

PCVs Turn in Gold-Medal Performance



THE WINTER OLYMPICS wrapped up in Vancouver, Canada, in February with China taking home 11 medals to lead the field of Peace Corps host countries. Kazakhstan was the only other Peace Corps entry with a medal, winning silver in the women's biathlon.

Youth throughout the world were also winners, thanks to the creativity of our many Volunteers who regularly turn in gold-medal performances.

Kazakhstan's one-medal count was trumped by a winter Paralympic games

for disabled youth, launched by Peace Corps Volunteer Shannon Huett of Poplar Bluff, Missouri. Mirroring the 2010 Winter Paralympics held in Canada, the games began with a torch relay and parade. Twenty participants enjoyed everything from ice skating to karaoke and one Kazakh woman with hip and leg disabilities was able to ice skate for the first time in her life.

Another Peace Corps country that may be better suited for the 2012 Summer Olympics enjoyed its third annual Olympic games hosted by Volunteers. More than 100 youth participated in Jordan's National Physical Education Games in April. The event was coordinated by youth development Volunteers and the Higher Council for Youth.

Volunteers throughout the world regularly seize upon such events as the Olympics and World Cup to teach youth about other cultures and host both educational and sports competition. This year's World Cup, scheduled for June 11 to July 11, will surely serve as the impe-

tus for soccer tournaments throughout the world. It is the first time the tournament will be hosted by an African nation, with South Africa having the honor.

Any Volunteer or returned Volunteer from Africa can attest to the soccer-crazed atmosphere. One RPCV left his mark on Niger when he distributed soccer balls to schools and community groups nearly 30 years ago, launched the group Project Play Africa. In 2008, Michael Mitchell (Niger, 1983-1985) returned to Niger with 2,016 soccer balls, with a new generation of Peace Corps Volunteers being asked to distribute many of them.

In March, Mitchell went to Benin to distribute 2,100 balls. Perhaps even more importantly, he has taken a page from such Volunteers as those profiled on this issue's front page who have helped build schools out of bottles and inorganic trash. Mitchell and his organization have taught communities how to make soccer nets out of the plastic bags that litter many municipalities.

Niger Volunteer James Mas (2007-2009) was among those to receive soccer balls, pumps, and needles from Mitchell's group last year. In agreeing to donate equipment to the primary school in his village, he required the children to collect money to buy glue for the seams to help the balls last longer. The students also had to set money aside to buy rubber patches in case a thorn punctured the ball, assuring that they take responsibility for their actions.

Mas helped older youth clear a plot on school grounds, ridding the area of thorns and marking a boundary with small rocks. Wooden posts were set up and plastic bag soccer nets were made with the help of students, village men, and even the village chief.

Such work can be easily duplicated by Volunteers throughout the world and would serve as a great project to complement this year's World Cup. What better way is there to teach youth about the environment than by tying it in with their favorite sport?

Daughters Inspire Mom to Serve with Peace Corps

By CONNIE GODDARD | PCV Romania

WITH THE PEACE CORPS APPROACHING ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY, it is no surprise that many Volunteers are the offspring of previous Volunteers. Two currently serve with me in Romania. In another sort of legacy, my younger daughter, Nell Goddard Wilson, followed her sister into the Peace Corps six years ago, serving in the environment sector in Bulgaria. My older daughter, Kate Goddard Rohrbaugh, served from 1993 to 1995, being among the first group of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) Volunteers in Ukraine. Now their "legacy" has gone in the opposite direction.

In August 2009, I was sworn in as a Peace Corps Volunteer, and now I am comfortably nestled in Romania, teaching English at a secondary school. Given my daughters' experiences, perhaps its fate that located me somewhat between Kate's site in the eastern Ukrainian city of Poltava and Nell's in Rousse, a northern Bulgarian city on the Danube. However, a crow flying from one to the other would miss my site in northwest Romania, an area that is also somewhat different in spirit from their sites. Mine is closer to Budapest than to Bucharest, and the area feels more Central European than Slavic.

More intriguing than the irony of our placements though are the changes both in technology and in the countries themselves during the 15 years since Kate served in Ukraine. For one, the Peace Corps' mission in Eastern Europe during those early years was concentrated in larger cities like Poltava, where Kate was one of three TEFL Volunteers.

After nearly two decades in Romania, today's TEFL teachers are more likely to be in rural areas, where English isn't as evident. My school is in a town of 10,000 or so, but it serves several smaller communities as well. About 22 miles west is Oradea, a city of 225,000, or about the same size as Rousse, where Nell worked for a large provincial park.



Ukraine Volunteer Connie Goddard shows children in her village how to carve a pumpkin.

Among my favorite juxtapositions here is the anomaly, in my mind, of listening to an American radio station, via the Internet, while watching a horse cart clomp by my window as it delivers wood for the ceramic sobas many Romanians use to heat their homes—most of which have both the Internet and a soba.

TEFL Volunteers here are serving primarily in rural areas, while both the environmental and youth development programs are being phased out. As these countries join the European Union, some of the services earlier Volunteers provided are now redundant or addressed more capably by host country nationals.

These changing needs reflect how these nations have changed in the two decades since Peace Corps began serving Eastern Europe. When Kate was in Ukraine, she could save some of her monthly allowance because there was so little to spend it on. Now, when I go to the mall in Oradea, the names of stores, as well as the products they sell, are all relatively familiar—and there's little I need that I cannot buy there.

The cars here are the same as we see at home, though I have become fond of some relics, like the 25-year-old Dacias that provide informal transit between my village and Oradea. Bus and train schedules are all available on the Web, as is international and lo-

cal news, which my computer translates without having to be asked.

When Kate was in Poltava, it was a real treat to discover a fax from her when I arrived at my office in the morning, while arranging for an occasional phone call was a major event. A decade later, I recall a cellphone conversation with Nell while I was wading in Lake Michigan and she was sitting on a Black Sea beach. Her delightful missives from Bulgaria were sent from an Internet café; I can send my essays from my apartment.

Fortunately, some things don't change. Kate spoke of how most Poltavites had a place in the countryside where they could grow their own food, a necessity back then. Today, many Romanians still rely on family gardens for food, but mainly because it is "ecologic," not essential. And Nell and I both have stories to tell about attending a pig kill, something all my students have done. Romanians, like Chicago's famed meatpackers of yore, use everything but the squeal.

The largest adjustment I've made here is accepting some limitations on my freedom of movement. For the first time in my adult life, I am not living in a major metropolitan area with an all-night transit system. On the other hand, I attend an aerobics class at a nearby school gym for about one-tenth of what it would cost in the U.S. Also, when I return home, there are thoughtful gifts my knowledgeable daughters have provided a tiny flashlight for lighting my way down dark hallways in block buildings and a set of measuring cups that offer gradations both in ounces and milliliters.

Aside from raising my daughters, this is probably the most instructive experience I have ever had!

Goddard is an education Volunteer from Wilmette, Ill. She is scheduled to complete her service in 2011.



That Was Then ... This is Now

Fellows/USA Celebrates 45 Years

THE PEACE CORPS FELLOWS/USA graduate school program, encompassing more than 50 universities, can trace its roots to Columbia University. A partnership that began in the 1960s continues today.

Then ... Trainees Work, Study in New York City

From The Peace Corps Times in 1962

Slum neighborhoods of New York City are the testing ground for a new concept in training Peace Corps Volunteers to work in community development in Latin America. During October, 90 trainees for Colombia served in a field-work program in Manhattan's lower East Side and in East Harlem and Chelsea districts.

Organized by the New York School of Social Work of Columbia University, the training program provides for seven hours a day of community work with New York City welfare agencies, in addition to classes in social work and in Spanish.

This phase of training for the Colombia project

followed eight weeks of training at the University of New Mexico and four weeks in Puerto Rico. The total training program of 16 weeks is the longest ever undertaken by the Peace Corps and the first to include field work in a specifically urban environment.

The New York training is designed to prepare Volunteers for community development under the auspices of CARE in eight cities in Colombia.

Assignments in Colombia will include work initiating and developing neighborhood self-help projects and in helping to establish programs in adult education, home economics, health education, child care, and recreation.

Now ... Fellows Program Trains Over 700 Educators

Today's Volunteers are trained exclusively in their country of service, but a select few have the privilege of following up their service by engaging in a program that can trace its roots to that early training model.

The Colombia post closed in 1981, but a Volunteer from that country who became a researcher for Columbia University in New York has served as the driving force behind a partnership that would benefit thousands.

Returned Volunteer Dr. Beryl Levinger (Columbia, 1967-1969) realized returned Volunteers had the specialized skills sought by the New York Board of Education in the early 1980s. Resourceful teachers who had practical, innovative ideas about education were needed. In cooperation with the Peace Corps, Lev-

inger proposed a program in which returned Volunteers would fulfill this need. In 1985, Teachers College launched a pilot Fellows/USA program to prepare RPCVs as teachers in New York City public schools. Since then, 556 urban educators have been recruited and trained. Currently, 36 first- and second-year Fellows are teaching full-time in New York City elementary, intermediate, and high schools, as well as in several alternative and specialized school settings.

Fellows/USA has developed similar initiatives with over 50 universities around the country. More than 500 Fellows work in fields other than education, including urban policy, environment, business development, social services, and community development.

To learn more about the program, go to peacecorps.gov and follow the Fellows/USA quick link.



In the 1960s, Peace Corps trainees participated in field training before heading overseas for service.



PC Combines Forces with City Year, The Corps Network

City Year, which engages young Americans in a year of full-time community service as tutors, mentors, and role models, is partnering with the Peace Corps.

The partnership will allow the exchange of training and technical assistance materials and link City Year members with PCVs for reciprocal mentoring and support.

"Partnering with City Year will allow more Americans with a strong commitment to public service to continue to contribute their enthusiasm and creativity at the grassroots level with communities abroad," said Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams.

A similar partnership has been formed with The Corps Network, which represents service and conservation programs that annually enroll more than

29,000 young men and women. Those with experience in youth development, conservation, and the environment will be encouraged to apply to become Peace Corps Volunteers.

Returned Volunteers will also be encouraged to serve American communities through this partnership.

The organizations hope to link The Corps Network members with Peace Corps Volunteers.

Peace Corps Week, 49th Anniversary Celebrated

The Peace Corps celebrated its 49th anniversary March 1. During Peace Corps Week, the agency's nine regional recruiting offices hosted over 140 recruiting and celebratory events across the country.

Top Colleges, Universities Cited

The Peace Corps released its 2009 Top 25 rankings of those colleges and universities producing Volunteers in 2009.

The University of Washington, Seattle, holds the top rank for large schools for the fourth year in a row, with 101 undergraduate alumni currently serving. The University of Colorado at Boulder is runnerup with 95.

In the medium school category, The George Washington University, Washington, D.C., ranks number one for the second consecutive year, with 53 un-

dergraduate alumni serving. Fellow D.C. school American University is close behind at 51.

For small schools, St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minn., ranks at the top for the first time, with 26 undergraduate alumni serving. The University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Va., has 23.

Historically, the University of California-Berkeley maintains the number one all-time rank, with 3,412 returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

Partnership to Benefit PC, Health Centers

The Peace Corps and the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) have formed an agreement to encourage NACHC's Community HealthCorps AmeriCorps members to serve throughout the U.S. in preparation of potential Peace Corps assignments abroad. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers will also be encouraged to seek employment in the community health care work force.

NACHC was organized in 1971 to provide a unified voice and common source for research, information, training, and advocacy. Community health centers serve 20 million people at more than 7,000 sites located throughout all 50 states and U.S. territories.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3 ■■■■■■■■■■▶

you make. You can't copy or cheat. The Ghanaian education system is trying to move from lecturing and note-taking to student-centered activities, and art certainly encourages that.



A student in Nancy Haggarty's class practices her graphic design skills.

I have found that the students also "can't hear when they don't want to." Their teachers call it "being out of service area." Just like other teenagers.

Nancy Haggarty is a visual arts teacher in the deaf education program in Ghana. She was a teenager when the Peace Corps was launched and had always wanted to join. The Watertown, Massachusetts, resident became a Volunteer in 2009, shortly after retiring, and is scheduled to complete her service in August of 2011.



NOTES *from the* FIELD

A Brief Look at Posts and Projects

BULGARIA

Smart Foods Workshop Conducted

Vanessa Raymond and her counterpart, Momchil Stoev, who has been trained at the National Academy of Sports, have been working in conjunction with the Peace Corps and the community foundation Mostove Nad Tundja to promote community awareness about healthy food choices.

Together, they designed a three-part healthy foods workshop called Smart Foods, which is tailored to reach children ages 6 to 11. Children are introduced to the topic of healthy food and its nutritional elements. Training also explores food groups and how to use the food pyramid, in addition to examining how food labels can help children make healthy choices. For more information, contact *Peace Corps Times* at pctimes@peacecorps.gov.

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Volunteers Provide Mental Health Training

Community development Volunteers George Stouter and Mike Fallahay have been drawing on their experience as family therapists (acquired prior to Peace Corps) to aid a committee drafting Mental Health and Substance Abuse Policies and Procedures for their island country of St. Kitts and Nevis.

In conjunction with drafting the policies, the Volunteers have been presenting monthly trainings on various health and safety topics to mental

health workers. The workshops have also been used during staff training for St. Kitts' first substance treatment program. Fallahay has also been teaching many people in his community about domestic violence and healthy relationships.

ECUADOR

Volunteer Forms Bank to Help Small Businesses

Agriculture IT Volunteer Shelley Jackson assisted members of her indigenous community in starting a community bank near her site to help launch several small businesses.

After attending meetings with local officials, Jackson's community bank group formed a bank of 25 members. In 20 weeks, each member saved \$40. Loans of \$15 to \$300 could be withdrawn monthly with a 10 percent interest rate. Community members used the loans to start small projects, which included a bakery, a grain bodega, and a sewing machine used to make traditional blouses.

The project "really contributed to the lives of others," Jackson said. She noted that the bank will continue to lend long after she finishes her service in April.

HONDURAS

Volunteers Empower Girls Through Workshop

Health and HIV/AIDS Volunteer Sarah West and her Honduran counterpart organized a workshop for 15 girls and

four Honduran women aimed toward empowering young women by helping them formulate their goals and future plans and understand their cultural identities.

The girls, ages 12 to 15, completed self-esteem activities, spoke about their goals, and heard from Honduran women who have risen from poverty and abuse to find success. The weekend workshop cumulated with a visit to the Copan Ruins, where the girls learned about ancient Mayan culture from a female park guide.



Honduras leadership camp participants show a mural they created that utilizes photos representing their culture. The mural will hang in the town library.

NAMIBIA

Male Engagement Initiative

Peace Corps/Namibia has been implementing an initiative to help youth, non-governmental organizations, teachers, health care providers, and community members to understand gender roles and recognize how they influence both male and female behavior in relation to health and well-being.

Volunteers are implementing the Male Engagement Initiative in all 13 regions of the country. The campaign also highlights how transforming gender norms will be necessary in reducing the spread of HIV/AIDS and gender-based violence. A total of 325 people have received training through the workshops.

UGANDA

Demonstration Farm Benefits Children

When Moses Mubala and Volunteer Jessica Dyer (2007–2009) started their demonstration farm last year, they had a small piece of land and high hopes to support orphans and vulnerable children through an income-generating project that breeds pigs and goats.

With a small grant supported by the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), such hopes transpired into a demonstration farm where animals are breeding and participants are learning how to care for them. This project provides 55 children, 40 of whom are HIV-positive, with a source of income to pay for school fees, health care, and food.

The overall goal of the farm is to generate enough money to pay for health, education, and other costs for the children, and to produce more pigs and goats. All participants receive free training and veterinary care to improve profitability and productivity and are encouraged to return to the veterinarian for consultations, as needed.

Haiti RPCVs Reach Out to Earthquake Victims

THE WORK DONE by "Friends of" groups creates opportunities for returned Volunteers to stay connected to their country of service long after they've packed their bags and headed home.

The Friends of Haiti, a group of over 200 RPCVs, held four events to raise relief funds for the earthquake that devastated the country on January 12.

Although Peace Corps does not currently have a post in Haiti, over 500 Americans have served in the country as Volunteers, as recently as 2005. Peace Corps staff members also participated in earthquake relief efforts within the country this year.

"Our initial fundraiser was for the Red Cross and the Haitian Education Leadership Program (HELP). The message we had two days after the event was that Port-au-Prince residents were go-

ing to go to the provinces so we were able to divert funds to our regional networks, in places where we had worked [as Volunteers]," says Lenny Teh (RPCV 1997–2000), a founder of the Haiti group.

The group met informally with members of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and RPCVs of Washington, D.C., just 48 hours after the earthquake and raised \$1,000. That figure rose to \$5,000 at a second event and efforts to help have continued non-stop, with some former Volunteers even traveling to Haiti to help.

The group also partnered with PAZAPA Center for Handicapped Children in Jacmel; the Haitian Timoun Foundation; and Peace Corps staff to donate paintings, picture frames, and ornamental woodcarvings that were auctioned at an event at Peace Corps

headquarters.

RPCV groups from New Mexico, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Jersey have also contributed heavily.

Another organization, Haiti Innovation, was created by a group of RPCVs to bring attention to initiatives and developments within Haiti. One of the founders, Bryan Schaaf (RPCV, 2000–2002), was speaking to fellow RPCVs in Washington when he referred to a proverb he learned as a Volunteer: "Haiti has teeth. It bites onto you. It doesn't let you go."

The same can be said of the many Peace Corps groups that lend a helping hand during times of calm and chaos.

For information about the Friends of Haiti and other groups tied to your country of service, hometown, or other special interests, go to rpcv.org or peacecorps.gov.

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