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INFORMATION FROM BARNSTABLE COUNTY
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“Hungry for Change” AmeriCorps Cape Cod MLK Day of Service a Success!

BARNSTABLE COUNTY, MA -- Over 150 volunteers joined the Barnstable County AmeriCorps Cape Cod program for their 10th annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day (MLK Day) of service to help address the issue of hunger in the Cape Cod community and make another MLK Day a “Day On.”

AmeriCorps Cape Cod partnered with the Barnstable County Department of Human Services and the Cape Cod Hunger Network to support and restock food pantries across the Cape. On January 18th, from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m., volunteers of all ages ran food drives at grocery stores in towns from Hyannis to Provincetown. Eleven grocery stores hosted the food drives, including Shaw’s Supermarkets and Stop & Shop stores as well as Ring Brothers Marketplace in Dennis.

Grocery store volunteers handed out a list of requested healthy food to ensure that donations were nutritious. Volunteer efforts helped exceed expectations for the day: The food drives were quite successful, with over 3,800 food items collected on MLK Day as well as \$900 in cash donations. Food and money donations were given to the Cape Cod Hunger Network to be dispersed to pantries across the cape. Another group of volunteers fell into synch at a construction site, provided by the Town of Dennis. This group built portable wooden collection bins for pantries to place in grocery stores and raised garden beds to grow produce, to further support pantries in their abilities to serve clients throughout Cape Cod.

After volunteering, approximately 75 community members joined together for a dinner at the Dennis Church of the Nazarene. Volunteer chefs Don Fallon of Ring Brothers Marketplace and Frans Weterrings of Nata’s Noodles prepared a delicious minestrone soup and Caesar salad meal for all to enjoy. The central location also allowed everyone to see collectively what was accomplished throughout the day of service, as all of the food donations were shuttled to the site to be organized before being distributed, and all of the food together was a sight to see!

“The overwhelming enthusiasm from the community to participate in service on Monday was exciting,” said Project Coordinator Rebecca Wolfson. “We couldn’t believe we had to add additional food drive sites, days before the event, to accommodate volunteer interest.”

Many groups and organizations signed up to volunteer together: the Boys and Girls Club of Mashpee, Yarmouth’s RFK youth program, Nauset High School’s Key Club, Senior Environment Corp, Harwich’s No Place for Hate, Laurence MacArthur Elementary School, Cape Cod Healthcare, and Single Volunteers of Cape Cod are only some of the groups who participated. Families returned after a positive experience serving with AmeriCorps Cape Cod in the past, alumni returned for a day of service, and some Girl Scout participants spent their 7th Martin Luther King Day “On” with AmeriCorps Cape Cod.

"To all who turned out, and all who donated to the drives in the grocery stores, the program and community are appreciative," Wolfson said.

The project was made possible through a generous grant provided by Shaw's Supermarkets and match funds from Barnstable County. Along with these project funders and all volunteers, AmeriCorps Cape Cod would like to extend a huge thank you to the following organizations and individuals who were integral in making MLK Day 2010 happen, through financial support and generous donations as well as other resources and support: Barnstable County Department of Human Services, Barnstable County Cooperative Extension, The Cape Cod Hunger Network, Home Depot, Shaw's Supermarkets, Stop and Shop Supermarkets, Ring Brothers Marketplace, Nata's Noodles, Accardi, Guaranteed Fresh Produce, Sysco, Paul Marks, Perkins, Dunkin Donuts of South Dennis, Dennis Department of Public Works, Sean Gonsalves, and Dennis Church of the Nazarene.

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AmeriCorps Cape Cod is a residential full-time service program committed to addressing the critical environmental and disaster response needs of Cape Cod's community and fragile natural resources. AmeriCorps Cape Cod's 26 members each provide at least 1,700 hours of quality service over an 11-month term focusing in the areas of natural resource management, disaster preparedness and response, environmental education, and volunteer engagement.

AmeriCorps Cape Cod is funded by Barnstable County and through grants from the Massachusetts Service Alliance and the Corporation for National and Community Service. AmeriCorps Cape Cod is operated out of the Barnstable County Resource Development Office. For more information about AmeriCorps Cape Cod, contact the Barnstable County Resource Development Office at (508) 375-6869 or americorps@barnstablecounty.org.