Can you believe it's November already? It seems like just last week AmeriCorps state members were logging into virtual orientation for another 3 hour long training! Nonetheless, we are all proud and exceptionally grateful for all the hard work and tremendous strides everyone has made thus far. In the words of Aristotle, "We are what we repeatedly do, excellence, therefore is not act but a habit." Thank you all for exhibiting excellence.

Lastly, as you are all preparing for the holidays and looking forward to spending time with family and friends, please be mindful to continue to exercise great safety precautions and know that your Alliance AmeriCorps family wishes you a warm season of joy, laughter, and happiness. ~ W. KaNeesha Allen
Meet a New Member of our Team!

Hung Luu
Marketing Undergrad

We are pleased to have Hung Luu join us as our AmeriCorps Marketing Intern. He will be with us for the Fall term and helping us improve our social media content and presence. Hung will be graduating this Fall with a Bachelor of Science in Marketing from the University of Texas at Dallas. He brings valuable experience with conducting marketing research and projects to our team and we are excited to learn from him.

Fun Fact: He enjoys traveling the world and was born and raised in Vietnam.

AMERICORPS OF THE MONTH
Jasmin De La Cerda; Youth Program Engagement Coordinator

Having Jasmin in our team has been a really great experience. Her knowledge and background fits so well with our program’s goals, and her experience working overseas with the similar population group allows her to have a natural chemistry with our clients/youth. I look forward to all we have planned to accomplish this coming year, especially in the literature area (digital and traditional). Thank you Jasmin for all you’re doing for the Refugee Youth Mentoring Program, YOU ROCK!!!

-Pierrine R. Spitaleri
Refugee Youth Mentoring Program Manager
Kelly Olivo has helped us make tremendous progress in our communication, branding, and outreach efforts to promote The Alliance and the communities we serve. She has helped us expand our social media and online presence by identifying new digital marketing tools and creating innovative content for our platforms. Kelly went above and beyond to ensure that we were still able to effectively promote The Alliance programs and our resources during COVID-19 by developing flyers, creating social media graphics, and curating our YouTube channel to include multilingual educational videos, agency webinars, and overviews of our agency programs. She also provided a great deal of support to make sure our major agency events were successful. Leading a team of interns, she helped coordinate a series of virtual World Refugee Day activities that engaged over 53,000 social media users throughout June 2020.

Kelly was also a crucial member of our Back to School Drive planning team, helping us gather donations, secure partners and promote the event. I'm so grateful to have had the opportunity to work with her and cannot thank Kelly enough for her service to the community.

It was our great pleasure to work with Lili during her year of service. Lili has worn many hats, helping us to grow our volunteer program. From content creation to system design, Lili was helping and learning nearly every aspect of our organization. Lili was instrumental in our day of volunteerism with Twitter, our No Kids on the Floor breakfast fundraiser, and the inauguration of our Art for All Gallery. Lili’s dedication to her work with clients receiving furniture assistance has been a pleasure to observe. Her grace under pressure and tremendous capacity for empathy are some of her greatest strengths. We are honored to be bringing Lili on full time at the conclusion of her service as our Furniture Assistance Coordinator.
MATTHEW JOHNSTON
By: Michelle Remy-Maillet, Coordinator of Entrepreneurship Programs, The Alliance

Matthew Johnston served as the Business Development AmeriCorps VISTA here at The Community Cloth since October of 2019. Within this last year he helped TCC develop many essential foundational tools to build capacity. That otherwise would have gone undone without his diligent work, service and commitment.

Accomplishments for the year include:

- Developed an inventory system for The Community Cloth, with scanning capabilities so that staff members or volunteers could scan the barcode labeled outside the bin and locate any items they needed.
- Managed over 1000 pieces of inventory
- Created and Developed all Standards of Operating Procedures (SOP’s) for the program, due to the lack of documentation there were no systems in place that other staff members could rely on to maintain the program. Matthew looked through 3 years of data and complied it into 1 binder, where staff and volunteers can now go to should they ever need assistance.
- Assisted me with sales reconciliation at partner sites.
- Collaborated with other non-profit partners to raise awareness regarding PPE during COVID-19 pandemic.
- Collaborated interdepartmentally within the Asset Building Department to cold call clients and inform them about potential rent opportunities and grants given by the City of Houston.
- Oversaw the second generation of Advisory Board Members within The Community Cloth.
- Assisted with sales that totaled over $12,000.00 within the last year.
- Assisted with over $2,000.00 of in kind donations made to the program.
- Facilitated meetings and helped develop the new business and marketing plan for the program.
- Helped oversee 2 interns, 1 which assisted him in the collection of data for the Smithsonian Museum (an ongoing collaboration) about children’s needs during COVID-19.

Matthew Johnston was an invaluable member of this team. The Community Cloth program would not be where it is today without his hard work and dedication. I have no doubt that Matthew will achieve great things wherever he goes next, he will be missed and I wish him the best of luck.

KEITH KATZ
By: David Fernandez, FOC Program Manager, The Alliance

Keith quickly developed tracking systems to capture client information about individuals and families adversely affected by COVID - 19

- Keith developed the digital intake process and is exploring digital signature programs for the FOC intake process, allowing the FOC to continue to enroll new clients and tend to the needs of people affected by the pandemic.
- Keith become a CARES ACT small business content expert within the FOC by becoming well versed in the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) designed to support struggling small businesses.
- Keith volunteered to help navigate small business clients through the PPP program by signing a special Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to deliver direct service to tend to these small business clients for the 30 days, greatly alleviating the strain on the FOC's financial coaching capacity.
- Keith volunteered to take on all these additional responsibilities while continuing to accomplish all his regular duties and projects delineated in his VAD.

“Though he had already proven himself to be a valuable member of the FOC team long before the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, Keith’s willingness to go above and beyond to support the FOC and to volunteer his time to service clients during the COVID - 19 crisis serves as inspiration for us all to remain steadfast as we strive to serve the community during these trying times.”
Things To Do

Houston:

- Houston Zoo: Zoo Lights 2020
- Matthew McConaughey Virtual Literary Brunch

Food Event: The Original Ninfa's Uptown

Virtual Tours & Streaming:

- DPAA Virtual Streams: An Array of Music Performances
- Take a Visit to Walt Disney World
- The British Museum, London
- NASA: Augmented Reality Tour App
- Defected Hold three-part "We Dance as One" Livestream

Webinars and Courses:

- November 5th: Books that Motivate ESL students to Read and Develop Fluency
- Using the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award
- Building a Professional Network for Service and Career
- ProLiteracy's Webinar Playlist
- Exploring Implicit Bias and Perception During your Service Year

Free Courses:

- 8 Certifications to Add to Your Resume
- 10 Online Certification Courses to Advance Your Career

Harvard Online Learning: Exercising Leadership: Foundational Principles

Self Care Corner

Health and Mindfulness:

- 3 Steps to Stop Remote Work Burnout
- Betterhelp I Professional Counseling w/ Licensed Therapist
- 9 Things to Do If You Feel Hopeless

Ted Talk Playlists:

- How to get into a work-from-home mindset
- How passion becomes purpose
- The Power of Film
- Why tech needs Diversity
- How to take charge of your personal finances
- Interview with a business mogul

Podcasts:

- 9 Of The Best Self-Care Podcast for when you're feeling Stressed or Overworked
- NPR: Ask me Another

Articles and Resources:

- Self Care Resource Center
- Mental Health Tools and Resources
- 8 Daily Habits: How to make yourself better each day
- Physical Wellness Toolkit

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