

Name: **Justin Barnabas Wright**
Service Site: **Lacey Elementary School, Lacey Washington**
Position Title: **VISTA/Washington Reading Corps Volunteer Coordinator**
Dates: **1/01-1/03**

The mission of the Washington Reading Corps (WRC) is to improve reading abilities of K-6 students across Washington State. This is achieved through research-based tutoring of struggling readers and effective collaborations among schools, families, community members, National Service, businesses and state partners. The schools that partner with the WRC have been identified as having the lowest test scores in reading and with children from families at or below the poverty level. Community Youth Services in Olympia coordinates the WRC for a 7 county area.

As a VISTA member of the WRC team, Justin developed and improved a solid tutoring program at Lacey Elementary. As a VISTA, for two years, Justin was responsible for recruiting and coordinating volunteers, managing the reading program at Lacey Elementary, planning family involvement and volunteer appreciation events, tutoring, and establishing and maintaining partnerships in his community. Justin was a very successful VISTA in every capacity. Justin provided training for his fellow members and mentoring during his second term of service, and took the initiative on additional service projects and tasks, such as grant writing, donation gathering, and co-managing the AmeriCorps grant.

Specific Assignments and Accomplishments

Justin recruited volunteers who contributed over 2,000 hours of tutoring for the school. In addition to his regular duties, Justin contributed a significant amount of hours as a tutor himself.

- *Recruited, trained, and managed a diverse pool of 50 volunteers which included, elementary students, high school students, college interns, student teachers, retired school personnel, national service participants, and community members from all segments of the Lacey community.*
- *Served as a community liaison by speaking at local civic groups and schools such as, The Evergreen State College, KAOS Radio, Thurston Community Television, and the Washington State Commission for National and Community Service, to solicit volunteers and support for the program. Justin was the field supervisor for Evergreen's interns and submitted evaluations of their work.*
- *Scheduled and matched volunteers with students to be tutored.*
- *Assessed reading scores and collaborated with teachers to identify students for the program. Monitored and assessed progress of children to share with tutors, teachers, and parents.*
- *Submitted monthly and quarterly reports to Key Area Coordinator to support local, regional, and statewide evaluation efforts.*
- *Attended monthly team and cluster meetings to receive training, network, and brainstorm with other WRC members.*
- *Solicited and managed over \$5,000 worth of in-kind donations.*
- *Fostered and maintained over 40 partnerships with various local organizations.*

Service Projects

Service learning is experiential learning gained by serving on a meaningful project created and carried out by community members providing reciprocal benefits discussed in reflection. Every year our members participate in 3 national days of service – Martin Luther King Jr. Day (MLK Jr. Day), National Volunteer Week (NVW), and Make a Difference Day (MADD). Below are the service projects Justin participated in; those italicized were designed and lead by Justin.

- The Mom's House Project – MLK Jr. Day 2001
- North Thurston Schools Projects – NVW 2001
- Wishkah School Project – MADD 2001
- *Senior Stories of MLK Jr. at Roo Lan - MLK Jr Day 2002*
- *"AmeriCorps, Stars of National Service" entry in the Capital Lakefair Grand Twilight Parade – July 2002*
- *Green Thumbs, Read Books Luncheon – NVW 2002*
- *Reading, Riding (the Bus) and Recess a Lacey Elementary Project – Sept. 2002*
- Helping Hands, Healthy Harvest – MADD 2002

Family Literacy Project

Washington Reading Corps VISTAs are required to involve families as one segment of the community in their service and reading programs. Justin was very capable of mixing educational activities with themes and media that excited participation of those involved. Justin was particularly passionate and creative in bringing parents and children together as a way to involve parents in their children's education, by planning and hosting the following family involvement events:

*Family Literacy Karaoke, *Family DVD Night, *Compact Disco, *WRC CD – A Portable Time Capsule, *Celebrity Read Aloud with Mark A Page, *Fall Book Harvest, *"Mock Twain" with Page to Stage

Trainings and Workshops

Training is a strong feature of our AmeriCorps Program. We provide the best training that we are able to, to help our members in their service and to facilitate their personal and professional growth. During Justin's time in AmeriCorps Justin took seriously the trainings we offered him and strived to learn all he could.

Tutor Training

General Tutor Training Skills, Tutoring, Advance Learning Styles, Freedom Writers Experience, English as a Second Language, Story Telling, Multiple Learning Styles, Student Management, WASL/EALRs, Working with Youth, Child Development, Love and Logic

(no less than 40 hours of training and significant hours of direct experience working with students)

Communication

Public Speaking, Facilitation Skills, and Communication Skills
(no less than 24 hours of training in communication)

Conflict Resolution

Tearing Down the Walls of Fear of Conflict, Conflict Resolution, and Compassionate Communication
(no less than 16 hours of training)

Team Buliding

Working with Difficult People, Team Building, Challenge Activities, and Ropes Course
(no less than 40 hours of training)

Leadership

Sititutional Leadership and Leadership Skills
(no less than 8 hours of training)

Life After AmeriCorps

Career Assessment, Portfolio, Resume Writing, Finessing Interviews, and Visioning for Your Future
(no less than 12 hours of training)

Diversity

Diversity Awareness and Diversity Awareness Building
(no less than 12 hours of training)

VISTA Specific Training

Volunteer Recruitment, Management and Appreciation, Grant Writing, Recruiting Local Business Partners, Donation Gathering, Using Electricity to Tell Your Story
(no less than 24 hours of training)

Additionally, Justin designed and provided or co-facilitated multiple trainings for different AmeriCorps audiences from recruitment, soliciting donations, building community, to use of various media to build partnerships as he exhibited in depth knowledge in particular subject areas.

Gregory Garcia
Washington Reading Corps Program Coordinator
Community Youth Service