Serve Washington
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AmeriCorps Responds to Spokane's Recovery Needs

OLYMPIA – Every day AmeriCorps members address locally-identified needs in communities across the state, but their service is even more critical as they help Spokane residents recover from significant hazards created by the accumulation of snow, ice and rain. Thirty-two AmeriCorps members (12 from the Educational Service District 101's Spokane Service Team (SST) and 20 from the Department of Ecology's Washington Conservation Corps) have been deployed to help mitigate the affects of the record snowfall.

The twelve AmeriCorps members from the Spokane Service Team removed snow from the roof of the Arc of Spokane, a nonprofit organization which serves individuals with developmental disabilities and their families. The building also houses an active daycare and multiple family support services. The facility's roof is over 18,000 square feet with a very slight pitch. SST Construction Supervisor, Mike Murphy stated, "The structure was damaged and would likely have collapsed without intervention."

The SST is working with the City of Spokane code enforcement officers to connect AmeriCorps members and community volunteers to neighbors in need, and tomorrow they will join the Washington Conservation Corps (WCC) to assist with snow removal at Riverside High School. AmeriCorps members have helped to clear drainage systems and provide access to homes of homebound elderly and people with disabilities.

Twenty AmeriCorps members from the Washington Conservation Corps arrived in Spokane yesterday to remove heavy snow from the roofs at Riverside High School and Medical Lake's high school and middle schools. The WCC crews were deployed from Wenatchee, Yakima, and Ellensburg and possibly more will be brought in from other areas of the state. In the past few weeks the Spokane-based crew helped out 100 stranded citizens who were referred by the Spokane County Emergency Management Center's 211 help line.

AmeriCorps is a national service program modeled after the Peace Corps, which enables individuals of all ages to dedicate a year of their lives to serving their community. Washington hosts the second largest contingent of AmeriCorps members in the Western United States. AmeriCorps members meet critical needs in education, public safety, public health, the environment and emergency response. Members receive a small living allowance during their service year and an education award to successfully mark the conclusion of their service.

To learn more about opportunities to serve in AmeriCorps visit the Commission's website http://www.ofm.wa.gov/servewa/.

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