



From the Office of Domestic Programs

Global Insights

MASTER'S INTERNATIONAL NEWS WINTER 2007

Peace Corps Welcomes New Director



Director Ron Tschetter

This past September, the Peace Corps welcomed its new director Ronald A. Tschetter. Director Tschetter is no stranger to the Peace Corps family. He is the third director in the Peace Corps' history to have served as a Volunteer. With

his wife, Nancy, he served from 1966–68 in India as a community health worker. After returning home, Director Tschetter worked in the financial securities industry for more than 30 years, gaining strong management and leadership skills throughout his distinguished career.

Prior to his Peace Corps appointment, Director Tschetter was the president of **D.A. Davidson & Co.** in Montana, the largest full-service investment firm based in the Northwest, a position he held for two and one-half years. Before that, he was president of the Private Client Group for **Dain Rauscher**, a position he held for 10 years until his retirement in 2001. Director Tschetter began his career in 1970 with Blyth Eastman Dillon Union Securities and joined Dain Rauscher in 1973.

Director Tschetter has received numerous awards in recognition of his public service. He has served on the **Securities Industry Association** sales and marketing committee and on the **New York Stock Exchange** Regional Firms advisory committee. He was chairman of the board of trustees of **Bethel University** (formerly Bethel College and Seminary) in St. Paul, MN; chairman of the board of **Daystar U.S.**, an affiliate of Daystar University in Nairobi, Kenya; and director of the **Community Bank Plymouth** in Minnesota. He also is a former chairman of the **National Peace Corps Association**.

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The Magic of Music

by Dorothy Biberman

Karaoke. Belizeans love karaoke. Many of them have their own machines, which they are all too willing to bust out for parties, or actually any time at all. There are even some local TV stations that air shows of people singing karaoke. A little while ago, we had a number of people over for dinner, and ended up singing at the tops of our lungs along to the music, late into the night. We live right below a family, our hosts, who have two daughters, ages 9 and 15. We were worried they would be upset about all the noise (I don't think it would be accurate to call it singing), but as it turns out they were just curious if we had a karaoke machine. The girls had wanted to come down, but felt too shy. Obviously, next time we'll need to invite them.

Recently, I was invited to a kids karaoke contest. The kids are members of My Neighbors and Me, a program that engages kids in the neighborhood in creative activities as an alternative to being on the street, joining gangs, and other not-so-healthy activities. It's sponsored by **UNICEF**, where my friend Karin works. Her colleague, who manages the program, asked if she would be a judge at the karaoke contest because she had been a judge at their last dance competition. I went along at the last minute, and also ended up being a judge.

The contest took place in a not very nice area of Belize City, in a tiny backyard. The judges' seats were three old armchairs behind a refrigerator turned on its side and covered in a tablecloth. Some flowers stood in a little vase on top of a doily in the center of the "table." They had built a stage and there were chairs for the neighborhood kids in the audience. The karaoke set-up was very high-tech with a webcam, huge speakers, and a microphone—all somewhat incongruous to the setting.

The event started an hour late, and with many technical difficulties. First there was a taped welcoming address from a young girl who had been elected queen of the group. The recording played while she took a few turns around the tiny open space in the backyard wearing a red robe and a crown, carrying a scepter, and waving regally with a huge, but shy, smile on her face. Although I couldn't understand any of the welcoming address, she was a vision.

Then the contest began. There were seven contestants and two rounds. I was in charge of judging how well contestants knew the lyrics; there was also a general performance score and a voice quality score. For some reason, many of

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Peace Corps Week 2007 Planning Resources Available Now

Have you started making plans to celebrate Peace Corps Week 2007? Would you like to do something, but don't know what—or how to begin? Regardless of where you are in the planning process, Peace Corps' Office of Domestic Programs has materials to help you.

The Peace Corps Week website at www.peacecorps.gov/pcweek is full of suggestions, tips, and ideas for celebrating the agency's anniversary. Whether you're a returned Volunteer or a friend of Peace Corps, it's easy to register online, request a presentation kit, and download fact sheets and other materials. If you have any questions, send an e-mail to pcweek@peacecorps.gov or call 800.424.8580, ext. 1961.





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Peace Corps 101: Adjusting to Life as a Volunteer

by Zac Dreaden

My training group arrived in Quito, Ecuador, on June 21, 2006, at eight o'clock at night. We were welcomed by 40 excited Peace Corps Volunteers yelling, "Peace Corps!" over and over again. The next day we left for Cayambe, the region where we would be living and training for the next nine weeks.

Each of us was assigned to a host family, with four or five Volunteers per village. The families' homes had been inspected before we arrived and the families given some instructions about food safety and such. Some had previously hosted Volunteers while others, such as my family, had never hosted a Volunteer. There were huge differences in the social and economic status among the various families. My family was poor, but I was very happy with my placement. They made me feel as if I was part of the family from the very beginning.

From the onset we were told to integrate ourselves into the community and spend as much time as possible with our host family. This wasn't easy, however, because much of our time was spent learning Spanish, in technical sessions, or in general meetings.

Peace Corps is known for having top-notch language training, so I was surprised by how little Spanish grammar instruction we were given. I have to admit, though, that I learned how to speak and understand more Spanish in nine weeks here in Ecuador than during seven months of classes in Spain. As for technical training, the Peace Corps concentrates on providing basic public health information as a way to address trainees' diverse skill sets.

I feel that it's necessary to at least mention the topic of diarrhea, which I had the opportunity to experience quite frequently. I am not sure whether or not I just had to get used to all of the foreign viruses and bacteria, but now that I am in my site, I have had no problems. I know of very few Volunteers who did not have similar problems during training, so I would highly recommend that anyone planning to become a Volunteer should mentally prepare for this.

The first week at my site was almost entirely consumed with preparing my apartment so that it was adequate for me to live in. The apartment was two concrete rooms that came with nothing but a toilet, a sink with running water, and a shower. Normally, if a Volunteer has a furnished apartment or lives with a family, the Peace Corps'



Zac Dreaden in Peru

settling-in allowance is more than enough. Since my situation was different, I had to use some of my own money. However, if I have a valid need I can contact the country office for assistance.

As for work, some Volunteers have very specific assignments that involve well-defined jobs; my assignment seems to be open and requires me to determine my role. Feeling unproductive or worrying that others view me as unproductive is an issue. At the moment, I feel that the best solution is to be at work Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Even if I do not have a defined job, I can at least get to know everyone and they will know that I am serious about my work and not just here for a vacation.

The Peace Corps recommends that my first two or three months at site be spent integrating into the community. I think that this is going to be my plan for now. I hope to get to a better level of Spanish before I give health presentations, plus I would like to better understand what the community really needs.

Communication is a major barrier and probably one of the most important factors affecting my success as a Volunteer. It goes hand-in-hand with cultural proficiency, which for me means that I seek to understand first and then be understood. Cultural proficiency really is about keeping an open mind to new ways of viewing life.

Zac is a global health master's candidate at the [University of South Florida](#) and the school's first MI student. He is assigned to Fundación para el Desarrollo Humano Sostenible Urbano y Rural, a public organization that works with the local hospital, youth groups from nearby schools, and the surrounding communities to promote good health practices.

Music

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Dorothy Biberman (left) with a friend in Belize

the girls—there was only one boy, and he got booted after the first round—sang Celine Dion. Sometimes it was painful, but mostly it was really enjoyable.

Even though the kids were nervous, they all got up on the stage. One little girl started crying and couldn't sing anything. A couple of the girls were pretty confident, strutting around, and playing it up for the judges. The applause was tremendous; it's amazing how much noise children can make. Plus, people from the neighborhood would stop by and hang out outside the gate shouting encouragement.

After the contest was over and the winners announced, music was turned on and all the kids started dancing. These kids could move; six-year-olds should not be able to dance like that! So they tried to teach us, which, of course, was quite funny. Karin, who is at least a head taller than all the kids, blond, Swedish, and crazy, started dancing like mad in the middle of the group. The kids all stopped and stared,

mouths sort of slack, looking at the crazy white gal.

I went home sweaty, smelly, and tired, with feet so badly bitten I had to ice them the next day—it was an absolutely fantastic night! It's amazing what can be accomplished when people are really dedicated to making a difference. All the politics and petty squabbling just seem to melt away when something goes well.

Dorothy is a student in the Master's International public health program at [George Washington University](#). She is assigned to the [Red Cross "Together We Can" project](#), a Caribbean and Central American regional project that promotes HIV/AIDS prevention awareness. Dorothy works with young peer educators, and with the monitoring and evaluation aspect of the project in [Belize](#).

Fifth Annual Graduate School Fair a Resounding Success



Meredith McDill (left), an RPCV from Chad and Director of Enrollment Services at the School for International Training, speaks with a graduate school fair attendee.



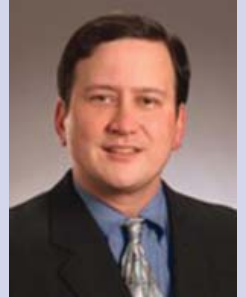
MI Panelists Vivian Nguyen (Rutgers University, Niger 2003-05) (left) and Jennifer Albee (University of Washington, Paraguay 2002-04) with Lynn Kneedler, Rosslyn Recruiting Office Manager (Tanzania 1965-67) (standing).

The Office of University Programs co-hosted the fifth annual graduate school fair on October 5 with the Peace Corps' [Mid-Atlantic Regional Recruiting Office](#) and [Returned Volunteer Services](#). The fair began with a panel discussion on graduate school selection, admissions, and funding. Panel members included program coordinators and staff from [American University](#), [George Washington University](#), and [Columbia University](#). A lively question-and-answer session featured six current and former students in the MI and Fellows/USA programs. The evening concluded with participants visiting exhibit booths staffed by representatives from 29 MI and Fellows/USA partner schools. The annual graduate school fair is one of the largest general information meetings presented by the Peace Corps. This year, 76 potential Volunteers and 48 RPCVs attended.

Where Are They Now?

Jason Julian, Belize (1991-93)

Jason grew up in Nebraska, but has spent most of his adult life in California. After getting a bachelor's degree in political economy from the [University of California at Berkeley](#), and a master's degree in public administration from the MI program at [Rutgers University](#), Jason spent four years in Washington, D.C., lobbying Congress for the [California State University](#) system.



In 1997, Jason spent four months with the [United Nations Volunteers](#) assisting with the post-civil war elections in Liberia. After coming home, he returned to California and earned his J.D. at [Hastings College of the Law](#) in San Francisco.

He currently practices commercial civil litigation in San Francisco with the firm [Foley & Lardner LLP](#). Jason has successfully litigated pro-bono cases, including one that involved racial profiling by police of African-American teenagers, and another where he represented a nonprofit school in a landlord-tenant dispute.

Jason's Peace Corps service as a physical education coordinator in a [Belize](#) primary school continues to impact his life in a variety of ways. He draws on his experiences when he coaches his son's soccer team, and also when he serves as an international election observer (in Bosnia and the Ukraine as well as Liberia). Married to a returned Volunteer who served in [Thailand](#) from 1988-90, Jason periodically speaks to school kids about his Peace Corps service.

Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world.

✪ Archbishop Desmond Tutu ✪

World Wise Schools Program Launches Peace Corps' First Ever Podcasts



Jordan Earl (front row, center) with fellow teachers in Tashkent

The Coverdell World Wise Schools program at the Peace Corps launched the agency's first podcast series, called *Volunteer Voices*, featuring stories written and read by Volunteers. In his podcast "A Day," Jordan Earl, an MI graduate of the *School for International Training*, recollects Uzbekistan's surprising diversity. "It would take many more than two years to decipher precisely what is what. Reminds me of how I feel when asked, 'Tell me about America....,'" says Jordan.

Users can hear the podcasts on the World Wise Schools' *Volunteer Voices* page and can subscribe to new ones as they become available through a variety of music software, including iTunes, MyYahoo!, Odeo, Juice, and others. A new *Volunteer Voices* podcast is distributed each Thursday at 9:00 a.m.

The World Wise Schools program has also unveiled its redesigned website at www.peacecorps.gov/wws. Volunteers can now ac-

cess information about *Correspondence Match*, which connects them with students in U.S. classrooms. Volunteers can also search through a lesson plan database by grade level, region, and subject area to find activities that support their education projects.

To complement the new website, the World Wise Schools program redesigned its monthly e-newsletter for educators, now titled *World Wise Window*. The first issue featured a series of stories and slide shows on disaster relief written and narrated by *Crisis Corps* Volunteers. Published on the first anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the issue included lesson plans on both hurricanes and tsunamis.

Coverdell World Wise Schools is named for former Peace Corps Director and late Senator Paul D. Coverdell. It creates award-winning classroom readings, lessons, and cross-cultural activities. All of its standards-based materials are free.

First Impressions: A Unique Community

by Jaala Thibault

On the third day of orientation for new students at *Monterey Institute of International Studies* (MIIS), my new friends and I were eating lunch at New Moon Chinese restaurant. Without being directed or prompted, we were having a conversation about variations in languages, shared words and pronunciations among languages and cultures of the world. Not only was our conversation unique, but our group represented five countries (Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Ukraine, and the United States) and everyone in the group had either lived or traveled abroad. We spoke more than 15 different languages. There were nine of us.

My first impression of MIIS is that it is a unique place. Here, I have friends from all over the world. The range in age, life experience, and interests is extremely diverse. Everyone has an interesting story to tell. As a returned Peace Corps Volunteer, I really value such an international community.

Professors at MIIS are an extension of the diverse student population. The range of teaching strategies, fields of expertise, and interests of the professors is amazing. In one of my classes, Principles and Practices of Language Teaching, the professor actually uses the principles and



practices that he is teaching on us. He does not lecture, but demonstrates practices and integrates us into the lesson. In my Language Teacher Supervision class we use case studies, role-playing, and peer teaching to discuss strategies, principles, and theories of supervision. In

Sociolinguistics we are studying non-standard varieties of English through song lyrics.

Opportunities at MIIS to become involved in the community also abound. There is a multitude of clubs, professional organizations, seminars, conferences, weekend workshops, and social events to attend during free time. There is even a Peace Corps Club that gives prospective and returned Volunteers an opportunity to share their experiences and gifts with the larger MIIS community.

The alumni network is another great resource at MIIS. Already, only three weeks into the semester, I have been introduced to an alumna from my home city. Next week I will observe her teaching a class at the City College there, then talk to her about career opportunities in our field.

Here at MIIS, it is my impression that we study and work in a welcoming, understanding, and innovative community. Professors and students are not separate entities, but colleagues. We all have something important to offer. Besides the time when I was a Peace Corps Volunteer, I have never been a part of such a unique community and I look forward to becoming more involved

Jaala served in *China* and *Micronesia*. In addition to being a student at MIIS, she works with the MI program helping candidates before they leave, while they are in the field, and when they return to complete their degrees.

New Director Continued from page 1

Director Tschetter succeeds Gaddi H. Vasquez, who was the Peace Corps' first Hispanic American director. Vasquez was sworn-in on September 7 by U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as the new U.S. Representative to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) of the United Nations in Rome.

Ambassador Vasquez began his tenure at the Peace Corps in 2002 and was the third longest serving director in the Peace Corps' 45-year history. Under his leadership, the Peace Corps reached a 30-year high in the number of Volunteers in the field. He directed the entry or re-entry into more than 20 countries, including the agency's newest program in [Cambodia](#), which will open in early 2007. Under his leadership, the agency established a unique Peace Corps program in [Mexico](#), and sent [Crisis Corps](#) Volunteers to assist in the Gulf Coast region in the aftermath of the devastation caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service January 15, 2007

The hope of
a secure and livable world
lies with
disciplined nonconformists
who are dedicated to
justice, peace and brotherhood.

 *Martin Luther King, Jr.* 

Master's International Expands Presence in Michigan and North Carolina

[Michigan State University](#) (MSU) and [Appalachian State University](#) are the newest Master's International university partners, working to train graduate students as Volunteers in hard-to-fill assignment areas.

MSU, located in East Lansing, MI, will offer master's of science programs through its College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Degree options will include crop and soil sciences; agricultural economics; and community, agriculture, recreation, and resource studies. Students will also have the option to add specializations in international development and environmental science and policy.

MSU joins [Western Michigan University](#) and [Michigan Technological University](#) as the third Michigan school to incorporate an MI program into their curriculum. This year, 71 Volunteers are serving from MSU, making the university the ninth highest producer of Peace Corps Volunteers among large universities.

"This exciting new program builds on MSU's long history as one of the leading institutions in recruiting Peace Corps Volunteers and as an institution committed to problem-solving engagement around the globe," said International Studies and Programs Acting Dean Jeffrey Riedinger. "This program will better equip Peace Corps Volun-

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[Community, Agriculture, Recreation, Resource Study](#) davisdia@msu.edu
[Crop and Soil Sciences](#) house@msu.edu

Appalachian State State University

[Elementary Education](#) hirsthp@appstate.edu
[English Education](#) hirsthp@appstate.edu
[Mathematics Education](#) hirsthp@appstate.edu

teers from MSU to make a difference in working to address problems such as environmental degradation, hunger, infectious diseases, limited educational opportunities, and poverty."

Appalachian, located in Boone, NC, will offer master's of arts programs through the College of Arts and Sciences and the Reich College of Education. Degree options will include elementary, mathematics, and English education.

Appalachian joins [North Carolina State University](#) and [North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University](#), bringing to three the number of universities in the state training graduate students through the Master's International

program. With 23 Volunteers serving from Appalachian this year, the school is ranked 23rd among medium-sized colleges and universities.

"The institution is excited about becoming a Master's International university partner. Among the goals of Appalachian's graduate school are student participation in international programs and the incorporation of meaningful internships or service learning into the appropriate programs," said Edelma Huntley, Dean of Research and Graduate Studies at Appalachian. "The MI program will help us to achieve these goals as well as train teachers who have international experience and a global perspective."

Tips for Coordinators: The MI Student Perspective

by Amanda Rabinowitz

MI program coordinators play a central role in their students' experiences. Here are some tips to help students take full advantage of the opportunities MI provides:

- Make your presence known to potential MI students at the time of their acceptance to the graduate program.
- Ensure that MI students understand which requirements apply to them and the deadlines for meeting them.
- Perform on-campus orientation sessions—connect MI students with each other.
- Facilitate communications between MI students and Peace Corps placement, when appropriate.
- Set and manage expectations for site placement, research opportunities, and supervision.
- Expose MI students to other RPCVs on campus to help give them a true perspective of the on-the-ground realities of the Volunteer experience.
- Encourage MI students to:
 - establish relationships with appropriate faculty prior to departure
 - gather resources that may be important to their practicum/research projects
- Explain the off-campus phase as it applies to MI students, particularly if it is unique.
- Provide MI students with an off-campus handbook that is easy to transport and includes requirements, deadlines, contact information, and answers to frequently asked questions that addresses common concerns.
- Establish lines of communication and procedures for:
 - requesting resources (e.g., can the school ship reading material overseas?)
 - feedback/advice
- Follow through with MI Volunteers during the off-campus phase by developing a tracking system and sending periodic e-mail or written correspondence at critical stages.

Amanda is a municipal development graduate of the [School for International Training](#). She first served in [Tonga](#) (1996–2000). As an MI Volunteer she served in [El Salvador](#) (2003–05).

Master's International Plans to Expand 10 Percent in 2007

For nearly 20 years, the Peace Corps has actively recruited Americans who want the opportunity to earn graduate degrees while serving as Volunteers through the agency's Master's International program. Responding to growing demand, the Peace Corps is asking for proposal requests from universities as it looks to expand the number of MI graduate school partnerships by 10 percent.

"Volunteers get more out of their experiences by being connected to their graduate faculty while serving," said Peace Corps Deputy Director Jody Olsen. "And Master's International program coordinators tell us how valuable the Volunteer experience is to their other graduate students and faculty. Ongoing stories from Volunteers bring subjects alive."

Increasingly, university representatives have viewed international education as a primary goal. In the case of graduate students serving as Peace Corps Volunteers, there are natural benefits for everyone involved—from the overseas communities to the campus communities to the students themselves. Usually older than

the average Volunteer, many MI students bring professional maturity and enhanced skills to their Volunteer service.

"In my experience, MI Volunteers bring a holistic perspective to their service," said Ruben Hernandez, Peace Corps' Chief of Operations in the Inter-America and Pacific region and former country director in [Honduras](#). "This makes them very focused and extremely valuable to the developmental needs of their host countries."

Working through a request for proposal (RFP) process, the Peace Corps will choose five new university partners in the areas of agriculture, education, and environment/natural resources studies. Finalists will be notified in March 2007.

Since 1987, MI has collaborated with specific university graduate programs throughout the U.S. These programs provide opportunities for Volunteers to apply their advanced education in hard-to-fill assignment areas. Managed through Peace Corps' Office of Domestic Programs, MI currently encompasses 85 programs at 50 universities across the country.

From the Master's International Director

Reflecting back over this past year's accomplishments, Master's International has much to be thankful for: a complete staff with Jahleezah Eskew as MI assistant director and Chris Amesquita as MI program assistant; committed MI campus coordinators who help prepare future Peace Corps Volunteers; the addition of two new university partners—Appalachian State and Michigan State; a two-day coordinators' conference that convened 41 program coordinators for information sharing and networking; production of the thesis anthology; a new format for the MI newsletter; and the many MI PCVs who transfer skills and spread peace and goodwill all over the world.

We hope that those unable to attend the coordinators' conference have reviewed the conference materials sent this summer. By now, you should have been e-mailed conference notes and found at least one new "best practice" idea to try with your MI program.

In completing the data collection for the census of current MI students, it is exciting to note the number of programs that are enrolling their first MI students this year. Congratulations! As a reminder, we are here to help your program be successful and help your students navigate the Peace Corps application process.

In the coming year, we look forward to adding five new university partners that will continue to help the Peace Corps fill scarce-skill needs for Volunteers with agriculture, education, or environmental/natural resources skills. Even as the program continues to grow, we are committed to staying

in touch with each of you. As always, we welcome your feedback on how we can continue to improve the program.

On behalf of the Peace Corps, the Office of Domestic Programs, and the Master's International staff, I wish everyone a peace-filled New Year.



Sylvia Alejandre