

AmeriCorp Volunteers Arrive in Vernonia

By Scott Laird

Reinforcements have arrived.

A team of eleven AmeriCorp Volunteers have come to Vernonia to help with clean up and restoration projects for victims of the flood. The Blue 4 team, part of AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) program, arrived on April 15 and will work in the Vernonia area until the end of May. The group is living at the Natal Grange and are coordinating with Columbia County Flood Relief (CCFR) to identify projects they can assist with. After four months of flood clean up and rebuilding, fresh faces and bodies are a welcome addition to the community efforts to rebuild.

Twenty-two year old Kate Delahunty from Connecticut has a degree in Public Health. "This is such a great opportunity to meet people from all over. You get few



chances in life to give back, and I'm taking this time to do that. I would definitely recommend this program," said Delahunty.

NCCC team members must be between eighteen and twenty-four years old. They commit to the ten month residential program where they work on

approximately four projects that last about six weeks each, focusing in areas of education, public safety, disaster relief, environmental conservation, and commu-

nity needs. Upon completing their service, members receive a \$4,725 education award that can be used for tuition or to pay student loans. Team Leader Tiffany Zapico, from Nutley, New Jersey, explained the arrangement. "We live and work together for ten months. Everything we do is team based."

Media Coordinator Kelly Comley discussed the benefits of being an AmeriCorp volunteer. "You get to travel, see the country, learn about new places, and meet all kinds of great people. You get a chance to learn about yourself, learn about frugal living, and take time to consider options that are available. You don't need money to apply, and your room and board is covered during the program. It's a great way to explore career choices, work with all kinds of volunteer organizations and network. It's a wonderful introduction to the world of service."

Jonathan Lee, twenty-two, from Fairfax, Virginia, just finished his Bachelors Degree and is planning to go to medical school. "This is an absolutely unique experience. It helps you grow as a leader and allows you to see your own potential and put it to use. It really taps into your humanitarian instincts." Lee offered an interesting perspective on working in Vernonia. "I have always wanted to be able to help in a natural disaster. Being able to come here and help is a dream job and a dream come true for me."

Team Leader Zapico told us about some of the other projects the team has worked on. In addition to working with Habitat for Humanity in Sacramento, the Blue



4 team has worked to restore farmland and did a major community clean up in Alpaugh, California. They have also been recognized for and will be receiving a national award for their volunteer efforts for their work in schools in New Orleans.

One of the team's goals while working in a community is to get the word about the opportunities with AmeriCorp and recruit new volunteers. "This has been a great chance for me to clarify what I want to do with my life," said Kelly Comley. "It's a great way to spend a year if you're just out of high school and trying to decide what to study in school or taking time before starting a career."

Vernonia is lucky to have these energetic, committed and service oriented guests here to help. If you see them around, in their AmeriCorp grey sweatshirts, make sure to say hello and thank you.

BEST HOT DOGS 'DIS SIDE OF CHICAGO!

Try the famous Chicago Red Hot, Polish, Bratwurst cooked in beer, Chili-Cheese Fries, Garlic Fries or Nacho Fries. Featuring Heileman's Old Style Beer!

2008 Cheap Eats Award -- Willamette Week

"A great hot dog!" --
Drew Carney, KGW 8

2007 Best Bites Award -- Oregonian

"Wayne's Red Hot has it all, plus huge flavor." -- Portland Mercury

WE HAVE THE BASEBALL PACKAGE! Watch all Cubs and Sox games here!



3901 NE MLK Blvd., Portland • 503.493.4537
Mon. - Thur. 11am-9pm • Fri.-Sat. 11am-10pm • Sun. Noon-6pm

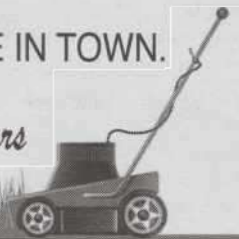
True Value
START RIGHT. START HERE.™

Spring is here! - Time to get out in the yard!

**Lawn Mowers - Garden Tools - Fertilizer
Weed Control - Mower Tune-ups**

WE HAVE IT ALL, RIGHT HERE IN TOWN.

Family owned & operated for 38 years



VERNONIA RURAL FIRE RALLY CAR BREAKFAST

Welcome Oregon Trail Rally Cars!

Sunday May 18, 2008 6:00a.m.-9:30a.m.
Join us for Biscuits & Gravy, Pancakes, Eggs, Ham, Fruit & more!

\$5⁰⁰ Plate

Fundraiser for new equipment at Vernonia Rural Fire Department