



Fellows

NEWS ABOUT PEACE CORPS FELLOWS / USA

Teaching Fellow's Lifelong Relationship With the Peace Corps Began at 17

By Gina Wynn



Jim Burkett (l) shows his students how to extract DNA from slices of a banana.

Back in 1962, at an age when most teens are thinking about the prom, graduation parties, or what it will be like living hours from their parents when they go away to college, Ohioan Jim Burkett was going through Peace Corps training in Montana and Puerto Rico and acquainting himself with Ecuador, his host country to be.

With special authorization from President Kennedy allowing him to serve at age 17, Burkett served his Peace Corps tour helping improve the

local agricultural economy and teaching English in the evenings. Because of his experience working on his father's Clyde, Ohio farm and his involvement with Future Farmers of America, he was well prepared for his assignment. More details about his overseas experience appear in the May 1963 issue of *Seventeen* magazine. Nearly 40 years later, after completing active duty in Vietnam, earning his associate's degree, working as a systems engineer, rejoining the Army, then

retiring in 1992 as a first sergeant, he decided once again to get involved with the Peace Corps.

His Peace Corps service "was a long time ago but seems like yesterday," said Burkett. "The information gets into your mind and leaves an imprint that's unbelievable."

He enrolled in the Fellows/USA teacher education program at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). After earning a bachelor's degree in "[Burkett](#)" continued on next page

Fellow Aids Pittsburgh Youth and Homeless

By Brian Goercke
Fellow, Duquesne
University



Brian Goercke (top row, center) poses with his students at Matsine Secondary School in Zimbabwe.

My Peace Corps service has proved to be the perfect bridge to Duquesne University's Fellows/USA program in Pittsburgh. As a Peace Corps Fellow with the Graduate Center for Social and Public Policy, I can build upon the hands-on skills I learned in the Peace Corps by combining extremely relevant internship experiences. This provides a healthy balance between theoretical and practical knowledge.

Because of Duquesne's flexibility in the types of

internships available for Fellows, my internship has allowed me to continue the type of work I was involved with during my Peace Corps experience. In Zimbabwe, I worked with at-risk children from a homeless shelter and with children and young adults living on the streets. In Pittsburgh, I work with at-risk children in an after-school program. I also participate in outreach work for the city's homeless population.

For Community Human Services' after-school program, I provide one-to-one

tutorial assistance to children and participate in sports and other recreational activities with them. I also arrange cultural diversity activities by coordinating discussion groups led by Duquesne students from around the world. Discussion leaders have included students from Kenya and Russia, who spoke to the children about their countries' customs, culture, economy, wildlife, and history. I plan to continue this very successful activity in the future. In addition, I have contacted embassies, local libraries, and other institutions in an attempt to procure

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natural science, which, combined with teaching credentials would make him extremely marketable, he decided to pursue a career in teaching.

“The best part of the [Peace Corps] experience was working with the people,” said Burkett. “In the evenings I formed English classes. That’s where I found it extremely satisfying to be a teacher.”

Because he is an RPCV and was already planning to obtain a master’s degree, he said that his entry into UTEP’s Fellows/USA program made sense. His master’s studies are in the geochemistry area of the environmental sciences, with a focus on nuclear waste disposal. His minor is in education. Burkett is currently finishing the requirements for teacher certification. For his internship, he teaches high school biology and chemistry to at-risk youth at Tejas

School of Choice in El Paso’s Ysleta School District. The students are mostly Hispanic and from 17 to 20 years old.

“Tejas is an alternative school where the majority of kids are generally those who lost credit in their regular high schools because of truancy,” said Burkett. “Through strict discipline we are able to get them graduated. We cover the material in half the time.”

The students also have the advantage of small class sizes of between eight and 17. One way Burkett captures their attention is by organizing interesting experiments like extracting DNA from bananas.

“When you’re able to come down to their level and reteach and reteach and talk,” said Burkett, “the kids really like that. At a regular high school, the teacher says something once and the students have to catch it,” he added.

Burkett describes his students as “very proud kids.” “They respect those who really want to help them. When you show them how serious you are about making them become successful, they do the work.”

He also attributes his success with his students to his ability to relate to their situations. “They don’t know how to apply themselves. I see myself in those kids when I was their age,” said Burkett. “I was active in track, band, and baseball, but agriculture was what I was really interested in. Academic subjects were the least of my desires.”

He now realizes the importance of academics and plans to continue teaching at Tejas School of Choice after he completes his fellowship. “I’ll stay at my current school for five or six years and then I’ll retire,” he said.

Peace Corps Fellows/USA

Fellows newsletter is mailed to Peace Corps Fellows and alumni, Fellows/USA program coordinators, community partners, and domestic and overseas Peace Corps staff.

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Fellows is a publication of the Peace Corps. Views expressed in *Fellows* are those of the individual writers and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Peace Corps. Use of funds for printing this publication has been approved by the U.S. government’s Office of Management and Budget.

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reading materials for the program’s library.

In my outreach work, I accompany a group of four who travel to various parts of the city to locate homeless individuals. Once we identify them, we try to engage these individuals and help place them in shelters or treatment programs. In one case, I used the Internet to contact the family of a homeless person, at his request, to let them know of his whereabouts and to assure them that he was doing well.

There are several other benefits to Duquesne’s

Fellows/USA program. First, students are given wide latitude in selecting topics for their thesis projects. Faculty members encourage students to choose topics in their anticipated occupations. For those interested in obtaining greater knowledge of a particular social issue, the process of establishing a solid thesis project can be quite rewarding.

Another benefit of this program is that the policy center attracts many international students. Graduate students have an opportunity to become familiar with individuals of diverse cultural

backgrounds. After spending three years in Zimbabwe, I found that I really missed being around African people. During the past semester, I’ve become friends with students from Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana, and Sierra Leone. I also met an instructor from Zimbabwe at the policy center.

Even though the combination of working and studying can be fairly demanding, I have adjusted well to this program. So far, my participation in Duquesne’s Fellows/USA program has been a rewarding experience.

Persistent Postal Service Changes a Life Former Engineer Discovers Niche in Nonprofits

I returned home and picked up the mail my roommate had set on the table. As I flipped through it, not really expecting anything, a letter from Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, caught my eye. It made me chuckle because it had five forwarding addresses on it—those little yellow labels the post office uses when you file a change of address.

I had been back from Cameroon for about nine months and was still in culture shock. My transition to being a science teacher in Cameroon from my job as an engineer at the Ford Motor Company had been pretty smooth, but coming back to reality in the United States left me in quite a funk. I just kept walking around thinking, “Is this it?” Sure, I had bought the cell phone and car and had a “good” job, but wasn’t there more to life? I was in denial that my job in Livonia, Michigan, was my life.

Fate seemed to catch up with me when I opened the letter heavy with yellow labels. It was information about Marquette’s Fellows/USA program. Although at first I dismissed the letter—after all, I wasn’t the type of student who received scholarships—I did notice that the application deadline was only two days away.

The next day at work, I kept thinking of that letter and how it had amazingly found me, tracking my wanderings over

the past nine months. My curiosity got the better of me, and I called the school to ask about the deadline. Much to my surprise, I was given an extension. Suddenly, in the midst of a directionless life, a path opened.

It wasn’t until I had been accepted into Marquette’s Fellows/USA program (known locally as the Trinity Fellows Program) that I realized that it was a great deal. The program is a 21-month study-work program dedicated to developing urban leaders with a commitment to community service. While engaged in full-time graduate study, I would work at an area nonprofit 18 hours a week for two academic years and 40 hours a week during the summer. I would get paid \$1,200 a month, my tuition would be waived, and there was no commitment after graduation! All I had to do was contribute \$1,250 each semester. I moved to Milwaukee and started the program a few months later. Now, as I write this, I’m a few months away from graduation. The program has far exceeded any expectations I had when applying.

My work experience has been fantastic! I’m the director of program development at the Badger Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired. In this position I create new programs to serve the needs of the blind and visually impaired in the community and improve existing programs and services. The position has

been a great fit with the breadth of education in Marquette’s M.B.A. program. It has allowed me to work in almost all areas of the organization, often building upon ideas presented in the classroom.

The wide scope of managerial experience has prepared me well for a future leadership role in or out of the nonprofit sector, but my two favorite aspects of the program are the camaraderie I share with the other six Fellows and the flexibility of the program. Upon first meeting the other Fellows, I felt at home. Our common thread of extensive community service and the fellowship bound us. The other Fellows tended to share more of my beliefs and attitudes about society than most people, something I longed for after returning to the States. The flexibility I have in my schedule has been wonderful. While for weeks at a time I’m constantly running among work, class, and studies, just when I’ve had enough, a lull comes and I get away for a few days, which always seems to make all the difference.

I don’t know if this program is the answer to my question “Is this it?” but it has definitely helped focus my life and provide a sound basis to build upon. I am much more optimistic about the future than when I returned from Cameroon, and I look forward to a future in nonprofit management.

By Scott Blunk
Fellow, Marquette University



Fellow Scott Blunk (l) introduced Rosy Goodrich and guide-dog, Feather, to Director of the Peace Corps’ Office of Domestic Programs Allene Zanger (r), when Zanger visited Blunk’s office at the Badger Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired in Milwaukee.

PROGRAM UPDATES

D.C. Students Learn in Two Languages

By Sarah Crites

Fellow, George Mason University



George Mason University Fellows from left to right: Joanna Newton, Sean Stevenson, Amy McCue, Wendy Lechner, Joanne Gossens, Sarah Crites, and Jeff Nesmith. Not pictured: Janeen Carrigan, Amy Franklin, and Michelle McNally.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer in Honduras from 1998 to 2000, I faced a steady stream of questions about life in the United States that was as much a part of my daily life as rice and beans. But as time went on and my Spanish improved, the questions from my Honduran friends and colleagues turned to language. It seemed the question on everyone's mind was why it was so easy for foreigners in Honduras to learn Spanish while English was so difficult for so many Hondurans, even though they had been studying it for years.

Many of us who served in the Peace Corps, regardless of where, can easily answer this question. The combination of intensive language training and complete cultural immersion that Volunteers go through is what enabled us to become fluent in the languages of our host countries.

The system for English instruction in the United States is not quite as user-friendly for speakers of other languages as the Peace Corps way is. Wouldn't it be wonderful if every newcomer to the United States were provided three months of intensive language instruction and cultural immersion? But because this is not our system, it is important to acknowledge and appreciate the difficulty of language acquisition within the framework of current education policies.

Currently, most nonnative speakers learn English through the method of ESL, or English as a second language. In most schools, ESL involves some classroom immersion, along with individual and small-group tutorials. Since the 1970s, there has been much debate as to whether ESL is the most effective format for language learning. Although it is unlikely

that most new immigrants in the United States will be introduced to Peace Corps-style intensive English instruction, there is a middle ground that is both realistic and effective: bilingual education.

When I returned from my Peace Corps service, I was interested in pursuing a field of study that would draw from my recent experience with language acquisition in Honduras and my growing interest in bilingual education. Eventually, I hoped to put my experience to use by working with multilingual students in the United States. After some research, I realized that the Fellows/USA program at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, was the perfect way to build on my experience while earning a master's in multicultural education and an elementary teaching certification. At George Mason, courses are geared for

["Crites" continued on next page](#)

Adapted from the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing newsletter



Johns Hopkins University Fellow (l) Katie Church shares a diversity brochure with School of Nursing faculty member Julie Hindmarsh.



Johns Hopkins University Fellow Maia Holden (r) discusses diversity with an unidentified program attendee.

School of Nursing Hosts Cultural Diversity Week

Entering the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing (SON) was like stepping into a different world during its recent "Honoring Cultural Diversity Week." The fall event, which featured a series of activities focusing on culture and diversity, was sponsored by Peace Corps Fellows, the school's Cultural Competency and Diversity Committee, and the Faculty Welfare and Development Committee.

According to Fellows/USA coordinator Lori Edwards, chair of the event and of the Cultural Competency and Diversity Committee, the idea for the event grew out of the strong interest in culture and diversity expressed at a School of Nursing retreat, and from the

Fellows/USA program's desire to offer this type of activity. Each year the school's Cultural Competency and Diversity Committee holds a workshop focusing on culture and diversity as part of a grant.

"After the retreat this summer, it became clear the SON could benefit from expanding the workshop to include several fun, informative, and educational activities that highlight and celebrate the diversity within our own school."

The event gave the SON faculty and students—many of them Fellows—an opportunity to share their culturally diverse experiences of living and working abroad through slide presentations, posters, and

displays including photographs, souvenirs, and health-related information from various countries. Cultural treats included African drumming, tea from Mongolia, and coffee from Central and South America. Also, nationally renowned diversity expert Sharon Fries-Britt, Ph.D., led a workshop titled "Understanding the Complexities of Culture and Diversity in the School of Nursing."

The next step for the committee, said Edwards, will be to review the ideas and suggestions discussed in the workshop breakout groups and make recommendations for plans within the SON to address cultural diversity.

“Crites” continued from previous page

people who plan to teach either internationally or with diverse U.S. populations. Course work is supplemented with classroom observations conducted throughout the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area. For my field experience, I was placed in a setting that matched my interests perfectly: a two-way, Spanish-English bilingual elementary school that allowed me to continue to use my Spanish while working with multicultural populations.

Established in 1971 by a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, Oyster Bilingual Elementary School in Northwest Washington has steadily maintained its place as one of the nation’s oldest and most respected bilingual public education programs. It has stood the test of time despite dwindling support for bilingual education, largely due to its students’ exceptional performance, but also due to its

widespread support among staff and families.

At Oyster, I spent a semester primarily observing, assisting, and at times conducting lessons in a fourth-grade bilingual classroom led by two experienced educators. While I learned a tremendous amount about teaching styles from my mentor teachers, I was also able to observe firsthand the unequivocal success of bilingual education. At Oyster, each pre-kindergarten through sixth-grade class is team-taught by an English teacher and a Spanish teacher.

The school day flows smoothly from one subject to the next, alternating English instruction with Spanish instruction. The most amazing part is watching the students learn. The majority of the students enter Oyster in pre-kindergarten, and speaking and learning in English and Spanish come so naturally to

them that they can shift gears from one language to the other without hesitation. As the majority of Oyster students are Latino and live in families with limited English, they are afforded an opportunity that is invaluable, but disappointingly rare. At any bilingual school, students can feel comfortable using their native language but also are able to use it to make connections with instruction in English. Seeing how rapidly and effectively these children learn both Spanish and English makes me realize how truly fortunate they are, especially compared with the countless nonnative speakers of English throughout the country whose needs are not being met in other types of programs.

It is clear that Oyster’s system, and other bilingual education programs, work. For years, Oyster students have maintained the highest reading scores on standardized tests in the D.C.

public school system. The school’s popularity becomes clear every spring when hundreds of parents line up outside the school days in advance to register their children for the following school year. Despite the clear need and demand for bilingual education, however, the opposition it has faced since the 1970s makes its future largely uncertain.

My graduate education through Fellows/USA has provided an effective framework for learning about instructional methods from my professors and then seeing the practical application with actual students in a multicultural setting. I plan to continue working with culturally and linguistically diverse students and—who knows?—maybe even open my own bilingual school one day.

Fellow Alumni: Where Are They Now?

Alumnus Applies Teaching Skills to Business

The Fellows/USA program at Teachers College, Columbia University, augmented my Peace Corps teaching experiences in Nepal and helped me appreciate the value of teacher education. During the two short years I was in New York from 1990 to 1992, I went from a scared young man considering the possibilities of a career as a bus driver (to avoid the challenges of classroom management) to thinking about becoming an administrator at a U.S. school where I could implement some of the positive things that I learned in Nepal and Teachers College.

After I completed the Fellows/USA program, I taught in rural

South Carolina for four years. The Peace Corps and Teachers College prepared me well for the experience and I gained even more valuable knowledge from my associations with the dedicated teachers at the school.

Then, during the dot-com boom of the '90s, I received an offer I could not refuse to work as a technologist at a start-up company. It was after much deliberation that I decided to leave the teaching profession—where I could make a difference in people’s lives—for the financial security of the technology industry. After a year, I decided to start my own venture and founded Professional Network Consultants,

Inc., a technology company in Charlotte, North Carolina. Although it was a financially sound choice, I sometimes miss teaching.

I find, however, that while training new employees, I use the knowledge of learning styles that I gained at Teachers College. When I first received a compliment on my teaching abilities, I realized the effects the Peace Corps, Teachers College, and the Fellows/USA program had had on my life. But ironically, the compliment was not for my role as an educator but for my role as the president and CEO of a million-dollar-plus company!

By Jeffrey Gaura
Fellows/USA Alumnus,
Teachers College,
Columbia University



Teachers College, Columbia University Alumnus
Jeffrey Gaura and family

Alumna Inspires With Peace Corps Stories

By **Laura A. Masko**
 Fellows/USA Alumna, San Francisco State University

Peace Corps Helps RPCVs Work Abroad

The Peace Corps' Short Term Assistance Unit (STAU) provides trainers for pre-service trainings when requested by a Peace Corps overseas post. To identify trainers, the STAU maintains a database of potential short-term contractors and actively recruits new candidates. In addition to sending contractors overseas, the STAU assists offices in need of qualified short-term contractors for other positions that involve organizing workshops and in-service trainings and conducting program evaluations. Qualified candidates have to have extensive adult training experience in overseas locations.

Contractors are compensated at a daily rate based on their relevant salary history and work experience in conjunction with the established compensation range for the position. Additionally, insurance, immunizations, travel costs, and a small per diem are usually provided.

For more information on how to apply and a list of current positions, refer to www.peacecorps.gov/employment/overseas/contract/index.cfm.

On a whim, I decided to go to Paris for five days because my passport was expiring and the ticket was \$400. The decision meant leaving my high school students alone with a substitute for four school days at the beginning of March. Going to Paris was hardly a sacrifice, but I did feel guilty about the time I was spending away from my class. I believe, however, it is important for teachers to go out and get inspired so that they can in turn inspire. I also planned to use the trip for writing and reflecting. Coincidentally, my passport had first been stamped in Paris 10 years earlier when I had undertaken my first travel adventure on my own at age 19.

Peace Corps Day fell on the Friday before I was to fly to Paris. I walked into the classroom in my *sawar kamese* (traditional Thai women's outfit of pants and long tunic top) with a beaded *bindi* (red dot married Hindu women wear in the middle of their foreheads), a sticky-rice basket in my arm, my *pasin* (a garment similar to a sarong worn around women's waists), my Thai amulets, and good luck charms. This Peace Corps

Day, I was going to teach my students about traveling. I said, "Today, I am sharing a personal part of myself. Today, I am not Ms. Masko, I am 'Ajaan Lola,' and I am your guest speaker. I am here to speak on the virtues of travel."

As a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand, I was known as Ajaan Lola—*Ajaan* (title of respect given to teachers, trainers, etc.) because I was a teacher to students in a rural village in north-central Thailand, *Lola* because my Thai students and neighbors could not pronounce my first name, Laura, and they called me Lola instead. This alternate identity illuminated the magic within me.

As *Ajaan Lola* back in California, I taught my American students about Thai culture, my total immersion, Peace Corps-style language lessons, and my favorite travel destination, India. At the end of my presentation, I showed the Peace Corps video *You Can Make a Difference*.

While watching the video, I was surprised to see that it featured my high school friend

speaking about his Peace Corps experience. It was extraordinary because I had no idea that he too had joined the Peace Corps after we had finished school in Portugal. After expressing my delight, I told my students that somehow the Peace Corps keeps connecting me with others.

This added to my enthusiasm about being *Ajaan Lola* again for the day and made Peace Corps Day very special. By sharing my Peace Corps experience with my students and discussing the benefits of seeing the world and learning about other cultures, I was able to explain to them why I would soon be leaving for another adventure. I was able to assure my students that it was worthwhile for me to go.

As a former Peace Corps Fellow and an aspiring writer, I have just written my first of many pieces about my Peace Corps experience. It has been seven years since I was first inspired to write about it. This trip to Paris and Peace Corps Day have reawakened the stories inside me.

Fellows/USA Visits Program Sites

Fellows/USA staff visited the following Fellows/USA programs during the 2002 fall and the 2003 spring semesters. Starting in the American Southwest, they met with program partners and Fellows at **Arizona State University, Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona, University of Texas at El**

Paso, and Western New Mexico University.

In America's heartland, programs at **Illinois State University, Marquette University, Michigan Technological University, University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee, and Wichita State University** were visited.

In other regions, Fellows/USA staff visited **George Mason University, University of New Orleans, and Southern New Hampshire University.**

The purpose of the visits is for staff to measure "customer" satisfaction and assist programs in areas such as marketing and community partner relations.

Survey Says Fellows Chose Universities for Courses, Financial Aid, and Location

Fellows/USA recently replicated a survey of its alumni first done in 1997 under the terms of the Peace Corps' Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds grant. To the 898* surveys delivered in fall of 2002, there was a response rate of 16.1 percent. Most of the respondents were education Fellows (108), while the remainder (36) represented community and economic development programs. In 1997, when only education Fellows were surveyed, 214 of 578 alumni responded for a rate of 37 percent.

According to the 2002 survey, the top five reasons Fellows gave for selecting their programs, from highest to lowest, were the availability of degrees or certification in their areas of interest, the amount of financial assistance offered, the location, program staff responsiveness to inquiries, and the population served by the program. Education alumni and community and economic development alumni differed in their reasons for selecting their programs, however. Education alumni ranked job assurance in the top five (it was number nine for community and economic development alumni) and ranked responsiveness to inquiries at number six. Community and economic development alumni ranked the starting date of the program and salary and stipend at number four, and the reputation of the university at number five. The population served by the program

and the location were not in the top five but were ranked sixth and seventh, respectively, for these alumni. The 1997 survey showed that Fellows selected their programs based on location (22 percent), amount of financial assistance (16 percent), courses or certification offered (12 percent), reputation of the university (11 percent), and job assurance (10 percent).

Although getting a degree and receiving financial assistance were the main reasons the 2002 respondents became Fellows, they were also motivated to serve: 72 percent wanted to work in underserved schools or communities in the United States, 53 percent wanted to continue Peace Corps service "at home," and 45 percent wanted to fulfill the third goal of the Peace Corps.

In judging the programs they attended, 83 percent of 2002 respondents rated them "excellent/superior" or "very good," compared with 44 percent in 1997; 15 percent rated them "average," compared with 38 percent in 1997; and 1 percent rated them "poor," compared with 2 percent in 1997. The 2002 respondents cited course work, other Fellows, and career or job experience as the most positive aspects of the programs. The most disappointing aspects of the program were program administration, course work, and costs or finances.

In 2002, 85 percent of alumni said their current position is

related to their experience in their Fellows/USA programs. Eighty-nine percent of community and economic development alumni are working in community service. In 1997, 91 percent were in education or community service. Eighty-five percent of 2002 education respondents hold positions in education or community service (82 percent are teaching or hold another position in education).

Among the 2002 group, 47 percent had teaching experience in the United States prior to their Peace Corps service, and 84 percent taught as Peace Corps Volunteers. In 1997, the figures were 43 percent and 80 percent, respectively. The three most difficult problems both 1997 and 2002 respondents have encountered as teachers in the United States are administration and bureaucracy (cited by 50 in 2002 and 58 in 1997); student problems like motivation, attitude, and readiness (cited by 34 in 2002 and 56 in 1997); and discipline and classroom management (cited by 27 in 2002 and 60 in 1997).

According to the 2002 survey, 81 percent of education alumni feel they have improved the overall learning environment in the schools where they have worked or have made positive contributions to their communities. This percentage could not be compared with 1997 figures because of insufficient data.

A complete report of the survey results will be distributed to program coordinators.

*Please note that Fellows/USA is lacking valid addresses for 328 of its alumni. If you know any Fellows/USA alumni who have moved since they were enrolled in the program, please have them contact the Fellows/USA office with their correct addresses.

AmeriCorps Deadlines

For coordinators interested in applying for AmeriCorps funding, Education Award eGrant submission deadlines are May 8 and November 5. The National award eGrant submission deadline is April 15. Visit www.americorps.org for complete information, application forms, instructions, and submission requirements.

Author, Educator Visits Fellow's Class

Adapted from www.tc.columbia.edu/newsbureau/ and the [Peace Corps Fellows Times](#) by Teachers College, Columbia University.

Noted author and educator Jonathan Kozol visited the classroom of Teachers College, Columbia University Fellow Greg Hesse, at New York City's Martin Luther King High School in October, prior to Kozol's appearance as Teachers College's 2002 Virginia and Leonard Marx Lecturer.

His many publications—including *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*; *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*; and *Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro Children in the Boston Public Schools*—draw upon his experiences learning about and working

with some of the country's poorest people in their schools, churches, and homeless centers. Intimately familiar with the hardships associated with teaching and learning in inner-city public schools, he has said, "Every Washington politician who talks about failures of our inner-city teachers ought to be obliged to spend a day in an inner-city school."

Kozol grew up in a suburb of Boston, graduated from Harvard University in 1958, and won a Rhodes Scholarship. According to an *Education World* article by Lois Lewis (available at www.education-world.com/a_issues/issues164.shtml), he decided that he wanted to be a

teacher after three young civil rights workers were killed in 1964. After teaching fourth graders for a year in an African-American section of Boston, he was fired for reading his class a poem by African-American writer Langston Hughes. He then taught at a suburban Boston school and was shocked by the differences between the two school districts.

During his visit to Hesse's class, Kozol observed and took notes on a group reading of the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Hesse (RPCV Poland 1999-2001) has also received other high-profile visitors to his classroom like New York Deputy Chancellor David Klasfeld and Manhattan Superintendent W.L. Sawyer.

Peace Corps Fellows/USA

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