



PEACE  
CORPS

# Times

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## Extending Service; Expanding Opportunities



Jamaica Volunteer Shannon Rease's environmental club students plant gardens during a special day of activities.

When Shannon Rease's two years of Peace Corps service was coming to an end, she knew she wouldn't be going home to Mount Pleasant, Michigan. Continuing her Peace Corps service in Jamaica for a third year was the obvious next step.

"My second year came to an end and I was still working on good projects

at my site," said Rease. "Extending my Peace Corps service was a 'no-brainer.'"

Rease, an environmental promotion and education coordinator, was granted an extension for a third year and continued to work for a local environmental nongovernmental organization (NGO). She managed environmental clubs, school gardens, a \$30,000

grant for a recycling program, and a wetlands preservation program, among other projects.

She then had the opportunity to stay a fourth year to serve as a Volunteer leader. In that position, she wrote a literacy education manual, conducted site checks throughout Jamaica, and helped with Volunteer placement.

With four years of environmental education experience under her belt, Rease left Jamaica this summer and is in search of an environmental education job with the federal government, state government, or an NGO.

"This has been a life-changing experience," Rease said. "What kind of person would I have turned out to be if I hadn't done Peace Corps?"

Peace Corps Volunteers choose to extend their service for many reasons, including a love of their village and friends, professional development, and a feeling that there is more to accomplish. Sometimes it's to work on a specific project with Peace Corps Response. Whatever the motivation, most Volunteers who decide to stay longer have many of the skills necessary to be successful long after the rest of their training group leaves. They gain full confidence in the language, know how to navigate the cultural maze, and feel acclimated in their host country.

Beyond professional development



Volunteer Gary Glass Jr. dresses as Father Winter in December 2007 during his service in Armenia. Glass extended for a third year in China as a teacher training Volunteer.

and increased productivity in-country, there are many incentives for Volunteers to extend their service. There is the readjustment allowance, which was recently increased from \$225 to \$275 per month of service; eligibility for monthlong special leave if the extension is for 12 months or more; deferment of student loans; and the cancellation of 20 percent of a Perkins Loan for a Volunteer's third and fourth years of service.

Patrick Findler and his wife, Meaghan Corwin, are extending for a third year at their site in Armenia. The teaching English as a foreign language

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Deputy Director  
Hessler-Radelet

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Carrie Hessler-Radelet was sworn in as deputy director at Peace Corps headquarters on June 23. She and her husband, Steve Radelet, served together as Volunteers in Western Samoa (1981-1983). Prior to her confirmation as deputy director, she was vice president and director of the Washington, D.C., office of John Snow, Inc. (JSI), a global public health organization. Four generations of Hessler-Radelet's family have served as Peace Corps Volunteers.

## A Friend Indeed

Alumni Groups Continue to Find Ways to Contribute

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is the second in a series of articles on Volunteer support groups and their activities. For a look at the first story in the series, go to [peacecorps.gov](http://peacecorps.gov) and check Peace Corps Times under the "Media" heading.)

Current and former Peace Corps Volunteers can certainly identify with a popular phrase that traces its roots to the third century B.C.

Quintus Ennius, often considered the father of Roman poetry, wrote:

Amicu certus in re incerta cernitur. Translated from the Latin as "a sure friend is known when in difficulty," today we say, "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

Whether one argues that "indeed" should actually be translated as two separate words within the phrase or not, returned Peace Corps Volunteer alumni groups can indeed, via their many good deeds, attest to being friends to those in need.

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### A Living Collection—50 Years

Peace Corps invites all Volunteers and staff members to contribute to the digital library—a searchable collection of photos, stories, and documents about Peace Corps, the Volunteer experience, and the agency's legacy of service. As we approach our 50th anniversary, please help us reach our goal of including photos and stories from the 139 countries Volunteers have served since 1961. You can contribute a story and up to 10 photos from your service by using our easy online process. **Go to [peacecorps.gov/collections](http://peacecorps.gov/collections). For questions or suggestions, email [digital@peacecorps.gov](mailto:digital@peacecorps.gov).**



(TEFL) Volunteers are organizing English-language festivals, including a regional spelling bee and a poetry reading contest. They are involved in producing a puppet show in English for a local TV station; creating an interactive television show about local government and a game show about American history; and continuing a project, launched in late 2009, to expand a health education project for schools.

“There are a lot of reasons why we’re extending,” said Findler. “There’s a certain amount of investment the local people have made in us – to help us get adjusted. I want to repay that as much as I can. If I stay longer, I’ll feel better about what I have accomplished.”

Extending allows the couple time to complete all the work they have started, and they have enhanced their ability to do it.

“I have the language skills to have the conversations that the work requires and I have the relationships with people to spur ideas for future projects,” said Findler. “At this time last year, I had only begun to make a name for myself and determine who I could work with and what I could depend on them to do.”

Jodi Hammer, coordinator of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) Career Center in Rosslyn, Virginia, helps returned Volunteers incorporate their Peace Corps service into their resumes. In doing so, Hammer has found that the majority of third-year Volunteers she speaks with have “an unparalleled element of professional development” to add to their resumes.

“Due to their already high-level language skills and in-depth understanding of the culture they served in, these third-year extendees were able to function at 100 percent from the outset of their extensions. Thus, they were able to take on even more complex, often high-profile projects at the national level, in conjunction with senior officials from local and international governments, as well as NGOs,” said Hammer.

## Peace Corps Manual: Criteria for Extensions

Volunteers should speak to their program managers in advance and extension requests should be made at least two months before a Volunteer’s established COS date. A country director will consider the following factors in determining whether to grant an extension request:

- A Volunteer’s unique importance to the total program and the overall benefit to the host country
- The degree to which the Volunteer’s supervisor and other host country officials support an extension
- The Volunteer’s motivation in seeking the extension
- Medical approval from the Peace Corps medical officer
- The conduct of the Volunteer
- The quality of the Volunteer’s service to date

The Peace Corps Leadership Development Academy, comprised of Peace Corps employees in the United States, is currently studying third-year extensions. The preliminary findings show that 80 percent of Volunteers who extend their Peace Corps service stay in their initial country of residence, working with an NGO or serving as a technical specialist or regional coordinator. The remaining 20 percent transfer to a post in another country.

Currently, there are more than 450 Peace Corps Volunteers who have extended worldwide. China has the largest number of such PCVs, with 26 percent of its Volunteers extending for a third year. Regionally, Africa accounts for 37 percent of those extensions granted worldwide. Among sectors, education Volunteers have the highest extension rate.

According to a preliminary survey of RPCVs who decided to extend their service, most said they wanted to mentor other Volunteers, develop professionally, utilize their knowledge to be more productive in their jobs, or were simply not ready to come home. A final report based on Volunteer survey responses will be available this fall.

For another Volunteer, the connections he made during his initial two years helped him secure an upper-level job during a third year of service.

David Hughes had worked as a health Volunteer in a disability resource center in the southernmost region of Namibia. That provided him with the opportunity to secure a position in the Ministry of Health and Social Services Rehabilitation Division.

“I gained a remarkable amount of experience and information during two years,” said Hughes, who also served with Peace Corps in the Eastern Caribbean in the 1980s. “By attending various meetings and workshops, I had also gotten to know the staff at the Ministry of Health. I saw areas in which little guidance and information was offered, by the national office, to the regions and thought that, by working at the national level, my potential impact could be greater.”

Teacher training Volunteer Gary Glass Jr. of Glen Rock, New Jersey, has almost completed his third year of service after accepting a transfer to China. Glass served in a remote site in his first host country of Armenia. Before his close-of-service conference, he received an invitation to extend in China, a place he had always wanted to visit and live.

“My experience in China has been very different from my previous post and I find it impossible to compare the two,” Glass said. “I have been fortunate to serve in two supportive and well-organized Peace Corps posts, in addition

to having outstanding local counterparts. It is a strange feeling knowing that my time abroad is coming to an end, but I will always have the memories with my local friends to bring me back.”

For St. Lucia Volunteer Kelli DePriest, finding the right project inspired her to apply for an extension. DePriest, who is from Broomfield, Colorado, ran a “Football for Lives” HIV/AIDS education program in two primary schools, working with more than 25 teachers as a youth development Volunteer. The program was adapted from a grassroots soccer program in Africa. With the support of her local counterparts, she plans to run the “Football for Lives” program at all nine primary schools in her district.

One of the games DePriest plays with the students is “Lions and Zebras,” a keep-away game utilizing soccer skills. The “Zebras” dribble the balls in a circle and the “Lions,” playing the role of HIV/AIDS, try to intercept the ball. After a second round, the participants discuss HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention within the context of the game.

“I can’t wait to spread the program throughout the island because I believe it is a truly innovative way to teach about HIV/AIDS education,” DePriest said. “Learning about ‘Football for Lives’ and seeing how the kids responded was my inspiration for extending.”

Jennifer Popham of Elkmont, Ala., has been a Peace Corps Volunteer for four years. Popham spent a year in Guinea, a year in Burkina Faso, two years in China, and is now extending for another year in China, where she teaches English in a college in a remote town in Gansu Province.

“By staying one more year in China, I will be able to teach English effectively and organize activities and interact with an established community, with a mutual exchange of learning and teaching American and Chinese culture,” she said. “Most of all, I enjoy the lifestyle of living, working, and growing as an individual in China.”

## Volunteer Life

# Helping Children Fight for their Rights



By NISAH N. ABDUL-SABUR | PCV South Africa

I watched as the minutes, hours, and days that my counterpart and I had spent designing and preparing a service event for orphaned and vulnerable children unfolded before my eyes. I realized that my passion for service had indeed evolved into something that I could not have fathomed several years ago. In this moment, I saw the positive change emanating from the face of each child who had received support. It was

then that I understood the impact of my service as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

For the past two years, I have worked diligently to create a sound foundation that will enable caregivers to provide psychosocial support, group therapy, and child forums to alleviate stress and provide resources to those rural children affected by HIV/AIDS, TB, poverty, and neglect. The circle of support, consisting of the children’s guardians, teachers, and assigned caregivers, provides a holistic approach that helps children complete a healthy transition from victims to victors. Having accomplished this, we set out to celebrate!

In March, 100 children traveled to Kings Court, located in Majadjiskloof, Limpopo, South Africa, to participate in the Fight for Your Rights event. The two-day event was held in response to child security threats associated with the World Cup. It tackled the issues of child trafficking, child protection, children’s rights and responsibilities, and child empowerment. In addition,

each child received a Fight for Your Rights card listing various emergency telephone numbers.

The South African constitution dedicates a section on the rights of children, including access to health and social services, family care, education, equality, and nutrition. To ensure that children grasped this concept, they were asked to identify and define each right and choose the one they felt was most important to them. Later, each child painted his or her chosen right onto a T-shirt.

Various community stakeholders participated and through the effective implementation of the event, participants came away empowered. They also took part in future planning for the project and are now prepared to move forward.

*Nisah N. Abdul-Sabur is a community HIV/AIDS outreach Volunteer who is serving as a advisor for a nongovernmental organizations. The Yeadon, Pennsylvania, resident is scheduled to complete her service in April 2011.*





That Was Then ... This is Now

## Camp GLOW a Summer Ritual Since the '90s

Boys and girls leadership camps were led by Peace Corps Volunteers throughout the world this summer. Moldova and Romania are among those countries with a long history of Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) camps that can trace their history to the 1990s.

### Then ... Camp Quickly Becomes a Peace Corps Staple

From *The Peace Corps Times* in the winter of 1998

In Poland, a group of TEFL and environment Volunteers decided to organize a leadership development camp for young women. The camp took on the name of GLOW. It stood for "Girls Leading Our World," and was fueled by a mission to ensure equal opportunity in Poland's work force and athletics.

For one week, girls between the ages of 15 and 18 had the chance to learn about building self-esteem, personal growth, individuality, women's health, and career opportunities. The girls were even coached on how to run elections and campaigns, and then use their

new skills for their own elections for Camp GLOW officers. PCV Kerry Tepedino, one of the camp's organizers, said that "the camp had a very positive effect on the girls, and many offered to help in upcoming GLOW camps and as mentors."

Indeed, the camp was such a success that it spread to Romania and Moldova. PCV Susan Derby recently held Camp GLOW in Moldova with funding from the Loret Miller Ruppe Fund for the Advancement of Women. "Sixty-two girls had the opportunity to learn more about themselves and others, gain new knowledge, and enhance skills necessary to become tomorrow's leaders," reports Susan. "As a Peace Corps Volunteer who has worked in Moldova for two years, I can say without hesitation that Camp GLOW was the most valuable, worthwhile project I have been involved with."

### Now ... Local Organizations Partner with Peace Corps to Oversee Camps

In Tonga alone, Volunteers were involved in six programs that carried the Camp GLOW moniker on four different island groups this summer.

Moldova also remains a Camp GLOW host, while another country, Morocco, was an early supporter of the concept and has seen host country nationals take ownership. A July camp in Morocco is sponsored by The Golden Buttons Association, an artisan cooperative that utilizes its members to empower young girls through discussion about gender roles and societal norms. Various activities aimed toward leadership are also conducted.

One former camp participant in Morocco is Najoua Ammzon, a 20-year-old high school graduate



Participants enjoy Camp GLOW Tonga 2010. (Thank you Volunteer Sarah Bond for sharing your photos.)

from a small village. Prior to her camp experience, Najoua was unemployed and lived with her parents in her village. The camp inspired her to move to a larger community where she could continue her studies and start a small business project. She began to take French and English classes and studied computer science and handicrafts. Now she regularly visits and networks with Camp GLOW facilitators and takes advantage of local artisan workshops and trainings to improve her job skills.

There are many Camp GLOW success stories. In Romania, the National Organization of Romanian Scouts provided a barn, tents, and a Scout employee to help house 36 girls ages 14 to 17 for a weeklong camp in July.

Every Camp GLOW empowers young women to embrace leadership roles, develop relevant skills, and aspire to achieve their dreams.

### Taking Stock with Mr. Sock

## The Reality of Peace Corps Life

countries and accounted for countless friends.

We have received many suggestions on how to mark the occasion, but one of the most entertaining may have been a casting call to a Peace Corps public affairs officer, requesting a "wholesome, service-oriented" RPCV for a reality show.

We're willing to bet that any TV reality show would be more entertaining if current Volunteers were involved. What better way to show the many benefits of serving in the Peace Corps than producing a Peace Corps reality series? Perhaps we could call it *Pacific Shore* or simply retain the titles *Surreal Life* or *Survivor* since Volunteers are able to identify with either in some way.

A genre that began when MTV first broadcast *The Real World* in 1992, reality TV has actually been around in one form or another since the early years of television, primarily with game shows. *Survivor*, one of the most popular reality series of all time, actually has nothing on our Volunteers. After

all, its stars have a network of fellow Americans within close confines who are only asked to live in an unfamiliar environment for a month or so. Some of our Volunteers have to travel for a day to visit someone who speaks English and find themselves in another country for over two years. However, after the first few weeks they realize it's not about being a survivor, it's about being a contributor, and they quickly adjust in ways that would make Richard Hatch envious.

You have all made it through the casting call, which could be compared to those frustrating months of waiting to hear if you had been accepted to the Peace Corps. You followed that by being an *Apprentice* during training and then, in many cases, became an *American Idol* in your community.

Regardless of the title, each Volunteer can bask in the reality of an everyday life that is so much better than any television show could be. The respect for all that you do is also evident to those who make their living writing

about television. Consider the advice *Los Angeles Times* columnist Mary McNamara recently provided to *Big Life* star Kirstie Alley:

"Despite what we have been led to believe by *The Biggest Loser*, losing weight does not make you a better person. It just makes you a thinner person. So why not devote yourself to good works for a year? Take a trip to Haiti or the Sudan, or join a group like the Peace Corps or Habitat for Humanity. You could help those in need, encourage potential donors and volunteers, and lose weight all at the same time—you would be amazed how a little hard work, a lot of water, and a monotonous diet of normal proportions can take off the weight."

While the writer may have been misinformed a bit considering there are those Volunteers who actually gain weight due to an increase in starch in their diets, we have to agree with her intent. After all, the Peace Corps truly is the best reality series and we have the pleasure of living it every day.



As we ponder how many times "Peace Corps" is mentioned during an average episode of *The Simpsons*, the agency has started to plan for its 50th anniversary. While I was just a ball of yarn when the Peace Corps was founded in 1961, today I pride myself on being part of a legacy that has spanned 139



## Have You Ever Considered ...

When you think of an international career with the federal government, the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development usually come to mind. However, there are many other federal agencies and divisions of agencies in the government where returned Volunteers can continue their public service overseas. Have you ever considered the departments of Commerce, Agriculture, or Defense? These are just a few of the many agencies with international mandates.

There are two main websites for federal employment: Avue Digital Services ([www.avuedigitalservices.com](http://www.avuedigitalservices.com)) and USA Jobs ([www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)). These sites offer a host of information that can seem overwhelming, but really can assist you tremendously in your job search. The USA Jobs website has a special international search function where an applicant can select a specific region of the world in which to look for opportunities. At USA Jobs you can also search by specific agency and then by sub-agency. For example, instead of wading through the nearly 1,000 jobs open at the Department of Agriculture, you can limit your search to the Foreign Agricultural Service. Avue has several tools that help to demystify the

federal hiring process. It provides explanations for the pay scales, job series numbers, and competitive status, to name a few.

Do you have a degree in public health? Why not consider the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)? CDC is looking for public health advisors to work worldwide. In this position you would manage, coordinate, and evaluate complex public health programs. There are opportunities to work with host governments, international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international and local donors, in addition to grantees.

Are you a veterinarian? Have a degree in animal sciences, biology, ecology, or zoology? The Department of Agriculture (USDA) has international opportunities through the Foreign Agricultural Service, the Office of International Research Programs, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, and the National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps (NAHERC).

NAHERC needs veterinary professionals to protect the health of and care for animals and plants. NAHERC assists in the federal response to domestic and international animal disease outbreaks, threats, or natural disasters.

The U.S. Army also has a need for veterinarians. Army veterinarians care for and treat Military Working Dogs (MWDs), military horses, and other animals. They also provide treatment to animals as part of the Army's program to promote the health and well-being of animals in the countries where the Army is serving.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has a variety of opportunities for RPCVs to continue their commitment to service. The Division of International Conservation at FWS works with domestic and foreign governmental agencies, national and international nongovernmental conservation organizations, universities, and other interested parties to conserve wildlife and their habitats. To accomplish this, DIC is working with host countries to build the capacity of local institutions and train host country staff in managing natural resources effectively.

Also, consider the Department of Defense, which has jobs ranging from creative arts therapists, speech pathologists, and teachers to civil engineers and hydrologists. Defense Department jobs are available throughout the world. If you are a teacher, you may want to consider the Department of Defense



Education Activity (DoDEA). DoDEA operates schools in military communities around the world and has teaching positions at Virtual Schools that provide web-based advanced placement and non-advanced placement courses to students worldwide. Currently, social studies, visual arts, chemistry, biology, science, and math teachers are being recruited.

Also, keep in mind that the federal hiring process will change in the next few months. Applicants will no longer need to answer short essay questions as part of the application process. So brush up on your resume and cover letter writing skills and good luck with your job search.



### Peace Corps Celebrates LGBT Pride Month

The Peace Corps recognized the contributions of its many diverse Volunteers during Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Pride Month, celebrated at the agency in June. The theme for the observance was "One heart, One world, One pride."

"Over the past year the Peace Corps has continued to make strides toward

building a more inclusive environment for our dedicated gay and lesbian Volunteers and staff," Director Aaron S. Williams said, adding, "This year we officially recognized same-sex domestic partners as eligible family members for overseas staff, elevating their status from member of household. This change allows same-sex domestic partners to be included on travel orders and entitled to many of the same benefits married spouses receive."

### Agency Receives CEAR Award

Peace Corps received the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) Award for fiscal year 2009.

Peace Corps Chief of Staff Stacy Rhodes and acting Chief Financial Officer Thomas Bellamy accepted the award on behalf of the agency at a ceremony at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., on May 26. The award is given

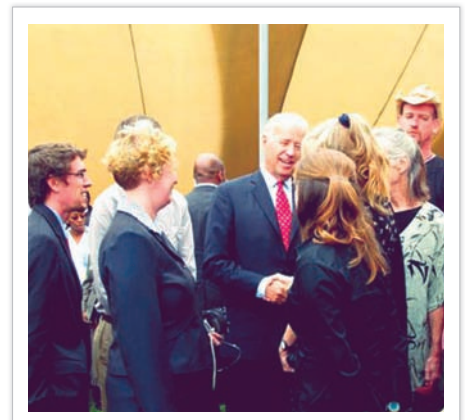
to federal government agencies whose Performance and Accountability and Annual Financial Reports achieve the highest standards of clarity in communicating financial information and demonstrating accountability. This is the third consecutive year that Peace Corps has received the AGA award.

### Vice President Biden Visits Kenya PCVs

Vice President Joe Biden met with 10 Peace Corps/Kenya Volunteers at the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, June 10 as part of his three-day visit to the country. After a speech at the embassy, the vice president spent time talking with the Volunteers and thanked them for their service.

Three of the Volunteers who met Biden serve as teachers and advocates for the deaf community in Kenya's central and eastern provinces.

Ranging in age from 23 to 65, the following Volunteers attended the



Vice President Joe Biden greets Volunteers during a visit to the U.S. Embassy in Kenya on June 10.

event: Emily Baker (2008-2010), Carly Brown (2009-2011), Christine Corrigan (2009-2011), Yabut Lapu-Lapu (2008-2010), Allen Neece (2009-2011), Pat Novak (2008-2010), David Posey (2008-2010), Lisa Roner (2007-2010), Eckhart Spalding (2008-2010), and Alyssa Vavrusa (2008-2010).

## RPCV Career Conference in D.C.

If you would like more practice telling your story as a tool for finding employment, consider attending a returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) career conference, hosted by Peace Corps' Returned Volunteer Services. Our next conference takes place October 12-15 at the Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. This four-day event includes interactive sessions on networking, interviewing, resume writing, and opportunities to actually put into practice what you've learned while connecting with employers participating in the career fair. For more information, visit [peacecorps.gov/rpcv](http://peacecorps.gov/rpcv).

## Attention Soon-to-be RPCVs!

Getting ready to COS? Still wondering what to do next? Check out our upcoming assignments with Peace Corps Response! We are looking for Volunteers to work as HIV/AIDS advisors in Malawi, teacher trainers in Colombia, TEFL instructors in China, and many more! Visit [peacecorps.gov/response](http://peacecorps.gov/response) to see all of our available positions. Considering employment or graduate school after Peace Corps? Visit [peacecorps.gov/hotline](http://peacecorps.gov/hotline) and [peacecorps.gov/fellows](http://peacecorps.gov/fellows)



“We are tremendously proud of our support of Peace Corps Partnership projects. We relish hearing from Volunteers as they report on the impact of a project in their host communities,” says Friends of Fiji President Rob Bartel (RPCV, 1995-1997), whose group formed in 1991 in conjunction with the Peace Corps’ 30th anniversary and has helped to fund water catchment projects, composting toilets, classroom construction, and beekeeper trainings.

Bartel’s words have been echoed throughout the Peace Corps community, with RPCVs contributing to the Partnership Program since its inception in 1964. The program serves as a link to such groups wanting to contribute to the work Volunteers do with their host communities.

Many alumni groups choose projects from a particular country to support, while organizations such as RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison, comprised of RPCVs from nearly every Peace Corps country, supported projects totaling nearly \$68,000 from 35 different countries in 2009.

In 1987, the group launched its successful International Calendar Project, which features photos from both current and past Peace Corps countries and lists important festivals, birthdays, and holidays from around the world.

“We began the project to share Peace Corps experiences with our home communities and to raise money for grassroots projects in the countries where we served or in which we live,” says Lee Row, president of the Wisconsin alumni group.

The calendar is also designed as a teaching tool, introducing various lifestyles, terrain, foods, occupations, and crafts from around the world. “Each year we provide calendars to teachers who participate in Peace Corps’ Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools program,” says Row. Currently serving Volunteers are encouraged to submit photos by visiting the official website at [rpcvcalendar.org](http://rpcvcalendar.org).

Other regional groups that sell Peace Corps calendars include RPCVs of Colorado and Atlanta Area RPCVs (AARPCV). The latter group uses proceeds from such sales and other fundraisers to support a Partnership project sponsored by a native Georgian. In 2009, AARPCV provided funding for a latrine project in Senegal, while recent projects have included latrines in the Dominican Republic, aqueducts in Costa Rica, a journalism project in Ukraine, and improvements to a Georgian orphanage.

“The Volunteer we support is also invited to present the project to the AARPCV members at a quarterly potluck meeting upon his or her return to the U.S.,” says AARPCV President Juli Powers (Ecuador, 1998-2002).

The Colorado RPCV group has supported such Partnership projects as a Croatian orphanage and an Albanian medical project, in addition to efforts aimed toward literacy and the environment in the U.S.

## RPCVs SHOW THEIR PASSION

Friends of the Dominican Republic, which was founded in 1998 and has over 2,600 members, started a foundation called the Community Challenge Fund (CCF) to support PCV-coordinated activities in that country and to help aid program sectors.

Exhibiting the passion of those involved, one RPCV borrowed \$50,000 against his mortgage to serve as a match incentive for anyone making contributions to the fund. As a result, over \$250,000 in tax-deductible donations have been raised in the past six years.

“We site-visited 10 projects in January and, in the first four months of the year, we have approved funds for four community development projects coordinated by PCVs in some of the poorest DR communities,” interim President John Epler says, re-



Friends of Fiji enjoy a Gala Fiji Evening fundraiser in Arlington, Virginia, with RPCVs dancing the Taralala (a Fijian line dance). To the far right are Alice Alexander and Fred Mosher, founders of the Friends of Fiji.

ferring to an aqueduct, library, and two community latrine projects.

Funding up to \$2,500 is provided to individual projects planned and coordinated by Volunteers. “To date, 41 projects have been approved [at a cost of over \$78,000], with 27 already completed. A total of 2,700 Dominican households have been directly assisted,” Epler says, adding, “While all of the matching fund incentives have been used, we continue to raise an average of almost \$20,000 a year for CCF projects, largely because we are able to present a proven, successful product to potential donors. One hundred percent of all donations go directly to project activities, as there are no overhead or staff costs charged to the program.”



“We are tremendously proud of our support of Peace Corps Partnership projects.”

— Rob Bartel (RPCV, 1995-1997),  
Friends of Fiji President

Friends of the DR also helps coordinate two other RPCV programs that fund activities. The Fondo Quisqueya Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides low income Dominican residents with scholarships and grants, while the Andy Hernandez Fund, named for the first Dominican Republic country director, funds various projects.

In similar fashion, Friends of Mongolia (FOM) operates two scholarship programs for Mongolian students to pursue a college or university education: FOM Scholarship and Girvin Scholarship. The latter is co-facilitated by UNICEF and the Mongolian Youth Development Foundation. “We have an annual competition and last year we funded 19 scholarships,” says FOM co-Director Anne Riordan.

“Recently, we funded a project in Bayan-Ulgii Aimag where a Volunteer is working with a counterpart to hold an English teachers seminar for Kazakh speakers,” Riordan says, adding, “Additionally, we funded a small grant for a computer learning center in Sukhbaatar Soum so the Volunteer and counterpart could hold computer trainings for the community.”

## SEEKING FURTHER INVOLVEMENT

Two groups that played a big role in helping Peace Corps re-establish programs recently are now looking for ways to further their involvement with Volunteers.

Friends of Liberia (FOL) and Friends of Sierra Leone (FSL) maintained a strong presence in the RPCV community despite an absence of Volunteers in those countries for 18 and 16 years, respectively. The Peace Corps re-entered Liberia with a team of 12 Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) in October 2008 and transitioned to a full Peace Corps program in June of this year. The program in Sierra Leone also greeted its first full group of Volunteers in June.

FOL was founded in 1986 as a social group that occasionally funded requests from Liberia. After war broke out, FOL became an advocacy group for the country and took an active role in mediating among warring parties.

The Liberia group recently ran a “Return to Liberia” project, with 30 FOL members participating. “We did service projects in the country together and then traveled. We also met with, and observed the work of, Peace Corps Response Volunteers,” says FOL Vice President Pat Reilly.

In 2009, FOL published its second edition of *Liberian Cookhouse Cooking*, a compilation of recipes from FOL members and Liberians in the U.S. Proceeds from the book go to an FOL small grants program that funds projects in Liberia.

“Our program has funded several projects that were sponsored by Response Volunteers. We only fund Liberian organizations, but the support of Response Volunteers is obvious in the ability to meet our criteria for application,” says Reilly.

FSL has funded a women’s agricultural project and provided support for training nurses at a pediatric hospital in the past two years. Two primary schools, a technical school, and a community resources center in Sierra Leone also benefited from FSL’s help.



RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison teach others about the Peace Corps during a recent event.

However, President Peggy Murrah says her organization is looking forward to funding more projects inspired by Peace Corps Volunteers in the coming years.

In similar fashion, RPCVs of Colorado hopes to create a network that not only continues to provide monetary support for PC Partnership projects, but also offers technical advice, if needed.

“We try to support PCVs with a connection to Colorado whose projects seem sustainable. The board reviews grant requests from January to April and awards grants in May. We are also willing to accept special requests outside of that window,” President Arianne Burger (RPCV/Kazakhstan, 1999-2001) says.

Today there are 60 RPCV alumni groups formally recognized by the National Peace Corps Association, although several others act independently of the organization. All of them have a common element – former Volunteers who want to contribute. To learn more about how you can connect with an alumni group, visit [peacecorpsconnect.org/member-groups](http://peacecorpsconnect.org/member-groups).

Volunteers can also learn more about funding opportunities by contacting the Peace Corps Office of Private Sector Initiatives at [pccpp@peacecorps.gov](mailto:pccpp@peacecorps.gov).





# NOTES *from the* FIELD

## A Brief Look at Posts and Projects

### ALBANIA

#### Film Increases Awareness of Human Trafficking

Peace Corps/Albania Volunteer Lauren Ready (2009-2011) collaborated with a school psychologist and the executive director of the Albanian Center for Population and Development to promote a film about the dangers of human trafficking. In April, Ready showed the film to more than 100 10th-grade students.

The film, made in consultation with five Albanian women who were trafficked into the sex trade, is an animated account highlighting dangers and raising awareness among young people. The film, titled “Two Little Girls,” can be found at [stopchildslavery.com](http://stopchildslavery.com).

### BURKINA FASO

#### Lessons, Murals Leave Lasting Impression

Community Health Volunteer Amanda Cassiday (2008-2010) completed a daily nutritional program for 30 mothers and their children and painted health-education murals to remind villagers of the lessons. The program, funded by a Small Project Assistance (SPA) grant, incorporated basic nutritional education and offered hands-on learning by preparing nutritious porridge every morning and encouraging repetition of healthy behaviors.

“I saw how empowering it was for community members—understanding the message on their own and explaining it to others,” said Cassiday.



Volunteer Amanda Cassiday stands near health education murals she produced in her village.

### BOTSWANA

#### Health Education Day Sponsored for Youth

With the help of Volunteer facilitators and funding from local government officials, Volunteers Julie Mellin (2008-2010) and Karen LaFlash (2008-2010) planned and implemented an adolescent reproductive health day for youth. This provided the opportunity for 70 teenage boys and girls from five different villages to spend the day at a settlement in

southern Botswana. They participated in educational and life skills sessions on negotiation skills, relationships, dealing with one’s HIV status, and teen pregnancy.

Mellin and LaFlash also helped facilitate a regional leadership camp for 30 secondary school girls.

### GUATEMALA



Volunteer Anne Ballard (2008-2010) spends time with some of the women in her community in Guatemala. A Healthy Homes Volunteer, she was instrumental in forming a club for pregnant women, helping to promote nutrition, exercise, and basic newborn care.

### MACEDONIA

#### PCVs Help Facilitate Inaugural Spelling Bee

Peace Corps Volunteers Maggie Davies (2008-2010) and Matthew Tschabold (2008-2010) joined forces with the organization American Corners in Macedonia to conduct the first National Spelling Bee in Macedonia. Approximately 400 students from throughout the country competed in four categories at the May 15 event. There were 12 winners from grades 5 to 12.

### ROMANIA

#### EcoWeb Promotes Collaboration, Education

The National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA), the U.S. Embassy, and Peace Corps/Romania launched Project EcoWeb on Earth Day. Over 200 teachers and students joined government officials and Country Director Sheila Crowley at a press conference to kick off the event. The project was financed by USAID through the Small Project Assistance (SPA) program and was co-financed by NEPA.

A national environmental education database, Project EcoWeb aims to strengthen the relationship between Romanian government organizations and civil society institutions. The website can be accessed at [ecoweb.anpm.ro](http://ecoweb.anpm.ro). Environmental education manuals developed by Volunteers are available for use.

### PARAGUAY

#### Book Club Sparks Interest in Reading

A married couple in Peace Corps/Paraguay is in the process of creating a library for a community of 200 families. Volunteers Lisa Stauffer-Baum (2008-2010) and Jesse Stauffer-Baum (2008-2010) have started a children’s book club to spark interest in reading and demonstrate how to use and appreciate books. Children meet once a week to read, put puzzles together, and make books—utilizing the website [booksatoz.com](http://booksatoz.com)—to add to the library.



Children attend a public library project organized by Volunteers Lisa Stauffer-Baum and Jesse Stauffer-Baum.

### SENEGAL

#### Volunteers Combat Malaria with Bed Nets

Volunteers are delivering bed nets to remote villages in the southwestern region of Velingara and are conducting malaria lessons with community members before distribution. Volunteers hope to provide a mosquito net for every bed in areas with high malaria rates and are conducting post-distribution evaluations with local health workers to verify that the nets are being properly used.

To learn more about the project, check out Peace Corps Response Volunteer Kris White’s story on the Peace Corps website.

### SOUTH AFRICA

#### Volunteers, Local Students Meet Team USA

Volunteers Joanna Balza (2008-2010) and Haley McDonough (2008-2010) helped organize a trip for 50 local students to a U.S. soccer team practice in Pretoria West in June. The World Cup outreach effort provided orphans, vulnerable children, and other at-risk youth a personal look at the huge sporting event.

The Volunteers traveled with their students, ages 10 to 16, to share in the festivities. The duo regularly works with the students at their schools and

through HIV/AIDS prevention and education programs. Five South African chaperones also helped with the event.

The group was welcomed by U.S. Ambassador Donald Gips and U.S. head coach Bob Bradley and met many of the national players.



U.S. player Jozy Altidore signs autographs for children who were part of a trip to a World Cup practice that Volunteers helped organize in June.

### TONGA

#### Cleanup Programs Launched by PCVs

Carole Kallansrude (2008-2010), a community education Volunteer, initiated Tonga’s first official “E-Waste” removal program and was able to assemble a team of local business owners, school officials, and other Volunteers to begin a wide-scale effort to collect and remove old computers from the island nation.

Fellow Volunteer Saskia Nauenberg (2008-2010) helped plant mangroves to tackle soil erosion, organized sustainable beach cleanups, and has launched a marine cleanup campaign. Nauenberg is responsible for the creation of the Vava’u Environmental Protection Association.

## PEACE CORPS Times

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#### Staff

Mark Huffman *Editor/Writer*  
Kelly McCormack *Writer*  
Nicola A.P. Cullen *Contributor*  
Juan Carlos Polanco *Design and Layout*

We welcome all Volunteer submissions and suggestions. Contact us at:

Peace Corps Times  
c/o Office of Communications  
Paul D. Coverdell  
Peace Corps Headquarters  
1111 20th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20526  
or email  
[pctimes@peacecorps.gov](mailto:pctimes@peacecorps.gov)