



### **Noreen Ahmed- Spirit of Service, Outstanding YouthBuild AmeriCorps VISTA Member of the Year**

Noreen has embodied the spirit of service through her thoughtful and quality-driven work behind the scenes at Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC). One project to which Noreen has made invaluable contributions, which also demonstrates her spirit and growth as a VISTA member, is the World Café. The World Café not only helps to educate our young people about important issues and involve them in discussions, but it also helps to bring together a diverse group of young people of different racial, socio-economic, and educational backgrounds on varying crews that may not have much time to interact in the field. Her ongoing commitment to the critical piece of fostering meaningful discussions amongst these diverse and often divided groups within the MHYC community demonstrates her commitment to service, her nuanced understanding of community issues and poverty, and her excellence as a YouthBuild VISTA.

Noreen's service has had a profound impact on the Denver community, participants, and herself. She has impacted YouthBuild participants through the hands-on, meaningful curricula she has developed over the last two years. To re-engage previously disenfranchised youth in rigorous course work, Noreen has balanced relevant content, a testament to her increased knowledge of the strengths and needs of students living in poverty, with myriad challenging and fun activities, including science experiments and debates. She is also spearheading the development of an alumni group intended to keep former YouthBuilders connected with each other, current participants, service, and their communities.

Noreen has also made an indelible impact on MHYC and its ability to adjust to the 2014 GED test through curriculum development and her proficiency in the pedagogy behind curriculum design. To create successful lessons, Noreen is able to anticipate challenges with pacing, content, scaffolding and materials, while also assessing lessons from various angles to address the needs of learners. Our 2014-15 data speaks to Noreen's significant contribution to 2014 GED preparation and Corps member academic development: 40 individual subject-area tests have been passed by 2014-15 cohort members as of 5/15/15. This exceeds the number of 2014 GED subject-area tests passed by May 15th for the 2013-14 cohort. These successes would not be possible without the heart, hard work and tenacity that Noreen pours into her service at MHYC. She has earned this award twice over through her commitment to YouthBuild, MHYC, VISTA and community service.

-Nominated by Nikki Sorola