

United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra
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**United Way of Northern
Nevada and the Sierra**

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United Way Brings AmeriCorps Volunteers to Build Capacity

Reno (Nev.) - The United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra (UWNNS) has partnered with the Corporation for National and Community Service to bring four AmeriCorps Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA) members into the nonprofit to further the development of the UWNNS' Financial Stability Partnership and build capacity to its early education initiatives in northern Nevada.

AmeriCorps volunteers Robin Mason and Tim Wilcox have been assigned to support UWNNS' Financial Stability Partnership by providing financial education workshops and free tax preparation services to low-income individuals in the northern Nevada and northern California regions. Mason and Wilcox will recruit and train volunteers, manage Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites, design financial education workshops and help people attain financial stability through financial education. VITA sites are an important way for low-income working families to learn about and access the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Each year, thousands of low-income Nevadans miss out on the EITC because they don't know how to claim the credit. In 2011, UWNNS's 10 VITA locations (there are now currently 12 locations) helped 2,389 individuals to receive more than \$3.1 million in total income tax refunds.

AmeriCorps volunteers Josh Halladay and Jessica May will implement and build capacity in UWNNS' Helping Hands Reading Initiative and Born Learning early education program. The Helping Hands program is an early intervention program that is conducted in the WCSD elementary schools to help increase reading scores of struggling students (pre-K to 6th grade) not meeting grade level proficiency. National tests show that Nevada children lag behind much of the nation in reading proficiency. Born Learning is an early learning program that provides parents and caregivers the tools and resources they need to create a strong learning environment for children from birth to age five. With more than half of America's kindergarteners being intellectually behind, Born Learning and other early learning programs have been found to improve a child's chances of being prepared for kindergarten, graduating from high school and even having a happy and productive life.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that engages more than 5 million Americans in service through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and the Social Innovation Fund, and leads President Obama's national call to service initiative, United We Serve.

About United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra

United Way believes the foundation of a happy, productive life is made up of three 'building blocks' – education, financial stability and health. United Way creates positive, lasting change through the organization's expertise, capacity and relationships. This year, United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra is celebrating our 70th Anniversary. With your help we will reach the goal of \$100 million raised since we started in 1942. To help celebrate this goal, we have established the \$100 Million Club. We invite everyone who gives to United Way to become a "\$100 Million Dollar Club" member. For more information, call 775-322-8668 or visit www.uwnns.org.

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