



PEACE  
CORPS

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PEACE CORPS ANNIVERSARY

## Connecting Cultures, Promoting Service at Smithsonian Folklife Festival

Before applying for a passport to travel to Washington for the 2011 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Lilian Nalilian Lekadaa—a Samburu woman from northern Kenya—had never been to her nation’s capital, Nairobi. Months later, she found herself in the unlikely position of sitting on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., teaching thousands of Americans and visitors from around the world about the art of traditional Kenyan basket making.

Lekadaa was one of 83 participants—a group comprised of current and former Volunteers and their host-country partners—who were invited by the Smithsonian Institution to represent the Peace Corps at the annual exhibition of culture. Peace Corps Goals Two and Three were on display at the Festival. Host-country participants shared their traditions and learned about American culture firsthand, visiting national monuments, attending a Major League Baseball game, and enjoying the sites of Washington, D.C.

Over the course of the Festival, many described the Peace Corps as a family. “Without this opportunity, I couldn’t meet the Zambians or the friends in Tonga in the Pacific,” said Malian mud cloth maker, Hamadoun “Big Brother Simbè” Sankaré. “We love each other like sisters and brothers: one mind, one heart.”

“The Peace Corps Volunteers, returned Volunteers, and host country nationals who were participants exemplified the goodwill, energy, and spirit of our organization,” said Peace Corps Director



Lilian Nalilian Lekadaa of Kenya shares a handcrafted bracelet with a young visitor to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

Aaron S. Williams. “Their devotion to promoting world peace and friendship taught visitors about the work of Volunteers and represented the bond that has developed with the people of 139 countries in which the Peace Corps has served.”

Festival participant Mahabat Sultanbekova, a Peace Corps staff member in the Kyrgyz Republic, said, “When you’re in Kyrgyzstan, America seems to be so far away, like it’s on another planet, but once you’re here you get to talk to people, you get to know the people, you get to have breakfast together with people in America and you’re like, ‘Wow, we’re all human, we are all the same.’”

Although participants didn’t always share a common language, they soon

found ways to communicate through a shared experience. “Even though some may not speak English, we are still able to communicate through sign language, which, we just learned,” said Henry Chilufya, a Peace Corps/Zambia staff member.

Learning and sharing occurred in many forms at the Festival, some of which will have a long-term benefit for local communities. For Mele Vaikeli, an artist and weaver from Tonga, an invitation to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History archives revealed that Tongan weaving has evolved over the years. With the help of a curator, she discovered in the museum’s collections several patterns, designs, and materials from 19th century Tongan weaving that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 ■■■■■■■■■■▶

### Letter from the Director

Dear Peace Corps Volunteers:

I would like to personally thank each one of you who participated in the 2011 Annual Volunteer Survey (AVS). Thanks to you, the Peace Corps achieved a historically high 86 percent global response rate, with almost 7,000 Volunteers responding to the survey this year! Your participation reflects the dedication and exemplary effort that you bring to every aspect of your Peace Corps service.

I would like to extend a special thanks to our Volunteers and dedicated staff at the 61 posts that achieved a response rate of 70 percent or better. In fact, 16 posts achieved 100 percent participation. I also appreciate that so many of you (96 percent) completed the AVS online this year—another historic high.

The AVS results help us improve the Volunteer experience by increasing the impact of Volunteers in their communities and enhancing our operations at headquarters and in the field. We will make the general global summary results available to all survey participants through each country director the week of November 7, 2011.

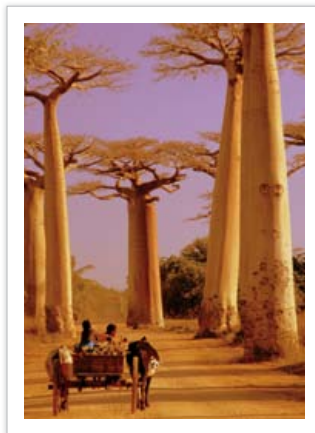
Your voice is essential to our efforts to build a stronger Peace Corps. Thank you for your outstanding 2011 AVS participation and for your dedicated service as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Sincerely,  
Aaron S. Williams  
Director  
(RPCV/Dominican Republic,  
1967-1970)

### 50th Anniversary Photo Contest Winners Announced

Thank you to all Volunteers who participated in the Peace Corps’ 50th Anniversary Photo Contest. After judging over 3,700 photos, the following 13 winners were announced in September:

- Paige Gable, Indonesia (2011-2013)
- Charlene Espinoza, Liberia (2011-2013)
- Briana Scroggins, Malawi (2010-2012)
- Cate Crandell, Moldova (2010-2012)
- Pamela Rogers, Lesotho (2007-2009)
- Melanie Chamberlain, Senegal (2009-2011)
- Sara Holtz, Togo (1995-1998)
- Emily Haas, Armenia (2009-2011)
- Michael Goralezyk, Tanzania (2010-2012)
- Ciara Johnson, Guinea (2007-2009)
- Elle Chang, Indonesia (2011-2013)
- Chris DeBruyn, Mongolia (2007-2009)
- Julie Smith, Madagascar (2009-2011)



Madagascar Volunteer Julie Smith’s photo was recognized as the most popular contest entry based upon Facebook votes.

Winning photos will be featured in the next issue.

### A Summertime Staple in Washington, D.C.

The Smithsonian Folklife Festival has been a summertime staple in Washington, D.C., for 45 years. The 10-day event is a “museum without walls,” bringing together musicians, artists, performers, craftspeople, storytellers, and community members to the National Mall to demonstrate the skills and knowledge of community-based traditions from around the world.

This year’s Peace Corps program explored the agency’s mission—to promote world peace and friendship—by introducing visitors to Volunteers and

returned Volunteers and members of the communities in which they have served. The Peace Corps was joined by programs on the country of Colombia and Rhythm and Blues music.

Welcomed by participants ranging from Jamaican organic farmers, to Georgian winemakers, to San Dancers from Botswana, the nearly 1.1 million visitors who attended this year’s festival got a true taste of the Peace Corps.

To enjoy the sights and sounds of this highlight of our 50th anniversary, go to [flickr.com/peacecorps.gov](http://flickr.com/peacecorps.gov) or [festival.si.edu](http://festival.si.edu).





# Peace Corps at the 2011 Smithsonian Folklife Festival

## 1. CRAFT DEMONSTRATIONS



Volunteer Elena Borquist-Noyes accompanied Tongan artisan Mele Vaikeli to the Festival, where they demonstrated Tongan weaving. Artisans from Kenya, Mali, Guatemala, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Morocco also gave handicraft demonstrations.

## 5. APPROPRIATE TECHNOLOGY: ZAMBIA



The Peace Corps/Zambia team demonstrated technology projects that use village resources to improve the standard of living. Their demonstration included solar-food dryers, pedal-powered cellphone chargers and clothes washers, coolers, maize hullers, and fuel-efficient stoves.

## 6. PEACE PORCH



Volunteers, returned Volunteers, host country nationals, and Peace Corps staff gathered on the Peace Porch stage to share stories about their experiences promoting world peace and friendship.

## 7. SHEA BUTTER: GHANA



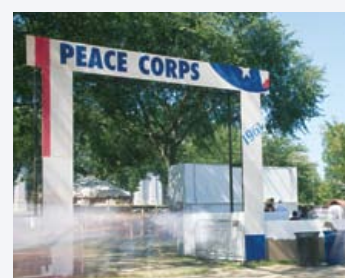
Three women from Ghana joined RPCV Rahama Wright to share their knowledge of shea production. Wright and the women set up a production display to demonstrate how they transform shea nuts into shea butter to sell and use.

## 10. BOTTLE SCHOOL WALL: GUATEMALA



RPCV Laura Kutner and her two Guatemalan counterparts demonstrated how to use plastic bottles filled with inorganic trash as an alternative to cinder blocks to construct a wall. During her service, Kutner and her host community used the same method to build a local "bottle" school.

## 12. PEACE CORPS ENTRANCE GATE



This summer the Peace Corps participated in the 2011 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. Over 1 million people attended the two-week event, which served to promote Peace Corps' Third Goal, helping Americans understand the people of other countries.

## 13. RPCVILLAGE



The tents in the RPCVillage provided RPCVs and others a place to connect through message boards and a conversation area. Recorders were provided in the Oral History tent to document and preserve stories from the history and culture of the Peace Corps.

## LEGEND

- 1. Craft Demonstrations:** Artisans demonstrated their crafts, which were also available for purchase in the market tent.
- 2. Kids Corps Tent:** The Festival's youngest visitors collected stamps in Festival passports and learned new language skills.
- 3. Organic Farming:** Visitors learned tips and techniques for effective organic farming.
- 4. Trees, Water & People:** Festival visitors learned about clean cook stove technologies.
- 5. Appropriate Technology:** An interactive display showed common items repurposed to make daily tasks more efficient.
- 6. Peace Porch:** Visitors gathered around the porch to hear stories about the Peace Corps.
- 7. Shea Butter:** Ghanaian women demonstrated the process of making shea butter.
- 8. Wine Making:** Grape stomping was a highlight for visitors.
- 9. Home Cooking:** Volunteers and HCNs hosted their own cooking shows highlighting traditional food dishes.
- 10. Bottle School Wall:** Visitors learned to fill plastic bottles with trash and construct a wall.
- 11. World Map:** Visitors to the Festival helped complete a World Map project.
- 12. Peace Corps Entrance Gate:** Visitors entered the Peace Corps section of the Festival here.
- 13. RPCVillage:** Message boards, a wish tree, and scheduled reunions allowed RPCVs to reconnect.
- 14. World Stage:** Performers shared traditional songs and dances with Festival visitors.
- 15. Food Tents:** Southeast Asian and West African concessions were available.

## 14. WORLD STAGE



The World Stage tent presented a variety of music, dance, and theater from current Peace Corps countries.



Performances included The Garifuna Collective, featuring the Umalali Women Singers (Belize/Honduras); Naro Giraffe Dance Group (Botswana); Opika Performance Group (Ukraine); Peru Gozando (Peru RPCVs); and The Rehoboth Children's Home Dance Team (Philippines).

Shown to the left are performers from Opika Performance Group (above) and Naro Giraffe Dance Group (below).

# Weeklong Celebrations Honor the Peace Corps

Friendships were renewed and stories were shared at events recognizing the recent 50th anniversary of the September 22, 1961, signing of the Peace Corps Act. To commemorate the milestone, thousands of returned Volunteers attended events across Washington, D.C.

Following is a snapshot of the many events hosted by the Peace Corps, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, and others. For more details, visit [www.peacecorps.gov/50](http://www.peacecorps.gov/50).

The celebration began on Wednesday, September 21, with a ceremony at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History, marking the donation of artifacts for a new Peace Corps Collection. The museum also hosted an "Out of Storage" display with a few of the newly collected items, allowing RPCVs and visitors to see the items before they were processed by material preservationists. The collection included an original sign from Peace Corps' post in Ghana and signed letters from President Kennedy.

On Wednesday evening, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts commemorated the agency's anniversary by featuring a performance by world renowned Senegalese artist Youssou N'Dour. The event began with a moving introduction by U.S. Rep. John Garamendi (RPCV/Ethiopia, 1965-1968) and remarks by Senegal Country Director Chris Hedrick highlighting the work of Volunteers in malaria prevention and education in western Africa.

The agency also hosted a three-day open house at Peace Corps headquarters that began Thursday. Visitors and returned Volunteers left notes on an RPCV message board, mingled with Peace Corps staff members, and viewed winning photos from the Peace Corps' 50th anniversary photo contest.

On Thursday, RPCVs also shared their personal stories at the Peace Corps Story Slam at McPherson Square

in the heart of Washington, D.C. The event, produced in cooperation with a local Washington story-telling group, allowed the audience to hear about the Volunteer experience firsthand.

The storytelling continued Friday morning at the "Early Volunteers" panel, moderated by Peace Corps Chief of Staff Stacy Rhodes. Panelist Judy Guskin (RPCV/Thailand 1) shared the story of the "historic napkin." She was one of thousands of students at the University of Michigan on October 14, 1960, who were asked, by then-Sen. John F. Kennedy, if they would contribute two years of their lives to help people in countries of the developing world.



The Peace Corps Walk of Flags makes its way to the Lincoln Memorial.

Guskin immediately took Kennedy's words to heart, penning her thoughts on a napkin. "My ex-husband (Al Guskin) and I went to a greasy spoon and wrote a letter to the (student) community at-large in Ann Arbor. It got in the paper and we said, "This is a great idea, we're ready to volunteer," she recalls, noting that over 1,000 students contacted her shortly after the article.

At Friday's Peace Corps night at Nationals Park, Director Aaron S. Williams (RPCV/Dominican Republic, 1967-1970) threw the first pitch before a game between the Washington Nationals and the Atlanta Braves.

Before the game, RPCVs also displayed the colors of their countries of service in a "Parade of Flags."

Williams also addressed those attending The Promise of the Peace Corps Gala hosted by NPCA at the Ronald Reagan Building later that evening. Former U.S. Sen. Harris Wofford, who was instrumental in creating the Peace Corps, also spoke. The event was hosted by Chris Matthews (RPCV/Swaziland, 1968-1970), while singer-songwriter Chrystal Bowersox entertained the audience.

The celebrations concluded Sunday with a ceremony honoring Volunteers who have died in service and the work done by all Volunteers. The ceremony attracted nearly 5,000 visitors and included government leaders and ambassadors from Peace Corps countries.

Liberia Vice President Joseph Boakai Sr., who was influenced by a Peace Corps Volunteer during his childhood, said, "I can think of no other organization in the world with grassroots orientation that has achieved all of its goals in record time as the Peace Corps."

Looking to the agency's next 50 years, former U.S. Sen. Chris Dodd (RPCV/Dominican Republic, 1966-1968) said, "Now more than ever, we are at point in history where the Peace Corps is needed. [The Peace Corps] has not only remained an important symbol of hope throughout the world, but has become an essential element of this world as well."

Director Williams concluded the ceremony by honoring all Volunteers. "They belong to a single common family—one united in the belief that service can change lives and change the world," he said.

Following the ceremony, Volunteers from all 139 of Peace Corps countries walked to the Lincoln Memorial in a Walk of Flags procession. Director Williams carried the Peace Corps flag.



## Career Corner RPCV Career Center Relocates to Washington, D.C.

Returned Volunteer Services' RPCV Career Center has moved to Washington, D.C. Previously located within the Mid-Atlantic Peace Corps Recruiting Office in Arlington, Virginia, the Career Center is now part of Peace Corps headquarters.

Temporary located in a separate building, the Center will move to its permanent destination on the ground floor of the main headquarters building when renovations are completed in January 2012.

The current facility has four computers, loaded with valuable resources to help RPCVs transition from Peace Corps into post-service employment. Bulletin boards feature up-to-date information on housing, job fairs, career-related workshops, and other free events. RPCVs also have access to general office equipment, such as a copier and printer, to assist them in conducting an effective job search.

The Career Center provides a variety of services to RPCVs, including:

- Workshops and webinars on career-related topics like networking, cover letters, and interviewing techniques
- Resume reviews, in-person for those living in Washington, D.C., and via Internet for those outside Washington
- Assistance with the career and job search process

Each Peace Corps regional recruitment office has a smaller "RPCV career corner," equipped with a computer with Internet access and the same helpful resources. In addition, this past year, Returned Volunteer Services conducted one-day regional career events, including regional job fairs, in each of the regional recruitment office cities.

Everyone is encouraged to join the RPCV Network listserv, a daily listserv exclusive to RPCVs that features job opportunities, career events, and housing opportunities. To join, visit [www.groups.google.com/group/rpcvnetwork](http://www.groups.google.com/group/rpcvnetwork).

All RPCVs may also take advantage of One Stop Career Centers located throughout the U.S., which can provide valuable assistance during the job search process. To find your closest employment center, visit [www.servicelocator.org/onestopcenters.asp](http://www.servicelocator.org/onestopcenters.asp).

# Volunteers Present Hands-On Science Lessons

Tanzania Peace Corps Volunteers Peter McDonough and Aron Walker showed the fruits of their labor at a science exhibit in June at Mkwawa University College of Education (MUCE). McDonough, a secondary school teacher, and Walker, a college instructor, manned a tent as part of MUCE's celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of its parent institution, the University of Dar es Salaam.

While other tents housed education and humanities exhibits, the Volunteers' tent displayed a secondary school science laboratory assembled from local material.

Two of his students joined McDonough and showed how they learned science at their school, demonstrating low cost laboratory flame

sources and explaining the manufacture of biochemical reagents from materials found at the market. More than just show and tell, the students engaged the large crowd in experiments: spinning bicycle wheels, testing botanical indicators, and powering up a hand-built electrical motor.

Several educators described the presentation as "transforming," noting that it left them excited about the possibility of hands-on methods for teaching science, even at the most remote schools. "I have seen a new way to teach," remarked one education student after using a hand mirror and a bucket of water to reveal many colors in white light.

"That is the whole point. A well-

conceived activity will teach the concept completely," said McDonough.

Particular touching for current educators was observing the depth of knowledge McDonough's students exhibited in their explanations. MUCE invited Walker to take part in a discussion about how to improve secondary level science education. Walker specifically addressed the benefits of hands-on science and the possibilities afforded by using local material.

One of the students presenting the exhibit summarized the point very well: "Doing experiments is the best way of learning science. And you can do experiments with very ordinary things, things that we can find even at our school."



# NOTES *from the* FIELD

## *A Brief Look at Posts and Projects*

### BULGARIA

Inaugural English Spelling Bee held Felicia Bivens (2009-2011) and Erin Raleigh (2009-2011) joined more than 50 Peace Corps Volunteers in organizing Bulgaria's first National English Spelling Bee with the help of local students and teachers. The winner of the competition was a 13-year-old student from Kostinbrod, Bulgaria, who received a trophy from U.S. Ambassador James Warlick.

The winner and 20 other students also each received a scholarship to an English-language summer camp in July that Volunteers helped organize.

### BURKINA FASO

Volunteer Helps Revitalize Archery Volunteer Jon Rudnicki (2009-2011) recently helped revitalize archery by hosting a community tournament. Home to the Lobi, whose ancestors carried bows to forage and use as weapons, the village was so receptive to the tournament that a second one was conducted, with a women's division being added.

"Everyone in the village valued the solidarity in preserving their traditions," said Rudnicki.



Women participate in an archery tournament that Volunteer Jon Rudnicki helped organize in his community.

### COSTA RICA

Coffee Producers Receive Certification

Volunteer Sarah Page (2011-2013) helped a cooperative of 800 Costa Rican coffee producers create sustainable business operations and become officially carbon-neutral certified. She worked with the coffee cooperative to determine all of the direct and associated emissions over the life-cycle of the product. The cooperative eventually lowered carbon emissions by reducing the amount of fertilizer used to grow the coffee.



Volunteer Sarah Page (right) joins a member of a carbon neutral certification team in Costa Rica.

### THE GAMBIA

Bike Trek Educates Youth about HIV/AIDS

Twenty-seven Volunteers and their four Gambian counterparts took a bike trek throughout The Gambia's North Bank Region and Central River Region-North last spring to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Three teams of bikers traveled to five schools and facilitated interactive programs and games to teach students about the transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Each program session concluded with informational skits performed by student peer health groups.



Volunteers pose before embarking on a bike trek to bring attention to HIV/AIDS education.

### GUATEMALA

Vegetables Roll From Tire Gardens

Volunteer Keisha Herbert (2010-2012) trained more than 30 girls, ages 6 to 14, to create vegetable gardens out of recycled car and truck tires to raise environmental awareness and increase access to healthy food. Herbert held a cooking and nutrition class with the vegetables students generated from the gardens.

Herbert helped the girls cut the top of the tires, fill them with soil and seeds, and paint the tires and wooden display posts. Today, the young women are growing and planting onions, tomatoes, carrots, and celery seeds in the gardens.



Volunteer Keisha Herbert and her students show the vegetable gardens they created by using recycled tires.

### PHILIPPINES

Baseball Camp Benefits 200 Students

Volunteers, in collaboration with the U.S. Embassy and Baseball Philippines, the country's professional baseball league, organized a two-day baseball camp in

Baguio City July 9-10. Volunteers played softball with more than 200 students and helped run a baseball clinic to promote sportsmanship and fitness. The event featured U.S. Ambassador Harry Thomas Jr. and was attended by students of Peace Corps Volunteers from the Baguio City area.



A Peace Corps Volunteer plays baseball with youth in the Philippines.

### RWANDA

Pilot Program Teaches English to Judges

Eleven Volunteers organized an intensive four-month pilot program designed to teach English to Supreme Court judges and other court staff. The July training was attended by more than 60 judges and court staff members. The training was conducted in partnership with the government to help Rwanda's judicial system transition from a Franco-phone civil law to an Anglophone hybrid common-civil law system.

### SURINAME

Anniversaries Celebrated With Ambassador, President

Approximately 500 guests attended a Fourth of July reception to honor the Peace Corps' 50th anniversary and the 16th anniversary of Peace Corps/Suriname. The event was held at the residence of U.S. Ambassador John R. Nay.

Suriname President Desiré Boutrose also attended and praised the work of Peace Corps Volunteers.

### THAILAND

Volunteer Organizes Life Skills Camp

Volunteer Anita Root (2010-2012) organized a three-day HIV/AIDS Life Skills Camp with 40 youth from her rural village in Thailand. The camp, held April 7-9, was funded through donations from the Peace Corps Partnership Program and focused on HIV prevention and education. Activities included information sessions led by community members and Peace Corps Volunteers on HIV/AIDS prevention, statistics, and healthy life skills. Participants also addressed ways to share information with other community members in anticipation of World AIDS Day on December 1.

### TOGO

Leadership Camps Benefit 500 Youth

Throughout the summer, 50 Volunteers managed 10 weeklong camps for nearly 500 youth, ages 10 to 23, in Pagala. Participants attended four distinct camps: Espoir, a camp for kids infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, taught lessons about life skills and self-confidence; Camp Joie taught disabled youth about living a healthy lifestyle; Camp Scientifille promoted girls in science through hands-on activities; and at Camp UNITE (Unification of the Nation: Initiative-Work-Education), youth learned about leadership, reproductive health, gender equality, and communication skills.

At the conclusion of each camp, participants organized local day camps or youth clubs in their villages to practice their new skills and share what they learned with their local communities



Volunteer Rose Lindgren (2008-2011) of Thousand Oaks, California, joins Camp UNITE participants in Togo.

### CORRECTION

The wrong photo accompanied a story about Honduras Volunteer Blair Wrangham (2009-2011) in the previous issue. *Peace Corps Times* apologizes for the error.

## PEACE CORPS | Times

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