

MINNESOTA

Literacy
The COUNCIL

VISTA VOICE



March 2015 | Your Connection to Literacy VISTAs Across the State!

Welcome to the March issue of the **VISTA Voice**. It was great to see so many of you at our January and February half-day trainings, and at the AmeriCorps Week events! With spring right around the corner, I hope you are all enjoying the warmer weather this month has brought us. Please enjoy the newsletter!

-Amy

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The Minnesota Literacy Council staff past & present AmeriCorps members came together on Wednesday for this photo op. in recognition of AmeriCorps Week 2015!

Stay Engaged Online!

[Facebook.com/mlcvista](https://www.facebook.com/mlcvista) | [Twitter.com/mlcvista](https://twitter.com/mlcvista) | mnliteracy.com/vista

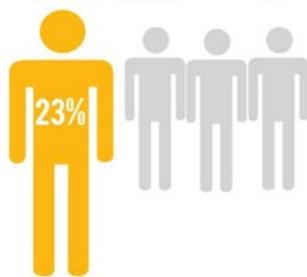
VISTA *Spotlight*



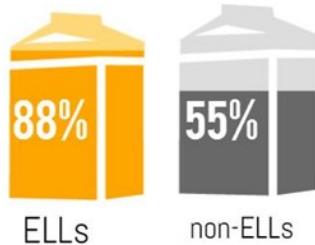
GETTING THINGS DONE FOR AMERICA BY

Increasing MPS English Learner access to curriculum and success with grade level content standards by developing a bank of supplemental curricular materials and texts appropriate for ELs, equipping classroom and ESL teachers to access these materials and evaluating and sharing our progress.

THIS MATTERS BECAUSE



MPS Students are English Language Learners (ELLs)



Receive Free and Reduced Lunch



ELLs scored "Not Proficient" on MCA Reading Tests (2012)

Research Suggests

ELLs need exposure to materials that allow them to practice reading and analysis skills independently in order to make growth in both reading and English.

IMPACT

Project Year 2



832

Materials in our Resource Bank, "EL/FI"

80

ESL Teachers report using materials provided by the Multilingual Department

4440

English Learners have used our materials in class

**Featuring:
Alana Peck**



“ I’m Alana and I serve in the Multilingual Department (MLD) in the Minneapolis Public Schools. One thing I’ve learned this year is that visuals are really important! The infographic included is a great overview of my project and also is an example of one of the presentation tools I’ve been experimenting with recently. ”

VISTA *Spotlight*

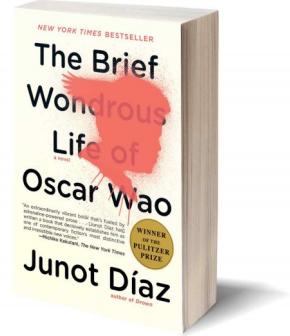
Continued:

Alana, what's your favorite part of being a VISTA?

“ I’m really enjoying developing a deep understanding of issues and policy surrounding English Language Learners. I’m fortunate to work with some very passionate and intelligent people who are willing to share their experience with me. ”

What's your favorite book?

“ “The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao” is the best book I’ve read in a long, long time. Junot Diaz is a talented guy. ”



What's a suggestion of a fun activity that's VISTA-budget friendly?

“ Short road trips are really fun and a great way to travel without breaking the bank. I’m hoping to take a weekend trip to South Dakota before August. ”



Like Alana’s **infographic**? Take her advice and spice up your presentations using one of these tried-and-true resources:



piktochart.com

The easy-to-use infographic creator, with tons of customizable themes.



<http://www.easel.ly>

Create and share visual ideas. Pick from a variety of infographic templates, or create your own.



<https://prezi.com>

Create presentations people will remember, utilizing motion, collaboration, meaning, and personalization.

Or, take your brainstorming to a new level with this visual **mind-mapping tool**:



<http://bubbl.us>

Brainstorming made simple! Design and share your mind-maps.

VISTA

Cross-Talk

Gina Nyhus & Katie Culhane

Katie: What is your favorite thing to do in St. Paul?

Gina: My favorite thing to do in St. Paul is to go to MN Wild games. Hopefully we can cheer them on in the playoffs this year!

K: What is the greatest thing you have learned from working at your site/being a VISTA?

G: I have learned a TON about fundraising by organizing events such as Hat Day, spaghetti dinners, and raffles. I have also gotten a lot more comfortable speaking in front of people and giving presentations. From working at my site specifically, I have learned a lot about recycling, composting, and living green.



K: Where is your favorite place in the world? When was the last time you were there?

G: I have been to Las Vegas twice and loved it both times. The lights, the food, the atmosphere, the interesting people... The last time I was there was for my golden birthday in September.

K: What is your favorite thing to do in your free time?

G: When its nice out, I enjoy riding my bike to Centerville beach and having a picnic before riding home. I also enjoy going to bingo, playing pool, and lounging with my cat, Hershey.

K: What are your plans for life after VISTA?

G: Well... I will most likely be staying for the third year of my VISTA project. I have loved everything about my site since my very first week, and I think it would be awesome to do all three years of the project. There is also the

possibility that this could turn into a permanent, part-time position, which is also an incentive.

Gina: What are you most looking forward to about Spring?

Katie: I am most looking forward to walking around the lakes with the rest of the population of Uptown. I moved to Uptown after undergrad for the great location and proximity to the lakes.



G: What is your favorite part about being a VISTA/working at your site?

K: My favorite part of working at my VISTA site is bringing guest speakers and new partnerships to

the after school program I work at as a part of my position. It is very rewarding to bring opportunities to the youth that they would not normally have access to. Watching high school students break out of their shell is incredible to witness and be a part of.

G: Where is one place in the world that you really want to travel to? Why?

K: If I could travel anywhere I would go to Machu Picchu. I have never been to South America and have heard rumors of Machu Picchu closing to tourists which only gets the travel bugs biting more!

G: What is your favorite board game?

K: Kind of a mix of a board game and cards, but I love cribbage!

G: What are your plans for life after VISTA?

K: I have no clue what is next after VISTA, but I am excited for the adventure!



VISTA

In the kitchen



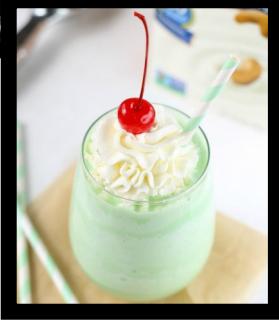
Featuring: St Patty's Day inspired fare

Breakfast: Festive (green) Pancakes

Use your favorite pancake recipe, add green sprinkles or food coloring until the batter turns the color green you want. If you're feeling extra creative, pour pancakes into special shapes!



Drinks: Irish Coffee & Shamrock Shake



Irish Coffee:

Ingredients:

6oz black coffee
1oz Jameson Irish Whiskey
2 teaspoons raw sugar (or to taste)
2 Tablespoons heavy cream (or
whipped cream)

Instructions:

1. Add brewed coffee to mug, stir in sugar.
2. Stir in whiskey
3. Top with whipped cream, *Enjoy!*

Shamrock Shake

Ingredients:

2 1/2 cups vanilla ice cream

1/2 cup milk

1/4 cup sugar

1/4 tsp peppermint extract

1/4 tsp green food coloring

Optional toppings: whipped cream, sprinkles,
chocolate mint, maraschino cherry

Instructions:

1. Mix ingredients in blender until smooth
2. Top with whipped cream & toppings!
3. *Enjoy!*

Dinner: Irish Beef Stew w/ Mashed Potatoes

Ingredients:

1 Tablespoon olive oil
1 lb. chuck roast, trimmed & cubed
1 yellow onion, diced
4 large carrots, peeled & chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon thyme
1 teaspoon crushed rosemary
2 bay leaves
2 cups beef broth
2 Tablespoons butter, softened
2 Tablespoons flour
Heaping 1/3 cup frozen peas

Instructions:

In large pot(/slow cooker) or deep skillet set to medium-high heat, add olive oil. Once hot, add chuck roast and cook until browned on all sides, about 4 minutes. Add onions, carrots, garlic, salt, pepper, thyme, rosemary and bay leaves. Cook another 5 minutes. Pour in beef broth. Cover and simmer 2-4 hours, until meat and vegetables are tender.



When ready to serve, remove bay leaves. In a small bowl, stir softened butter & flour together until smooth. Stir butter mixture into stew. Add frozen peas. Once the gravy thickens slightly, it's done. Serve hot over mashed potatoes.

Reminders & Save the Date!

March 9—13 | AmeriCorps Week! [Join in on the fun with ICC!](#)

April 12—18 | National Volunteer Week

April 24 | Full Day Literacy VISTA training *in-person attendance required

Reminder: All Jan-Feb half-day training materials are now posted on [VISTA Portal](#)

Mystery VISTA

1. What is your favorite part of being a VISTA?
Seeing the smiles on the faces of the people we have helped.
2. What is your favorite thing to do on a Saturday afternoon?
Read a good book or golf. Depending on the weather.
3. If you could be reincarnated into any animal, what would you choose?
Sea otter.
4. What is your favorite kind of breakfast food?
Bacon. Who doesn't love bacon?
5. What is the last place you would ever want to travel to?
The boundary waters with a good collection of books and a fishing pole.



The February Mystery VISTA was Sarah Shapiro! Congrats to Emily Jahn & Allison Scheider for guessing correctly!

Remember to send your best guess to akrill@mnliteracy.org for a chance to win a prize!

Birthday Corner

Wishing a wonderful Birthday to...
Amy Decker - March 3rd
Adriana Gabres - March 28th

