

EMPIRE STATE POVERTY REDUCTION INITIATIVE (ESPRI) EMPIRE CORPS VISTA **NEWSLETTER**

February 2018

On Kristen Semento, the United Way of Northern New York (Watertown) VISTA



Kristen Semento at
UW of Northern NY

Kristen is part of a military family and has lived in 2 countries, 12 states, and 23 cities. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Art History from University of Texas at Arlington and her Master's Degree in American Material Culture from University of Delaware. She decided to become a VISTA because she is interested in giving back in meaningful ways to those directly impacted by poverty. Since starting in August, Kristen has been focusing on creating updates for United Way's 211 website, which focuses on health and human services organizations. This enables those without high school degrees or English fluency to access information on United Way's resources. The highlight of her VISTA year has been working with organizations and learning how they operate on a ground level.

A Warm Welcome to Karen Talbot—New Program Officer for CNCS!

On January 11th 2018, DOS ESPRI program analyst, Charlene Griffin, and VISTA staff: leader Sarah Ferritto and member Charm Lee, visited the Corporation for National and Community Service's (CNCS) new program officer, Karen Talbot.

Karen has been with CNCS since 1998 and is excited to work with the Empire State Poverty Reduction Initiative and the NYS Division of Community Services; particularly to furthering the mission of reducing poverty and increasing economic opportunity for all New Yorkers. On the subject, she states her enthusiasm in working with a "great new group of VISTA volunteers to further the mission of CNCS in meeting the needs of local communities and improving the lives of their fellow citizens through service."

Her recommendation to VISTAs is that while individual service is a year of giving back, "it is also an opportunity for you, as VISTA members, to gain skills, connections, and experiences that will last a lifetime. My advice to you is to embrace this opportunity and through the struggles you will face take comfort that it is an effort much appreciated by all those lives you touch."



Charlene Griffin, Sarah Ferritto, Karen Talbot, and Charm Lee
at the NYS CNCS Office in Albany, NY

Please welcome Karen in her new role at: KTalbot@cns.gov