

## Delaware Public Allies shapes a generation of caring

*Program gives young adults a start in the nonprofit world*

By ALEXANDRA DUSZAK • The News Journal • November 6, 2010

Even as Alana Iannucci pursued an art degree, she knew she wanted to work with children. Now, the University of Delaware grad is fulfilling her dream as a Public Ally, working for UD's 4-H: Operation Military Kids program in Dover.



Public Ally Alana Iannucci chats over a cup of coffee with Diane Hawke, who works at the University of Delaware and helped get a \$10,500 grant for Delaware Public Allies. (The News Journal/ROBERT CRAIG)

Iannucci coordinates activities, trains teens to give presentations, maintains the organization's website and creates newsletters

"It's a lot of work, but when you're working with kids, you don't even notice," Iannucci said.

Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program that trains young adults to become leaders in the nonprofit sector, places its participants in 10-month professional apprenticeships at nonprofit organizations throughout the state. The new class was introduced Friday at the annual Meet the Allies breakfast in Wilmington.

The Allies, some of whom work at Goodwill, the West End Neighborhood House and Serviam Girls Academy, help develop the services these organizations provide and address

issues such as education, community development and public health.

The national office announced Friday via YouTube video that Delaware Public Allies was one of three programs nationally to receive a \$10,500 grant to further alumni engagement. The Washington, D.C., and Chicago Public Allies offices also received grants.

Since Delaware Public Allies was created 16 years ago, the program has expanded from 17 allies to 30, and will continue to grow in the next few years under the direction of the national office, Program Director Christina Morrow said.

"We're starting to lay the groundwork in hopes that we will be able to expand our program again," she said.

The Delaware chapter of Public Allies was the first office in the nation to establish an alumni council, Morrow said. Many of Delaware Public Allies' 300 alumni remain in contact with the organization.

"Most everybody comes back around," Morrow said. "It's just a season of your life. It's like your high school alma mater."

Many of the program's participants use Public Allies as a way to gauge how they would like to be involved with public service. Charlene Reed, who is working with the West End Neighborhood House, said her 10 months in the program will help her decide if she wants to attend graduate school.

"I figured if I got into this program, it would give me a feel for whether I liked nonprofits," Reed said.

She said since she started at West End in September, she has enjoyed giving job training to unemployed 16- to 21-year-olds and assisting them with job searching.

"It's exciting, actually," Reed said. "I like doing that kind of stuff."

The Allies also participate in team service projects with the goal of creating a sustainable effort that community members can continue after the Allies graduate in June. One group, the Tilliage People, will establish community gardens and farmers' markets in the West Side. Reed said working with the group has been one of her favorite parts of the experience.

"You really get a sense of community," Reed said. "Even though I'm new to the area, they really welcomed me in and made me feel at home."

**Contact Alexandra Duszak at 324-2810 or [aduszak@delawareonline.com](mailto:aduszak@delawareonline.com).**



The latest class of allies is introduced by the Delaware Public Allies program Friday at the annual Meet the Allies breakfast at the DoubleTree Hotel in Wilmington. The program trains young adults to work in the nonprofit sector. (The News Journal/ROBERT CRAIG)



Regina Alonzo, Chair of Public Allies Delaware, greets the guests and participants Friday at the annual Meet the Allies event held at the DoubleTree Hotel. Delaware was one of three programs nationally to receive a \$10,500 grant. (The News Journal/ROBERT CRAIG)