ST. PAUL — St. Cloud native Karen Schleper recently began a one-year term of service with AmeriCorps VISTA at the nonprofit organization Admission Possible. Admission Possible is dedicated to making college admission possible for promising low-income students in the greater Twin Cities by providing after-school college prep programming to 1,400 juniors and seniors at 19 public high schools.

Schleper is one of 56 recent college graduates serving 10-12 months through AmeriCorps at Admission Possible in St. Paul. With nearly 350 applicants for those positions, Schleper’s strong application and interview earned her one of two Development VISTA positions on the team.

She was excited to be chosen and anticipates the impact she will have in her position. She said that she believes everyone should have the chance to go to college and she is the person she is today because of her college experience.

The Admission Possible AmeriCorps team will put in more than 98,000 volunteer hours this year to ensure that students in the program gain admission to college. Admission Possible program director Bethany Albrecht said she knows they are up to the challenge.

She said that at a time when college access and funding is more competitive than ever, Admission Possible students continue to beat the odds. She added that the enthusiasm and talent of AmeriCorps members is a large part of that.

The majority of AmeriCorps members working with Admission Possible serve as coaches for high school students, but the four AmeriCorps VISTAs help the organization build its capacity to serve by working on communications, fundraising and expansion.

Schleper is one of two development VISTAs who provide direct support on fundraising initiatives for the organization and help maintain donor relations. Supporting the coaches in their roles, out of the spotlight, suits her.

She said that she knows that behind the scenes work is essential to helping students achieve their dreams of going to college.

Natalie Rule, director of external relations, said that Admission Possible is fortunate to have young idealistic leaders like Schleper on the team.
Schleper is a 2005 graduate of Cathedral High School and she graduated from the College of St. Benedict in May with a bachelor’s degree in biology and a minor in psychology.

While making adjustments to life in the Twin Cities, she also hopes to volunteer at Fairview Hospital and the Science Museum of Minnesota in the near future.