



AMERICORPS NCCC FEMA CORPS



CONNECTIONS

Otter Unit Edition

Volume 1 Issue 1 - October 2013

INTRODUCING THE OTTER UNIT



The Atlantic Region was introduced to FEMA Corps for the first time this year in Perry Point, Maryland. Their inaugural class was officially inducted on August 27th, 2013. One unit, called Otters, encompass over ninety members and eight teams were deployed, on September 12th, 2013 to six states: Massachusetts, New York, Colorado, New Jersey, Virginia and Missouri.

News from the Corps

Member Reflections

Holliston, MA—Region I Disaster Recovery Systems Facility

Rhae Cisneros—01

I love being on the Otter unit because of the passion and determination of our CMs. Their eagerness to learn and grow inspires me and reminds me why I get up before dawn every morning.

Queens, New York—JFO

Scott Chen—02

I feel great about being in the Otter unit. Being the first O2 team leader allows me to set the standard for all those to come in the future.

Denver, Colorado—Disaster Recovery Center

Nicholas Yencopal—O3

I like being on the Otter unit, O.T.T.T.E.R.S, Otters are the best! It's been a fun time and I have seen some interesting things and really like my teammates. We register survivors and learn about HUD (Housing and Urban Development) through training.

Colts Neck, New Jersey—Navy Weapons Station

Samuel Lindberg—04

I love my unit. I have some of my favorite people I can talk to if I ever have the need. I trust and respect all of you. I can rest easy knowing I can ask for help if I need it.

Centennial, Colorado—Joint Field Office

Jessica Stafp—06

The whole JFO work thing...it's awesome. I like that my whole team is in one building. And I like that I see my work get done. Soon I will be doing a Stafford Act ISP delivering food to various locations in Colorado. It will be nice to be out of the office.

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CORPS MEMBERS

Ridding Otters in Denver

Have you ever rode on an otter? Well we've got a picture of an otter ready to be ridden...of course you do have to go to Denver Colorado to ride this plastic fella. Brandi Rae Briones of Otter 6 claims the otter she snapped a picture of at the Denver aquarium was,



"So cute!" 54 people were recorded to have seen this picture posted on Facebook, but only eleven liked it? Hmm, someone's giving otters the cold shell...I mean shoulder.

Safety in the Dark?



As the Vehicle, Safety and Tools officer, have you been doing your fire drills at the spike lodging? Otter 1 definitely has and they have been going above and beyond because they did their drill in the dark. No, not with the lights off, but at night! Now, it's uncertain if

the drill was really the VST's or if there was a fire, but this team seemed to be stoked either way with thumbs going up and hugs going around. Good thing no one was sleeping commando! This team earns the assurance award. Good going Otter 1.

**Want to see your picture here?
Want to leave a comment for the other teams? Email
the editors at youotterknow20@gmail.com**

Yummy Yummy in My Tummy

Ever wonder, how to eat on \$4.75 a day, who has dietary restrictions or how you can eat as much as you want? Forward all of your answers to Otter 4, the chefs of the month, with their delicious looking pierogi. For those of you who do not know, pierogis are Russian dumplings of unleavened dough that are usually fried or baked and stuffed with potatoes, sour kraut or ground meat. This picture of these homemade pierogi make this dish look easy, but with pierogi, the dough is made from scratch, the filling is added, and than the cooking begins. The total prep



plus cook time? 1 hour. After posting this picture, Paulina Alexis Snopek asks "What did you guys make?" No one has responded. Challenge accepted?! Anyone?

Team PT

Otters and Terrapins have been known to be a bit competitive toward each other, but who would have thought the competition would end up at a park with a soccer ball? Otter 7 took Terrapin 7 down in a team on team soccer game in Kansas City, Missouri. Not only did the Otters win, they gave the Terps a member from their own team to make the numbers even. This team earns the most fit award!





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TEAM LEADERS



In the beginning



On September 12th, 2013, nine fearless Otter pups left their mother and ventured out into the unknown. With their own identities and aspirations, the nine pups began changing the world through community service, disaster recovery, mitigation and

support. Some pups accomplished tasks on their own and others teamed together. Out in the wild, through the tribulations, these pups continue to persevere.

Where the Otter Goes

Through Team Leader Training and Corps member Training Institute, Sir Octavious Augustus had been the soft cuddly that has kept us cheered up, but where does he go? What does he do now that the TLs are gone? Last month he was spotted sand surfing at the Jersey shore.



But most recently he has been found acclimating himself with the new STL Sean. There have been rumors that Sir Augustus has learned to back the van and now rides "shotty" on the dash board. What an intelligent Otter! Where will Sir Augustus go next?

The California Sea Otter

DuVale Riley, honorary FEMA TL and life-time Otter is doing great in Sacramento, CA as a traditional STL. You didn't think we'd leave him out of the first issue did you?



And than there were 10

Please welcome the two new additions to the Otter team, David Nelson and Sean Jolliff. Sean is the unit's support team leader and right hand man to Beth. David is the unit's strategic support team leader and the liaison between FEMA HQ and the Atlantic Region. Out of the three new additions to the corps, we'd say the otter unit got the two best team leaders. Or did these two team leaders get the best unit?! You decide. Thanks again, the editors have been known to be a little biased.



Sean Jolliff



David Nelson

Flash Back to the Past



O.M.G.!! We did not just find this picture of the early Scott Chen! How cute is this?! Chen was apart of the Vinton, Iowa FEMA Corps team as

a Corps member last year called Pine 5. Chen, also known as "Sweet Scott", is now a part of two inaugural FEMA Corps, the best of which is the Atlantic Region of course. Want more information? You know where to find Chen! #embarrassingmuch?

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INDEPENDENT SERVICE LEARNING PROJECTS

Muddy River



There is a place in Kansas City Missouri where everyday citizens can go to help clean trash off of a river bank. Otter 7 found this place and dedicated five hours of their free time to the Muddy River

Conservation. As they exited the van, the team realized how the NCCC on their backs immediately gained attention and implied that this team was going to make a difference. The service consisted of a brief safety lesson, instructions to put on life jackets and riding a boat across the river. The team was dropped off on the river bank and after three hours had collected over seven bags of trash. The honor and respect that citizens have for AmeriCorps was definitely seen and felt that day. Thank you Otter 7, for your service.

What is a Stafford Act ISP?

It only requires ten hours for the entire ten month service period. It is the only ISP that can be logged into the portal. Teams can partner with organizations in declared disaster areas to meet its requirements. But, what constitutes as a Stafford Act ISP and when do you have time to find one? According to information



gathered from the Atlantic Region, a Stafford act ISP can be either an emergency preparedness education exercise or service during a nationally declared disaster. Both of these examples would need to be with an organization. Examples of organizations could be: Rebuilding America, American Red Cross or VOAD agencies (Volunteer Organizations Aiding in Disasters). ISPs can be done during the work week, on the weekends, over winter break, as a team and alone. Of course, you do need 3 people if you'd like to use the van.

Forms, Forms and More Forms

Attention all POLs! It's time for a POP Quiz! How many forms need to be completed for an ISP to be counted? If you answered anything other than 2, your wrong! A proposal form and a completion form must be submitted in order for any ISPs to be approved for hours. The proposal is due 3 business days prior to the ISP, and the completion form is due within a week of completing the ISP. These guidelines stay true for both independent and team ISPS. With that being said, the POL is only responsible for the team ISPs, not individual ones. Unless the TL says otherwise.

The Why Behind the What

Remember, your ISPs should be fun and enjoyable. Take time outside of work to change the world. **One rock thrown into a river makes multiple ripples and causes everlasting change. Use your paws and make ripples.** Ha! Get it? Because Otters have Paws! And live in RIVERS! #corny



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CELEBRITY TRASH WITH ADRIANNE ROE



Kendra Wilkinson is pregnant with her 2nd child by Hank Basket.

Kristin Bell and Dax Shepard said "I do".... in a courthouse..



LC from the Hills got engaged the same day as ex boyfriend Jason Wahler tied the knot!



The Jo-Bros (aka: Jonas Brothers) canceled their much anticipated tour due to family trouble... drama!!



Nelly's 7th studio album "M.O." dropped this week! It has guest appearances by Trey Songz, T.I., and Wiz Khalifa.

The one and only Justin Bieber debuted a new song, Heart Breakers, on Monday this week. It's said to be about ex-girlfriend Selena Gomez...

Miley had a busy week (10/13-10/19), hosting and performing on SNL, GMA, and Jimmy Kimmel just to name a few. She also dropped her 4th studio album Bangerz. Britney Spears, Big Sean, Ludacris, and Nelly all make appearances on the albums.



Sad news for the Kardashians, While Khole and Lamar are going through some rough roads with their own marriage, Kris and Bruce Jenner announce their divorce after 20 years!



Atlantic Region Edition



CALENDAR

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Lauren R's Birthday: Otter 5	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16 Greg C's Birthday: Otter 6
17	18	19	20	21 ALL Teams Arrive Back	22Jasmine P's Birthday - O8 TRANSITION	23 Depart for Break
24 Cynda M's Birthday: O8	25 BREAK	26 Grace S's Birthday: Otter 6	27 BREAK	28 THANKS- GIVING	29 BREAK	30 BREAK
1 Stacey C's Birthday: O8	2 BREAK	3 BREAK	4 BREAK	5 BREAK	6 BREAK	7 Brienne G's Birthday: O1
8 Return from Break	9 Transition Day	10 Transition Day	11 Transition Day	12 Transition Day	13 Deploy for Round 2	14 Round 2 Begins
15 Brandi B's Birthday: Otter 6	16 Drew Y's Birth- day: Otter 7	17	18	19	20 Stephen S's Birthday: Otter 4	21
22	23 Cameron P's Birthday: Otter 1	24 Dan M's Birth- day: Otter 1	25 MERRY CHRISTMAS	26	27	28 Nickie M's Birthday: Otter 8
29	30	31		December		



Otter Unit Edition



From the Desk of Beth Stewart

The Why Behind the What

“Our duty is to encourage everyone in their struggle to live up to their own highest idea, and strive at the same time to make the ideal as near as possible to the truth.” Swami Vivekananda

Otters—I could not be more proud to lead this unit. The work you all do everyday, not just on your projects, but to support each other, challenge each other, and learn from each other—that’s what makes this program great. Thanks for continuing to inspire me, for sharing your ideas and feedback with me, and carrying the commitment to service with you every day. YOU are the “why behind the what” of what I do.

**Want to ask Beth a Question to address in this section? Email the editors at
youotterknow20@gmail.com**

First Round is Hard...

I thought I'd take this moment to share some perspective. First round is the hardest of all rounds. Everything just became real, it's you and your team. Every little thing that seems like an issue on your team, because you are just learning about each other and feeling out how to communicate with each other, is a huge issue.

Do not be concerned, this feeling natural, first round and into second round is typically the time of storming. It's important during this time to remember its good, because it leads to greater growth for you as an individual and as a team. Remember to step back, put things into perspective, and be a part of making this experience better for you and your team.

Its important in times like this to remember that your Team Leader is your greatest resource and advocate. The more insight you can share with them about your experience, concerns, and ideas, the greater the success of your



How cute and amazing are these little guys?!

team. Team Leaders can't read minds, so don't assume they know what all of the issues are. Their main priority is you and your team, so talk to your team leader and be a part of the solution. Help each other get through the storm.

Have FUN! Plan movie nights, themed dinners, and board game tournaments. Go to fall festivals, have costume parties, and go apple picking or pumpkin frolicking (did I make that last one up?).

Also, don't be afraid of structured team time like team builders and team meetings. These are essential to improve communication and gain a greater understanding of each other. Try not to take too much personally during this time, you are all managing a lot of stress, and usually stress manifests in less than pleasant ways. That's natural too, help each other find constructive outlets for stress and frustration. Go out together, stay in together, and just have fun.

Looking Back...

“My first round as a team leader I learned the hard way of taking on too much and trying to fix all of the things I thought were issues on my team all by myself before communicating with my CMs. Not only did I run myself into the ground physically and get the flu, I learned through a conversation with my ATL I was actually making decisions that made things worse, and the things I thought were issues due to member complaints weren't really issues at all and people were just venting. So talk to your CMs, you can't do this alone. Ask questions, be open to feedback, and remember the **team that storms together, stays together.”**

And in case you didn't know —Its turtle hatching season along beaches in Mexico, Australia, and along the gulf coast of the US. When the going gets tough, think of these little guys and the long journey that awaits them. **Faced with adversity, I will persevere.**