



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FMI Kate Perkins, 207-671-3221, KPerkins@mcdph.org

New AmeriCorps Somerset County Members!



Cheryl Curtis and Liza Russell

On September 14th the first two members of AmeriCorps Somerset County started their service. Cheryl Curtis and Liza Russell are both long-time residents of Somerset with a passion for community service. Both women will be volunteering on a full-time basis to help link people with care and services, recruit community volunteers for a wide array of programs, and provide support to area residents who may be homebound or isolated. Cheryl and Liza will be working with Somerset Public Health, MaineGeneral RSVP and Spectrum Generations. These are just a few of the local organizations who came together to obtain an AmeriCorps grant from the Maine Commission for Community Service.

All of the AmeriCorps members will work to improve health and well-being in Somerset County by developing or expanding programs for veterans & military families, improving access to health care, providing small group and community-based health education, coaching people in chronic disease self-management and obesity prevention as well as linking people with hospice and behavioral health support programs. The project is a partnership among Somerset Public Health, Health Reach, Hospice Volunteers of Somerset County, Kennebec Behavioral Health, Healthy Sebasticook Valley Coalition, Spectrum Generations, and Kennebec Valley Community Action Program in partnership with MCD Public Health. Funding for the Somerset AmeriCorps program is provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) through the Maine Commission for Community Service (MCCS).

Cheryl noted that, “the opportunity to earn a living allowance and serve my community was the perfect next step” after sending her children off to college, because full-time AmeriCorps members receive a living allowance (\$12,530/YR) and upon successful completion of service, a \$5,730 educational award. Liza looks forward to using her education award to help pay for her son’s education. After working as a dental hygienist for almost 40 years, Liza stated that she is excited about this new opportunity to “participate in a more encompassing and impactful approach to supporting the people and communities that I have fallen in love with.”

There are six full-time positions still available in addition to 13 part time positions. While part-time AmeriCorps members do not qualify for the living allowance or health benefits, these members will benefit from professional training provided for AmeriCorps members and a pro-rated educational award is available. For those over 55, the educational award can be transferred to a child or grandchild, which is a great benefit for recent retirees who aren’t ready to sit at home but don’t want a full time commitment. Anyone interested in learning more can email Liz at callen@mcdph.org.

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MCD Public Health (MCDPH) is a not-for-profit agency founded in 1966 that operates across Maine to support and improve health and well-being. Recognized as a Public Health Institute, MCDPH was selected by the collaborating agencies to be the applicant to MCCS for AmeriCorps Somerset County. This program is supported by a grant to the Maine Commission for Community Service under the Corporation for National and Community Service Award D “15AFHME001-0002”. The opinions expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Commission or the Corporation or the AmeriCorps program.