

ST. LOUIS HEALTHY MARRIAGE COALITION



FLAME

FAMILY-LOVE-AND-MARRIAGE-EDUCATION



VOLUME 3, ISSUE 4 FALL 2009

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DID YOU KNOW ?

Each year family fragmentation costs American taxpayers at least **\$112 billion**

These costs are recurring, in that the decline of marriage costs American taxpayers more than **\$1 trillion over a decade.**

This estimate includes the costs of federal, state and local government programs as well as foregone tax revenues at all levels of government.

In Missouri,
family fragmentation costs State and Local taxpayers **\$ 644 million annually.**

In St. Louis,
5.6% of married households are living in poverty while an overwhelming 37.3% of families with no father present are living below the poverty level

WHY WE NEED YOUR HELP

Finding new ways to strengthen healthy marriage and reduce family fragmentation is a legitimate and pressing public concern.

SLHMC is actively working to combat these costs and help restore the family structure in St. Louis

**This year alone SLHMC has served:
892 Couples 1,002 Individuals 3,250 Teens**

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Join SLHMC's Online Mailing List

SLHMC has recently joined Social Networking websites Facebook and Twitter. Please look us up!

If you would like to join our online mailing list to receive updates and/or your newsletter please email Kara at:

slhmc@att.net

MEET OUR NEW AMERICORPS VISTA VOLUNTEERS!



Hi! My name is Kara Fillman and I am one of the new AmeriCorps VISTAs at SLHMC. My position is Marketing and Development Coordinator. My father was in the Army while I was growing up so I moved around a lot. I spent the majority of my time living in Belgium, where I lived for eight years and graduated from high school. After Belgium, I moved back to the U.S. to attend Truman State University, where I graduated this past May magna cum laude with a BA in History and a minor in French. I felt compelled to do a year of service after college to give back in thanks for all that has been given to me in my life so far. After considering my options, I decided that working at SLHMC was the best fit for me. I'm really excited about my position and helping the coalition grow and develop! I already feel like I'm learning a lot!



I attended Manchester College in North Manchester, IN, receiving a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology. I'm originally from Wabash, IN, located in Northern Indiana. My motivation for becoming an AmeriCorps VISTA stemmed from my passion to help people, my indecision about graduate schools and my desire to learn more about future professional options while gaining experience. St. Louis Healthy Marriage Coalition was my first choice as an AmeriCorps member because not only does the mission fall in line with my personal values, but as a future counselor I realize there is prudence in learning as much about healthy marriages as possible. At SLHMC, I work with Madeline Adams on the Healthy Hearts and Homes Project to provide program infrastructure. For Healthy Hearts and Homes, I facilitate in the organization of data, organize workshops, client recruitment, and the creation of a resource directory and community assessment. For SLHMC I assist with fundraisers.

Hi! My name is Dallyda Tatchi-Banda. I am an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer working here at SLHMC as the Marriage and Family Program Coordinator. I recently graduated from Berea College in Berea Kentucky with a degree in Child and Family Studies. I am taking a year off from school to gain knowledge working at SLHMC before continuing my education in social work or marriage and family therapy. I enjoy working with children, youth, and families and SLHMC is the right place for me to get the experience that I need. I am learning so much and I know there is much more to discover. I hope by the time I finish my year with SLHMC, I leave a different person than when I first began. I look forward to doing many great works with SLHMC along with a successful year!



What is VISTA?

AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) is a national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. Founded by John F. Kennedy in 1965, VISTA was incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993. VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 40 years. The 170,000 VISTAs who have served since 1965 have played a key role in establishing many of the best-known anti-poverty programs, including Head Start.

VISTAS HOLD NEIGHBORHOOD MEET AND GREET

This past October, VISTA volunteers Kara, Dallyda and Heather joined me to host a neighborhood meet and greet at our new office in the Central West End. At this event SLHMC staff prepared baked goods and punch to serve to those passing by the office that day at no cost. Members of the community were very gracious to receive this 'random act of kindness' and this event provided SLHMC a unique opportunity to get their name out in the neighborhood.

Events such as these are a great way for VISTA volunteers to help support the non-profits for which they are working. As a VISTA for the past year I have worked on many events as well as on the newsletter, mailings and provided support at workshops. My year as a VISTA will be coming to an end on November 20th, so this will be my last newsletter submission. I have greatly enjoyed my time as a VISTA and have gained many skills that I know will assist me in my future career pursuits. I

would really like to thank everyone at SLHMC for all of their help over this

year. I was very lucky to work in such a pleasant office with great people, and I really appreciate everyone's support this year! - Caroline Allen



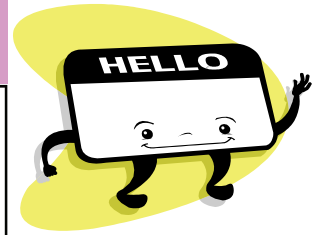
SLHMC IN THE COMMUNITY!

Healthy Hearts and Homes, St. Louis (HHH) is a collaborative effort of the St. Louis Healthy Marriage Coalition, Nurses for Newborns and the Father's Support Center, St. Louis. HHH seeks to prevent child abuse & neglect by providing nurse home visitation, relationship education and responsible fatherhood services to new parents. HHH recently held events for program participants at the St. Louis Zoo on October 31st and November 7th. The purpose of these events was to give clients an opportunity to



enjoy a day at the zoo with their children, while allowing us to reconnect with families who have not taken advantage of the services offered by HHH. Clients who attended both events were given an overview on the services provided by HHH, H1N1 Prevention, and tips for keeping children safe while in public

areas. In addition, staff were able to collect survey data from clients who have not been in contact with staff recently. Clients were given wristbands for each member of the family allowing access to the carousel, train and Children's Zoo, along with meal vouchers. Luckily, the weather was gorgeous, allowing clients and their children to have a wonderful time! Staff members were thrilled to observe families enjoying themselves in this way and have deemed this event a success!



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UPCOMING EVENTS

SMART SINGLES RELATIONSHIP SKILLS WORKSHOP— DECEMBER 3RD & 4TH, 8AM-1 2PM @ St. LOUIS JOB CORPS CENTER, 4333 GOODFELLOW BLVD, ST. LOUIS, MO 63120

DOORS TO SUCCESS, RELATIONSHIPS SKILLS WORKSHOP—WEDNESDAYS BEGINNING JANUARY 13— MARCH 3RD @ BETHANY PEACE CHURCH

SLHMC PET PARADE IN THE CENTRAL WEST END

On November 8th SLHMC held its first Pet Parade in the Central West End. This event was a fundraiser for SLHMC with a portion of the proceeds going to Stray Rescue of St. Louis. During this event participants were able



to mingle with other pet owners and later take part in a friendly dog show. With categories such as "ear-ristable ears", judges gave out four different prizes donated from local pet businesses. Participants

were also able to shop for petwares at local pet sewer Mary Anne Coker's booth. This event was a great way for SLHMC to get their name out in the neighborhood as well as enjoy a beautiful Sunday afternoon. SLHMC would like to thank K9 Karnival, Four Muddy Paws, Pets in the City and Wolfgang's Pet Stop for their wonderful donations. We would also like to thank local dog walkers Connie Wolf and Ben Sommer for helping out as judges.





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WE'RE ON THE WEB!

WWW.STL-HEALTHYMARRIAGE.ORG

Promoting & Supporting Healthy Marriage
in the St. Louis Community

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FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Those of you who read the SLHMC Newsletter regularly know that I am a "seasons" person. I love the rhythm of the four seasons here in the Midwest. I find that the four seasons mirror the seasons of relationship.

For the past several weeks we St. Louisans have been savoring the beauty of the fall foliage. You just about think all the trees have gone bare and you discover another gem with the sun's radiance shining on it. Another frequent view, during late fall, is the nests that are so visible in the trees that stand naked of their leaves.

The nests serve as homes for the birding families. The nests appear so small and inconsequential to the human eye but they serve an essential function. The nests remind me that family, however, stark or small or fragile is essential. Families need a place to call home, however simple or small. When all else is bare in our lives, we need a place to be welcomed, we need people to care and caress us, just as the

birds seek a nest, a safe haven. Our current Newsletter contains some very startling facts. In our Community, over 20 % of our families are living in poverty. Many of these families are fragmented, and unstable, their "nests" tottering which means that many of the children in these homes are tottering physically, emotionally, psychologically. This reality impacts our community, our schools, our neighborhoods, and our churches. It impacts every one of us.

SLHMC continues to expand its services to teach healthy relationship and family wellness skills. The work of SLHMC is like building a nest, one twig at a time, often unnoticed, but with commitment and competency we are co-creating nests throughout the Community. Look up to the trees and see hope and stability.

~Bridget Brennan

Executive Director

Stronger Marriages, Stronger Families, Stronger Communities.