

RPCV Update

AN UPDATE FOR RPCVS AND FRIENDS OF THE PEACE CORPS

Winter 2003

A Message From the Director

Let us renew our commitment to work for peace.

The nation is at a turning point in its history. President Bush recently said, "We have glimpsed what a new culture of responsibility could look like. We want a nation that serves goals larger than self. We've been offered an opportunity; we must not let this moment pass." At the Peace Corps, we are responding to these words with a well-conceived plan to make the agency a world-class organization for the 21st century. Included in this plan are the following priorities:

- Expand recruitment efforts and increase the diversity of the Volunteer population
- Expand into new countries

- Explore new ideas
- Improve the Volunteer delivery system
- Provide high-quality programming and training support to overseas staff and Volunteers
- Use state-of-the-art technology to communicate and share knowledge

Never in the history of our nation has the mission of the Peace Corps—the pursuit of world peace and friendship—been more important.

Gaddi H. Vasquez

Online Library Brings Agency Resources to a Wider Audience

The Peace Corps' new online library is a resource for organizations and individuals working in international and domestic community development. Anyone can access training manuals and other resources developed by the agency to train and support Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and host nation partners by downloading them from the Peace Corps website.

Among the resources that may be of interest to community development workers are materials on working in communities with diverse cultures, on teaching English to speakers of other languages, on managing volunteer programs, and on planning for disaster prevention and mitigation. Check out all the library's offerings at www.peacecorps.gov/library.



Director Vasquez visits Afghanistan, 2002



Message From the Director
page 1



Online Library
page 1



Recruitment
page 2



In Other News...
page 2



Safety and Security
page 3



RPCVs in the News
page 3



The Back Page
page 4

We are at a turning point in our history.

Recruitment

The face of America has changed dramatically over the past 40 years as the nation has become more diverse. In step with this change, the Peace Corps has set a high priority on expanding the number of Volunteers and staff who reflect America's diversity. Diversity among Volunteers working overseas demonstrates America's pluralism and helps dispel harmful stereotypes about Americans.

Vital to the success of increasing the agency's diversity are efforts to increase the number of Volunteers beyond college age. The agency is actively seeking prospective Volunteers among married couples, seniors, and retirees, encouraging these groups to consider devoting two years of service to the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps has ambitious goals, and it needs your help in these

"A spirit of sacrifice and service gave birth to the Peace Corps more than 40 years ago. We needed the Peace Corps then, and we need the Peace Corps today."

*President George W. Bush
February 15, 2002*

efforts, especially recruiting. You can become more engaged in Peace Corps activities by participating at the local level to raise the visibility of the agency nationwide. You have already helped immensely in so many ways, but there is much more you can do.

To contact the Peace Corps regional office in your area, call the agency's main number at 800.424.8580.

New Recruitment Initiatives

The office of Volunteer Recruitment and Selection is developing two initiatives that have the potential to increase the Peace Corps' Volunteer force significantly. The first is to create "storefront" recruiting sites in selected cities around the country. The new sites will be located in cities that are far from the existing regional offices and could benefit from better Peace Corps visibility. The hope is that the new storefront offices will allow for greater community outreach as well as a regular presence at educational institutions in the selected cities.

The second initiative is to collaborate with community colleges in recruitment of Volunteers. This initiative aims to increase the agency's visibility at selected community college campuses through targeted marketing of Peace Corps opportunities. The agency is also considering the possibility of offering those with A.A. or A.S. degrees an opportunity to earn a B.A. or B.S. through Peace Corps service in a program modeled on the Fellows/USA and Master's International programs.



*Education Volunteer
Edy Kouri (Malawi, 2001)*

Peace Corps Reauthorization

The Peace Corps is working closely with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the House International Relations Committee to achieve bicameral and bipartisan support for a five-year reauthorization of the agency during the 108th Congress.



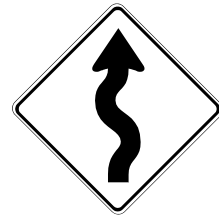
*President Kennedy shakes hands with
Volunteers in the Rose Garden, 1961*

In other
news...

The 'Center' Reorganizes

The Center for Field Assistance and Applied Research has been reorganized to create a new division, the Overseas Training Division. The new division is made up of the Training and Staff Development Unit, the Short Term Assistance Unit, and the Staging Unit. Mary Killeen will serve as the division's chief. This reorganization reflects the continued importance of training in the growth and strengthening of the Peace Corps' programs. Moving the Staging Unit from Volunteer Recruitment and Selection to the Overseas Training Division will more closely align staging content and events with other agency trainings.

Safety and Security in an Unpredictable World



Just how safe is it to be a Volunteer? The Peace Corps has substantially enhanced safety and security procedures over the past eight months.

The United States is part of a global community that is facing increasing risks. A country anywhere in the world can suddenly and quickly become a dangerous place to be. Given this environment, many people understandably are asking, How safe is it to be a Peace Corps Volunteer nowadays? The Peace Corps is examining this question closely and has substantially enhanced its safety and security procedures over the past eight months. Ensuring the safety and security of Volunteers is clearly fundamental to our mission.

In today's unpredictable world, it is also imperative to educate Volunteers to conduct themselves in the safest possible manner. While the Peace Corps is unable to design or

build a perfect safety system, it is doing everything possible to ensure that all Volunteers have the knowledge and tools to serve safely.

One recent example of our successful efforts in this area is the rapid relocation of Volunteers from Côte d'Ivoire to Ghana in September 2002 as rebels seized Bouake, Côte d'Ivoire's second-largest city, and Korhogo, dividing the country into government- and rebel-held zones. Using its emergency action plan, Peace Corps/Côte d'Ivoire quickly and safely moved all 133 Volunteers in the country to Accra, Ghana, without experiencing any incidents of violence against Volunteers. The program in Côte d'Ivoire has since been suspended.

Highlights of the New Safety and Security Plan

The Peace Corps has implemented a new safety and security plan.

As of July 1, 2002, staging for trainees was extended to two days in order to devote an entire day to safety and security issues.

Another part of the plan is to centralize safety and security communications, compliance, and support.

Seven regional safety and security officers are to be headquartered in each of the regions to provide country-specific training and support.

Each country is required to have in place an updated emergency action plan that can be implemented quickly and strategically.

RPCVs in the News

A New Governor for Wisconsin

Newly elected Democratic Governor **Jim Doyle** of Wisconsin (RPCV Tunisia 1968-70) is the second returned Volunteer currently serving as a governor. Jim Doyle and his wife, Jessica, served together as teachers in the north African country of Tunisia after they graduated from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Referring to the couple's Peace Corps service, Jessica Doyle said, "It changes your perspective and makes you realize we have so much."

Jim Doyle has followed in the family tradition of public service to improve the lives of others. In addition

to his previous elected positions of Wisconsin attorney general and district attorney, Doyle worked as an attorney in a federally funded legal services office on the Navajo Indian Reservation in Chinle, Arizona.

Until the recent midterm elections, Republican Governor Bob Taft of Ohio (RPCV Tanzania 1963-65) was the only returned Volunteer currently serving as a state governor.

New RPCV Country Director

Kristin and David Besch have lived far from their home in Georgia since Kris began her tour as country director in Kazakhstan in April 2002. Kris

and her husband, Dave, both served as Peace Corps Volunteers in Swaziland from 1982 to 1984. Their three children—Brianna, Jay, and Joelle—accompanied them to Kazakhstan.

According to Kris Besch, one big adjustment the family has made is going from having two cars in the United States to having none in Kazakhstan. They are relying on public transportation instead.



Bulletin: Peace Corps Day 2003

February 2003

Dear Returned Peace Corps Volunteer:

I welcome the opportunity to thank you in advance for your participation in Peace Corps Day 2003. Your continued commitment to the ideals and goals of the Peace Corps is vital to the building of goodwill and the promotion of world peace. Your spirit of volunteerism serves as a testimonial to the important work that more than 168,000 returned Peace Corps Volunteers have performed since 1961.

Today, there are Volunteers serving overseas in 70 countries in such diverse fields as education, health and HIV/AIDS, information technology, business development, the environment, and agriculture.

As an RPCV, you can continue to support today's Peace Corps by carrying out third goal activities. There are many ways you can participate in Peace Corps Day. You could encourage your local newspaper to write a story about your experiences in the Peace Corps or you could write a letter to the editor sharing information about your experiences in the Peace Corps and *(cont'd)*

There are many ways you can participate in Peace Corps Day...

Stay
connected.

The RPCVUpdate is a free newsletter for returned Peace Corps Volunteers. *In the near future, the Update will be available only in an electronic format.* To continue to receive the Update, please fill in the following information, detach the card, and drop it in the mail. You may also put this information in the body of an e-mail message and send it to the database manager at rpcvupdate@peacecorps.gov. Please put "RPCVUpdate" in the subject line.

**E-mail
Address** _____

Name

First _____

MI _____

Last _____

Address

City _____

State _____ **ZIP** _____

Country of Service

Phone

(home) _____

(work) _____

Date of Birth _____

Dates of Service _____

Privacy Act Notice:

The collection of this information is authorized by provisions of the Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501, et seq.). Information will be used to involve former Volunteers in agency affairs, recruitment, and to keep addresses for informational mailings. Providing information is voluntary.

Fill out and send in this
reply card, or log on to
the website:

[www.peacecorps.gov/
rpcv/records](http://www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/records)

**Has any of your contact
information changed?**

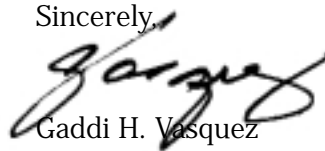
Bulletin: Peace Corps Day 2003

encouraging others to consider Peace Corps service. I encourage you to tell your stories in classrooms, libraries, places of worship, community centers, and the workplace in order to strengthen the ability of Americans to better understand the world. You might also want to participate in one of the events being organized around the country by Peace Corps recruiting offices and returned Volunteer "alumni" groups.

In addition to participation in Peace Corps Day activities, individuals, schools, service organizations, religious groups, and returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups can help support the Peace Corps' mission through the Peace Corps Partnership Program. Tax-deductible gifts have helped build community centers and classrooms and have provided funding to small-scale entrepreneur groups to improve farming and handicrafts initiatives in countries world-wide. If you would like to learn more about how to contribute to the Peace Corps Partnership Program, please visit our website at www.peacecorps.gov/contribute.

Once again, thank you for your continuing commitment to the Peace Corps. I am proud to be a part of such a fine and distinguished organization.

Sincerely,



Gaddi H. Vasquez
Director

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The Back Page

“Building Bridges” Launch

The Peace Corps, in conjunction with the National Geographic Society Education Foundation, has recently published a new curriculum resource, *Building Bridges: A Peace Corps Classroom Guide to Cross-Cultural Understanding*. The lessons in this book:

- Help students better understand their own culture and how it has shaped them.
- Help students begin to understand the perspectives of other cultures, leading to increased respect for those who are different from them—in the classroom and worldwide.
- Provide students with an increased awareness of the value and practicality of social service within and beyond the bounds of school.

The book takes the Peace Corps’ expertise in preparing Volunteers to live and work effectively in other cultures and applies it to the cultural challenges posed by the increased diversity of America’s classrooms. A formal launch of the book took place January 27, 2003.



Peace Corps Day

The executive order establishing the Peace Corps was signed on March 1, 1961, and each year on or close to March 1, thousands of returned Peace Corps Volunteers commemorate the agency’s anniversary by sharing the knowledge and insights they gained from their overseas experiences with their home communities. On February 28, 2003, RPCVs will honor 42 years of Peace Corps service. This is your opportunity to promote a better understanding of the people of your host country among the people of your current community. Sign up to participate today. Online registration is available on the Peace Corps website at www.peacecorps.gov. You can also visit the Peace Corps Day website for ideas, suggestions, and resources for help in setting up your presentation and sharing your experiences. If you have any questions, please e-mail Domestic Programs at pccday@peacecorps.gov or call 800.424.8580 (press 2, then extension 1961).



Visit the Peace Corps Day section of the website: www.peacecorps.gov/rpcv/peacecorpsday

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