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Editor: Erica Burman

Contributors: Brandon Baca, Erica Burman, Anthony Cherwinski, Bob Criso, Sara Feldman, Cliff Garstang, Leah Hashinger, Marianne Joyce, Jonathan Pearson, Suzanne Smith, Kate Schwanhausser, Emily Sernaker, Hannah Stocks, Andy Trincia, Diana Vergis-Vinh, Jade Wu

WorldView Advertising

Scott Oser

advertising@peacecorpsconnect.org

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WorldView



Winter 2014

Volume 27, Number 4

A magazine of news and comment about the Peace Corps world

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION



Nashville's ESL to Go brings language classes to refugees.

FEATURES: Refugees & Immigrants

14 | Balkan Son Redux

The story of a Kosovo refugee comes full circle
By Andy Trincia

18 | Aiding Refugee Integration

Celebrating an award-winning collaborative relationship
By Anthony Cherwinski

21 | Refugees Helping Refugees

Interpreter program models sustainability and innovation
By Emily Sernaker and Hannah Stocks

24 | RPCV Drives Class For Refugees

An innovative ESL program brings instruction to refugees' doorsteps
By Leah Hashinger

28 | The Refugee Well-Being Project

An innovative mental health intervention model
By Brandon Baca

31 | The Global

Community, Here At Home
RPCVs put Peace Corps skills to work in Chicago
By Marianne Joyce

33 | The Richness Of The Present Comes From The Past

An immigrant Volunteer reflects on her immigrant students
By Jade Wu

ON THE COVER A joyous Çelik Nimani waves the Kosovo flag at Kosovo's first FIFA-sanctioned international friendly football match between Kosovo and Haiti (October 5, 2014). CREDIT: ÇELIK NIMANI

WorldView

A magazine of news and comment about the Peace Corps world

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DEPARTMENTS



8



37



40

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

6 The Peace Corps Family

By Glenn Blumhorst

AROUND THE NPCA

8 Group News Highlights

A look at what NPCA member groups are up to
By Jonathan Pearson

10 Advocacy Update

RPCVs around the country participate in district office advocacy initiative
By Suzanne Smith

12 Blogs, Baseball And Ebola

A busy fall for the National Peace Corps Association
By Erica Burman

13 Why I Give: Ken Hill

"Now is the best opportunity I have seen for NPCA to succeed."

By Kate Schwanhausser

BUZZ FROM THE FIELD

28 Internally Displaced Persons In Georgia

Understanding barriers to integration
By Sara Feldman

43 Where In The World Is WorldView?

Send us a photo!

COMMENTARY AND OPINION

37 Troubled Lands

A reflection on tense borders and dangerous places
By Bob Criso

LETTERS FROM ...

40 Letter From Mali

A Return to Mali-la
By Diana Vergis Vinh

BOOK LOCKER

41 Everywhere Stories

Edited by Clifford Garstang, Korea 1976-77

COMMUNITY NEWS

42 Recent Achievements of Our Community

Edited by Jonathan Pearson

45 In Memoriam

ADVERTISER INDEX

44

THE PUBLISHER

The publisher of *WorldView* magazine is the National Peace Corps Association, a national network of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, former staff and friends. The NPCA is a not-for-profit 501(c) (3) educational and service organization which is independent of the federal agency, the Peace Corps.

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THE PEACE CORPS FAMILY

By Glenn Blumhorst

We haven't been shouting it from the rooftops, but this year marks the 35th anniversary of the National Peace Corps Association.

Back in the mid-1970s, several Returned Peace Corps Volunteers kept crossing paths at midwestern global education conferences and started to discuss how they could continue to promote the values and lessons they learned as Volunteers around the world. Meanwhile, small communities of Returned Volunteers had been meeting in Washington, D.C., New York and elsewhere. In 1978 the parties held a "tribal council" of sorts, formed a steering committee and made plans to meet the following year, when they established the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (incorporated in 1981) and elected its first chair, Greg Flakus (Philippines 1973-1975). The name would be changed to the more inclusive National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) in 1993.

Looking back, as both a returned Volunteer and now as the president of the NPCA, I am indebted to the vision of those pioneers and to their dedication that continues to this day. Visit the Board Emeriti page on our website (<http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/about/board-emeriti-program/>) and take in the decades of service given by scores of returned Volunteers. They knew then what we still know today: that when we return from our Peace Corps service transformed, with a newfound worldview, cultural agility, resiliency, gratitude—and some great stories—we go through one

of the most challenging transitions of our lives. But we don't have to "go it alone." A community of people who shares and understands our Peace Corps experience awaits.

Today, the NPCA stands at the center of that united and vibrant community—an alumni network of over 215,000 individuals who continue to have an impact, who continue to get things done at home and abroad.

Keeping our community engaged, connected and informed is what the NPCA is all about.

Around the globe, 143 affiliated local chapters undertake grassroots activities while the national organization provides an umbrella of core services and programs to RPCVs.

Connecting with our fellow RPCVs helps us land on our feet and take the next step toward graduate school, career change, launching a business or continued service. The NPCA mentoring program, LinkedIn group and scholarship opportunities help ease the transition from Peace Corps Volunteer to student, working professional, entrepreneur, or wherever we are headed next in our life.

Peace Corps Connect, the annual conference of the Peace Corps community, is yet another way that the NPCA brings us together and strengthens our sense of community. As Peace Corps Connect 2014 in Nashville proved, you can expect to be energized, engaged and entertained when we meet again on June 5-6, 2015 in Berkeley, Calif.

We value our Peace Corps experience and we'd like for more Americans to have the opportunity to serve. Through the NPCA's advocacy program, RPCV citizen advocates—you—support issues

important to the Peace Corps community, including an independent and robust Peace Corps, and policies that respect, honor and recognize the contributions of the Peace Corps community. Join us on Capitol Hill—or online—for our National Day of Action on behalf of the Peace Corps on March 5, 2015.

When I became president of the NPCA last year, I described it as "coming full circle." I'm privileged to serve as the President of the NPCA, serving you and the Peace Corps community after starting out as a Volunteer myself some 22 years earlier. Like many RPCVs, I had become unintentionally disconnected—a result perhaps of my focus on family and career, or my 10 relocations during 18 years of living abroad, or my lack of participation in social media.

Now I realize what I needlessly missed over many years. I missed opportunities to advocate in Congress for one of the most formative institutions in my life and career. I missed opportunities to reunite with, and expand, my circle of RPCV peers. I missed networking, professional development, and business opportunities to ease my transitions and aid my career advancement. I missed out on my family—my Peace Corps family.

I encourage you to be an involved member of the Peace Corps community through your NPCA. You won't want to miss it.

In continued service,

Glenn Blumhorst

President, National Peace Corps Association
RPCV Guatemala, 1988-1991

You can reach Glenn at president@peacecorpsconnect.org.

Interested in supporting the work of the NPCA? Visit <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/contact-us/contributing/>. If you have never been a member of the NPCA, it's free! Sign up at www.peacecorpsconnect.org/free and continue to receive *WorldView* magazine.

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GROUP NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

A look at what NPCA member groups are up to

By Jonathan Pearson



WASHINGTON DC

It's becoming an annual event. The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington DC (RPCV/W) joined Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet for a town hall style discussion in October. RPCV/W Treasurer, Jason Smith, moderated a discussion based on five general themes: Peace Corps' evolution over the years, benefits for RPCVs, program openings and closings, RPCV concerns and the future of Peace Corps. Questions streamed in from around the country from a diverse body of RPCVs, from the very first Volunteers to some who just returned from service. Additional questions were taken from the live audience and Twitter. RPCV/W thanks the Office of the Third Goal for the strong organization, Peace Corps headquarter's tech team for streaming the meeting around the world, and, of course, Carrie, for taking part in the discussion.



HEALTH JUSTICE

One of the newest NPCA member groups is Health Justice for Peace Corps Volunteers. Initial meetings in Washington at the NPCA offices and national conference calls has led to the establishment of a growing working group that is exploring activities to raise awareness and support for individuals challenged by illness or injuries incurred during their Peace Corps service. Activities under discussion include establishing an annual day to raise awareness about the needs of injured/ill members of the Peace Corps community and building stronger support networks around the country.

MICRONESIA

A recently revived member group is the Friends of Micronesia (FOM). Incorporated earlier this year, the group held a kickoff event in October in Washington D.C. About 25 area RPCVs and a representative of the Embassy of the Federated States of Micronesia attended a Saturday potluck/organizational dinner. Every decade of Peace Corps service was represented at the gathering. Initial plans for the group include a gathering in San Francisco in June to coincide with Peace Corps Connect, further embassy events and planning for the fifty year anniversary of Peace Corps in Micronesia in 2016.

NEW JERSEY

This summer the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of New Jersey (RPCV-NJ) initiated a promising collaboration with the Rutgers University Centers for Global Advancement and International Affairs

(GAIA) designed to promote interaction between RPCVs and Rutgers' large population of international students and faculty. Collaborative efforts being pursued include enrolling RPCVs in Rutgers' International Friendship Program, allowing them to become conversational partners with international students; inviting students and faculty



to join RPCVs for holidays, meals or volunteer activities; and publicizing Rutgers' international programs within the RPCV community.

THAILAND

The Friends of Thailand (FOT) is concluding its thirteenth year of supporting development projects in the country. Four projects were the focus of member donations during 2014. One of them is the continuation of a Thai Youth Theatre Festival. The annual festival consists of acting workshops and plays presented all across the Kingdom. The Youth Theatre Festival was the very first project supported by FOT. Other projects supported in 2014 were a mobile English teaching clinic and training programs to promote teenage reproductive health and rural household waste management.

VIRGINIA

Summer and fall is a time for many outdoor community festivals. And for many RPCV member groups, this is a great opportunity to build a stronger community presence. That was the case

in September for the Northern Virginia RPCVs who again this year successfully



staffed a booth at the annual Reston Multi-Cultural Festival. A highlight of the day was the swearing in of 22 new U.S. citizens from 22 countries. One favorite booth activity involves having visitors put pins in a world map indicating their place of birth, place of ancestry and—for some—their place of Peace Corps service. Visitors to the booth included Virginia Congressman Gerry Connolly.

NATIONWIDE

At an October celebration to mark the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP), it was noted that 77 RPCV member groups have donated more than a half-million dollars to these grassroots, community supported development projects supported by Peace Corps Volunteers in the field. Groups recognized at the ceremony included the Atlanta Area RPCVs, the RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison, Friends of the Dominican Republic, Friends of Ghana and Friends of Lesotho. Congratulations to these groups and all who have contributed to the PCPP over the years!

Get connected and learn more about these and other achievements of NPCA's 143 member groups by visiting <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/member-groups/>. WW



U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

The Returned Peace Corps Volunteers at State hosted "Take an RPCV to Work Day" as part of Peace Corps' National RPCV Career Conference. The event included panels on the perspectives of RPCVs working at State and Human Resources officials' discussion of foreign and civil service hiring practices. The nearly 40 RPCV visitors then "speed networked" with RPCVs working at State. The feedback from one participant mirrors the feedback from the others: "It was good to see people who had made their Peace Corps experience an integral part of their daily lives and to understand the way Peace Corps service improves our career potential."

NPCA ADVOCACY UPDATE

Get connected, get involved

By Jonathan Pearson

Day of Action Set for March 5th

As the calendar turns to a new year, the National Peace Corps Association's advocacy program turns its full attention to March 5, 2015. That is the scheduled date for our 11th annual National Day of Action in support of the Peace Corps. Last year, 101 advocates from across the country came to Capitol Hill and participated in 175 meetings with congressional offices. Mark your calendars and plan to join us for this powerful gathering of advocates for the Peace Corps. If you can't come to Washington, you can help organize Day of Action activities in your hometown with fellow RPCVs, family and friends. Contact advocacy@peacecorpsconnect.org to find out how you can help.

Thank You RPCV Member Groups

While President Obama will be issuing his fiscal year 2016 budget request to Congress in February, advocacy on his Peace Corps funding request is well underway. Our thanks to leaders of 106 RPCV Member Groups who signed a letter to the President urging that he request increased funding for the Peace Corps. The letter was sent to the President and delivered to representatives of the Office of Management and Budget responsible for the international affairs portion of the President's request.

RPCV Election Results

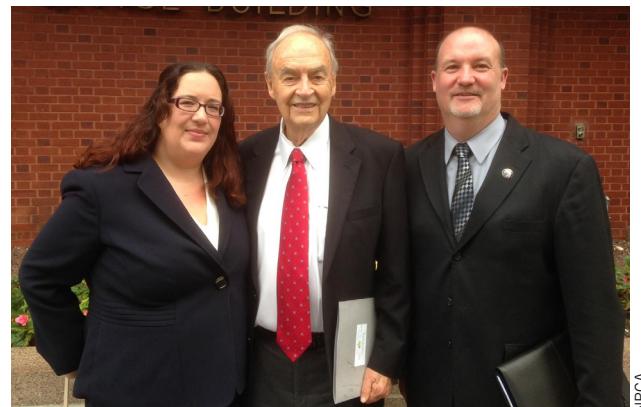
The biggest 2014 election news from the perspective of Returned Peace Corps

Volunteers may have come in Pennsylvania, where Tom Wolf (India 1968-1970) was elected Governor. While Wolf cruised to a strong election night victory, incumbent Congressman Mike Honda (El Salvador 1965-1967) had to wait several days before declaring victory in California's 17th Congressional District. Fellow California incumbents Sam Farr (Colombia 1964-

1966) and John Garamendi (Ethiopia 66-68) were re-elected to office, while in Massachusetts, Joseph Kennedy III (Dominican Republic 2004-2006) ran unopposed. Wisconsin Rep. Tom Petri (Somalia 1966-1967) did not run for re-election. Petri's departure means the new House of Representatives will not have a Republican RPCV congressman for the first time in 35 years.

Sierra Leone Ambassador

Congratulations to members of the Friends of Sierra Leone for their advocacy to confirm a new Ambassador to the West African nation. A general petition drive urging Senate confirmation of John Hoover to be the next ambassador was coupled with targeted and individualized outreach to Senators. After a year in which Sierra Leone had gone without a



Former Senator Harris Wofford (c) joined NPCA President Glenn Blumhorst and Board Member Kristina Owens at a meeting with the Office of Management and Budget to urge strong funding for the Peace Corps.

NPCA

U.S. Ambassador, Hoover was confirmed by the Senate in September.

Advocacy Coordinators

With recent additions in the San Francisco Bay area, Kentucky, North Carolina and New York City, the number of NPCA Volunteer Advocacy Coordinators has reached 32. These dedicated leaders help ensure that our national calls to action resonate at the grassroots level. Advocacy Coordinators were extremely active during our promotion of district meetings with congressional offices in August and September. They will also be playing a lead role in the buildup and execution of the March 5th National Day of Action. **wv**

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BLOGS, BASEBALL AND EBOLA

A busy fall for the National Peace Corps Association

By Erica Burman

BLOG IT HOME

In September, nine Peace Corps Volunteer winners of Peace Corps' second annual Blog It Home contest traveled from their countries of service to Washington, D.C. for a weeklong visit in which they shared their service experience with students,



Blog It Home winners.

community members and members of Congress.

Three hundred and fifty entries from 60 countries were narrowed down to 20 finalists who were then voted on by the public through Peace Corps' Facebook page.

One of the final stops on their hectic schedule: a Friday brown bag lunch at the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) office. The bloggers welcomed the chance to reflect on the week's events with "Peace Corps family," and to learn more about the NPCA and how it and its member groups can support them when they return home.

Among the visitors to our office were Christine Bedenis of Plymouth Mich. (Thailand); Jill Conway of Highlands Ranch, Colo. (Albania); Erika Hooker of Ithaca N.Y. (Senegal); Sara Laskowski of Aberdeen, Md. (Guinea); Julia Lingham of Holliston, Mass. (Uganda); Keith and Heather May of Beavercreek, Ohio (China); Anna Nathanson of Teaneck, N.J. (Cameroon); and Bronwen Raff of Hailey, Idaho (Dominican Republic). Links to all their blogs can be found at <http://www.peacecorps.gov/resources/returned/thirdgoal/highlights/bloggers-vote/>.

PEACE CORPS NIGHT AT NATIONALS PARK

The flags were ready. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers were ready to carry them proudly onto the field. Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet was on hand. And National Peace Corps Association President Glenn Blumhorst was ready to throw out the first pitch.

Sadly however, Peace Corps Night at Nationals Stadium, scheduled for Wednesday, September 24, 2014, was a bit of a bust. Rained out.

But RPCVs show up, right? So although the stands were rather empty the next day, Glenn threw out the first pitch, and retiring Peace Corps Chief of Staff Stacy Rhodes got to yell "Play ball!" one last time. Here's to better weather next year.

EBOLA RELIEF FUND

When there's a crisis, the Peace Corps



The National's mascot Screech is a Peace Corps fan.

community responds—and NPCA is here to support our members and member groups.

Which is exactly what happened in September with the Ebola crisis.

The Peace Corps community is uniquely positioned to help identify and support efforts in local communities in the affected countries where resources can have a significant impact. In collaboration with Friends of Guinea, Friends of Liberia, and Friends of Sierra Leone, the NPCA launched an Ebola Relief Fund. Contributions, which are tax deductible, are being accepted and acknowledged via the NPCA website and designated 100% towards Ebola-related relief efforts.

The funds are being distributed to vetted organizations working in West Africa as determined by a fund steering committee. This committee is comprised of two representatives of each of the above NPCA member groups, chaired by Russell Morgan, Dr.P.H. (Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Kenya 1966-1969) and with staff support from NPCA Vice President Anne Baker.

As of this writing, over \$40,000 has been raised and distributed to six nonprofit organizations on the ground in

affected communities, with subsequent rounds of awards envisioned contingent on available funding.

Learn more and make a donation via the microsite we've created for this effort: <http://www.npcabolarelief.org>. While all contributed funds will go directly to Ebola relief efforts, please consider an additional donation to the NPCA General Fund to help offset administrative costs and/or wire transfer and other related fees. You may contribute to both funds from the same donation page.



Visit the NPCA Ebola Relief Fund at www.NPCAEbolaRelief.org.

WHY I GIVE: KEN HILL

“Now is the best opportunity I have seen for NPCA to succeed.”

By Kate Schwanhausser

“Now is the best opportunity I have seen for the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) to succeed,” says Ken Hill, an NPCA member who’s been there from the start. Ken was there at the NPCA’s founding and continues to remain invested in the NPCA’s future.

Ken worked at all levels of Peace Corps, beginning as Volunteer in Turkey from 1965-1967. He lived in a village east of the capital city of Ankara and worked on rural agricultural development projects with his community. Following that, Ken worked as a Peace Corps recruiter, spent time working at Peace Corps headquarters where he met his wife, Winnie, and finally, after stints in other federal agencies, he started his own business in 1980.

He couldn’t stay away from Peace Corps for long, though. In 1990 Ken returned to Peace Corps, signing on as Country Director for Eastern Russia, Bulgaria and Macedonia. He recalls Russia as “especially challenging as Peace Corps started there shortly after the ‘fall of the wall’.

He would later join the NPCA and serve on the board as Chairman from

2004-2006. Throughout a long career, Ken never lost touch with his Peace Corps roots. He’s organized staff reunions at both the 40th and 50th anniversaries of Peace Corps and has been back to his village in Turkey four times. He still keeps in touch with the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of his village on Facebook.

Peace Corps and the NPCA have never been far from Ken’s life, which is one of the many reasons why he counts himself among the NPCA’s supporters. As the alumni network for RPCVs, the NPCA keeps the Peace Corps community connected and engaged. Ken donates because he believes that “now we have the clearest opportunity to ensure that the NPCA can fulfill legitimate RPCV needs and be a positive force to support Peace Corps.”

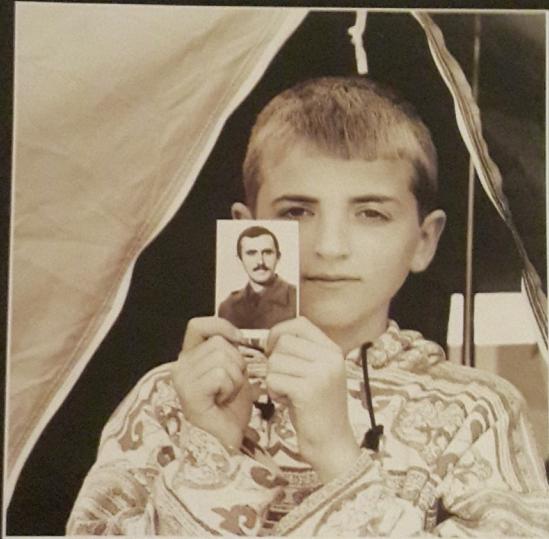
To read more from Ken Hill and find out how you can support the NPCA, visit our website at <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/contact-us/contributing/>



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Kate Schwanhausser is the membership and development assistant for the NPCA. This was drawn from an interview conducted earlier in the year by special projects volunteer Natalie Hall (Thailand 1967-1969), originally published on the NPCA blog.

THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION
WORLDVIEW
 SPRING 1999 VOL. 12 NO. 2



BALKAN SON
Working the refugee camp system

Vodou tune, by Bob Shacochis
Bleeding Cambodian justice
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BALKAN SON REDUX

The story of a Kosovo refugee comes full circle

By Andy Trincia



Cover and photo from the 1999 profile in *WorldView*.

A somber-looking boy wearing a hoodie stands outside his family's tent in a Kosovar Albanian refugee camp in Macedonia. Holding a small portrait of his missing father, his intense eyes stare into the camera.

The haunting image was featured on the cover of the Spring 1999 issue of *WorldView*, when this magazine was still printed in black and white. The editors

called him "Balkan Son." Diving into the story and accompanying photos, readers learned that this 12-year-old was an upbeat, gregarious boy despite the surrounding Kosovo War and brutal ethnic cleansing resulting from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. Showing resolve amid difficult refugee conditions, the boy made the most of his experience in the camp, beefing up his English by making friends with NATO troops and doing whatever he could to help his mother and sister while searching

for his missing father and brother.

Fifteen years later, the Balkan Son—Çelik Nimani, now 27—has resurfaced.

In May, on the 15th anniversary of the NATO bombing that lead to the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo, Çelik posted a photo from the *WorldView* story on Instagram. It showed him in a light moment, smiling and horsing around with camouflage-wearing NATO soldiers from the United Kingdom. He added the note, "Thank you, NATO."

Through the Internet he then tracked

down the story's author, Cindy Karp, and editors at *WorldView*. He was sorry for not writing earlier and simply wanted to say, "Thank you."

The National Peace Corps Association sent word to Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet, who relayed the story to Stephen Kutzy, country director of the brand-new Peace Corps Kosovo program just as the first Volunteer trainees were arriving in the capital, Prishtina. Kutzy met with Çelik to get acquainted and coincidentally learned that Çelik's wife's cousins were at that moment hosting a Peace Corps trainee. Kutzy invited Çelik and his wife, Zejnepe Morina Nimani, to a reception for Hessler-Radelet at the U.S. Ambassador's residence and the couple attended the swearing-in ceremony for the Volunteers along with the host-family cousins.

Çelik still thinks about those British troops from NATO who dedicated time to protect the families and play with kids in their spare time.

"I look back at the magazine every year and read through the story and the imagination that I had back then, and where I am now," he said. "I always in particular like the picture of my happy face sitting on the big truck with the NATO soldiers, and wishing to meet them one day and thank them and their countries for helping our country earn its rightful independence and stop the killing of innocent people. The *WorldView* story gets stronger each year as one moves forward and tries not to forget history, but moves on with life."

There was, incidentally, a happy ending for the Nimani family. Karp, the writer, met Çelik while he searched notes and letters posted in the camp, trying to locate his father and brother who, in the chaos that followed Serbian troops forcing them from their Prishtina home, were separated and sent to a different, then-unidentified refugee camp in Macedonia.

Karp then followed Çelik around the camp, sometimes while he acted as a young translator for Doctors Without Borders staff, and the "Balkan Son" story

was born. She helped the Nimanis reunite by sorting through newspapers and posting a classified ad. The two now keep in touch after being reunited themselves.

Once together, the Nimanis were one of many ethnic Albanian Kosovar families selected for immigration privileges to

Canada. While integration there was smooth and they were grateful for being treated well, the war ended a few months later and they chose to return to Kosovo. Çelik's mother, a newspaper copy editor, went back to journalism and works at the country's leading daily. His father, a



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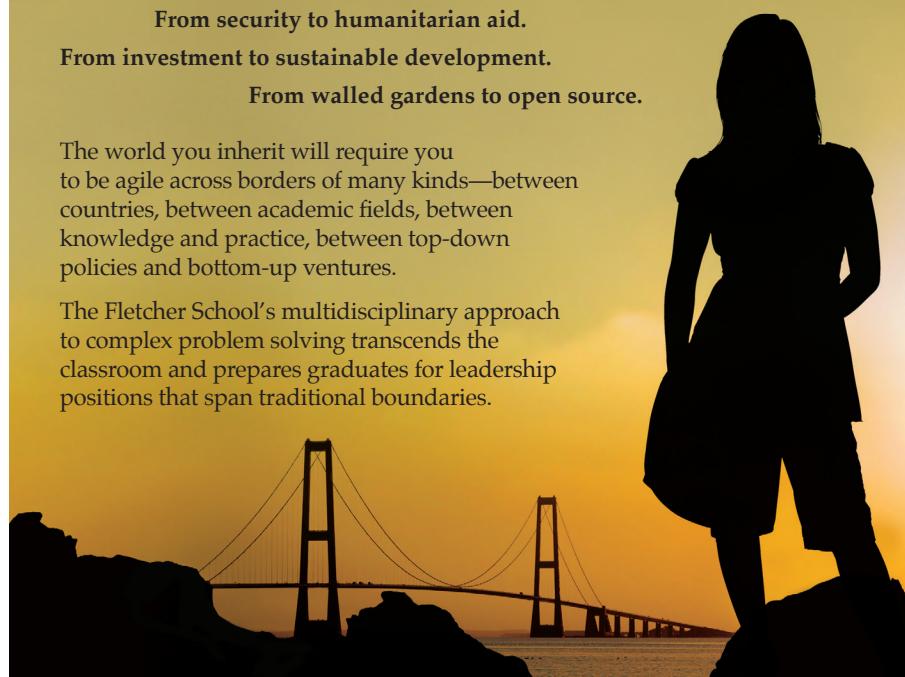
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CELIK NIMANI



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news editor and translator for 20 years at Kosovo's national TV station, did construction after the war as it was in high demand and now works for the Kosovo Security Council, a prominent government agency.

As for Çelik, he graduated from engineering school (where he met his wife Zejnepe, a civil engineer) and is wrapping up his master's thesis in business management. He runs a 20-person technology company that outsources services to foreign companies, including development of web sites, apps and design. A true entrepreneur, he's heavily involved in Kosovo's fledgling start-up business community—very much in the spirit of Peace Corps—and networking throughout the world. He's even been invited to speak in countries that do not recognize Kosovo's national independence, which it declared in 2008.

Çelik said Kosovo's independence is not what its people expected now that there is 40 percent unemployment, widespread corruption and lack of investments to make a better future for the country, not unlike what occurred

elsewhere in the region in the years following the fall of communism. He believes these challenges must be tackled by a new generation of people, perhaps educated outside of the country, who can achieve results and build a better future for the next generations.

"It's something close to my heart in which together with friends and like-minded people, we help shape the start-up scene in Kosovo and open the mindset of the people to opportunities by creating jobs, not waiting for those jobs," he said. "As an organizer and facilitator for Startup Weekend (a global, Seattle-based nongovernmental organization), I work directly with the community of Kosovo but also with those in other countries, to make impact, create change and educate people into entrepreneurial action."

After the war, incredibly, the Nimani

home in Prishtina was untouched. The two-story house with a garage—they were a well-educated, middle-class family—had withstood the barrage of bombs on Kosovar soil. The family still lives there. Çelik and his wife, his parents and sister, who's a doctor specializing in neonatology, occupy the home. His brother eventually returned to Canada where he lives with his wife and three children.

"Some areas of Prishtina were bombed and nearly 60 percent of the rest of Kosovo was completely burned down," Çelik recalled. "Some people managed to return, including us, and find their house standing and intact. It was a miracle. But this was not the case for many people who had to build everything from the ground up and continue life without family members, relatives or friends lost during the war. Many people are still missing with their fates unclear."

At the recent swearing-in ceremony, Kutzy, the country director, presented Çelik with a Peace Corps lapel pin. Çelik called it a "true honor" and felt that he had come full circle.

"The most amazing thing is when you see how much these people manage to learn from host families in just a few weeks, and how they're going to dedicate two years of their life to volunteer for my country," he said. "Ever since I got the Peace Corps pin, I feel like an honorary member of the Peace Corps, something that makes me proud. This also reminds me of the mission of how Peace Corps was created by President John F. Kennedy to encourage mutual understanding between Americans and people of other nations and cultures." **wv**

Andy Trincia (*Romania 2002-2004*) is a writer based in Sacramento, Calif. His work has been published in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Wichita Eagle*, *The News & Observer* (Raleigh), *The Florida Times-Union* and *Calgary Herald*; *National Geographic's Glimpse*; *Globe Trekker's Pilot Guides*; *Peace Corps Writers*; *Carolina Alumni Review*; and *Northeastern magazine*.

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AIDING REFUGEE INTEGRATION

Celebrating an award-winning collaborative relationship

By Anthony Cherwinski

Integration: a word used often, but seldom understood. As Peace Corps Volunteers we were able to scratch the surface in the experience and understanding of integration. We traveled to a foreign country by choice in order to represent our country and improve ourselves in a peaceful and productive manner. Adjusting to life in a new place was a part of this choice. Integration was a test which sparked growth and at the same time exposed raw emotions. However it may have affected us, we had a safety net, we had a community of support and we had a home we could still call home.

Now, imagine being forced to leave your home. Forced to leave everything you knew, including family and friends. You cannot go back. You are now in a completely foreign city and country. With two feet on the ground you are surrounded by new faces, new paces, new money, new weather, new food, a new language and very few people to assist you with the new day-to-day. This is your new home and you literally have no choice; you must make this work. This is the reality of integration and life for a refugee.



Anthony working side-by-side both DU and Refugee students at The Public Good Gala. An event celebrating the CFaSST/DU collaboration.

MAX GLEICHER

I work for The African Community Center of Denver (ACC), which is supported by the Ethiopian Community Development Council (ECDC). At ECDC/ACC we support refugees through their integration process. The primary assistance we offer deals with housing, healthcare and job placement. I am the training coordinator at ECDC/ACC and my primary focus is the Commercial Food Safety and Service Training program or what we call CFaSST.

CFaSST began in 2012 and in October the ninth cohort will have graduated from the program. What makes the CFaSST program unique is the relationship between ECDC/ACC and the Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality Management at the University of Denver (DU). In fact CFaSST is so unique that in the winter of 2013 Dr. David Corsun, the director of the Fritz Knoebel School traveled to Paris to accept the Worldwide Hospitality Award for "Best Educational Innovation." This award is a direct result of the collaboration with ECDC/ACC and is evidence of what can come from major organizations working together in order to improve the lives of many.

The training itself is a 100-hour



CFaSST students working at The Public Good Gala, an event and fundraiser celebrating the ECDC/ACC and DU partnership.

month long course held both in DU classrooms and in the Knoebel School's commercial kitchen. Topics include cross-contamination, identifying foodborne illness, and knife skills, among others. These lessons give the refugees skills and knowledge needed to become employees in the food service industry. But, arguably the most important aspect of this collaboration is the relationship the refugees form with the DU students alongside whom they work and learn.

CFaSST is conducted in tandem with Dr. Cheri Young's Human Capital

course. During the month long training, the refugee students are individually paired with DU students. Each week the students meet twice and are encouraged to spend time with each other in and out of the classroom. When asked how these relationships have affected her students, Dr. Young said, "I think my students learn that they have a good life, they learn the value of perseverance and it causes them to broaden their concepts of what talent is and how it is packaged."

There is no question that the members of the refugee population have each had



DU students and CFaSST students during the CFaSST graduation celebration.

MAX GLEICHER

ANTHONY CHERWINSKI

a difficult past, and the system that is established does not provide for the safest and most productive transition into the fast-paced and competitive world that is the United States. That being said, the opportunities CFaSST provides for its students are many according to Donna

Kapp, creator of the CFaSST curriculum: "becoming comfortable traveling in a new part of town, meeting more Americans, building their networks and increasing social capital; getting real, hands on work experience."

The goal of CFaSST since its

inception has been to provide refugees with a training opportunity which will give them the skills and tools that can quickly translate into employment. The immediate results are substantial and important, but the positive effects reach far beyond these quantitative results. Jennifer Guiddeche, the director of the ACC said it best: "this program is an example of positive immigrant integration, because two sides are working together—the newly arrived immigrant and the local receiving community are working towards a goal—and in the meantime, they are building relationships and experiences that are useful to both parties."

This program is about changing lives. It's about giving the future leaders of DU a new and important perspective on not only their professional, but also their personal lives as well. It's about allowing a new member of our community a chance to further their understanding of their new home and provide them with the strength to move forward.

As an RPCV, I have gone through integration into a new country and re-integration in the country I call home. The CFaSST program and ECDC/ACC have been a major part of this emotional process for me. I was fortunate enough to start working with this program only six months after my return, and am excited to move forward and do what I can to help develop CFaSST. I'd like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all refugee populations: you have helped me through my integration. I look at you everyday with admiration, and you are a constant reminder of the endurable strength of the human spirit. **WV**

Anthony Cherwinski's (Mongolia 2011-2013) major project and focus during his service was the founding and creation of his province's first educational program for children with disabilities. Anthony has been the training coordinator at The African Community Center in Denver since January of 2014. He co-facilitates the CFaSST program with Donna Kapp.



Anne-Claire Benoit, MPA '12
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REFUGEES HELPING REFUGEES

Interpreter program models sustainability and innovation

By Emily Sernaker and Hannah Stocks

In Silver Spring, Maryland, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) Community Interpreter Program connects newly arrived refugees to high quality, culturally sensitive interpreters, many of which are former refugees themselves.

When walking around the IRC's office, one often sees a range of interpreters at work. They are everywhere—next to clients in Cultural Orientation class, beside them in interview preparation workshops, in one-on-one meetings with case managers and employment specialists. In an office that serves individuals from all over the world the need for quality, careful interpretation is essential. It is hard to believe that a few years ago, a walk around the office would have looked very different.

For a long time, IRC offices relied on telephonic interpretation. This involved paying a fee to a phone service that kept interpreters on call. The phone service was often problematic. There was no way to ensure the quality or accuracy of the interpreter assigned to work with IRC staff and clients. There was also a lack of cultural understanding or contextual sensitivity to issues specific to refugees. The wait for interpreters for languages considered "rare" for the general population, but common for the IRC, could go on for hours. IRC staff members felt there had to be better way to get quality services.

What they arrived at now seems like a natural solution: instead paying a fee to outsider businesses, why not employ former IRC refugee clients who were in need of work? The refugees and asylees go through a lengthy application and selection process, and once chosen, undergo significant training and testing to become qualified. The results are tremendous—



IRC Amharic interpreter Solomon Tigist (not shown) works with a caseworker and asylee.



IRC French interpreter Miry Tumoe works with two newly arrived refugees.

EMILY SERNAKER

finally, staff and clients are working with professional interpreters that have a deep understanding of the refugee experience, and can provide high quality, culturally-competent interpretation services. Refugees with valuable language skills and work histories benefit from interpreter training, supplemental income and an entry point in the professional U.S. workforce.

Today, the IRC in Silver Spring's Community Interpreter program does just this. The program consistently employs over 30 individuals, with an additional 30 (representing languages that are less prevalent in our work), prepared to assist when needed. The interpreters are paid market rate, which compared to other first jobs in the U.S. is a great success. In addition to being employed by the IRC, many have found work interpreting for other organizations ranging from homeless shelters to health clinics to the military. Beyond interpreting qualifications and experience, past participants

state that the Community Interpreter Program provides professionally transferable skills in areas including active listening, cultural competence, clear communication and appropriate use of workplace technology. This assists interpreters in their transitions to subsequent positions.

"We need interpreters who can work effectively in a variety of scenarios," says IRC Community Interpreter Coordinator, Hannah Stocks. "A refugee stepping off a plane from a camp and asking a caseworker questions...the process of applying for health insurance through federal government; these are easier to navigate if the person interpreting understands both where the client is coming from and what services and processes exist in our community. Our interpreters do just that."

Hannah's approach to the program, including its expansion to offer services in two additional local counties, is making a difference locally and across the IRC network. In the IRC's 22 offices,

in-person interpretation is becoming increasingly preferred. The success of Silver Spring's program shows that interpretation programs are both possible and incredibly valuable to the refugees, nonprofit professionals and community members. **WV**

For more information, or if interested in contributing to the IRC Community Interpreter Program, please email InterpreterSS@rescue.org.

Hannah Stocks (Morocco 2006-2008) is the Community Interpreter Coordinator at the International Rescue Committee in Silver Spring, Maryland. **Emily Sernaker** is the External Relations Coordinator at the International Rescue Committee in Silver Spring, MD. Hannah was an IRC caseworker before the Community Interpreter Program was established and appreciates the immense difference the program has had on non-English speaking refugees and interpreters alike. The IRC in Silver Spring currently employs at least 4 RPCVs as full time staff.

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RPCV DRIVES CLASS FOR REFUGEES

An innovative ESL program brings instruction to refugees' doorsteps

By Leah Hashinger

On a hot August morning, I join Erin Keafer, ESL to Go Curriculum Coordinator, and three refugees from Myanmar for a tour of Nashville's Cheekwood Botanical Gardens. We stop frequently for the women to take pictures posed in front of flowers, ponds, and sculptures. Walking through the lush landscape of Cheekwood is just one of the many firsts the women have experienced since being resettled in Tennessee. The women had never attended formal English as a Second Language (ESL) classes prior to stepping onto the ESL to Go mobile classroom. On this day, we are celebrating their graduation from the program.



Erin Keafer in Georgia with her students.

ANGIE HARRIS



ESL to Go Coordinator Erin Keafer (Republic of Georgia 2010-2012).

Three years ago, Angela Harris, a Peace Corps Volunteer in Papua New Guinea from 1991-1993, had an idea for a classroom-on-wheels that would bring English as a Second Language (ESL) classes to refugees at the apartment complexes where they live—eliminating the need for transportation to and from class. Harris' vision was covered in a story that appeared in *WorldView's* winter 2012-2013 issue. When the article was published, Harris' team at the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute (TFLI) in Nashville, Tenn. was still in the process of raising funds to purchase the truck. After a successful campaign, the first-of-its-kind classroom arrived in Nashville in May of 2013.

Since the truck rolled into town, the ESL to Go truck has served over 185 students. Men and women from Myanmar, Bhutan, Somalia, Sudan, Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Mexico, Cuba and Egypt have stepped into the classroom to begin, or continue, their journey towards English proficiency.

While Harris and I were designing the mobile classroom in Nashville, Keafer was teaching English as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Republic of Georgia. Keafer's husband happened to be listening to Nashville Public Radio when a story about ESL to Go aired.

"My husband heard a story about a

new program starting up that would take a truck to where refugees lived, and he thought it sounded perfect for me. I was excited, so I looked into the program and discovered that it was at TFLI, where I was already planning on getting my Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) certification," Keafer recalls.

Upon returning from Georgia in June 2012, Keafer enrolled in TFLI's TESL training course, where she met Harris, who after seeing Keafer complete the course, offered her a job as a part-time ESL to Go instructor.

"Having been a Peace Corps Volunteer myself, I understand the

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ANGIE HARRIS



Erin Keafer and ESL to Go Truck in front of Nashville's Parthenon.

dedication and flexibility required to work with an international population," Harris says. "It was obvious that Erin's Peace Corps experience was the perfect fit for working with refugees and ESL to Go."

Man Cing, who goes by Nu Nu, suggested the excursion to Cheekwood. Nu Nu is an unusually petite woman with a strong voice and resilient attitude. She was one of the first

students to enroll in the ESL to Go program last May. After escaping persecution in Myanmar, Nu Nu fled to Malaysia where she lived with her husband and oldest son for several years, prior to arriving in Nashville in April 2012. She had been waiting for an opportunity to study English, and was thrilled when the ESL to Go truck showed up in front of her home. Nu Nu is one of the most determined students



Erin Keafer with ESL to Go Graduates at Cheekwood Botanical Gardens.

LEAH HASHINGER

Keafer has encountered. I ask Nu Nu how she felt after attending English class for over a year.

"Before I was scared to speak English, but now I feel better and I'm not scared. I'm not ashamed. I want to try more and I know more. I can speak to my neighbors and it's very helpful for conversations. It's very helpful for my appointments, a lot of things," she explains. "Before if I went to an appointment, I used an interpreter, but now I can speak by myself a little."

Another woman, Esther Vung, chimes in to say "I learned so many things—how to speak English and use grammar. Thank you ESL to Go!" The women giggle as Vung so enthusiastically praises the program.

They go on to discuss how they will have better job prospects if they can speak English well. The women agree that once all of their children are in school, they want to work to earn more money to support their families. All three women have kids who have not started kindergarten yet. Nu Nu's 3-year-old son joins us for the outing.

Keafer's students share her passion for strengthening communities and empowering others. Beyond contributing



Erin Keafer in Georgia.

State of What's Next

to their household incomes, the women have ambitions of helping fellow Burmese refugees. Nu Nu explains, "If I continue to study English, I can help my people go to appointments. I think I can help them." Nu Nu's friends nod in agreement.

All three students are sad to leave Keafer's class and joke that they should be allowed to continue with the program, but they understand how much they have accomplished by testing out of the course. Just over a year ago the women had no class to attend, but with Harris' concept and Keafer's instruction, they are now armed to tackle their next hurdle—which they unanimously agree is becoming U.S. citizens. **WV**

Leah Hashinger is the ESL to Go program manager at the Tennessee Foreign Language Institute. She is co-creator of the ESL to Go Program.

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THE REFUGEE WELL-BEING PROJECT

An innovative mental health intervention model

By Brandon Baca

RWP 2010



A student advocate (center) poses with daughter and mother refugees from Iraq.

Perhaps one of the most important ways peace is created and sustained is through opening and sustaining dialogue between people and allowing them the opportunity to see one another as humans and not as "others". The creation of the Peace Corps opened this opportunity to many Americans and its effects continue on in the lives of hundreds of thousands of host country nationals and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) alike. In addition to the great work Volunteers have contributed to their host countries, they have also brought back intangible lessons relating to privilege, social inequities and a desire to make positive sustainable changes. Such transformational learning is one of the wonderful results of placing individuals and their experiences at the center of their own learning, as subjects (rather than objects) of their learning. The Refugee Well-being Project (RWP) is another such program that has opened up a dialogue between communities that were once seemingly worlds apart but are becoming more and more integrated with one another.

For the past eight years, we've been engaging undergraduate students at the University of New Mexico and newly resettled refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and several other countries. This community-based participatory research project is designed to better understand resettlement stressors, prevent psychological distress, and promote mental health, well-being and integration of refugees

"If the structure does not permit dialogue the structure must be changed"

– Paulo Freire

in the United States. Our program is unique in many respects but surprisingly similar in approach to the Peace Corps. For one, our program emphasizes mutual learning. Refugees both learn from and teach Americans throughout the 9-month long program. Mutual learning breaks down the popular image of refugees as helpless victims. Instead, American students learn first-hand, much as PCVs do, about commonalities and strengths. Refugees, in turn, learn about the complexities of American culture and begin to break down their own stereotypes.

My experience with RWP began in 2007, as an undergraduate student majoring in psychology at the University of New Mexico. Prior to taking the class, my knowledge of refugees was limited to what I had seen on the news. Little did I know, that many refugees were living literally a few blocks from my home. After working with a Burundian family who fled ethnic violence in 1972, I had a completely different outlook and my career path began to unfold. I, like several other RWP students, was inspired to join the Peace Corps as a result of my experience working with refugees. Many of the skills that I learned in RWP prepared me for my Peace Corps service but most importantly it was the outlook I gained that prepared me. It's a rare opportunity to get college credit and gain meaningful life experience, but it doesn't have to be so rare.

RWP students commit to a two-semester course, which begins with three months of training before they are paired with newly arrived refugee families. In training, students learn advocacy methods, refugee backgrounds, TESOL

DALE FREDERICK 2007



Student advocate and refugee partner holding RWP Certificates of Completion.

basics, and many other useful skills for working with refugee families. After training, we begin Learning Circles, which are two-hour group meetings once per week involving the students and refugees. The first hour is focused on cultural exchange, in which students and refugees learn from each other through discussions

aided by interpreters. The second hour is dedicated to one-on-one learning, during

which students and refugee participants work in pairs on areas of the participants choosing such as English, job preparation, or accessing social services. Children and adolescents get homework help, tutoring and other fun learning activities. Furthermore, the students spend 4-6 hours outside of Learning Circles advocating for and transferring advocacy skills to their refugee family based on the family's unmet needs. The instructors of the course supervise the students through weekly group meetings with small groups of students. Refugee families and students are also interviewed throughout

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“When I was in Africa people were telling me, “Oh there is no one who can speak your language. You [will] have no friends.” But I have come to find that life is really good. I’ve got a lot of friends who are American people. They are people who are really willing to help me out. I have had a really positive experience”

– Burundian RWP Participant

the program using mixed quantitative and qualitative methods. Research plays an important role in our program and helps us and the scientific community understand what methods of support work best for these communities.

Our research has shown significant increases in many areas of well-being

for refugees, such as access to resources, social support, quality of life, English proficiency and citizenship knowledge and decreases in their psychological distress to name a few. We have also seen systemic changes in Michigan and New Mexico among community members and service providers who have become

more responsive to the needs of refugee families because of advocacy efforts of undergraduate students and their refugee partners. Burundian community members have also formed a community-based organization called the Association of Burundian Americans in New Mexico. Our research can be found in scholarly journals such as the *American Journal of Community Psychology* and *Psychological Services*.

The importance of developing innovative ways to address the stressors of refugees could not be more relevant today. The highest number of displaced people around the world since World War II was recorded in 2013. The United States accepts about 60,000 new refugees each year. These refugees will receive very limited support from the government and many communities in the United States have not been adequately prepared to address the issues refugees face. New refugees are sometimes not welcomed to their new communities and seen as burdensome. As a result, we see some refugee communities isolate themselves and the community as a whole misses out on the strengths that refugees bring. **WV**



Three student advocates including author, Brandon Baca (bottom left) and Burundian refugee family.

Brandon A. Baca (Rwanda 2009-2011) is currently research coordinator for the Refugee Well-being Project (developed and directed by Dr. Jessica Goodkind, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of New Mexico) which is in its ninth year at the University of New Mexico and in the second year of a 5-year study funded by the National Institutes of Health. He can be contacted at bbaca75@gmail.com.

THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY, HERE AT HOME

RPCVs put Peace Corps skills to work in Chicago

By Marianne Joyce

Alasting memory from my Peace Corps experience is being on the receiving end of a culture of warmth and hospitality, of the concern for the wellbeing of a stranger far from home. Looking back, it is even more impressive that this culture persisted during civil war when fears were heightened and resources were scarce. Many Guatemalans were fleeing to the United States for safety in the mid-1980s, and I knew that the welcome I had received would not be reciprocated. At best, these undocumented students, farmers, lawyers, doctors, family members of the disappeared might encounter indifference and invisibility.

Years later, I and many fellow Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) have found our way to an organization in Chicago that helps us carry forward goals and transferable skills from Peace Corps, offering volunteers and employees daily global experiences right at home.

Heartland Alliance for Human Needs and Human Rights began in 1888, when Chicago became the second city to form a Travelers Aid organization. Newcomers moving to the city to look for work—particularly vulnerable youth and

women—were able to visit Travelers Aid service centers around the city's ports and rail stations and receive help with housing, employment and community resettlement. These efforts were expanded by the work of Jane Addams and her colleagues at Hull House, when they founded the League for the Protection of Immigrants in 1908.

Today Heartland Alliance continues to serve refugees and immigrants, including unaccompanied minors, torture survivors, and other vulnerable groups in the region. Heartland provides a range of health, legal, housing, employment services as well as international programs and advocacy centered on poverty reduction. I should not have been surprised to discover at least twenty RPCVs working across the agency in refugee resettlement, teaching and assisting unaccompanied minors, helping torture survivors, raising funds for Heartland Alliance programs and developing global health programs internationally.

Bracketing the generations of Heartland Alliance RPCVs are Bill Gorman (Nepal, 1967-1969) and Zaana Hall (Morocco, 2012-2014). Zaana's experience in youth development and fluency in Arabic situate her well as a Refugee and Immigrant

Community Services (RICS) employment specialist for newly arrived refugees, currently from Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Cuba, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and Syria. Her colleagues at RICS include Associate Directors Lea Tienou-Gustafson (Chad, 2003-2006) and Darwensi Clark (Ghana



The first gathering of RPCV staff of Heartland Alliance, at Chicago's Heartland, Oct. 7, 2014. (Left to right) Andrew Piotrowski, Lisa Floran, Sidney Freitag-Fey, Zaana Hall, Marianne Joyce, Barbara Franco and Bill Gorman.

2000-2001), and Youth Liaison Emma Stensvaag (Mozambique, 2008-2010).

Bill Gorman is one of the dedicated mental health professionals who helped to establish the Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture in 1987. He remains an active volunteer psychologist whose "retirement" has included academic collaboration with Trinity College-Dublin, staffing Semesters-at-Sea, and human rights advocacy. Bill's colleagues at the Kovler Center include Carlan Gordon (Benin 2008-

2010) a clinical doctoral student, and me. Leora Hudak (China 2010-2012) recently completed her practicum in June and is now employed at another torture treatment program in St. Paul, Minn.

Heartland Alliance RPCVs believe all of us have a unique connection to the refugee experience and that channeling this empathy can offer deeply rewarding careers in an array of refugee-related work. Who among us has not felt disoriented, isolated, less able to communicate complex ideas and homesick in a foreign land? Our distress as PCVs is usually fleeting and we are anchored for two years by the warmth and support of our host communities.

As eye-opening and compelling as our Peace Corps experiences are, the return to the U.S. is a natural time to keep that connectedness alive with the global community in our neighborhoods. Lisa Floran (Senegal 2011-2013) jumped

into volunteering with the RICS summer program soon after she returned from West Africa and found volunteering to be a healthy strategy to cope with the funk of adjustment. She immediately bonded with the Francophone kids—sharing language and cool dance moves. Volunteering turned into a job by summer's end. Sidney Freitag-Fey (Mongolia 2004-2006), Heartland Alliance's associate director of development, dove into volunteer tax preparation when he returned and now describes one of his proudest accomplishments as using Mongolian language skills to help members of Chicago's Mongolian community complete tax forms.

Emma Stensvaag (Mozambique 2008-2010) was inspired by Mozambique's collective ethos "Estamos juntos," and now channels the sentiment into her work with refugee youth. RPCVs in the U.S. are fostering a culture of hospitality. Barbara

Franco (Burkina Faso, 2011-2013) and Andrew Piotrowski (El Salvador 2011-2013) currently teach and help unaccompanied minors as they wait out reunification with families and other legal processes. Their language and knowledge of country and cultural context provide an oasis for many kids facing enormous challenges.

Surveying Heartland Alliance RPCVs for favorite memories, I found responses clustered around food, babies and interacting with kids, with a few additional notables: "Doing the traditional meke wesi spear dance at our swearing-in ceremony," said Will Evans (Fiji 2013-2014); "Run-ins with Azeri KGB," said Jim Baldwin (Azerbaijan 2010-2012); and funny goat stories from Carlan Gordon (Benin 2008-2010), like "when one peed on my solar charger and that was the end of my power source." Samantha Levin (Guinea 2007-2009; Mali 2011-2012) had the misfortune to be evacuated from two Peace Corps countries but was successfully distracted by being featured in a *Time* magazine story on Michael Jackson Thriller Dance Day.

Heartland Alliance RPCVs advise those still serving to value what you learn in-country: flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, enough trust to risk venturing into uncertain prospects, holding on to sense of humor and humility in face of frustration, and drawing upon the connections and care with others to contend with inevitable adversities. When you return, find local groups and connect to the National Peace Corps Association. They can keep you socially engaged and offer opportunities to complete Third Goal work. Should you seek employment or volunteering with programs serving refugee and immigrants, you are likely to be interviewed by a fellow RPCV and more importantly, you will have the privilege to offer and receive warmth and hospitality to individuals and families from parts of the world you do not know, but it will feel reassuringly familiar. **WV**

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Marianne Joyce (Guatemala 1985-1988) has worked at the Heartland Alliance Marjorie Kovler Center for the Treatment of Survivors of Torture since 2000.

THE RICHNESS OF THE PRESENT COMES FROM THE PAST

An immigrant Volunteer reflects on her immigrant students

By Jade Wu

When I joined Peace Corps Malawi as an education Volunteer in 1995, I never imagined

that almost 20 years later I would be in a huge reception hall in Indianapolis for the wedding of one of my former Malawian students. Moreover, I did not expect to hear a distantly familiar voice joyfully shouting, "Teacher! Do you remember me?" As I turned, it was another former Malawian student.

I had not seen either of them since completing my Peace Corps service in 1997.

This July I flew to Indiana to attend the wedding of Shadreck Kamwendo, my former student. Arriving at the church, mingling with his family and friends, meeting his bride, and attending the reception, I realized he was no longer the skinny teenager from Lunzu Secondary School in Malawi whose thoughts about America were only hopes and dreams. He was a successful professional now, the program director of the National

Kidney Foundation of Indiana, and an active, respected and well-connected member of his community.

Still, his first few years in America had not been so easy. He related that he immigrated to the U.S. in 1997 to join family members and struggled to adapt to a new way of life. He worked at various jobs to support himself, and achieved a Bachelor of Science degree in Health Management from Indiana University before landing his current position and meeting his wife Andrea.

Davie Kamwendo, my other former student from Lunzu (not related to Shadreck), also related a similar story of arriving in the U.S. to join family, and struggling. Over the years, Davie worked at various jobs, became a father and is now a huge sports fan. When we spoke at the reception, he still had his distinct familiar laugh, one that I had heard many times at Lunzu Secondary School.

As an immigrant myself and having seen first-hand how an immigrant family labored, I know that what these two young men went through in the U.S. was not easy. Yet I emigrated from Hong

Kong when I was only five years old, so it was easier for me to learn new things. Shadreck and Davie had to start all over again in their early adult years, learning to adapt physically, socially, economically and professionally, a huge feat for those coming from a small, relatively poor



BRUCE BEARDSLEY

From left to right – Shadreck Kamwendo, Jade Wu, Davie Kamwendo.

country in East Africa.

Talking to the wedding guests and watching Shadreck and Davie mix with the crowd, I was struck by how easily and comfortably they fit in with mainstream

American life now. Shadreck volunteers for Habitat For Humanity in his spare time and loves watching Notre Dame Football. Likewise, Davie is a NBC Sports fan and loves U.S. soccer.

Then I suddenly realized that, inadvertently, both of them were also

helping to further two of Peace Corps' three goals: promoting a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served and promoting a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. These goals are normally meant for Volunteers to pursue. But as both Shadreck

and Davie have family and friends in Malawi, they certainly shared their understanding of Americans with Malawians back home. Furthermore, they continue to reveal aspects of their Malawian heritage with fellow Americans they associate with.

I saw the latter happening at the wedding. Many of the guests were Shadreck's friends from church and work. Most of them were Caucasians who had never been to Malawi—or anywhere in Africa. But as Malawian music was played, traditional attire was worn, and ethnic dances were danced, the audience caught glimpses of Malawian life and how those people celebrated.

This is the magic of Peace Corps. Its domino effects continue for years, linking the past to the present. As Volunteers, we set out to share, learn, and help make life better for other people, making our own lives richer in return. It is not every day that a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer has the opportunity to reunite with her former students from two decades ago, witness their successes and share the common bond with them of being immigrants to America. My life was certainly made richer by my students in Peace Corps Malawi and I can proudly say that this richness continues to this day. **WV**

Jade Wu (Malawi 1995-1997)—one of the few immigrants in her Peace Corps cohort of approximately 100 Volunteers—is an author, lawyer and keynote speaker. After Peace Corps, she worked on the humanitarian crisis in Kosovo, and upon returning to the U.S. she pursued a career in the law as a prosecutor, criminal defense attorney and eventually law firm associate. Over the years, she has worked on humanitarian and peace-building projects in the Philippines, Germany, Iraq and Afghanistan. Her foreign policy articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Foreign Policy Journal*, and *International Policy Digest*. She is currently writing a book with the working title, *Moments That Flashed*. Follow her on Twitter at @jadejournal.



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INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS IN GEORGIA

Understanding barriers to integration

By Sara Feldman

SARA FELDMAN



Berbuki Settlement, just outside Gori, Georgia.

At the beginning of 2014, I was readying myself to leave for a second round of Peace Corps service, the first having been in Micronesia in the early 1980s. This was to be a very different experience: I was going to the Republic of Georgia. One thing was the same—I had to look both places up on a map.

But that's where it ended. Unlike the idyllic islands of Yap State, Georgia, a country of stunning mountainous beauty, had a long history of conflict and war. In the 20th century, in particular, Georgia experienced 70 years as part of the Soviet Union, followed by an extraordinarily hard period of adjustment, and by multiple conflicts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Both areas are in the north of Georgia and border Russia, and each area has a non-Georgian population. Ethnic and political differences have led to the expulsion of Georgians from these

territories, sometimes quite violently. Many people fled with only what they could carry, leaving for an uncertain future in Georgia. These are Georgia's Internally Displaced Persons, or IDPs, and there are currently about 280,000 of them, about 6% of Georgia's total population.

Understanding the plight of IDPs requires a different perspective than the sadly more familiar situation of refugees being forced into countries not their own by conflict or environmental disasters. IDP's are ethnically and linguistically Georgian, yet a very significant proportion of them live in collective centers or settlements, segregated from society in many ways. They grapple with significantly higher rates of unemployment, mental and emotional issues, health problems, and substandard living conditions. For instance, while 89% of Georgians own their own homes

(including apartments), more than 60% of IDP's do not own their residences.¹ In an even more stunning statistic, unofficial figures suggest that up to 80% of IDPs may be unemployed, compared to the official unemployment rate of 15% of the overall population.²

The Georgian government has taken many steps to improve IDP conditions, and NGOs have also stepped up to the plate, playing a critical role. As an Individual and Organizational Development Peace Corps Volunteer, I am currently working with the leading IDP national NGO in Georgia—Charity Humanitarian Centre "Abkhazeti," or CHCA. While I work to improve CHCA's capacity, CHCA works to improve the capacity of IDPs in a wide variety of ways. As we work together, I am starting to understand some of the underlying reasons for the stubborn problems that IDPs face.

1. Franziska Gassmann George Berulava Michael Tokmazishvili, Economic and Social Vulnerability in Georgia, United Nations Development Programme in Georgia, 2013, p.10.

2. The World Bank, Supporting the Livelihoods of Internally Displaced Persons in Georgia, May 2013, p.8.

3. Resolution of the OSCE Budapest Summit, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 1994-12-06, p.7.

4. Economic and Social Vulnerability in Georgia, p.24

The first fact I came to understand is that IDPs do not stay in substandard housing and financial distress voluntarily. Although on its face it seems that IDPs ought to easily be able to integrate into Georgian society at large, given their shared values and language, in fact nothing could be further from the truth.

During the violent conflict in Abkhazia in the early 1990's, IDPs were forcibly ejected in what has been characterized as "ethnic cleansing."³ Approximately 250,000 IDPs arrived in Georgia without any resources or possessions, and were placed in what are known as "collective centers." Generally, these consisted of abandoned military barracks, hospitals, schools and the like—facilities not designed for habitation. Many families lived in overcrowded, unsanitary conditions in these centers for decades.⁴ Eventually, due to international aid and evolving Georgian government

policies, some buildings were renovated, and residents were given ownership interests. This process continues today. In other cases, the residents were evicted after being given some compensation. Many were offered alternative housing in remote locations, far from job opportunities, which further contributed to their economic and social isolation.

A parallel situation occurred in 2008 when new conflict broke out in South Ossetia. As it escalated, causing the evacuation of thousands of Georgians (and all Peace Corps Volunteers, as well) from their homes, the Georgian government hastily built small single-family cottage-style settlements, especially in areas closest to the conflict zone. There are now approximately 40 IDP settlements in Georgia. A significant amount of foreign aid helped support



Davit Metreveli, IDP and Maintenance Team Leader at Berbuki Settlement, and author Sara Feldman.

SARA FELDMAN

the "new" IDPs, but that money started to dry up in 2010. The population that occupies these settlements comes from largely agricultural backgrounds and has encountered significant challenges in finding employment. Without resources, these IDPs are unable to leave the settlements and live as part of the larger society.

CHCA works to address all areas of need within the IDP community. They offer vocational training, micro-financing, assistance with forming housing associations and maintenance teams, social enterprise programs, extensive educational and youth programs, and more. As I settle into my home in Gori, one of the hardest-hit cities in the 2008 war, I have had the opportunity to travel to a number of settlements to observe these programs, and there I have discovered the final, and saddest, barrier faced by IDPs: they want to go home. Although they are Georgian, their longing for Abkhazia and South Ossetia is palpable. Facing the difficult reality that they may never see their birthplaces again is perhaps an insurmountable barrier for some.

One incident illustrates this point poignantly. During a visit to the settlement of Berbuki, just outside of Gori, CHCA staff and volunteers were invited to drink wine and make toasts with a family having lunch. Toasting and wine being the lifeblood of Georgia, such hospitality is common. When we were with the family,



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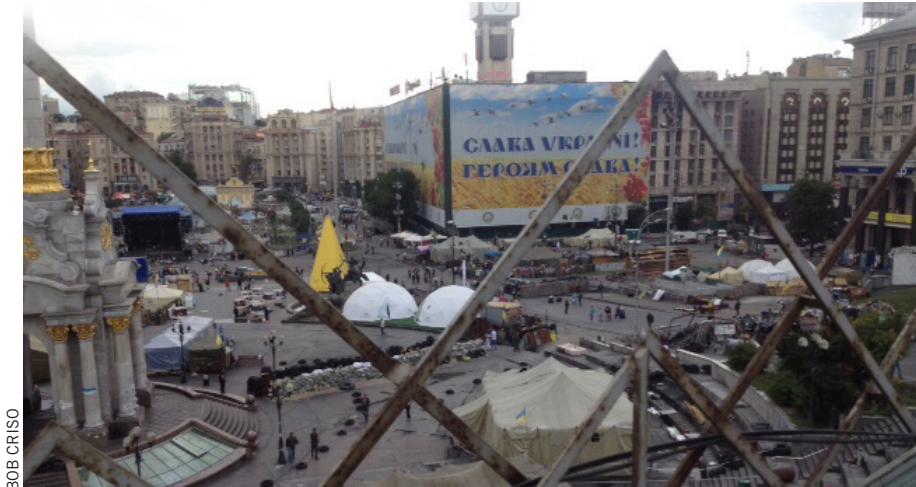

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TROUBLED LANDS

A reflection on tense borders and dangerous places

By Bob Criso



BOB CRISO

The resource-rich eastern region with strong ethnic loyalties secedes and declares itself an independent republic. A civil war breaks out and the casualties mount. Most world powers support the federal government but one or two contrarian states support and arm the breakaway republic. There is a fear that neighboring countries could also balkanize if the secessionist republic is victorious. The conflict becomes a proxy war for larger geopolitical issues.

Biafra and Nigeria, 1967? Yes, but also a surprising number of other nations as well in 2014. Visiting a few of them recently, I realized again how much I had learned during my Peace Corps years.

On my way into the city, the taxi driver said I'd have to carry my luggage the last two blocks to my hotel. It seemed odd until I turned a corner and saw what looked like a war zone spread out in an expansive public square: elaborately fortified barricades of twisted metal; mounds of sandbags and tires strategically stacked; bricks, ripped from the roads and sidewalks, piled into fortress-like walls and scores of green military tents

scattered across the square and beyond it. A smoky odor filled the air from open-air fires heating oversized cooking pots in front of the tents. Interspersed throughout were makeshift shrines with flowers and candles to the "heroes" who had been shot at that exact spot during the uprising. Touching photos of a young father holding his daughter and a fresh-faced smiling youth, barely old enough to shave, would give anyone pause as they passed. Men in camouflage uniforms, some with black balaclavas and pistols, patrolled the scene. I passed cautiously through a roadblock then followed a path that circled around the rubble until I came to my hotel at the head of the square.

It was June 2014 and I was in Kiev, the setting of the Orange Revolution that ousted the President, Viktor Yanukovych earlier that year. I was staying at the Hotel Ukraine at one end of Independence Square, also called *Maidan*. The roof of the hotel had been a base where police snipers picked off demonstrators around the square. When the uprising ended, an interim president was installed and the patriots went east to reclaim the separatist region. The third floor

Maidan (Independence Square) in Kiev in late June, 2014. "Although the square had been cleaned up some by that time, it still conveys the war zone atmosphere that existed there during the uprising. It also represents the feeling that many Ukrainians still had that the struggle was not over and this sacred ground where so many had been martyred should not be dismantled yet."

of the Hotel Ukraine became a crisis center, filled with journalists and a setting for government press conferences.

So there I was, six months after the uprising, curious and confused. By June, a new president, Petro Poroshenko, had been elected and a war was raging in the east. The tents had been taken over by new residents: some well-intentioned patriots, some hangers-on and some homeless looking for free food and shelter. Maidan had become Ukrainian hallowed ground which the latest residents capitalized on when they took over the space. The government was reluctant to clear the square in view of the ongoing war and the strong nationalist sentiment that it represented. It became an Ukrainian tourist site, reminding everyone of the sacrifices that had taken place there. "It also keeps the government in check," one of new occupants told me, "This war isn't over yet." Vendor tables around the square sold everything from commemorative tee shirts to Putin toilet paper. Men in camouflage uniforms still milled around the lobby of my hotel. Merchants along Kreshchatyk Street, Kiev's main artery, were frustrated because their businesses were suffering. Picture the downtown area where you live filled with barricades and tents, traffic unable to pass through the main boulevards from one end of town to another.

It reminded me of how many of the cities began to change in Nigeria once the war had started in 1967: the roadblocks and the spontaneous militias that



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manned them, the civil defense teams being hastily organized in every city, town and village, the volunteers signing up to join the cause and the push for women to "do their part" for the struggle. One day, my secondary school was abruptly closed after soldiers arrived and announced it would be used as army barracks and students were expected to join the army immediately.

Back then, I thought it was just my luck to be sent to a country that would end up in a brutal civil war. Forty-seven years later it seems like there's a Biafra in so many countries around the world. Prior to Ukraine, I had been in Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Georgia had already lost the breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. A young man who worked at my hotel in Tbilisi, told me how his relatives had been killed in Abkhazia because his family were "Georgian" rather than "Abkhaz." His family fled the region leaving everything behind. It reminded me of when Igbos were being slaughtered in Northern Nigeria and raced back to the East as refugees.

When Russia annexed Crimea, the anxiety heightened in Western-leaning Georgia that they might be next. Neighboring Moldova had the same worries. Having closely followed the Ukrainian crisis in the news, I was eager to get accurate information while I was in Georgia. It wasn't easy.

"Did you hear what's happening?" an American ex-pat living in Tbilisi asked me one morning. "American snipers are picking off people in Donetsk. The bodies are piling up! I just saw it on the Russian news." It was like listening to Radio Enugu during the Biafran conflict when there were so many horrific reports, it was hard to tell the difference between what was likely and what was ludicrous.

My next stop was Azerbaijan, an oil-rich Muslim country geographically divided by a disputed territory, Nagorno-Karabach—a self-declared republic which no one in the world recognizes. It's populated by Armenians on land claimed by Azerbaijan. Armenia, that rare country which has good

relations with the US, Russia and Iran, has bitter relations with its neighbor Azerbaijan. Fighting along the border prevented me from exploring the beautiful hilltop towns and monasteries that Nagorno-Karabach is known for. I learned to not even mention the word "Armenia" in Azerbaijan because people get irrationally inflamed. The border that Armenia shares with Turkey also flares up periodically not just because of the long-simmering genocide issue but also because of disputed land. Mt. Ararat, that integral part of historic Armenia, is now on land across the Turkish border. "We get along with everyone except those closest to us," an Armenian woman with an impish grin told me in a Yerevan cafe. Turkey, of course, has an eastern Kurdish region that has been clamoring for independence for years.

In Nigeria it was Igbo-Hausa and Christian-Muslim but when you scan a map of the world you'll find Catholic-Protestant, Black-White, Buddhist-Muslim, Jewish-Arab, Sunni-Shite, Spanish-Catalonian, British-Scottish. Even tiny Sri Lanka had it Tamil Tigers fighting viciously for independence for years. The list goes on. So many countries bitterly divided with minority regions demanding independence as the solution. Somalia, my Peace Corps placement after Nigeria, has the distinction in Africa of having one tribe and one religion yet its clan rivalries are at least as divisive as any ethnic or religious conflict. Three points of the five-pointed star on the Somali flag represent the parts of Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya that Somalia claims as theirs. (The other two represent the former British and Italian regions that were joined at independence.)

What's distressing about this state of affairs is the inability of groups to work through their differences and live side-by-side and the shortage of courageous and visionary leaders who could negotiate acceptable compromise solutions, allay the fears and take them there. As Peace Corps Volunteers we tried to bridge and transcend some of these divides and present a face of America to the host countries that was beyond the headlines and the propaganda. We were there to understand the cultures

and the day-to-day lives of ordinary people. Bringing that experience back home and spreading that knowledge increases awareness exponentially to those who weren't there, but it's quite an ambitious goal to change anything in view of the larger and more powerful forces at play.

Traveling off-the-beaten path, I retain a cultural curiosity that the Peace Corps stirred up and nourished in me. It hasn't burned out even though my stamina is not the same as when I was twenty-two. Navigating through tense borders and dangerous locales, I continue to draw on the judgment and decision-making that was fine-honed during my own Biafran experience with all its dangers and uncertainties. In all my travels, I'm reminded of the challenges that many current Volunteers face in an ever-more-complicated world. **WV**

Bob Criso (Nigeria 1966-1967, Somalia 1967-1968) is a writer living in New York. He previously worked as a psychotherapist in private practice and at Princeton University. He can be reached at bobcriso@gmail.com.

Continued from Page 36

everyone seemed happy. And indeed, we also were happy to be with them. But one man's toast brought us all up short. He toasted to returning to his home. He said that the settlement could never be his home, and he wanted to see his home again before he died. It was an unutterably sad moment, because it was so personal and real. We toasted, we drank to his home, and we moved on—but I will never forget the look on that man's face. **WV**

Sara Feldman is currently serving her first year as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the city of Gori, in central Georgia. She has lived and worked in places as diverse as Jerusalem, Israel; Kyoto, Japan; Seattle, Washington; and, of course, Colonia, Yap. Sara loves to travel, experience and understand new cultures, and to put her experience as a lawyer and nonprofit executive to good use.

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A RETURN TO MALI-LA

A Menna De! “(A long time!)”

By Diana Vergis Vinh

Would people still eat pounded millet porridge? Would they have the same teasing cousins?

These were some of the questions going through my head as I returned to Mali to work with an American health organization 30 years after serving as a Peace Corps health Volunteer. Looking at the old Malian man sitting next to me in his traditional dress and beard I thought, not much has probably changed. Then he took out two cell phones from his flowing brocade shirt and shook several SIM cards from a used pill bottle into his hand. “Because I am a merchant I travel a lot and have a different card for each country,” he said as he expertly switched out his phones. Hmm, maybe a lot has changed, I thought as the plane touched down in the Bamako airport.

Security measures are much tighter, I observed, as a soldier in a glass booth carefully took my fingerprints and examined my passport. Then I walked through the airport doors onto the same tiled patio I had crossed before and the warmth of the sun and the smell of ripe mangos hit me. I saw a cab driver holding up a sign for Mali Health and made my way towards him. As I sunk down into the car, the Bambara language came flooding back and I asked him about his day, his family, his friends and finally his name. When he replied that he was a “Traore,” I informed him with great gusto that he was “not a serious person and that his preferred food was beans.” Surprised, he gleefully replied, “Oh no! Your last name

is not Diarra, is it? Walai! You are the bean eater!” One question was answered: the joyful tradition of teasing cousins was still going strong.

I was completely lost as we made our way towards the office; Bamako is one of the fastest growing cities in the world and it is enormous. Happily, the driver knew exactly where to go, and soon I was meeting the skilled and friendly staff at Mali Health. The brightly painted cinder block structure looked familiar, but as I talked with staff I learned that many of the health conditions I had seen—such as guinea worm, cholera, measles, onchocerciasis and leprosy—were much reduced. Maternal and infant mortality were lower as well. Sadly, malaria is still going strong, and it is one of the main things Mali Health is now focused on fighting.

The next morning, I went out to a suburb of Bamako to take pictures and videos of staff and patients at the Mali Health partner clinics. A lesson on water sanitation for the community health workers was being presented via a Powerpoint projection on the plaster wall. Midway through the talk, everyone broke up into small groups to brainstorm and create posters on ways water could be contaminated. I asked the workers about whether people were resistant to treating their water or using the suggested 20-liter containers. “No, they have seen that their children are healthier when the water is cleaner and there are few problems getting people on board,” was their response. This heartening reply was

At right: Peace Corps days.
Below: Working with Mali Health.



DIANA VERGIS VINH



DANIELLE HULL

a far cry from my failed efforts at getting people to screen their water to prevent guinea worm.

So what did it feel like to be back after so long? In short, it was wonderful; so many of the things I loved about Mali—the warmth and energy of the people, the beauty of the country and the delicious food (I did have the porridge)—were still there, and now good health practices, such as regular vaccinations, water treatment, and prenatal care, seem to be taking hold as well. There is concern about the revolt in the north and worry about politics in general, but as I got on the plane to fly home, the Bambara proverb, “An orphan is not a person who has lost their parents, but someone who has lost hope,” still seemed to ring true.

(This proverb is a little more genteel than my favorite: “You can’t run and scratch your butt at the same time.”)

From 1984 to 1986, Diana Vergis Vinh was a Peace Corps health Volunteer in Mali. After finishing service, she studied in France, got a nursing degree in Arizona, and worked in public health while raising her family. Now that her children are nearly grown, she is getting a Master’s Degree in Public Health and hopes to return to international work.

EVERWHERE STORIES

Excerpts from Everywhere Stories: Short Fiction from a Small Planet

Edited by Clifford Garstang

With a theme of "It's a Dangerous World," Everywhere Stories: Short Fiction from a Small Planet, edited by award-winning author and Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Clifford Garstang (Korea 1976-1977), takes readers on a journey to all seven continents: to a portentous soccer game in the Congo, a mysterious disappearance in Argentina, post-Katrina New Orleans, a murder in the Italian countryside, a quarreling couple in Kazakhstan, a visit with Chairman Mao in China, a sketchy dentist in New Zealand, and to many more countries around the world.

"Because of my own international experience," says Garstang, "first as a Peace Corps Volunteer and then as an international lawyer, I've always been interested in multicultural fiction and stories set outside the U.S."

Here are excerpts from stories by two Peace Corps writers included in the anthology.

From: "Eggs"

Susi Wyss (Central African Republic, 1990-92)

Grace and her friend Solange pick their way by moonlight down the dirt paths of their Bangui neighborhood, wandering toward the main road where streetlamps will light their way to the Bar Etoile. Other than the steady singing of crickets and the sporadic bark of a dog, the neighborhood is quiet, houses closed up for the night, faint slits of orange light from a kerosene lamp seeping through an occasional crack in a shutter. The humid night air sticks against her skin, and Grace tries to remember not to lick off the lipstick that Solange applied to her lips.

Solange is uncharacteristically silent, although she did mention at the start of their walk that Alexi might come to the Bar Etoile tonight—information that made Grace's stomach contract into a knot. She can't tell whether she's nervous about seeing him or if she's just hungry—she hasn't eaten since midday, when she bought a stick of fermented cassava at the market where she sells dried fish.

Despite her hunger, Grace feels lucky. She finally has a place to live and a new friend in Solange. Although it's only been a year since her mother died, she's almost forgotten wandering with her two younger sisters from their village for several days to reach the capital of the Central African Republic. A distant aunt took in her sisters, but insisted that Grace, who was almost thirteen at the time, was old enough to fend for herself. So she slept outdoors and picked up odd jobs around the market, carrying loads for merchants, until she was able to get a market stand of her own and, finally, a place to sleep—a one-room, mud hut with a thatched roof that leaks when it rains.

Yes, her luck has finally changed. And the next step—if her good fortune holds—is to find a man with the means to live in a solid, concrete house with a tin roof, more than one room, and a latrine that's not communal. A place that's big enough for her sisters to finally come live with her.

From: "A Husband and Wife Are One Satan"

Jeff Fearnside (Kazakhstan, 2002-04)

Neither of them could remember exactly when their arguments began bringing more business to their cafe. A certain amount of public obnoxiousness could be expected in Kazakhstan, especially when vodka was involved, but normally the deeply personal affairs of a husband and wife were kept secret, behind the locked doors of crumbling Soviet-era apartments or closed gates of tiny village homes.

That doesn't mean people were above prying into their neighbors' lives, especially in the villages. Raim and Railya made it easy for them.

It started out playfully.

"Mare," Raim would say, smacking his wife on her great round behind, which shivered like a horse's flank under her cotton skirt. "Stallion," she would return, grabbing him by his fleshy hips and then pushing him away, laughing.

The sparse few customers who came at first, mostly their friends and relatives, enjoyed this little theater. Then one day Raim returned drunk from a trip to the bazaar to buy onions, and Railya soundly scolded him for "coming in on his eyebrows" in front of the entire cafe.

"You're really under her heel!" roared the big foundry boss, Kolya, and everybody laughed. Raim, normally good-natured and too drunk to fight back anyway, grinned sheepishly.

"But it's a very pretty heel," he said, trying to wink but blinking both eyes instead.

Once the taboo was broken, they began arguing as freely in their cafe as they did at home. Being ethnic Tatars, descendants from the Mongols who had ravaged the region some eight hundred years before, they already enjoyed a certain reputation for wildness. At some point, they realized that business had become brisk. Just how much was due to their tasty homestyle cooking and how much to the entertainment was uncertain, but Railya shrewdly observed that there were certain phrases that always pleased her diners, who even insisted that the thunderous pop music, normally a cafe's main attraction, be turned down in order to hear what the combatants were saying.

It was a summer Friday night, and the regulars were all there: married, bear-like Kolya and his doll-like girlfriend, Larisa; Murat, a quiet little Kazakh man, and Tikhan, the equally quiet Russian youth who always sat with him; Dilya and Olya, excitable and extravagant teenage friends; and Alikhan, a widower everyone assumed was alcoholic because he strangely sat by himself and never spoke except to order.

Raim hustled between his roles of greeting customers, grilling large skewers of meat, and dishing out portions from a massive cauldron of plov, long-boiled rice, carrots, and onions topped with mutton.

Everywhere Stories: Short Fiction from a Small Planet (ISBN: 978-1-941209-11-0) Edited by Clifford Garstang, published by Press 53. Learn more at http://www.press53.com/Everywhere_Stories.html.

Clifford Garstang (Korea 1976-1977) is the author of *What the Zhang Boys Know* (Press 53, 2012), winner of the 2013 Library of Virginia Literary Award for Fiction, and the prize-winning linked story collection *In an Uncharted Country* (Press 53, 2009). His work has appeared in numerous literary magazines, and he has received fellowships from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts, and the Sewanee Writers' Conference. He holds an MFA in Fiction from Queens University of Charlotte and is the co-founder and editor of *Prime Number Magazine*. He is also the author of the popular literary blog *Perpetual Folly*.

RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY

By Jonathan Pearson



BENIN

The founder and Chief Customer Officer of d.light, **Sam Goldman** (2000-2002), is the recipient of the 2014 Charles Bronfman Award, which recognizes humanitarians under the age of 50 whose work is inspired by their Jewish values and is of universal benefit to all people. d.light has changed the lives of over 37 million people by replacing outdated kerosene lamps with affordable solar lights. Goldman was the recipient of NPCA's Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service in 2011.

Lana Moriarty (1993-1997) has been named acting director for consumer e-health at the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC). The ONC is at the forefront of administrative health information technology efforts and aims to improve health care through exchange of health information and accessibility. Moriarty will work on issues of patient engagement, information access, and the transformation of the health care system.

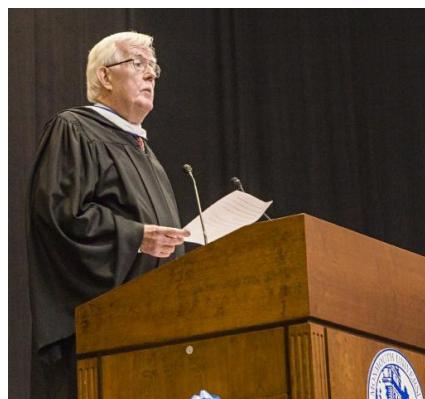
BOTSWANA

Americorps Alumni celebrated the 20th anniversary of the domestic service program in part by honoring twenty individuals with National Leadership Awards. One of the recipients, **Sondra Samuels** (1992-1994), had the dual distinction of service as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Botswana. Americorps

Alums recognized Samuels for her work as President and CEO of the Northside Achievement Zone (NAZ). Located in North Minneapolis, NAZ is focused on ending multigenerational poverty through education. NAZ has been named a federal Promise Neighborhood and has become a nationally recognized model for comprehensive community development and systems change.

ETHIOPIA

The 81st anniversary marking the founding of New Jersey's Monmouth



University included honoring **Thomas Gallagher** (1962-1964) with the Distinguished Alumni Award. The honor is the highest award presented by Monmouth's Alumni Association to individuals who have distinguished themselves by contributions made in their own particular fields of work, professional or personal, or in the betterment of humanity. A 1962 graduate, Gallagher entered the Foreign Service, becoming the youngest chief of a diplomatic mission in modern U.S. history, serving as consul general in Ecuador. He is also recognized as becoming the first civil servant of any modern government to voluntarily identify as a gay person.

FIJI

San Francisco artist **Christine Laws Anderson** (1974-1976) has two embroidered wall hangings juried into the 20th National Exhibit of the Embroiderer's Guild of America. The traveling exhibit has recently been in Colorado, South Dakota and Tennessee, and is scheduled to be exhibited in early 2015 in Minnesota and North Carolina.

GUATEMALA

The *Huffington Post* recently named **Juan Gonzalez** (2002-2004) as one of their featured "40 under 40: Latinos in American Politics." Gonzalez worked for the State Department for ten years and served on the National Security Council. He now serves as Senior Advisor to Vice President Joe Biden. One of his key roles

involves assisting the Vice President in building diplomatic relationships across Latin America.

GUINEA

Seth Aubin, an associate professor at the College of William and Mary, has been selected as a Fulbright Scholar by Fulbright Canada. Fulbright Canada aims to foster a relationship with the U.S. by allowing their scholars to conduct research or attend academic programs in the other country. Aubin will work as a physicist at TRIUMPH, Canada's national laboratory that conducts research on nuclear physics as well as particles. Aubin worked as a fellow at the University of Toronto in order to conduct research on Bose-Einstein condensation and Fermi gases.

IRAN

Former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary **Donna Shalala** (1962-1964) announced she will be stepping down

as the head of the University of Miami. Shalala has worked in academia for over 30 years in addition to the eight years she spent working with the Clinton administration. While at the University of Miami, Shalala led a \$1.6 billion fundraising campaign which led to increased medical research, an expanded faculty and more financial aid.

MALAWI

Citizens Financial Group, an American bank with several locations along the east coast, has named **Leo Higdon** (1968-1970) their newest board member. Higdon also serves on the board of HealthSouth (a rehabilitation service provider) and Eatton Vance (an investment management firm). Previously, Higdon served as president of Babson College, College of Charleston and most recently, Connecticut College.

MARSHALL ISLANDS

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick

nominated **Paul H. Smyth** (1990-1992) as an associate justice of the District Court. Smyth has been the U.S. attorney in the Springfield, office since 2007. After graduating from Amherst College, Smyth served in the Republic of the Marshall Islands for two years. He then proceeded to attend law school at the University of Virginia. Smyth is actively involved in several community programs including the Mason Square Initiative, which promotes food access and healthy lifestyles in Springfield.

NIGER

Anne Crylen (2001) has been in Cambodia as the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship. A Doctoral Student at the University of Washington, Crylen's work in Cambodia is focused on special education. She is one of 1,800 Fulbright scholars traveling abroad during the 2014-15



WHERE IN THE WORLD IS WORLDVIEW?

Send us a photo!

Nicole Banister writes, "Peace Corps South Africa sends *WorldView* magazine out regularly to our P.O. boxes, and it is always a welcome piece of mail! I love reading it, and when I'm done with each addition I lend them to my students in my grade 6 and 7 English classes. I used to get, 'Ma'am, what's Peace Corps?' (pronounced 'peace corpse') all the time, but after a couple months of them reading *WorldView* and me explaining to my kids that 'Nna ke moithaopi wa Peace Corps...' (I'm a Peace Corps Volunteer...) in Sepedi, the language spoken at my site in Limpopo), I think they finally get it. Thanks for your wonderful publication and keep up the great work!"

Like many Volunteers, Nicole finds that *WorldView* is great reading when she travels. She took this snap in a local taxi.

Have a great photo of yourself with *WorldView* magazine? Surprise us! Send your submission to news@peacecorpsconnect.org. Interested in writing for *WorldView*? Check out our submissions page at www.worldviewmagazine.com.

Be like Nicole! Did you know that a lesson plan accompanies each issue *WorldView*? Visit <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/n pca/news/worldview-magazine/lesson-plans/>.



academic year. Her selection was based on Fulbright criteria which considers a scholar's academic and professional achievement, and leadership potential.

PANAMA

Tempest Carter was recently honored by the African Genesis Institute, a southeast Pennsylvania program described as a "school without walls" focused on developing and understanding of the African experience in America. An alumnus of the Institute, Carter received The Young Scholar Award at the program's 21st annual Graduation and Awards Luncheon.

(1965-1968) onto their team of senior international experts. Carson's 37-year Foreign Service career included postings as the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya,



Zimbabwe and Uganda, and service as the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs from 2009 to 2013. Ambassador Carson also serves as Senior Advisor to the President of the U.S. Institute of Peace. He is the recipient of a number of awards, including the U.S. State Department's Meritorious Service award.

SIERRA LEONE

Illinois educators receiving this year's "Those Who Excel" awards include **Marilyn Mastny** (1974-1976) of the Champaign School District. Mastny, a Mentor/Volunteer Coordinator at Central High School, will receive the Educational Service Personnel Award of Excellence. The awards are presented by the Illinois State Board of Education and given to individuals for their community involvement, views on the state's most pressing educational needs and outstanding service to students.

Monica Edinger (1974-1976) is one of four winners of the 2014 Children's Africana Book Awards (CABA). This is the 22nd year of the award, hosted by the Smithsonian's National Museum of National Art. The award honors authors and illustrators who have produced exceptional books on Africa for young people. Edinger and illustrator Robert Byrd were recognized for their book, *Africa is My Home: Child of the Amistad*. Prior to the awards ceremony in early November, Edinger and other winners visited local schools and libraries to read to young people and autograph copies of their books.

TANZANIA

Albright Stonebridge Group (ASG) has welcomed Ambassador **Johnnie Carson**

An October special on the Animal Planet highlighted some of best documentary film footage of videographer **Bill Wallauer**, who has worked with Jane Goodall and her research institute in the study of chimpanzee behavior. Wallauer began working with Goodall in 1992, soon after he completed his Peace Corps service. Most of the videography has centered on Gombe National Park, where Goodall has been studying chimpanzee behavior since the early 1960's.

THAILAND

Suzanne McCormick (1989-1991) was named president and CEO of the United Way-Suncoast. Located in Tampa Fla.,



United Way Suncoast partners with various organizations to ensure that children receive the education they deserve and struggling adults are able to maintain financial stability and employment. Prior to her work with the United Way, McCormick served as the CEO for the American Red Cross of Southern Maine and the People's Regional Opportunity program.

VANUATU

Casey Burnette (2002-2004) is the first recipient of the Outstanding Returned



Peace Corps Volunteer award, given as part of the 2014 Governor's Service Awards in Colorado. Burnette, who is the Service Project Chair for the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Colorado (RPCVs of Colorado), received this

ADVERTISER INDEX

American University School of International Service **17**

American University School of Public Affairs **11**

Antioch University **6**

Brandeis University Heller School **5**

Bryn Mawr University Pre-med Post-bac **39**

Catholic University **32**

Claremont Lincoln University **27**

Clark University **2**

Colorado State University Business School **27**

Columbia University SIPA **25**

CUNY Law School **23**

Goucher College **34**

Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing **Cover 2, 1**

Lesley University **39**

Monterey Institute MIIS International Studies **20**

Next Step Travel **Cover 4**

Peace Corps - Third Goal **23**

SIT Graduate Institute **11**

Tufts University Fletcher School **15**

UMBC Shriver Peacemaker Program **38**

University of San Francisco **29**

Western Illinois University Fellows **36**

award in recognition of her passion and enthusiasm for continuing to volunteer and be of service to others. Since 2009, Burnette has organized more than 20 different service projects for the RPCVs of Colorado, ranging from trail building to community gardening.

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES



Six Returned Peace Corps Volunteers received the 2014 Franklin H. Williams Award. The award, given each year by the Peace Corps, honors returned volunteers from ethnically diverse backgrounds who exemplify an ongoing commitment to community service and the third goal of Peace Corps service. This year's recipients are **Trudy Anderson** (Morocco 1987-1989) of Morganton, North Carolina; **Manuel Colon** (Paraguay 2010-2012) of Urbana, Illinois; **Emily Ellison** (China 2009-2011) of Gallup, New Mexico; **Alexandra Escobar** (China 2012-2013) of Long Beach, California; **Ferney Giraldo** (Guatemala 2008-2010) of The Bronx, New York and **Hugh Williams** (Sierra Leone 1974-1976) of Atlanta, Georgia.

For more Community News go to www.peacecorpsconnect.org/nPCA/news/community-news. WV



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IN MEMORIAM

We remember those within the Peace Corps community who passed away in the last several months, and thank them for their service to our nation. For a more extensive list of those lost in recent years, visit <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/rememberingthoselost/>.

We welcome you to send information on additional members of the Peace Corps community by sending a message to obituary@peacecorpsconnect.org.

PEACE CORPS STAFF

Cleo Blackburn III, 9/14/14
Oliver Taylor, 9/15/14
John Torian, 9/6/14

MULTIPLE COUNTRIES

Mary Martha Beaton, Morocco, Thailand; 8/12/14
Mary Bennett, Liberia, Nigeria; 10/11/14
Judy DeVries, Tanzania, Libya, 9/23/14
Cynthia Livingston (Waterbury) Cole, Honduras, Jamaica; 9/26/14

BOLIVIA

Charles H. Teller, 8/28/14

BRAZIL

Wilma O'Brien, 9/22/14

BULGARIA

Bonnie Getsinger, 10/8/14

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

Judith "Judy" Bogen, 9/3/14

EL SALVADOR

Delbert Farmer, 9/7/14

GABON

William Backs, 10/11/14

GHANA

Robert "Fritz" Frederick Cameron, 9/25/14
Anne Elbrecht, 9/24/14

GUATEMALA

James Doyle Wilson, 9/12/14

GUINEA

E. Roland Noel, 10/5/14

HONDURAS

Robin Burton, 9/2/14

KENYA

Gordon Grant, 10/18/14
Martin Wiebe Selch, 9/9/14
Charlene A. Seibert, 9/23/14

KOREA

Joseph McFadden, 9/23/14

LIBERIA

James Colegrove, 9/10/14

David Holsten, 10/19/14

Virginia Spray, 9/15/14
Richard John Swee, 9/17/14
Clifton Scott Whitehead, 9/22/14

LITHUANIA

Katharine Prout MacKinnon, 9/24/14

MALAYSIA

Valerie Granstra, 9/12/14

MICRONESIA

Everett Eugene Jones, 10/2/14

NIGERIA

Syed Malik Khatib, 9/8/14

PAPAU NEW GUINEA

Sean Tuttle, 9/3/14

PARAGUAY

Warren Thomas Chapman, 9/18/14
Cynthia Coupe, 9/10/14

PHILIPPINES

Marilyn Irene Maddox, 8/30/14

SENEGAL

Barbara M. Catherwood, 9/10/14

SOUTH AFRICA

Linda Ayer, 9/6/14

THAILAND

Frederick John Baker, 9/15/14

TONGA

Jack Hill, 9/15/14

TUNISIA

David Holdzkom, 10/5/14
Richard Morehouse, 8/11/14

YEMEN

Alene Rose Whitaker, 9/21/14

COUNTRY OF SERVICE NOT SPECIFIED

Dr. James A. Dray, 9/30/14
Colleen Eicher, 9/14/14
Charles Paul Hunt, 9/5/14
Dominic Palombo, 6/16/14



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