

AmeriCorps Seniors Newsletter - January 2023

Happy New Year! We hope the beginning of 2023 has been great to you.

Now that the holiday season is wrapped up, new is the year, new are the hopes, new are the spirits, and new are our warm wishes. We are so grateful for all of the partnerships and volunteers who make possible the work we do to keep our community connected and serve those close to us.

As the year changes, we would like to highlight some changes, activities, and goals; we would also like to shine a spotlight on some victories and celebrate those who contributed.

Pictured are the AmeriCorps Seniors staff members at the OCWCOG Staff Picnic in August 2022. From left: Emily Loveall- Stand By Me Coordinator, Alicia Lucke- CSP Program Manager, Taylor Thorn- AmeriCorps Seniors Eligibility Specialist, Brittany Kosydar- AmeriCorps Seniors Eligibility Specialist, and Melissa Wright- CSP Administrative Assistant.



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Meet OCWCOG's AmeriCorps Seniors Staff

Alicia Lucke

I'm Alicia Lucke and the CSP Program Manager at OCWCOG. I oversee a variety of federal, state, and local community-facing programs that help serve seniors and people with disabilities, K-12 students, low-income families, veterans, and more! I love operating programs that trend towards service gaps, but my favorite part of the job is probably seeing my staff implement those programs, form relationships, and grow professionally. Our staff is sharp, empathetic, creative problem solvers, and just fun to be with! In our free time, my hubby and I chase after our kiddos (ages 11, 8, 3) and watch them play sports, learn instruments, and do all the other fun school

milestones. I love Michigan football (Go Blue), college basketball, and have NBA Team Pass for the Milwaukee Bucks---I don't think we missed a game last year. My 2023 New Year's Resolution is to read more and watch less sports!



Taylor Thorn

My name is Taylor Thorn and I am an AmeriCorps Seniors Eligibility Specialist at OCWCOG. In my role, I get to work with all our AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers in the Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP programs. I am also the SHIBA Coordinator for our 3-county area. My days never look the same, you might see me at a community volunteer fair, helping lead our monthly in-service trainings for Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents, or hear my voice over the phone scheduling SHIBA appointments. My favorite part about my job is getting

to work with the amazing volunteers. Their commitment to serving our community is incredible! When I'm not at work, I enjoy spending time outdoors exploring new areas with my husband and two dogs, watching cheesy movies and TV shows, and adding to my house plant collection! My resolution for the new year is to try and learn something new every day, no matter how big or small. I am surrounded by amazing co-workers, volunteers, and friends that I hope to learn and grow from!

Brittany Kosydar

My name is Brittany Kosydar and I'm an AmeriCorps Seniors Eligibility Specialist at OCWCOG. I work with all our AmeriCorps Seniors programs, including the Foster Grandparent, Senior Companion, and RSVP programs. One of the things I love about this role is that my days are rarely the same and I am often able to get out in the community instead of always being



behind a desk. Whether I am providing support to one of our volunteers, coordinating trainings, speaking to a community group, setting up a table at a volunteer fair, or scheduling SHIBA appointments, I know that I am making a difference in my community. When I am not at work, I am usually busy with my 3-year-old son -- reading books, doing crafts, building with blocks, or running around outside and exploring the woods. I also have 4 cats and 3 dogs that keep me busy! Some of my favorite things to do in my free time are hiking, board games, puzzles, and putting together LEGO sets. My resolution for the new year is to spend more time outside enjoying the beauty that Oregon has to offer!

Melissa Wright

My name is Melissa Wright and I'm an Administrative Assistant at OCWCOG. I make appointments for veterans at the Benton County Veterans Service Office, help with mail and communications with all three of our AmeriCorps Seniors programs, and provide some clerical support to all the other Community Services Programs. My favorite part about my job is getting to interact with the senior volunteers in our programs because of their dedication to serve their communities and friends. I am amazed and humbled by their big hearts, and I feel lucky to know them. In my free time, I enjoy disc golfing with my partner and son, hanging out with my daughter, and being in the kitchen cooking all my favorite things. My daughter has a kitty named Beast, who is exactly as friendly as he sounds, but we love him just the way he is. My resolution for 2023 is to spend more time with my teenagers because they're growing up in a flash and I don't want to miss a thing!



Emily Loveall

I'm Emily Loveall, and I'm the Stand By Me (SBM) Coordinator for the OCWCOG. SBM offers free financial coaching to Oregonians in our area, and our coaches help people clarify their financial goals and reach them through action plans. I support the coaches, I do a lot of outreach so we have more coaches and clients, and I have a few financial coaching clients, too. My favorite part is seeing people transform their finances and feel more financially secure and stable. I'm also a life coach, writer, and teacher. On the weekend, you might find me at a concert, on a camping trip, baking something tasty in the kitchen, or working on my novel. My family and I love being outside, so my new year's resolution is to get 1,000 hours outdoors!

How to reach us

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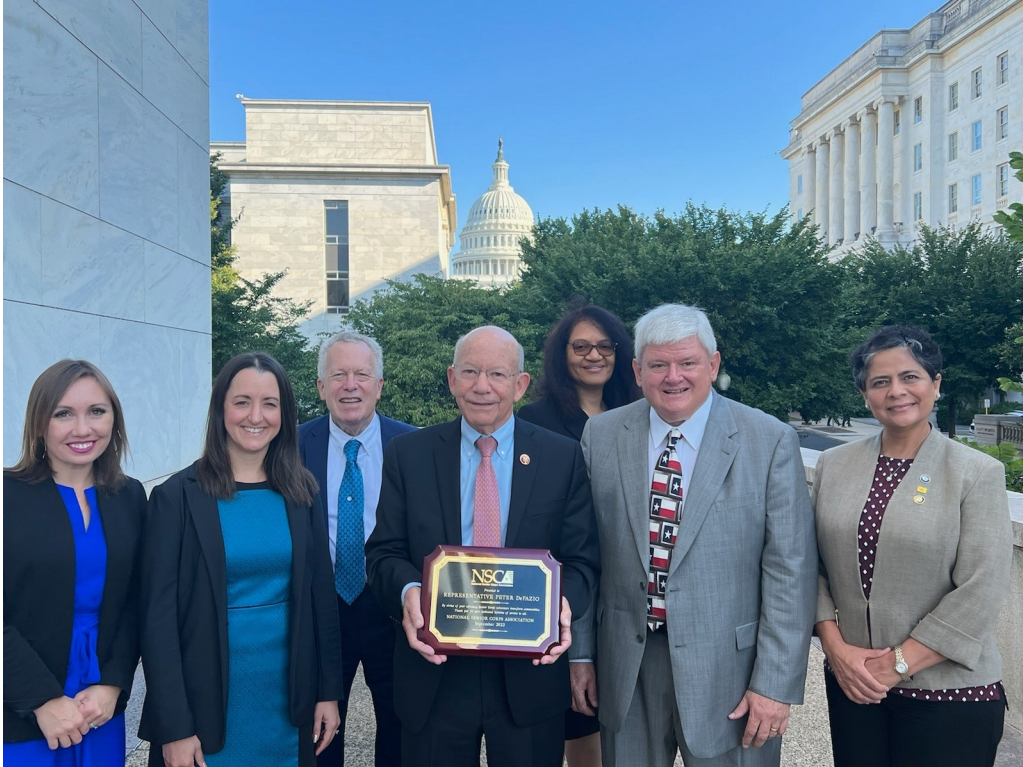
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NSCA Board Meeting in Washington DC

The National Senior Corps Association (NSCA) is the recognized national leadership organization representing the combined interests of the AmeriCorps Seniors programs: Foster Grandparent, RSVP, and Senior Companion. Community Services Programs Manager, Alicia Lucke, went to Washington DC during the week of September 19-23, 2022, for the NSCA's first in-person board meeting in three years. NSCA board members met with Congressional representatives to impress upon them the significant impact our programs have on the communities we serve. On September 21, 2022, NSCA presented Representative Peter DeFazio (D-OR) with a special award for his years as a National Service Champion.



Pictured (left to right): Cassie Rose (Board Member, OR), Alicia Lucke (Board Member, OR), Alan Lopatin (Washington Advocate), Rep. DeFazio, Valarie Wright (Immediate Past President, DE), Nolen Mears (President, TX), and Josefina Mata (President-Elect, NM)

OCWCOG's Social Media

Find us on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/OCWCOG

SHIBA Activity During Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment Period

The Senior Health Insurance Benefit Assistance (SHIBA) program, administered by OCWCOG on behalf of the State of Oregon, educates and advocates for the residents in our Region about Medicare. SHIBA counselors provide one-on-one counseling and monthly Medicare classes throughout Linn, Benton, and Lincoln Counties.



During the Open Enrollment period, October 15 – December 7, 2022, our volunteer SHIBA counselors spent **1,100 hours** helping **547 Medicare recipients** make the best decisions for their healthcare needs. They also held **seven presentations** and had information tables at **three events** to provide information on different types of Medicare coverage.



Community Partner Spotlight: CSC

As your state-designated community action agency for 40 years, Community Services Consortium offers a wide range of programs and services in Linn, Benton, and Lincoln counties, and select services in Polk County. Their mission is to overcome poverty in our region, by connecting people with the tools and resources they need to build better futures. CSC works together with community partners to overcome poverty, one person at a time. Some of the ways they achieve this is by having active community partnerships to provide support through:



- .. Housing and rental assistance
- .. Utility assistance
- .. The Linn Benton Food Share
- .. The COVID Equity Program
- .. Wildfire Relief
- .. Youth, education, and workforce programs

For more information about CSC, how to get help, or how to volunteer, call (541) 928-6335 or visit their website at www.communityservices.us

National Wear Red Day – First Friday in February

Did you know heart disease is a leading cause of death in the US?

According to the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NLHBI) website, devoting a little time every day to care for yourself can go a long way toward protecting the health of your heart. Simple self-care, such as taking a moment to de-stress, giving yourself time to move more, preparing healthier meals, and not cheating on sleep can all benefit your heart.

Here are few self-care tips to try every day to make your heart a priority:

Self-Care Sunday

Find a moment of serenity every Sunday. Spend some quality time on yourself.

Mindful Monday

Being aware of your health status is a key to making positive change.

Tasty Tuesday

Prepare a tasty, healthy meal! Think about how to make healthy food choices.

Wellness Wednesday

Move more, eat a fruit or vegetable you've never tried, make a plan to quit smoking or vaping.

Treat Yourself Thursday

Treats can be healthy. Try making a dessert with fresh fruit and yogurt or host a family dance party.



Follow Friday

Follow inspiring people and pages on social media, or text a friend to help you stick to your self-care goals. Remember to take care of your mental health, too.

Selfie Saturday

Inspire others to take care of their own hearts. Talk about your self-care routine with loved ones or share a selfie on your social media platforms. Having social support and personal networks can make it easier to get regular physical activity, eat nutritious foods, reach a healthy weight, and quit smoking.

Learn more about heart health and heart-healthy activities in your community, and see what others are doing for their heart health, at nhlbi.nih.gov/ourhearts or follow **#OurHearts** on social media.

Volunteer Opportunities



Meals on Wheels (MOW): Deliver meals or assist in kitchens of meal sites to ensure that seniors and individuals with disabilities receive meals.

Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA): Train to become certified as a Medicare counselor, and provide one-on-one support to local residents new to Medicare or with questions about changing their coverage. Counseling can be done remotely too!

Senior Companion Program (SCP): Provide assistance and companionship to homebound seniors who have difficulty with daily living tasks. ***Volunteers must meet income eligibility guidelines and will receive a tax-exempt stipend for their National Service.

Foster Grandparent Program (FGP): Tutor, mentor, and support children in local schools who are at an academic, social, or financial disadvantage. ***Volunteers must meet income eligibility guidelines and will receive a tax-exempt stipend for their National Service.

Stand By Me (\$BM) Oregon: Train to become a financial coach and help local residents navigate the process of meeting their financial goals. Coaching is done mostly remotely.

The Senior Services Advisory Council (SSAC) and Disability Services Advisory Council (DSAC) consists of stakeholders from the community that advise and advocate regarding policies, quality of services, program delivery, budget, spending and are integral in development of OCWCOG's Area Plan.

Money Management Program: Assist individuals with finances, such as paying bills or managing federal payments on a client's behalf.



If interested, please call the AmeriCorps Seniors office at

- 541-574-2684 (Lincoln County)
- 541-812-0849 (Linn/Benton County)

Or complete an application at

- www.ocwcog.org/connect/volunteer/

Upcoming Events

Medicare 101

OCWCOG, in partnership with SHIBA, is holding classes that will cover the basics of Medicare parts A, B, C, and D.

Classes are designed for anyone who will be eligible for Medicare within a few months or is new to Medicare. Current beneficiaries who would like a better understanding of their Medicare benefits and options will also find classes valuable. Spouses and other relatives are welcome to attend. Registration is required.

Linn/Benton Counties

LBCC Lebanon Campus – Wednesday,
January 25, 2022, 5pm – 7pm

LBCC Albany Campus – Tuesday, March 14,
2022, 5pm – 7pm

LBCC Corvallis Campus – Tuesday, March 21,
2022, 1pm – 3pm

Lincoln County

Samaritan Center for Health Education in
Newport – Friday, February 17, 2022,
10am – 12pm

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide

Volunteers in Oregon's Benton and Linn counties can take the stress out of tax time with in-person, IRS-certified tax preparation. Tax-Aide is available to anyone, free of charge, with a focus on taxpayers who are over 50 and have low to moderate income. Federal and Oregon personal tax returns will be prepared February through mid-April 2023.

Appointments are required. For appointments in Corvallis and Philomath call **541-602-5829**; in Albany call **541-497-7194**.



Now available in Linn, Benton,
Lincoln, and Marion Counties

Improve your credit score.

Get free credit reports from three credit bureaus.
Learn how to improve your score.

Increase your savings.

Work with your coach to develop a plan to balance your income and expenses. Start saving for a rainy day, retirement, a house, a college education, a car or other financial goals.

Access financial services.

Access consumer-friendly alternatives to payday-loans. Discover credit-builder loans, mortgages, and interest-bearing savings accounts.

Pay for college and receive financial aid.

Get help with financial planning for college education, financial aid, scholarships, FAFSA and student loans.

Become a Homeowner.

A Stand By Me coach can help you build your credit score, reduce debt and qualify for a mortgage.

Start or expand your business.

Navigate the bureaucratic and legal maze of business ownership. Earn business certifications and learn how to access business financing and development resources.

Since 2011, Stand by Me has helped over 25,000 Delawareans.

Stand By Me is the only statewide financial empowerment program in the United States that provides free one-on-one financial coaching, along with other services to help individuals better manage their personal finances. Working with hundreds of area businesses and government partners, Stand By Me helps build stable communities.

Originally launched in Delaware (May 2011) as a partnership between the United Way of Delaware and the State of Delaware, Stand By Me is a financial empowerment program that continues to help individuals and families achieve their goals.



Get A Stand By Me Coach Today
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