

# *Governor's Service Recognition*



*June 8, 2017*

*Olbrich Botanical Gardens*

*Madison, Wisconsin*



Corporation for  
**NATIONAL &  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICE** 

# *Schedule of Events*

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Welcome, Jeanne Duffy, Executive Director, Serve WI  
Award Presentation, Saira Anwer, NBC 15 News

**AmeriCorps Member of the Year**

Tiffany Xiong

Partners for Afterschool Success

**AmeriCorps Program of the Year**

College Possible Milwaukee

**AmeriCorps VISTA Participant of the Year**

Alicia Falon Jarrett

UW Parkside AmeriCorps VISTA Project

**Senior Corps Participant of the Year**

Millie Polinske

CESA 10 Foster Grandparent Program

**Senior Corps Program of the Year**

RSVP of Dane County

Driver Services & Vets Helping Vets Program

**Veteran Volunteer of the Year Service Honoree**

SSG Chris Lauerman

Wisconsin Army Cadets

**Volunteer Engagement Honoree**

Tony Omernik

United Way RSVP of Marathon County

**Marty Stein Friend of National Service Exemplary Supporter**

Tom Devine

Closing Remarks, Lisa Delmore, WNCSSB Chair

# Governor's Service Recognition

The Governor's Service Recognition Event honors outstanding volunteers, national service participants and programs that have helped to address serious social needs in their communities. These honorees have made significant contributions to Wisconsin through their service efforts. Their generous service is impacting the lives of countless Wisconsinites.

## Honorees



**Tiffany Xiong**  
**AmeriCorps Member of the Year**

As an AmeriCorps member with Partners for Afterschool Success, Tiffany provides literacy tutoring to 11 middle school students who are 2-4 levels behind in literacy. In addition to tutoring, Tiffany plans and facilitates extended learning programming after school including a Careers Club, which engages students in career and college exploration activities, and an Arts and Culture Club, which Tiffany started when one of her tutees expressed a desire to teach classmates about her culture after being teased for the food she ate. The Arts and Culture Club has helped to bridge cultural divides between students and has provided a platform for students to gain leadership skills. Tiffany also coordinates the school gardens and leads various member service projects including a community-wide food drive that collected over 4,000 pounds of food for local pantries. Tiffany is service-minded and always willing to go above and beyond to provide her students with new opportunities.

The award will be presented by Bonnie Erickson of Partners for Afterschool Success.



### **College Possible Milwaukee AmeriCorps Program of the Year**

College Possible AmeriCorps members serve as coaches helping to prepare low-income high school students for college and to support college students until they graduate. AmeriCorps members provide guidance through the entire college preparation process from ACT-prep to essay writing- from finding schools that are

the best fit for each individual student to completing the FAFSA- from deciphering financial aid letters to securing letters of recommendation. As students enter college they continue to be supported by College Coaches who help students with financial aid, registering for classes, and staying on track for graduation. Last year in Milwaukee, College Possible served more than 750 students in 14 high schools. College Possible juniors improved their ACT scores by an average of 20% and 94% of College Possible seniors earned college admission. Additionally, College Possible supported 1,300 college students on more than 80 campuses. These students earned over \$2.2 million in scholarships to fund their higher education. College Possible is building the future leaders of Milwaukee, both in their coaches and in their students.

The award will be presented by Richard Esparza of College Possible.



### **Alicia Falon Jarrett VISTA Participant of the Year**

Alicia served as an AmeriCorps VISTA at John XXIII Educational Center through the UW-Parkside AmeriCorps VISTA Project. Alicia helped write and submit grants that totaled approximately \$76,000 which helped the John XXII Educational Center serve 197 students in the afterschool program, 128 students in the high school program, and 10 families in

the parent education program. In addition, Alicia developed and implemented new databases and assessment tools. She trained staff members in the use of these tools which were used to improve programs. Outside of serving at her host site, Alicia organized a drive that resulted in 20 cases of bottled water being sent to AmeriCorps NCCC members who were serving in Flint, Michigan. Alicia is the epitome of what it means to lead by example.

The award will be presented by Shirley Heck of UW-Parkside.



**Millie Polinske  
Senior Corps Participant of the Year**

Millie is a Senior Corps member serving at Osseo Elementary with the CESA 10 Foster Grandparent Program. "Grandma Millie" has served approximately 16,000 hours over 23 years. She is an icon in the halls and classrooms at Osseo Elementary where she can be seen helping children sound out words and solve math problems. Over the course of

the last three school years, Millie was paired with 17 students for literacy needs with each one showing an increase in their literacy skills. During the same three school years, Millie also mentored 8 students with each one showing significant gains in areas such as social skills, life skills, and behavior. Students, teachers, and other Foster Grandparents have been the beneficiaries of Millie's gentle presence, smile, patience, and humility that she shares from her heart.

The award will be presented by Saira Anwer of NBC 15 news.



**RSVP of Dane County-  
Driver Services & Vets Helping Vets  
Senior Corps Program of the Year**

Since 1975, RSVP of Dane County's Driver Services Program has helped thousands of older adults stay in their homes by providing rides to important medically related appointments as well as delivering meals. In 2012, Vets Helping Vets was added to address the unique needs of veterans and their

families, which includes rides to a broader range of appointments such as job interviews and counseling services. The Drivers Services and Vets Helping Vets Program mobilizes an army of over 700 volunteer drivers. In 2016 alone, Drivers Services volunteers delivered 84,438 meals, provided 8,585 rides to 1,144 passengers, donated 34,563 hours and drove 409,792 miles. Over the past four decades, volunteer drivers have volunteered more than 1 million hours, driven over 8 million miles and delivered 1.5 million meals. These services weave a thread of hope into the lives of seniors and veterans whose simple goal is to live as independently as possible for as long as possible.

The award will be presented by Gene Kundert, Manager of RSVP Driver Services, and it will be accepted by Tom Poppe, former Coordinator of Vets Helping Vets and Bob Shank, Volunteer Driver of RSVP Vets Helping Vets.

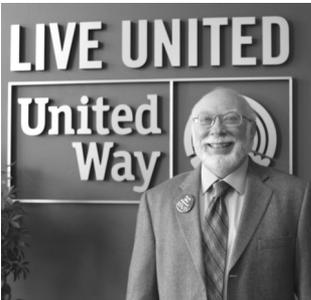


### **SSG Chris Lauerman Veteran Volunteer of the Year**

As a Veteran of the Iraq War, SSG Chris Lauerman continues to serve his community by volunteering as the Commanding Officer with the Wisconsin National Guard sponsored Wisconsin Army Cadets Program. In his role, SSG Lauerman mentors youth ages 12-20 and provides them with training opportunities

to learn about careers and life in the Armed Forces. He provides monthly trainings for up to 30 youth at a time in areas such as self-defense, marksmanship, communications, and common task skills. By providing these experiences, SSG Lauerman helps prepare youth to make tough choices about whether or not to join the Armed Forces. During his time as Commanding Officer, more than 50 youth have joined different branches of the military. SSG Lauerman's goal is always the Cadet, making sure they have what they need to complete the mission. In return, the Cadets are inspired to become leaders both in the Armed Forces and in their communities.

The award will be presented by c/MSG Hunter Plamann and it will be accepted by c/CPL Andrew Vander Putten of the WI Army Cadets on behalf of SSG Lauerman.



### **Tony Omernik Volunteer Engagement**

Tony Omernik is the RSVP Director in Marathon County. With drive, vision, and innovation, he continually assesses community needs and finds ways for his 584 volunteers and 44 partner stations to address them. Tony and his volunteers help older adults stay active and feel connected to their community through

developing programs such as monthly Coffee Hours. Tony empowers volunteers and helped them connect with community partners to establish a sustainable ramp building program that assists six disabled residents annually. Tony also took on the challenge of rebuilding an abandoned free blood pressure screening program, recruiting retired and active nurses to provide regular health screenings which resulted in 785 screenings in 2016. Tony is passionate about helping older generations find purpose through service. His love for his career in volunteer engagement is inspiring and contagious, infecting all that have had the pleasure of knowing Tony and growing the ranks of active volunteers in Marathon County and beyond.

The award will be presented by Shelly Kaiser of Marshfield Clinic.



**Tom Devine**  
**Marty Stein Friend of National Service**  
**Exemplary Supporter**

Tom Devine served as the Executive Director of Serve Wisconsin from 1998-2016. Over his 18 years as Executive Director, Tom helped numerous local communities meet their most pressing needs through national service and volunteerism. Under his incredible leadership, Wisconsin became a strong leader in national service and significant funding was secured to provide resources across the state. Tom's strong presence and passion for national service led to Serve Wisconsin becoming one of the most recognized and successful service commissions in the country. Tom has devoted his life and career to national service and he will always exemplify what national service is all about, selfless service and a dedication to improving communities.

The award will be presented by Brian Blahnik of the Marshfield Clinic AmeriCorps Programs.

## *Master of Ceremonies*



**Saira Anwer** joined the NBC 15 News team in January of 2016 as a reporter and weekend anchor. She is from Galesburg, Illinois and graduated from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a degree in Broadcast Journalism. While in college, she spent summers interning at radio and TV news stations in Moline, Illinois and Paducah, Kentucky. The summer after college she traveled to Istanbul with a team of journalists to create an award-winning documentary about domestic violence and women's issues in Turkey. After graduation, Saira spent two years teaching 8th grade English in Dallas, Texas as part of the Teach For America Program. After completing the program, she moved to Minot, North Dakota to anchor the 6pm news program for an NBC Affiliate where she established and led a weekly medical segment, and reported on various issues on North Dakota's Indian reservations. Saira enjoys playing tennis, musical theater, watching cooking shows and eating ice cream. She loves that living in southern Wisconsin allows her to do the things she loves while serving a vibrant and diverse community.

# *Event Sponsors*

Serve Wisconsin and the CNCS Wisconsin State Office sponsor the Governor's Service Recognition Event. Serve Wisconsin manages AmeriCorps State programs. The CNCS Wisconsin State Office manages AmeriCorps VISTA and Senior Corps programs.



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**Serve Wisconsin** works with AmeriCorps programs throughout the State of Wisconsin to address human, educational, environmental, public safety and homeland security needs. AmeriCorps members are given the opportunity to enrich the lives of the people and communities they serve and their own lives through professional and personal development. Serve Wisconsin is governed by 21-member citizen body appointed by Governor Walker. For more information about Serve Wisconsin or funded AmeriCorps programs, visit [www.servewisconsin.wi.gov](http://www.servewisconsin.wi.gov).

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