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AmeriCorps VISTA Rosie Nelson Honored with Governor's Award for Volunteer Excellence

 APRIL 13, 2012 BY [ADMIN](#)



OXFORD, Miss. – Rosie Nelson of Oxford, an AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer at the University of Mississippi, has been named as recipient of the inaugural award for Outstanding Service by a National Service Participant by the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service.

The award is part of the 2012 Governor's Initiative for Volunteer Excellence Awards, which celebrate ordinary Mississippians doing extraordinary things to improve lives and communities across the state.

Nelson will be recognized Monday (April 16) at the GIVE Awards luncheon at the Mississippi Museum of Art. Her work serves as an example to all Mississippians during Volunteer Week in Mississippi, April 15-22.

"Rosie serves with compassion and intelligence," said Stephen Monroe, UM assistant dean of liberal arts and director of the North Mississippi VISTA Project. "VISTAs are dynamic and highly motivated people, and Rosie is a wonderful example. We're proud of her service and of this accomplishment."

Nelson is one of 11 AmeriCorps VISTA members fighting poverty through education with the North Mississippi VISTA Project at the university.

Serving in the School of Engineering, Nelson helps to develop service-related initiatives and provides support to faculty developing service-learning coursework. She has served more than 800 hours as a VISTA member, working with faculty, staff and students to develop a service-leadership organization for engineering students, as well as a small grant program that provides students with startup funds of up to \$500 to create science and technology-related service projects within the local community. Her work in this capacity has unlimited potential for positively affecting Lafayette County, Oxford, and the Ole Miss communities.

Nelson has revived the university's chapter of Alpha Phi Omega, a national co-ed service fraternity, and serves as its chapter adviser. She assists other chapters throughout Mississippi and nearby states in developing their service programming. Besides VISTA and Alpha Phi Omega, Nelson volunteers with the Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts and Lafayette County 4-H.

Nelson has served as an AmeriCorps NCCC member, where she participated in several projects along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. In honor of her work as an NCCC member, she was awarded the Gold Level President's Volunteer Service Award, as well as the Congressional Award Bronze Medal. She was a volunteer in multiple groups as an undergraduate at the University of California at Berkeley and as an employee of the Walt Disney Co.

She is committed to sharing her passion for service with others and encourages her peers to volunteer for causes that are personally meaningful.

"I am a relatively new resident, but I have embraced Mississippi as my home, and I am honored to give back to the communities here," Nelson said.

VISTA volunteers are sought for 2012-2013. Applicants must be at least 18, a U.S. citizen and have a bachelor's degree or minimum three years' work experience. Each of these full-time, one-year placements is supported by AmeriCorps with a modest living allowance, health benefits and an education grant, which can be used for graduate education or to repay qualified student loans. Those interested in serving should submit a brief letter of interest and resume to Stephen Monroe by 5 p.m. June 11. Successful candidates will begin their one-year terms in August.

"Like Rosie, our VISTAs make real and lasting contributions to the people of Mississippi," Monroe said.

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