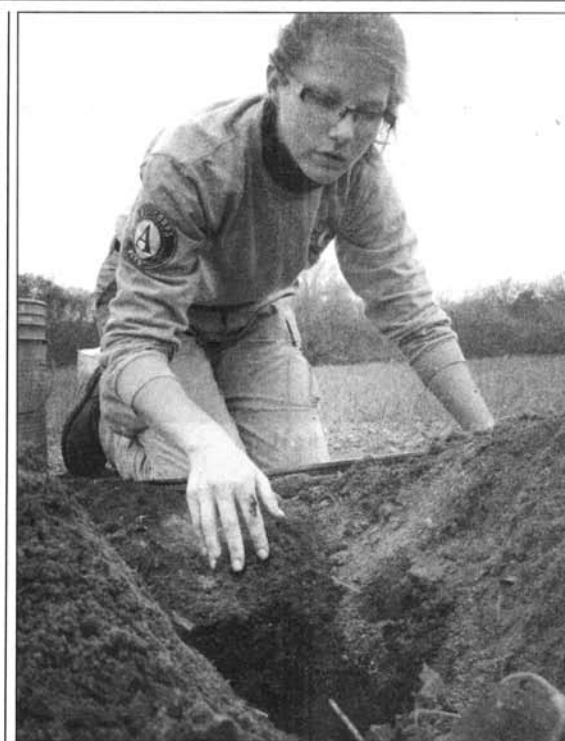
Ms. Larned has had an ongoing relationship with AmeriCorps. Each of the Raven One team members are currently reading stories from her book *Stone Soup for the World: Life Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes* in which several AmeriCorps stories are featured. The book and corresponding curriculum are used in many AmeriCorps training programs.

Raven One team member Ellen Leoni is working with Stone Soup's new global technology initiative to help

develop further ways to access their curriculum including filming the upcoming Youth Leadership for Sustainable Development summit that takes place on July 7.

Ranging in age from 18 to 26, the team members make up a diverse group from seven different states. They include high school graduates taking a year off before starting college, recent college graduates, and current college students who have chosen to take a break from their studies to work with communities. "It's a great way to get additional money for school, to travel and to serve the country," Raven One team leader Kevin Jones said. This is Mr. Jones's third year in AmeriCorps and his second as an NCCC team leader.

Reflecting on the team's mission here on the Island, Mr. Jones looks to "helping bring the institute one step closer to realizing their hopes and dreams for a sustainable Island, and not having to depend on so many resources from the mainland."



KELSEY SMITH TRANSPLANTS TOMATOES AT AN ISLAND FARM.

In exchange for their 10-month commitment of full-time service, AmeriCorps members receive a modest living allowance, housing, meals, limited medical benefits and uniforms. They are also given a financial award at the end of their service to be put toward existing loans or for future educational expenses.

All the members of Raven One are officially assigned to the Perry Point, Md. campus. They started their service in Delaware before arriving on the Island on April 30. Team member Maddy Gribbon pointed out that some NCCC members have been taken out of their original assignments and sent to Alabama and Mississippi in response to the natural disasters that have recently occurred there. "Every member receives disaster relief training through the Red Cross," she said. "If a disaster happens, they go there."

On Saturday, May 14 from 3 to 4 p.m. Miss Gribbon will lead a presentation at the Vineyard Haven Library for Vineyard youth and their families to learn more about AmeriCorps NCCC.

In addition to Raven One's daily service activities, the team also sponsors a community day of service where they invite the local community to work alongside them on a project. On Sunday, May 15 from 1 to 5 p.m. Raven One will lead a beach cleanup with Island youth at the Cape Pogue Wildlife Refuge on Chappaquiddick.

Raven One will be working on the Island until June 25. After that they return to Perry Point to give a presentation of their work. They will also find out at that time what their next assignment will be and where this journey of commitment to service will take them next.

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COMMUNITY

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AmeriCorps comes to the Island

PHOTO BY TRISTAN FOWLER

Maddy Gribbon, Kelsey Smith, and Ryan Hatem (left to right) prepare a row for seedling tomato plants at the Norton Farm.

By Whit Griswold

On April 30, nine young, idealistic citizens from across the country came to Martha's Vineyard for a two-month stay at the invitation of the Stone Soup Leadership Institute (SSLI). As members of AmeriCorps' National Community Civilian Corps (NCCC), they came here to boost the efforts of nonprofit groups ranging from schools to teaching farms to conservation organizations.

The joint effort was a natural melding of two organizations that have much in common, including a direct link. Launched in 1994 as an outgrowth of the National and Community Service Trust Act, AmeriCorps has attracted more than 500,000 volunteers since then. Some give a few hours a week, while NCCC members commit to 10 months of full-time work, usually on the road. They re-

ceive a small stipend, room and board, and \$5,550 to help pay for college or repay student loans.

Each year NCCC recruits, trains, and dispatches 1,100 volunteers to partner with state and local agencies and nonprofit organizations "to improve lives, strengthen communities and foster civic engagement," according to the mission of its parent organization, the Corporation for National and Community Service. In the process, the idea is to develop leaders who, by example, will encourage their peers to become involved and start working for the greater good.

When AmeriCorps works in schools, it often uses a curriculum developed originally on Martha's Vineyard by SSLI, a nonprofit "educational organization that develops tools, programs and community initiatives that honor everyday heroes and trains future and

emerging leaders to work together to build a better world," according to its mission statement. The genesis for the institute was the book "Stone Soup for the World: Life-Changing Stories of Everyday Heroes," written and published in 1998 by Marianne Larned of Vineyard Haven.

"The book came out in 1998, and we then worked primarily with educators on the Vineyard to develop a curriculum," Ms. Larned said late last week. "And when we opened it up nationally, we had a training at the West Tisbury School. We brought in some of the people from the book, including AmeriCorps, and then they went off and followed the curriculum themselves."

Closer to home, SSLI started

the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Initiative, through which young Island residents are trained to work toward a more sustainable world. With the NCCC team, the young Is-



PHOTO BY TRISTAN FOWLER

Kelsey Smith and Jim Norton plant seedling tomato plants at the Norton Farm last week.

landers will host a beach cleanup project this Sunday, May 15, from 1 to 5 pm at the Cape Poge Wildlife Refuge on Chappaquiddick. Islanders interested in helping out should



PHOTO BY ELLEN LEONI

Just after arriving on the Island two weeks ago, The AmeriCorps crew chowed down at The FARM Institute with members of the Martha's Vineyard Youth Leadership Institute.

meet at 1 pm at the Chappy Ferry, where they will receive a free ticket, or at Mytoi Garden on Chappaquiddick.

On Saturday, May 14, from 3 to 4 pm, Islanders of all ages can learn more about AmeriCorps at the Vineyard Haven Library. Coincidentally, next week, May 14 to 21, is AmeriCorps week.

While they are on the Island, the NCCC team is helping Stone Soup on a number of fronts — by developing a pilot program called the Global Technology Initiative, by editing training videos, and by filming projects with MTV. They'll build blisters and bruises doing repair work on a building in Vineyard Haven that will house Stone Soup's offices. They will also help out at the 7th annual Youth Leadership Summit for Sustainable Development to be held on the Island from June 18 to 24.

The first week they were here, the NCCC team worked with Jim Norton helping plant at Norton Farm on the Vineyard Haven-Edgartown Road. "I asked Jim if he would like some

help, and he said that his knees would because you have to get on your knees to plant tomato seedlings," Ms. Larned said. "They learned about how Jim plants his seedlings, and then he talked to them for an hour about sustainable agriculture on the Island."

The NCCC team will also join forces with several local nonprofits to push important projects forward — building a new greenhouse at The FARM Institute, for example; helping prepare Vineyard Voyagers for the year's sailing programs; creating an outdoor classroom with Island Grown Schools at the West Tisbury School; moving a greenhouse at Whippoorwill Farm; planting corn, beans, and squash at Native Earth Teaching Farm; and building a chicken coop for Oscar's Eggs.

For more information on the NCCC team while it is on the Island, call Tristan Fowler at 315-247-9172 or refer to www.ravenoneclassXVII.wordpress.com. The website address for AmeriCorps is www.americorps.gov.

More information on SSLI is available at www.soup4world.com, or by calling Marianne Larned at 617-304-7821. ♦

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