



# SALS JOURNAL

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Fall/Winter 2009

## Making a Difference

*Vickie Mullins, VISTA Supervisor*

The Southern Appalachian Labor School celebrated its annual Make A Difference Day on Saturday, October 24, 2009. Make A Difference Day is a day set aside for volunteers from all walks of life to do good deeds in their communities! SALS will participate again this year as it has in past events.

The event is sponsored by USA Weekend magazines in cooperation with several public and private entities. SALS Staff and YouthBuild Workers worked on several projects at the Community Center. The projects included the resurfacing the basketball court, planting flowers around the walking track, and repairing a roof for a family in the Oak Hill area.

In addition, the women's bathroom at the community center needed work. We rebuilt the floors, installed three new commodes, and placed new floor tile down. Volunteers also cleaned the kitchen, cafeteria, and the offices at the Community Center.

Make a Difference Day is a Saturday in October when volunteers all over the nation come together to help others in their local communities.

SALS staff prepared several food boxes through the SHARE program for local community members. The SHARE program is a food distribution program that delivers low-cost food to local residents on a pre-order basis.

In all, it was a good day to help out local residents and build community spirit!

## Bridge Day

*by Alisha Young, AmeriCorps VISTA*

A wet and rainy day ended successfully for the SALS staff and College group of Volunteers working Bridge Day 2009. On October 17 several of SALS staff and eight volunteers from a University from Tennessee shoveled food to extreme seekers on that chilly day. We sold Chili, Hot



*YouthBuild members repair bathroom in Community Center on Make a Difference Day*

Dogs, Hamburgers, Corndogs, Hot Cocoa and Hot Apple Cider to try to keep the patrons warm. SALS also set up a craft table with Birdhouses and West Virginia Key Chain Holders made out of recycled wood designed by our SALS Youth. We also had a housing display alongside of the craft table with brochures available to area residents and travelers.

Staff members met in Oak Hill at 4 AM to prepare for the security check-in and prepare our food trailer for when they finally let people on the bridge. We finally made it through the security check at about 7:30 AM and were finally able to set up our trailer a few hundred feet from the bridge. It was a very busy day and customers began crooning for our Hot Apple Cider and Hot Cocoa as soon as they were walking towards the bridge.

During the Mid-Day slow times, myself and a couple of Volunteers were yelling and ushering people towards our trailer by mocking the Subway song "\$1 Dollar Hot Dogs!!!!!!!!!!" Amazingly each time we sang what we had to offer we would have a line full of people so obviously slogans do work. We ended the day with a profit of over \$500 and I finally got to attend a bridge for the first time.

# Investing in Youths Pays Off

*Alisha Young,*  
*Printed in the Charleston Gazette, February 10, 2009*

Against all odds, I wanted to go to college. When I was in high school, my stepfather went to prison, leaving my Mom, my little sister and me to fend for ourselves. I got a job to help buy food and school clothes, and I looked after my sister. I knew I had to keep up my schoolwork. But the stress was too much for me. I started taking risks.

Amazingly, I made it to college, but I had a low tolerance for stress. A few semesters later, I dropped out. I eventually wound up at YouthBuild. At the time, I felt like a failure. But at YouthBuild, I learned to build houses and earned educational awards so I could go back to school one day. I learned to deal with problems so that I'm not so overwhelmed.

The teachers and staff don't tolerate any risky behavior. I attended peer counseling sessions to stay in the program and I was able to start anew.

Today, I'm a YouthBuild leader, and I'm well on my way toward going back to school.

Every year, thousands of young adults like me earn their GEDs or high school diplomas while learning job skills and earning money for building affordable housing for homeless or poor families in YouthBuild programs around the country.

It feels good to make money and help rebuild a community. It feels even better to rebuild your life.

Many of my classmates go on to college or technical school.

But many young people who need help aren't able to get it because there's not enough funding.

John David, director of the Southern Appalachian Labor School in Fayette County, which houses our YouthBuild program, tells me that every day.

It's like that nationwide. Last year, more than 14,000 young people couldn't get into YouthBuild programs because there was funding for 8,000.

President Barack Obama understands that not only do YouthBuild programs provide second chances to young people who need them most, but they also improve America's most distressed communities. He has said he wants to expand YouthBuild to help 50,000 youth a year. I'm glad we have his vote of confidence.



*Volunteer & Buck Shumaker clean up leaves around the Beards Fork Community Center*

## Actions for Justice at SALS

*By Gary Zuckett*

SALS has been involved with many environmental and social justice activities since the last news letter. Health care reform has been a big issue and as usual, SALS works in coalition with other kindred groups on this to amplify its voice. The HealthCareforAmericaNow.org WV Coalition did health care town halls around the state. At the one held by Congressmen Rahall in Glen Jean, we marched to the event with flags flying.

According to a national study by Families USA, four West Virginians die each and every week here because of the complications of not having health insurance. Despite the millions that Big Insurance is spending to kill reform, we're hoping our nation will find a way to cover everyone.

On state issues, SALS is an active member of West Virginians for Social & Economic Justice. This group includes the state AFL-CIO, Social Workers, Citizen Action, Council of Churches, WV Center on Budget & Policy and other community organizations dedicated to improving the lot of the average family. With this group SALS addresses issues such as Living Wage, Racial Profiling, Protecting Social Security, Justice in the Workplace and numerous other justice issues.

As a collaborator with the WV Environmental Council, SALS has worked for clean air, water, and strict enforcement of environmental regulations to protect our beautiful state for future generations.

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# Director's Report

John David

SALS has just survived a difficult year when funding was tight. With the implementation of the Recovery Act, however, SALS has received special ARRA funding for YouthBuild, AmeriCorps, VISTAs, and a WIA Summer Youth Program. Other housing related funding has come from the Federal Home Loan Bank, HUD Rural Housing/Economic Development, USDA Rural Development, Workforce West Virginia, HUD Counseling, and the regular AmeriCorps cycle.

In addition, we wish to express our thanks for support funds and services from BB & T, United Bank, The Benedum, The Greater Kanawha Valley Foundation, Appalachian Community Fund, WV Development Office, WV Legislature, Pyles/Turner Foundation, and YouthBuild USA.

The children's after-school and Energy Express summer programs have also rebounded after a lean year. Our 21st Century consortia, led by the New River Health Association, was refunded, although at an amount much less than expected. We have supplemented that with funds and services from an Explorations grant (WVU Extension and WV Department of Education), USDA/WVDOE food funds, Fayette County Commission, Fayette County Schools, City of Montgomery, WVU Extension, WV Commission for Community and National Service, numerous private donors, and Step-By-Step.

We were saddened to hear that Jim Winter passed away in Baltimore. Jim, who was related to Brenda and Lee Winter, grew up in Kincaid in the large white Kincaid house that was ruined by the 2001 flood. He moved away many years ago but always was loyal to the area and the families who lived nearby. Thus, he was a major contributor to SALS and the Public Improvement Council for Kincaid and Upper Page (PICK-UP) for many projects that benefited area families and children. It was his final wish that he would "come home" and his ashes have been sent back to be placed at one of his local projects.

As noted elsewhere, the SALS Dorm is now finished. It is a state-of-the-art facility with a sprinkler system, commercial kitchen, handicap bathrooms, and many other features. Volunteerism has become a major program at SALS, as reservations for 2010 already exceed 2000 volunteers. They will be housed in the two SALS Dorms, WVU-Tech, (former) Gauley Bridge High School, and Rev. T. Hamm's church in Montgomery. Other sites are pending.

We are still working on multi-family housing programs. Several are in the mix. SALS has received support from the Fayette County Commission and the WV Housing Trust Fund for pre-development work. Other projects that have garnered resources include the Green House/Farmer's Market building, completion of the walking track and play courts, and FEMA food/utility assistance.



*Governor Manchin (center) with SALS AmeriCorps members (Shane Moore, Joe Neely, John Flack in back left and Gary DeLuke - far right) in Charleston at the state-wide AmeriCorps swearing in ceremony*

Readers may wonder what we can offer or what we need in regard to all of this activity. Here is a short list:

1. **YouthBuild** (Kathryn: 304/779-2772) High school dropouts age 24 or under for GED attainment and construction competencies.
2. **Housing Counseling** (Brenda/Debbie: 304/442-3042) Anyone who seeks information about buying/renting, loan document counseling, foreclosure/credit counseling.
3. **Re-Habs** (Debbie: 304/779-2772) Low income home owners who need home repairs.
4. **New Homes** (Brenda: 304/442-3042) Families interested in a new home built by SALS and who are eligible for special programs, offered through SALS, such as low-interest rates, discounts, tax credits, etc.
5. **Children's Programs** (All ages) (Red/Vickie Mullins/Ann Johnson: 304/779-2772) After School and summer programs, transportation provided, nutritious meals, special projects, homework help with qualified teachers.
6. **Health Care** (Vickie Mullins: 304/779-2772) New River/Beards Fork Clinic with Dr. Dan Doyle and access to a walking track that is fenced and lighted.
7. **Housing Rentals** (Vickie Smith: 304/640-3792) SALS has apartments and homes for rent for families under various subsidy programs.
8. **Workshops** (Gary: 304/779-2772; Alisha: 304/442-3156) SALS has free workshops on toxic contaminants, counseling, topical issues, and many other issues.
9. **Volunteering** (John Flack/Gary/Artie: 304/779-2772) SALS hosts groups to assist with SALS Housing.
10. **Emergency Food/Utility Assistance/Food Pantry** (Debbie: 304/779-2772).

To prepare for the future, we are working on several sustainability preparations. Organizationally, they include

*Continued on page 10*

# YouthBuild News

*Kathryn South-Adkins*

This has been an eventful fall at SALS. The Dorm, located next door to the SALS community building in Beards Fork, is finally finished and we are trying to find or build new furniture to fill the gorgeous rooms. The YouthBuild crews and lots of volunteers from all over the country have had some blood, sweat, and tears imbedded into the tiles of that building. Now, we are just waiting for our first group to christen it for future volunteers who will be spending time there.

SALS was awarded a Department of Labor YouthBuild grant earlier this year. Therefore, we have been busy recruiting youth and doing orientations and workshops to give the youth as much information as they can absorb to get them employed.

The new training lab at SALS is underway and should be finished soon. The new recruits will be getting National Center for Education and Research (NCCER) training, which is construction training that is nationally recognized. The youth will have a better opportunity for employment with this certification program. SALS is one of over 100 YouthBuild programs across the country that uses this certification to assist the youth in getting employment in the construction field.

SALS celebrated Make A Difference Day this year by repairing the women's rest room at the SALS Community Center. The after-school program youth also participated by visiting the elderly in the neighborhood and doing read aloud activities. This was also a SHARE day at SALS, so there were a lot of different projects going on in the community.

Artie Mullins and I have been doing workshops with the YouthBuild members focused around developing healthy relationships and choosing friends wisely. SALS received a grant from YouthBuild USA in late summer to offer these classes to our youth and it has been a fun experience.

## Many Hats

*Debbie Spurlock*

The past few months have been very busy at SALS. As you all know if you work at SALS you wear many, many hats. One of my many hats is the housing hat. I have been working very closely with Brenda. I travel to Montgomery two days a week, sometimes more, to work on housing issues. We have helped a single father obtain a home for him and his kids. We have lots of other applicants in the pipeline. We offer home buyers education to anyone who is interested. A certificate of completion is required if you are buying a home. I have also been very busy in the rehab department. It's sad to see how many people need repairs to their homes. Almost all of them would have to go without if not for the various grants for

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*Debbie Spurlock (center) & volunteers collect donated food*

home repairs. Some have no heat, some have leaky roofs, the list goes on and on. Lots of time and paper work goes into completing a file for qualified applicants. But its worth it in the end to see how happy the families are with a nice, dry, warm place to live.

I have also been attending lots trainings with Lisa Manley. We are in the process of obtaining our mortgage license. We have to complete twenty hours of specified training and pass a test of one hundred, complicated questions. This is something new that is required to be a loan originator. This has been a very stressful and complicated process.

Another hat is my SHARE hat. As most of you know, SHARE is a program where you can purchase a box of food for low cost by helping out someone who can't help themselves. These boxes contain fresh fruits and vegetables, frozen meats and various dessert items. My husband, Carlos, and I travel to Oak Hill early in the morning once a month, on a Saturday, to meet the truck to pick up the food. We bring the van of food back to SALS to prepare the individual boxes. Sometimes my son, Brandon, helps us out. After all the hard work is done we set back and wait on the folks to come and pick up their food. If someone doesn't have a ride or is too sick to come out, we deliver their boxes.

I have yet another hat. I work with the FEMA program. This program helps area residents with food and utility bills. We receive a designated amount of money to buy food and another amount to help with termination notices on utilities. This has been a great help to our area since so many have lost their jobs. Our food pantry was blessed with a GREAT donation from Group WorkCamps, another program I work with in the summer. When the kids came to repair homes in our area this past summer, each brought some can food items for our pantry. During the first week of camp we collected an amazing 8,500 cans of food. The second week we added an additional 2,000 cans. We also had some money donations made to the pantry. It's a great feeling to be able to help others out. It's sad to see how excited people get over food.

I also help out other folks in the organization when they need it. So you see we are one big happy family!

# News From Housing

By Brenda Winter

The past few months have been very busy ones for the housing staff at Southern Appalachian Labor School. I, along with Debbie Spurlock, have been to several trainings. The last was to certify us in Foreclosure Prevention. The housing crisis has hit some parts of the country very hard, but we are fortunate to have only a few who have needed this service so far. We are prepared to help anyone when needed to avoid foreclosure. We once again received the Housing Counseling grant and must work real hard to understand and assist people in our community who need help with credit and budgeting issues. To obtain a loan, clients must go through an eight hour Homebuyers Education class. We also provide certification in this area as this is a requirement wherever you go to obtain a loan. We try to provide monthly group sessions or at times on an as needed basis if a client calls in and needs assistance sooner. We are also in the process of selling two houses which SALS built at Hilltop. The process is long with lots of paperwork but we hope to go to closing soon.

## Teamwork

Ralph Shockey, Site Supervisor

First I would like to thank our supporters for the grants. This has been an awesome year so far and the volunteer dorm is finally complete. I want to thank the crews and volunteers because without you all it would not have been possible. My personal news is that I am enrolled in a skill course and am attending school for the first time in years. Being back in school is a cultural shock, since a lot has changed in 24 years.

I was able to attend a Learn and Serve Conference at Blackwater Falls State Park and take two of our youths. We learned about leadership and teamwork, empowering youth to reach within and take charge of their lives, keeping a positive attitude, and doing bigger and better projects. We also learned that by working together great things can happen. The academics that we sometimes take for granted always comes into play in the future. The youth need to know that they are learning and it is our job as supervisors and mentors to show them.

I personally learned that the youth of today can effectively take leadership and accomplish wonderful things in life. I am looking forward to working on completing, which I know will be a wonderful experience for the crew, youth, and the residents.

I would like to end on a positive note, borrowing from one of our crew members – Craig Fitzwilliams, “TEAMWORK CAN MAKE A DREAM WORK” because together we can make a difference in a youth’s life. Our works have the power to build up and heal or to tear down and destroy. Let’s work together to build a positive future.



Chris Buck & volunteers paint hall in SALS new dorm

## Walking Trail Nears Completion!

by Alisha Young, AmeriCorps VISTA

Before the end of 2009 the Beards Fork Walking Trail will be complete. It has been a long two year struggle to make this work and there is now a light at the end of the tunnel.

During the beginning of my VISTA term I was assigned to design a walking track next to the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork that would go along with our New River Health (Healthy Living Program).

I began by getting a contractor to lay the asphalt for the actual track and worked closely along with our Construction Manager Vickie Smith making sure the shelters, lights, and shuffleboard would be constructed.

With the help of my colleague Vickie and the guidance of my supervisor John David the track is almost officially complete. We have already gotten bids for the fencing to go around the track and the lighting system has already been ordered.

I am excited to say that I almost didn't see this day coming but with the track completed it will be the only Walking Track and Picnic area in over a 30 mile radius on RT. 61 between Oak Hill and Montgomery.

Thanks to the assistance from the Leadership at SALS I will have successfully completed all my goals on my VISTA Work plan before my term ends.



# Glad to Be Here at SALS

by Gary DeLuke, AmeriCorps VISTA

My name is Gary DeLuke and I am a new AmeriCorps VISTA here at SALS. Due to a somewhat vague job description, I did not quite know what to expect until I arrived and settled in. I spend the first couple of days trying to learn about the organization by working with the crew on the new dorm beside the community center, which, I am excited to say, has passed inspection and is painfully close to being a livable space.

I applied for VISTA service hoping to work in Southern or Central Appalachia—preferably coal country—and was quite pleased to get a call from John David while I was living in Boone, NC. I had never heard of SALS but, after doing a bit of research, I discovered that it is exactly the atmosphere I was looking for.

I came here with my head already full of ideas—including alternative sources of electricity, a relationship between SALS and local farmers, and more efficient and eco-appropriate construction and rehabilitation practices. So far, I have been able to get dialogue and action going on these subjects. I cannot wait to see what happens here in the months to come.

## Bridge Day Fundraiser Helps After-School Programs

Ann Johnson, VISTA Volunteer

October 17, 2009 was the 30th Annual Bridge Day Festival in West Virginia. Above the famous white water rafting on the New River, vendors, base jumpers, and thousands and thousands of onlookers gather right on the New River Gorge bridge for the state's biggest party of the year. This year SALS staff Vickie Smith, her granddaughter Shelby, her dad Sid, along with SALS Staff Vickie Mullins, SALS's YouthBuild USA VISTA Gary DeLuke, SALS's Step by Step VISTAs Alisha Young and Ann Johnson, SALS Director John David and a group of eight College Students from Austin Peary State University in Tennessee all came to volunteer. It was a long and eventful day and we completed our mission of fundraising for the after school program.

The after school program is coordinated by Charlene "Red" Newkirk. We were recently awarded a special Explorations "The Youth Thing" grant through WVU for an older middle and high school program. This program runs the same days and times as the after school program.

Other partnerships we are working on with New River Gorge National River HQ through the help of VISTA Education Coordinator Lorien MacAuley and Fayette Farmers Market through the help of VISTA Savanna Lyons. We are

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looking forward to this being an ongoing program to help build financial as well as human capacity and create sustainability while being geared towards entrepreneurship.

We are also working on planning field trips for the children and youth. One of our first field trips was Sunday, October 25, 2009. Charlene "Red" Newkirk (Coordinator), Ann Johnson (VISTA), Kim Barrett (Assistant to Coordinator), Billy Austin (Van Driver and parent), and Ann Nichols (parent) along with seven of the TYT (The Youth Thing) youth and two of the after school program children attended a self lead tour of the State Museum located in the Culture Center at the Capital Complex in Charleston, WV. We are all looking forward to more field trips in the future.

Again, as always, the after school and youth programs are in need of volunteers, tutors, projects, and programs. Call me at 304/779-2772!

## Youth Programs at SALS

By Charlene Newkirk,

In the After School program at SALS students K-6 can attend four days of programs each week. This includes homework help, wellness activities, recreation, special events, healthy snack, and supper.

We have had a very successful year so far and are looking forward to more success in the future. We have added "The Youth Thing" Program for youth grades 7-12. They help mentor the children in the after school program with exercise, outdoor activities, and homework. They are a big help to the tutors – Mrs. Ferri and Mrs. Rudy. Mrs. Ferri works mainly with the after school children through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant Program. Mrs. Rudy works with the after school and the older youth programs. The Youth Thing is sponsored through an Explorations Grant through the West Virginia Statewide Afterschool Network.

The Youth and After School children will be working with the YouthBuild VISTA – Gary DeLuke, the AmeriCorps Step by Step VISTA – Ann Johnson, and the AmeriCorps member John Flack in planning the garden beds for the "Hoop" Green House Project.

The children made Thanksgiving and Christmas cards for their parents and a Christmas decoration. We participated in the Lights On for After School, Veterans Memorial Service, and a program where Joe Bundy portrayed Booker T. Washington.

All the children were able to take part in several field trips. Field trips included the new State Museum at the Cultural Center, viewing of the Egyptian Exhibit at the Clay Center also in Charleston, and the Youth Museum of Southern West Virginia in Beckley. More trips are being planned after the Holidays.

Special congratulations to Neffatterrie "Tia" Green for receiving her parade pin from ROTC for participating in the Veterans Day Parade in Beckley. Special thanks to Susan Akers for volunteering with our programs, Ann Nichols for her tutoring assistance, and other parents for their assistance and allowing their children to be a part of our programs.

# Celebrating the Past and The Present

*Artie Mullins, Volunteer Coordinator*

The Solidarity Festival at SALS this year was a very wonderful event that occurred in June. There was lots of music, food and fun that marked a successful event. Once again, we went with the Flag Day and June tenth theme, to highlight the day of solidarity and support for the Southern Appalachian Labor School and the good works that had been performed during the year. June tenth marked the general time that the slaves in Texas found out that slavery had been abolished for nearly a year. This marks a great event in the history of our nation and symbolically reflects the spirit of SALS by assisting local citizens in creating a new future for their families and broader community. The day ultimately celebrated the importance of human rights and self determination for all people.

The music of the day featured the country stylings of Billy Payne, the multitalented 2 BLUE and several other local artists. Billy Payne, whose recordings have made the top independent charts in the US, is a regular at SALS as he has entertained the thousands of volunteers who have helped out at SALS throughout the years. Harold Allen is a native of Fayette County and presents Delta blues and several other genres of music, including Bob Dylan, Doc Watson and other contemporary historically significant musicians. His partner, Terry Lively, is a native of Clay County. Terri comes from a long line of mountain musicians who taught her to love local music and seek to preserve the local flavor through voice and guitar. Terri grew up playing piano and singing with her dad's traveling family band. All of the music was lively and had much of the audience dancing and tapping their feet along with the rhythms.

In addition to music, the educational and entertaining styles of June Binder and John Lozier brought something special to the day. June Binder is a performance artist who uses dance, costume and humor to impart social and political insight to historical and current events. Jude always brings humor in such good spirits to our solidarity festival each year. Jude's artwork displayed to her mask making is truly impressive and always something our festival participants look forward to each year. John Lozier is the founder of the organization Harping for Harmony. John crafts his own harps, and is willing to teach others to build their own harps, as he is done with our youth and our young workers. John is a piper of harping. You will find him throughout the day teaching the very young and young at heart how to play a tune on his harps. He has carried this philosophy of promoting peace to harping all over the world. SALS is indeed lucky to have such dear friends and supporters such as John Lozier and Jude Binder.

This year, we took the opportunity to celebrate the completion of two projects at the SALS community center

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*John Lozier demonstrates Harp to Tylor Ellison at Solidarity Festival in June*

in Beards Fork. There was an open house for the new dorm that will house our volunteers and the near completion of our walking track. Both projects have been long time visions of John David, the director of SALS. Vickie Smith and our crews have worked long hours to complete both projects. So it was a very happy day for everyone at SALS to see these projects come to fruition. We also took time to acknowledge the loss of many friends and family members of our larger SALS family. John David recalled the names of a loved one's who had passed away last year and we all took a moment of silence to honor the loss of so many friends. The loss of our loved ones reminds us of how important it is to continue to make life a more healthful and pleasurable existence for everyone around us. And this has been the goal of the Southern Appalachian Labor School from the time of its conception to present day. The day ended with everyone feeling uplifted and ready to tackle another year of work.



*Jude Binder from Heartwood in the Hills performs*



## SALS Hosts Lead and Mercury Workshops

This Fall SALS presented workshops about the dangers associated with lead and mercury exposure, and the health risks associated lead and mercury poisoning. Fayette Co. residents were offered four workshops between November 16 and November 18. These were provided free to the public through funding from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Glenda Maddy, SALS Researcher and Project Coordinator, conducted these public health awareness workshops. Efforts to heighten awareness among holiday shoppers came from recent reports announcing the impending arrival of discounted toys coupled with increasing recalls for lead-containing products including many toys, according to Ms. Maddy. To view a comprehensive list of recalled products, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov). Simply click on the "Environmental Health" tab and select the "Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention" link to enter the Lead Homepage. A link to the recalled toys is available on the homepage, in addition to other helpful information including prevention tips, publications and links to state and local programs.

Other sources of concern for southern West Virginia residents are the abundance of abandoned mines and mining equipment. This increases the possibility of exposure to both lead and mercury through soil and water contamination. Both elements have been known to contribute to severe adverse health effects, especially in children ages 6 and under.

In order to address these issues, Jennifer Garlesky, AmeriCorps VISTA for Morris Creek Watershed Association, joined the workshop to inform participants on the effects of acid mine drainage on a local Fayette/Kanawha County watershed and its impact on the surrounding communities. Ms. Garlesky presented compelling photos of a once thriving community that has been reduced to a fraction of its peak population, with a large portion of the watershed abandoned by residents and aquatic life alike. After decades of acid mine drainage and groundwater and soil contamination by disintegrating mining equipment, most of the watershed was left desolate and unable to support insect life, let alone native trout and bass that are well known in West Virginia streams.

Through the efforts of local residents with the cooperation of local agencies such as the WV Department of Environmental Protection, the Army Corps of Engineers and the AmeriCorps VISTA program, volunteers have been able to restore sections of the creek and increase insect and aquatic life associated with a healthy stream, according to Ms. Garlesky. Though there is much work left to be done in the Morris Creek watershed, their success serves as a prime example of the power common citizens have when



*Artie Mullins (center) & volunteers behind new dorm*

they work together.

SALS AmeriCorps VISTA's, Gary DeLuke and John Flack, also addressed workshop attendees introducing SALS programs and answering questions about services available to Fayette County residents.

In an effort to help boost attendance and ultimately increase community awareness and education, SALS conducted a drawing for a Wii console, donated through Sam's Club from all workshop participants. Congratulations go out to Ms. Alice Ambler for winning the drawing. Enjoy!

A big "Thank You" is in order to Brenda Winter, Debbie Spurlock, Lisa Manley, Vickie Mullins, Ann Johnson, Gary Deluke, John Flack, and youth volunteers — for working so diligently to put out a 13,000 (+) mailing to introduce the workshop outline and locations. Another "Thank You" goes out to the American Electric Power Company (AEP) for helping us to reach out to the entire Fayette County area.

Much gratitude also goes out to the many other area leaders who made these workshops possible. Many businesses opened their doors to their community, providing space and support for workshop presentations. The Hawks Nest Lodge and Conference Center, the New River Health Association, the Mount Hope Housing Authority and the WVUIT Alumni Center all waved their traditional fees, allowing SALS to use their facilities at no charge. Their courteous and enthusiastic support was greatly appreciated.

SALS will continue in its quest to build stronger communities and to work together to help lift people from poverty and into healthy, productive and fulfilled lives. Both lead and mercury poisoning can be reduced if not completely eliminated through education and action. With so many unavoidable hardships in our lives, SALS hopes to increase awareness of the problems associated with these and other contaminants, and to work together to build a safe and thriving future for our children.



# Volunteer Roundup

*Artie Mullins, Volunteers Coordinator*

2009 was a very busy year for volunteers at SALS. The year began with the visit from our friends from Hillel at Binghamton University. This group was served their second year with us. They helped with raising the walls of our new dorm last year, and did a lot of work finishing up the interior of the dorm. They were a wonderful group who taught our youth a lot about Jewish tradition. Following the Hillel group, was the first of the many college groups arriving throughout March. Our guest, included volunteers from Wartbury College, Rochester Institute of technology, Florida State, Boston University, University of Miami, Madison (Wisconsin) Technical College, Rutgers, and University of Illinois. The youth were extremely capable and managed easily with our young workers. The various teams worked mostly on our dorm but some of them worked on our rehabs in Page and Powellton. Our youth are always entertained and educated by their inter-action with the college volunteers. It is a time for making new friends and exploring other possible options that the college students bringing to our youth.

In June, we welcome back our friends from St. Andrews School in Austin, Texas. Once again, the team was led by Lex Breckenridge, a native of Beckley West Virginia. This however would be the last time Lex would lead the team because he has taken a position in Washington state. The youth were mature and disciplined at work and during the meetings I held each morning and evening. These are high school students, who have a love for West Virginia, and particularly for what SALS does. They worked hard to help complete the dorm and to do remodeling on the Powellton rehab.

In June, Joe Mario returned to join with Class VI Rafters to lead the annual day of rafting that Class VI offers free of charge to the entire SALS staff including our Youth-Build and AmeriCorps Members. Joe has led this trip for the fifth year and spends a lot of time throughout the year arranging the event. Joe's son Chris also returned for a short visit and spent time mentoring our after school youth. The rafting trip was a big success and our young adults took the opportunity to take advantage of this otherwise unaffordable activity that Class VI so generously offers each year.

From June through October, we would entertain nine more groups sent to us through Global Volunteers and the return of one our long time partners from St. James Parish, Maryland. Global Volunteers is my secondary employer based in St. Paul Minneapolis. I have been employed by Global Volunteers since 2004. John Flack, our most recent AmeriCorps member has been a great help with these

volunteers and will do a lot of the work in the coming year. I am the permanent team leader for these teams, whose members travel from all over the globe to serve a week or two at SALS. I find this work to be especially rewarding, because not only do I get to interact with people from everywhere, but are you are introduced to people from all over and who have a wide variety of professions. All of our volunteers, bring something special to the table by interjecting a new spirit into our rather routine lives. We are grateful for all that the volunteers have contributed this year, and throughout all of the years.

## GreenHouse Project Grows

Those who haven't been part of a barn-raising for a while were surprised by the next best thing that occurred at the SALS Community Center in Beards Fork on Saturday, November 21<sup>st</sup>. The event was a Hoop-Raising for a large 40 x 15 foot tunnel GreenHouse that has been constructed next to our new walking track and adjacent to our new Dorm. Dozens of Fayette Co. farmers and friends showed up to do the work.

The GreenHouse was funded by donations and the Fayette County Farmers Market Association, which is a non-profit coalition of producers and consumers formed when local eaters met with local farmers in an effort to buy local food. Their mission is to have local people grow and sell local products. The project also involves youth in the SALS "Accent Education" 21<sup>st</sup> Century afterschool program and the Explorations Coalition called "The Youth Thing", which is the program for older youth. Gary Deluke, a SALS AmeriCorps VISTA, is coordinating the SALS component. AmeriCorps VISTA Ann Johnson, who has championed the community garden concept for some time, is also helping..

The Saturday event raised the hoops and also featured a building workshop. Lunch at the SALS Center was provided by Pies & Pints and Gumbos.



*Hoop greenhouse construction at SALS*

*Director's Report, continued from page three*

adding several board members and implementing a succession process that includes adding an Assistant Director. Financially, they include obtaining revenue from properties, purchasing assets, developing previously donated/obtained assets, and establishing an endowment.

The SALS staff has been on perpetual overtime, attending meetings/conferences, dashing from one crisis site to the other, and helping keep hope alive everywhere. Everyone needs a 'thank you' and big 'pat on the back' for a job well done in continuing to "Construct Change from the Ground Up".

It is the season to wish you the best of health and hope you continue to do good things and thank you for your support.

## Construction Report

*Vickie Smith, Construction Manager*

We have had many volunteers during 2009 helping our construction crews out. We will and do miss all those extra hands on the labor school's projects. The volunteers helped in amazing ways. We were down to virtually skeleton crews and would have never completed our projects on time without their help. I would like to thank Artie and others for the wonderful lunches that were prepared for the crews while working in Beards Fork. This was a real treat as it gave our youth the chance to spend some time with the staff at the community center.

Ralph and Terry really worked hard on the dormitory in Beards Fork with their small crews. We had a summer work program through WorkForce WV in Beards Fork that contributed a great deal, considering that they were an inexperienced, non-seasoned construction crew. All the old crew members and the new crew members worked very hard to complete our dorm. It did take us longer than we would have hoped but with the low numbers in crew sizes and our many other obligations it went surprisingly smooth for our first commercial building. As the designated contractor with the Community Development Block Grant for the labor school, I am very pleased and proud with the finished product.

We have completed a few rehabs this year and hope to finish two more before the end of the year. We are working on our training facility. This will be used for my office and the construction /alternative energy training lab for the YouthBuild/ DOL. The lab will provide extra learning time for the GED. The lab will also be used as the craft factory, which provides an opportunity to recycle scrap materials in a useful manner.

As we start the new cycle of our YouthBuild Academy program I would like to welcome the new youth and congratulate them on their completion of the mental toughness component of our program. These group members were able to put the finishing touches on the dorm and are now

at their new job locations.

I've attended several training for SALS in the past few months. One was for the West Virginia Housing Development Fund on the new regulations in financing for our home buyers program. I also attended a Federation of Appalachian Housing Enterprises board meeting and one of its trainings in Virginia. It was on up-and-coming green technology, as well as the local adoption of new code requirements in the industry. I attended a meeting in Flatwoods sponsored by the Housing Assistance Council and HUD for our CHDO (Community Housing Development Organization) projects. Also I attended the Youth Build MIS training in Washington, DC. This training was for the new reporting requirements for the Department of Labor. The Santa Fe training that I attended presented ideas to help our youth start their own business and a look at the training materials that are available on the market. It also covered aspects of the program that are sometimes troublesome and included open discussion on possible solutions.

The Individual Development Plan, which is a youth savings program, is still a service that we seek to introduce for our youth as we would like to be able to help our youth plan for their future.

## Tribute to a Union Brother



Dear Dr. David,

I don't know the proper etiquette for sending a donation to the Labor School. An obituary is attached. The young man, David Pettry, was a member of IBEW - His granddad was a union man.

As a young kid I was a friend with Sharen (mom) his aunt, and his uncles. Have not seen any of them in over 30 years. But old memories of my youth are still with me. I feel deeply about the loss of her son.

My dad said his grandfather Givens was/is a strong union man back in their working days. Not long before Daddy died, Tom, the granddad came to visit Daddy. (He was a friend with his Dad and family back in the "old days". To Daddy, Grandfather Givens was still a "boy" at some 60 years old!

Not a scab crossed the line according to Daddy when Tom was working the site. I guess David, his grandson, had union blood too.

Attached is a check for the Labor School. You guys are appreciated down there and I sure hope you can keep on going!

Jack Platter, 2/13/09

*Editor's note: David Pettry was born in Gallipolis & died on 2/11/09 unexpectedly at the age of 39. David was a construction electrician out of IBEW local 495 in Wilmington NC.*

# Southern Appalachian Labor School - Who We Are

## SALS Community Center

304-779-2772, or 779-2280

WVU-Tech office: 304-442-3042

Housing Counseling: 304-442-3042

Construction Manager: 304-469-3792, fax 469-9721

John David, Director - 304-442-3157

WEB: [www.sals.info](http://www.sals.info)

### Board Officers

Helen M. Powell	Chair
Marcus Wilkes	Vice Chair
Rick Wadsworth	Secretary /Treasurer
John David*	Director <a href="mailto:jdavid@citynet.net">jdavid@citynet.net</a>

### Project Staff

Kathryn South-Adkins*	YouthBuild/AmeriCorps/DOL <a href="mailto:ksouth@citynet.net">ksouth@citynet.net</a>
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Artie Mullins*	Volunteer/Building Coordinator/ AmeriCorps <a href="mailto:artiemullins@earthlink.net">artiemullins@earthlink.net</a>
Ralph Shockey	Youth Build Trainer
Jimmy Adkins	YouthBuild Trainer
Terry Black	YouthBuild Trainer

\* Indicates members of the SALS Leadership Team

### AmeriCorps/VISTA

Ann Johnson	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Alisha Young	AmeriCorps/VISTA
Gary DeLuke	AmeriCorps/VISTA

### 'Accent Education' After School Program,

*Explorations "The Youth Thing" After School Program*

Charlene Newkirk	Site Coordinator
Tony Canada	Project Director
Regina Gilbert	Experience Works
Debbie Ferri	Teacher
Dorothy Rudy	Teacher
Wilda Salter	Foster Grandparent

### Energy Express

Anne Lathen

### New River/Beards Fork Health Clinic Project

Dr. Dan Doyle, M.D.

### EPA Lead and Mercury Awareness Program

Glenda Maddy, Researcher

### G.E.D. Instructors/Fayette Co. Schools

LeeAnn Gore & Mary Lynn Flint

### WVU Extension Service

Debbie Tate  
Casandra Bandy

### Bookkeeping Team

Valarie Cowley, Ruth Lanham  
Tom Bass, Brenda Winter



**Yes,** in these difficult times I understand the importance of an organization like the Southern Appalachian Labor School. Enclosed is my contribution to keep your essential work on track and moving forward. Contributions to SALS are Tax deductible: Mail to SALS POB 127, Kincaid, WV 25119

Enclosed is:  \$1,000  \$500  \$250  Other\$\_\_\_\_\_

Or print a donation form at [www.sals.info](http://www.sals.info)

Please send me a thankyou gift..  \$50 + Donors will receive a SALS License Plate, or similar item

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City/St/zip \_\_\_\_\_  
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E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

SALS engages in solicitation for the purpose of acquiring funds to support the Southern Appalachian Labor School. WV residents may obtain a summary of our registration and financial documents from the Sec. of State, State Capitol, Charleston, WV 25305. Registration does not imply endorsement.



# Your Contributions Make a Difference!

Dear Friend of SALS,

We continue to face major challenges. Our grants are at risk and demands for our services continually increase.

We are attempting to diversify and submit proposals for programs that deal with youth offenders, lead contamination, and both apartment and coal camp rehabilitations. The bottom line, however, is that we need help now more than ever from you, our supporters.

Help can come in different packages. We need everything including land, buildings, building supplies, vehicles, supplies for the community center, and especially cash donations.

All contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law. In addition, your contribution may also be eligible for a West Virginia tax credit.

**All contributions, large and small, are very welcome. If you can help, please complete the coupon inside this newsletter.**

Hopefully, you realize that what we are doing is meaningful, important, empowering, and deserving of your generous support. We rely on you and appreciate your help. Be well, do good things, and keep in touch!

Best Wishes,  
John, David, Director



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