



AmeriCorps

Ohio Association of Foodbanks

Community Services Report: September 2020





Total Members Currently Serving: **37**

Other Highlights This Month:

22,525 people received hunger relief, referrals, or nutrition education

58 outreach events or presentations

26 new systems or processes implemented

6077 youth supported

14 community assessments conducted

ShareCorps members are part of the AmeriCorps VISTA program. They work on indirect, capacity building initiatives like improving technology at food pantries, developing resources, and coordinating volunteers. They serve full-time for year-long service terms.

“I have been creating a digital literacy class for the clients we serve. Our program has access to an online resource that gives people access to over 140 online classes to support professional, personal, and financial development. We encourage clients to use this resource, but one barrier that prevents them from doing so is lack of familiarity with technology. So I built a digital literacy course that could be led by a facilitator and will provide in-class practice exercises, visuals to assist in learning, and take-home resources clients can refer to when they need help outside of class.”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Janelle Johnson (NOCAC)

“The partnership with Franklin County Public Health that I facilitated is continuing. A community health worker plans on being present for a block of time during our open pantry hours so that clients can consult with them about any issues they are facing. I have been able to refer several clients to their services. One individual who has significant health challenges has been working extensively with them to get the care he needs.”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Karissa Esala (New Albany Food Pantry)

“Our teen market program to combat teen hunger is finally starting to take off! I met with our future school liaison at Thomas Worthington High School (over zoom) to discuss the needs and future of the program through the pandemic. I also spoke with current VISTA, Polly, about her experience organizing her food bank’s school pantry program. She shared with me some of the materials that she developed, which will prove very helpful in the future and safety of our own teen market.”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Jenna Boue (Worthington Resource Pantry)

“This month one of the main objectives of my VAD came to fruition in the Virtual 5K. I was able to interact with more staff, volunteers, and supporters this month than during the previous three, and it was excellent and energizing. With this event being virtual for the first time, we did very well, generating around \$30,000 as our gross figure. It is not what we would’ve hoped for had we been able to host a traditional event, but I am pleased with the fact that we provided some continuity for the fundraiser, and provided ample opportunities for the community to learn about CRIS and partake in a healthy and safe activity. We were able to engage what are likely our youngest supporters yet with the Family Challenge I created.”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Lexi Kilbane (CRIS)



“The Farmhouse has begun the process of growing an orchard on our grounds. I was able to assist this project by recruiting and organizing volunteers to help with the planting of over 70 fruit trees. All of the plants/trees were in the ground in just two days thanks to 13 volunteers who volunteered a total of 68 hours in the orchard. What the orchard produces will be used at our local food bank, C.A.S.T., for our Sunday Market, our co-op bags, our community dinners, and hopefully through our new relationship with our local school system to address food insecurity.”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Megan Brown (The Farmhouse)

“This month, I’ve finished writing and editing 326 pages of training material from three program manuals. This training material is going to be used in developing a cohort-style program where new communities can learn about Serving Our Neighbors’ model of programming. I am helping develop this training by collaborating with SON Ministries’ founder and another community partner.”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Hannah Graber (SON Ministries)

Coming Together for a Day of Service

This year, on the September 11th National Day of Service and Remembrance, eight ShareCorps VISTA members dedicated their day to serving an Ohio community in a different way. They took some time away from their typical VISTA duties to join the Alliance for The Great Lakes and their Adopt-a-Beach program. Working at two beaches, these VISTAs spent a combined total of 28 hours cleaning Ohio’s Great Lake shores. It was an opportunity to come together as a ShareCorps team, share in a hands-on service experience, and reflect on what this day means to those able to give back to their community. Thank you to the VISTA members from Greater Cleveland Food Bank, CRIS, and the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank for your service! And a special thanks to Debbie Kummer, Greater Cleveland Food Bank VISTA, who put this opportunity together!





“September was a very busy month for our school year planning! It was so exciting to take part in the planning of programs for students, as well as a college-bound program for students & families. I collaborated weekly with Breakthrough’s program directors to plan effective events, and we finally started to host more of these events. As a program we are now offering the following virtual programs: tutoring, advisory board (to plan the future of BTC with students), and “Super Saturdays” (experiential learning events).”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Ashley Martin (Breakthrough Cincinnati)

“I created social media marketing for Oberlin Community Service’s participation in Connect to a Cause Day, a twelve-hour fundraising period done in conjunction with the Community Foundation of Lorain County and over 50 other local non-profits in Lorain County. In the days leading up to September 17th, I created cohesive photo series and edited videos from the members of our Board of Directors, all to make sure that as many people were keyed into Connect to a Cause Day as possible. Ultimately, OCS received \$8,089.27 for the Emergency Assistance Fund through Connect to a Cause Day.”

AmeriCorps VISTA member Emily Murphy (Oberlin Community Services)

“This month was supposed to be the planning and setting up of our largest fundraiser for the year- but because of COVID we had to reimagine what that may look like. My team and I created a “Bulb” drop fundraiser where people could text, donate online or send a check and for each amount it would provide a certain number of meals as well as plant bulbs being dropped into the ground along our fence line. Our facility sits on a very heavily traveled road and so in the spring when they bloom it will represent all the families we were able to provide for. We were able to raise over \$10,000 already!”

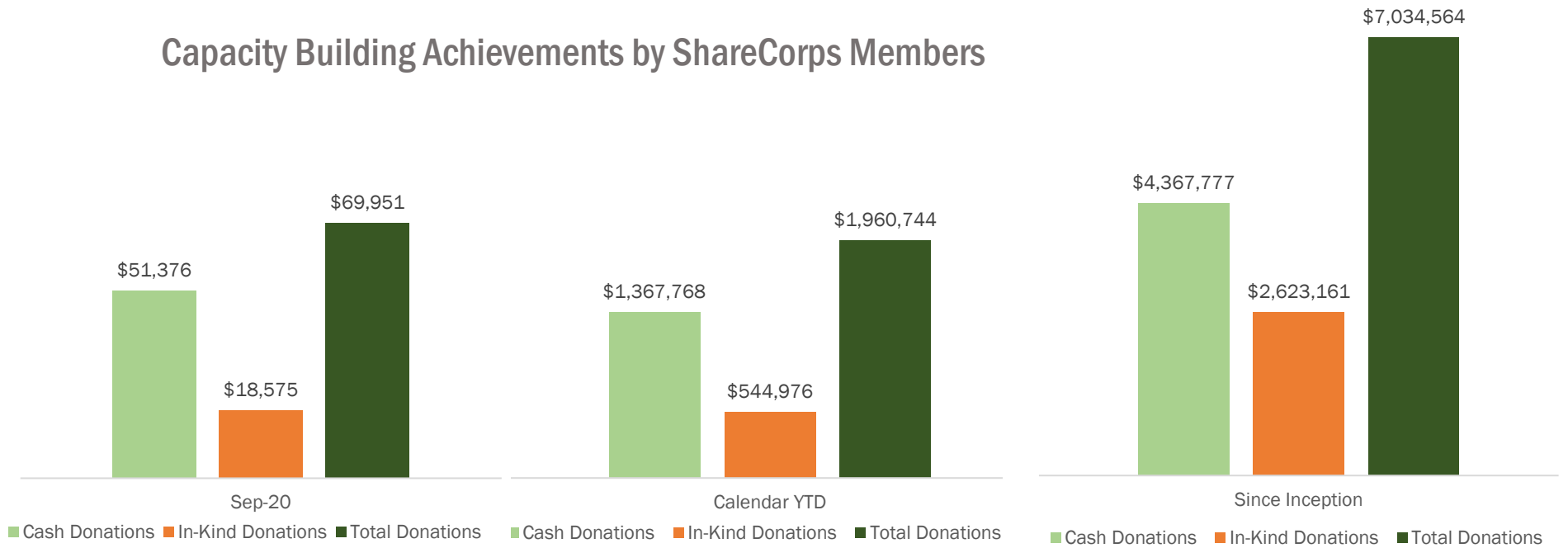
AmeriCorps VISTA member Kendra Faulkner (Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio - OHgo)

“This month, I worked with Ohio Dominican University to have our market become a work study site for their students. That process was finalized and we are now able to hire up to four students for 10-15 hours a week. I’ve also been working to create a partnership with Capital University’s Bonner Scholarship Program. Starting in the next few weeks, Bonner Scholars will be volunteering at our market on a regular basis. Partnerships with these institutions will develop and provide the volunteer stability we have been seeking for the market.”

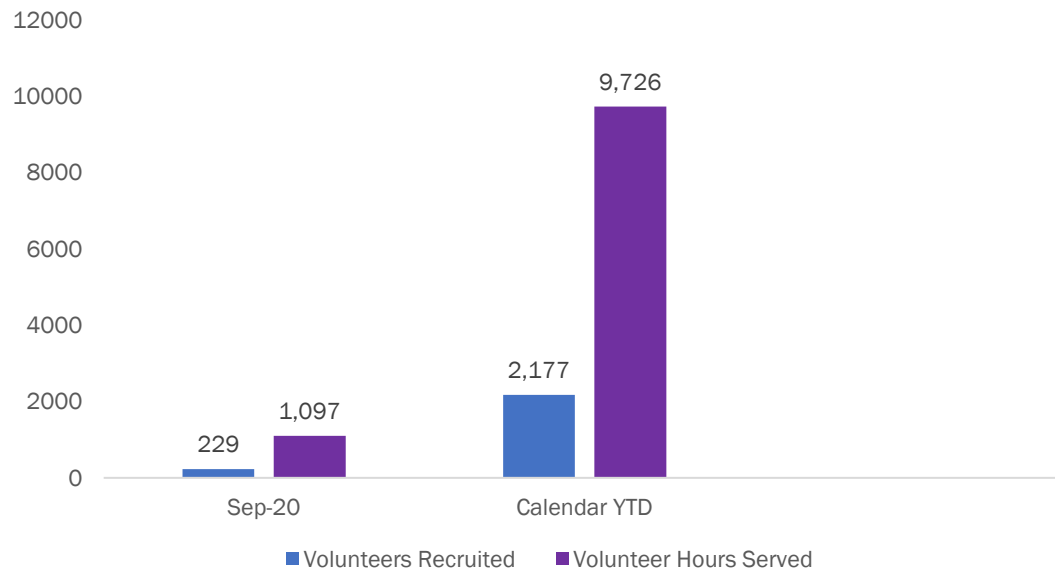
AmeriCorps VISTA member Jess Grady (Community Development for All People)



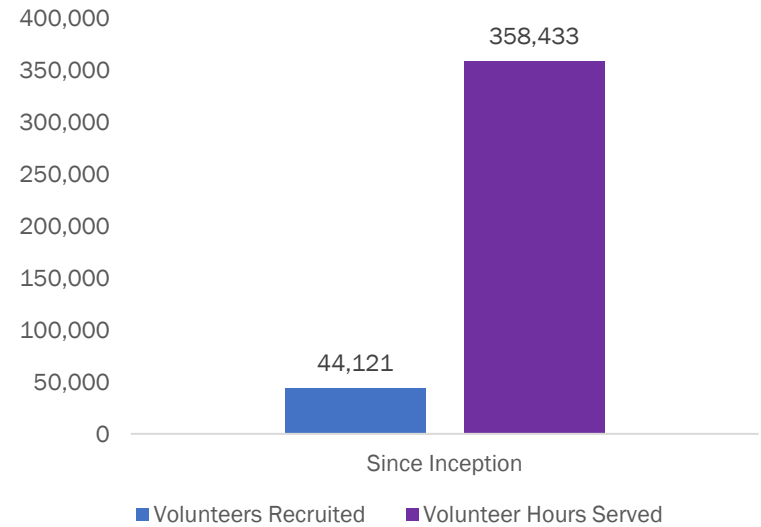
Capacity Building Achievements by ShareCorps Members



Volunteer Mobilization - Current Program Year



Volunteer Mobilization - Since Inception



ShareCorps Member Highlight:

Sydney Quynn, Otterbein University

Serving as Food Equity Coordinator, Sydney is responsible for supervising Otterbein's campus food pantry and community garden. She helps to oversee the production of fresh produce and manages its distribution to students and community members experiencing food insecurity. As part of her service, Sydney also develops community partnerships that contribute to furthering Otterbein's food justice advocacy work. In just four months of service, Sydney has made a lasting contribution to her host site by implementing innovative organic farming practices to improve food production, designing and carrying out a novel racial justice initiative to encourage students to think deeply about systemic racism and how it relates to food justice, and by constantly providing the innovation necessary to push this work in new directions. Sydney comes from a food justice advocacy background and she uses this previous experience to be intentional with her programs, events, and partnerships, ensuring that everything is working towards her organization's mission for food justice. Serving in the times of COVID-19 and the unique communication and planning challenges that presents, Sydney has learned over the past four months how to think many steps ahead to ensure that her decision-making remains in-line with her goals for the year.

Sydney recommends National Service and is grateful for her experience so far. She states that, "a year of service is a great way to get experience in a field you are interested in and determine if is a path you want to continue down." With a goal of employment with a grassroots food justice organization following her service term, Sydney also recognizes her service year as a time when she can learn about and better understand the policies and practices that result in people being in need so that she can continue to serve them, this year and beyond. Thank you for your service, Sydney, and for your work towards eliminating food insecurity in Ohio!



"This experience has taught me that nobody deserves to live in poverty. Through this experience I have developed more empathy for those in poverty because I have a better understanding of the hard work, exhaustion, hunger and depression that comes with living at or below the poverty line."



ShareCorps Member Highlight:

Ryan Sharkey, Good Samaritan Hunger Center

Ryan is currently serving as the Volunteer Coordinator for Good Samaritan Hunger Center in Akron. His goal for this year is to both increase the number of volunteers as well as to build new opportunities for volunteer involvement with the organization. In addition to working with volunteers, Ryan has played a role in the fundraising and development work of his host site and both of these roles have allowed him to gain new skills during his service term. Through grant writing and fundraising efforts he has learned how to effectively communicate the great work being done at Good Samaritan Hunger Center; through volunteer management he has learned how to network within a community.

Ryan knows he has made an impact on his community already through his work, in particular with his efforts to integrate a new transportation program. He is excited that he is seeing the growth and development of a program in its early stages that will hopefully become an integral part of the organization and community. Ryan has eight months remaining in his service year, but he already knows that he would like to continue to work with non-profits following his term to continue to support communities in need. Ryan says that this experience has showed him the volatility of Summit County, helping him to grow more humble, become more receptive to people, and to better understand what programs those experiencing food insecurity may need. We appreciate your service, Ryan!

“I would strongly recommend National Service to anyone who is looking to gain skills as well as gain an understanding of the community around them. For many people this would allow them to work with groups they may never be exposed to normally.”

ShareCorps Member Highlight:

Iliana Reese, The University Church

Serving on the Garden Team at The University Church, Iliana has spent the first four months of her service year putting new programs and processes in place to support the growth of TUC's Community Supported Agriculture distribution and school veggie bag outreach program. Iliana has created three new tracking procedures that will allow TUC to better understand volunteer involvement, the amount of produce received from both partners and grown on-site that is distributed, and what seeds are donated for future planting efforts. Iliana plans to utilize these tracking procedures throughout the year to help TUC identify future areas of growth. This focus on supporting agriculture has been a change for Iliana who calls this role a transition from "being a city mouse to a country mouse." But her time supporting the TUC garden programs has encouraged her to think ahead to how she can use her architectural skills to incorporate urban gardens into affordable housing projects she hopes to work on in the future.

As a VISTA member, Iliana has been able to see the true extent of poverty in her community and it has helped her realize that she is not alone in her own, similar experiences. She understands the challenges and is now excited that she is able to give back and return to service which was a large part of her early life. While still early in her service year, Iliana already hopes to serve another year with TUC as many of her ideas have to currently be put on hold due to COVID-19. We can't wait to see what all you have planned for this year and years to come, Iliana!



"I am honored that I can help the community by my work here and I hope others sign up and dedicate one of their years in life to helping out and building others up. It has left me very fulfilled knowing that I am helping to chip away at poverty, one vegetable at a time."