



## Q&A: Catching up with...

*An occasional interview series with those in service making Nebraska stronger*

**WHO (name):** Randall Barrett  
**WHAT (title):** CapacityCorps Energy Efficiency Coordinator  
**WHERE:** Rebuilding Together Omaha

### Tell us a little bit about you.

I am 25 years old. I am originally from a southeast South Dakota town called Madison. My educational background is in journalism with a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from South Dakota State University. I am currently working on my master's in journalism and mass communications from South Dakota State University. I have professionally worked with South Dakota Public Broadcasting as a seasonal news producer for about 18 months as well as have freelanced with National Public Radio and National Native News.

I am also a member of the Oglala Lakota Nation of South Dakota. While a student at South Dakota State University, I have had the chance to work with other Native American students from within the state of South Dakota and across the country, challenging them to think about higher education and getting them interested in journalism and media through workshops, high school classes and conventions.

### Who are some of your heroes, or people you look up to?

My parents would have to be the people I look up to most. They have always been an example of service to community and individuals. They got me into community service through the Boy Scouts of America when I was 11. Not only did we serve the community through Boy Scout service, but my parents also took part in heading up a literacy council in rural South Dakota to help those who are illiterate or have a low reading level to become effective readers. They continue to volunteer with the literacy council and also volunteer to tutor and educate low-income individuals who still need to earn their GED, driver's license, and other certifications that would help those people become a more desirable work hire.

### Tell us a little about your service. What are you doing?

I am an AmeriCorps member with Rebuilding Together Omaha. My title is CapacityCorps Energy Efficiency Coordinator, which means I am trying to increase the energy efficiency and environmentally friendly capabilities of Rebuilding Together Omaha. We are finishing up the rebuild of a home of an Omaha woman, Alice Becerra. I was able to personally weatherize the home by filling in gaps around windows and furnace vents, amongst other home energy efficiency fix-ups. My work not only is at a home rebuild site, but at the office, trying to make the office place more environmentally friendly, by finding more recycling options and energy conservation strategies.

I have also been developing their social media by starting Facebook, Twitter and YouTube pages for Rebuilding Together Omaha. I have also started classes with the Rebuilding Together Omaha board of directors to educate them on the use of social media and effectively using it with our group's mission. With my background in media, I have also produced videos for Rebuilding Together Omaha for projects that we have been a part of. I am also looking to producing a series of energy efficiency how-to videos for people to use on their own homes as well as our rebuilding teams in April.

### **What are your goals for this year of service?**

I hope to effectively help home owners live warmly and efficiently, either directly or indirectly, by being able to educate and initiate energy efficiency strategies in their homes in some way.

I also hope to increase awareness of Rebuilding Together Omaha, and make sure people know about our work in low-income communities. With increased awareness, we may be able to reach out to more people who need help or find a resource of volunteers to give back to Omaha community.

### **What are your plans for when you complete your current service?**

My plans are to get through another year in graduate school, and to go back into the media industry in some way. My journalistic ideals would lead me back into public broadcasting, but I would love to continue working with media in the non-profit sector and try to shed light on the issues that trouble communities and spread the word about initiatives trying to help those communities.

### **What advice do you have to those considering national & community service?**

Remember special moments and people that have touched your life during your service, and make sure to share the stories of those moments and people with others. Word of mouth is a great way to spread awareness of a cause. Also, find different outputs for the story: Start a blog, record your events with video/audio/photos and spread them to the winds. If you are doing good in your community, then you have something to share with others and your good works need to be out there.