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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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KIDS Consortium Welcomes New AmeriCorps*VISTA Member

Auburn, ME - KIDS Consortium is pleased to announce that Jo Anna Gates has joined the staff as an AmeriCorps*VISTA member for 2009-2010. Founded in 1992, KIDS (Kids Involved Doing Service-Learning) Consortium helps transform classrooms and communities through an award-winning educational model that has touched more than a quarter-million students across New England and New York. The mission of KIDS Consortium is to prepare young people to be active and responsible citizens by training and supporting educators, community organizations, and youth in best practices for service-learning. Through service-learning, K-12 students identify, research and address real community challenges, using knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.

Ms. Gates is part of a larger statewide team of AmeriCorps*VISTA members organized by Communities for Children and Youth, a statewide initiative of the Maine Children's Cabinet working to promote positive child and youth development.

Ms. Gates will work with KIDS Consortium staff to increase the number of Maine K-12 students involved in service-learning projects in their communities. She will focus on a new initiative designed to engage students in "Green" projects that will make their schools more environmentally responsible and sustainable. She will also help KIDS Consortium improve its use of technology and social networking tools, and assist with fundraising efforts and outreach to local community organizations and school districts with populations of children and youth at risk of poverty.

Most recently employed by Parker Hannifin as an Information Technology Analyst in their Hydraulic Systems Division in Kalamazoo, MI, Ms. Gates comes to KIDS Consortium with a diverse background in information technology, communications and science. Ms. Gates holds a master's degree in physical chemistry from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a bachelor's degree in chemistry, mathematics and physics from Kalamazoo College in Michigan.

To learn more about AmeriCorps*VISTA and teams organized by Communities for Children and Youth, please visit www.mainevista.net. For more information about KIDS Consortium and service-learning, please visit www.kidsconsortium.org. ###