

Q&A: Catching up with...

An occasional interview series with those in service making Nebraska stronger



WHO: Sylvia Jons
WHAT: AmeriCorps*VISTA
WHERE: Midwest Consortium for Service Learning in Higher Education
– in service at Nebraska Wesleyan University

Tell us a little bit about you.

Integrity. Selflessness. Independent thinking. Higher education. These are my core values: values rooted in notions instilled from my youth and continuously stemming from my various roles as a sister, daughter and student.

As a daughter, I am blessed with selfless parents. Adopting all four of their children, each one of us is of a different ethnicity. Living in such a unique family, my parents taught us that education is priceless, happiness succeeds money and that an individual can make a difference, without necessarily winning the Nobel Peace Prize.

As a sister among siblings of no physical resemblance, our connection flows from within. I am an advocate and teacher for my younger siblings. Furthermore, our experiences both individually and collectively solidify my belief in questioning information, searching for truth, a two-way learning environment and recognizing multiple perspectives.

Who are some of your heroes, or people you look up to?

I look up to my parents.

Tell us a little about your service. What are your goals?

This experience in a small liberal arts university provides me with the chance to take what the students are learning in the classroom, provide opportunities for them to apply them in the community, and more importantly come to an understanding of why their service is important. And I don't mean just the, "This made me feel X, when I did Y." I want them to ask what are the barriers that make X what it is, and what is being done to change it.

What are your plans for when you complete your VISTA term?

I have been accepted to the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Higher Education Administration program.

What advice do you have to those considering VISTA/national service?

I am rewarded by the notion that I'm helping to create graduates who are civically responsible engaged community members. If you feel the same way, you should also apply.