Hello VISTAs,

I have been calling a few of you every other day and am finally getting to know everyone on a personal level. Thanks everyone for being kind and taking time to talk to me. From the sound of it most of you are navigating through your beginning VISTA life very smoothly. There have been few hiccups here and there, so I have listed out those concerns in a bullet format. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

1. **DC NTI Reminder**: In terms of registering for the DC NTI, you just need to check the “NeighborWorks Recovery Program AmeriCorps VISTA member” box on your registration form. If you are registering online, copy that phrase in a comment box. The **deadline** for early slot registration is October 13th.
	* You are **automatically** registered for the **Wednesday VISTA Day event** unless you let me know that you are not coming. It is a **whole day** event so do not register for any other class. Thanks!
2. **Mark your calendar**: We have a list of webinars scheduled for the month of October and November. Below is a brief description of each webinar and the date it is scheduled for. They all are scheduled for 2:00 PM EST and will take 45 minutes unless stated differently. We invite you to participate in the ones that suit your interest. You can find the calendar on <http://vistaland.yolasite.com/>.  More details to follow next week.
	* **Design Basics** by Jessica Oxley

**October 20, 2010**

An introduction to design basics which includes basic layout, typeface and color selection juxtaposing. This is a good starting point for VISTAs who will be creating marketing and or promotional material.

* + **Project Management: Asking the right question** by Swati Karandikar

 **October 25- 29, 2010**

Examine, identify and design the key components of an effective project management process by asking the right questions. VISTAs will be divided into smaller groups throughout the whole week based on the content area so that we can share implementation techniques for the key components.

                              Monday: Foreclosure Prevention & Outreach                          Thursday: Financial Capabilities

                                   Tuesday: Communication/Marketing & Outreach                  Friday: Grant Writing and Strategic Planning

                                    Wednesday: Partnership Development & Community Stabilization

* + **Green Building: Basics of Green Design** by James Ruhland III and Kyle Rogers

**November 4, 2010**

Facilitated by one of our NeighborWorks Organization staff memebers and a VISTA colleague, the class covers construction basics for green design. Everyone who is interested in green design and or would like to know more about it, should join us for this webinar.

* + **Social Media and Community Development Field**  by Katrina Rex and Eileen Flanagan

**November 10, 2010**

This webinar is going to be a collaboration between four experts who have been using social media in their owns ways to communicate community development related messages. Join us and learn how social media fits with your own outreach efforts. This might take a little longer than 45 minutes.

* + **Community Stabilization** by Sarah Greenberg

**November 15, 2010**

Learn about the latest initiatives and best practices within the Community Stabilization field.

* + **Foreclosure Prevention** by John Snyder

 **November 17, 2010**

With an ever changing market and introduction of new programs, learn about the recent foreclosure prevention and mitigation initiatives and the strategies that wok in this field.

1. **Make A Difference Day**

**October 23, 2010**

[Make A Difference Day](http://www.handsonnetwork.org/nationalprograms/signatureevents/MakeADifferenceDay) is the most encompassing national day of helping others -- a celebration of neighbors helping neighbors. Everyone can participate! Created by USA Weekend Magazine, Make A Difference Day is an annual event that takes place on the fourth Saturday of each October. The Corporation of National and Community Service and NeighborWorks America encourages you to participate at your local program.

1. **SNAP Program:** Few VISTAs had a little difficult time signing up for SNAP. While applying for your food stamps, you will need to print out the “VISTA Benefits Public Disregard” letter. You can find this letter on myamericorps.gov > my service letter > select service term and select “VISTA Benefits Public Disregard” letter.  In order to overlook your allowance, the Human Services Department (office that issues EBT cards), needs proper paperwork to process your application faster. Please let me know if you are having a difficult time with your application or need more instructions accessing your letter.
2. **Education Policy and Institutions that Match the Segal AmeriCorps Education Award**: For those of you who are considering using your education award to pursue higher education, please browse through [this](http://www.americorps.gov/for_individuals/benefits/ed_award_match.asp) list of schools that match your Segal AmeriCorps Education Award. Many prestigious schools participate in this program, actively pursue AmeriCorps Alums and have strong community development related graduate programs. If you are planning to go to school next year, please remember to find out the application and fellowship deadlines.
	* **Education Policy**: Attached to this email is a copy of “New” AmeriCorps Education Policy. This policy allows AmeriCorps VISTAs to pursue education that may or may not relate to their VISTA year while they are serving as a VISTA. Given that most of us are in different stages of our lives, I suggest reading through the policy if you are interested in pursuing education while you are serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA.

As always if you have any questions or concerns, feel free to give me a call.

Have a nice weekend!

Swati Karandikar

NeighborWorks America VISTA Leader

Office Phone Number: 202.220.7074

Cell Phone Number: 630.570.1124