

# WorldView

## CHANGEMAKING

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- Rebuilding after the Rwanda Genocide
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A magazine of news and comment about the Peace Corps world

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Jack Edwards

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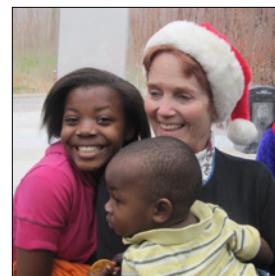
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**COVER:** Abdrouhamane Tossekere and Souleymane Aissata Camara receive support from facilitators Mariama Keita, Emma Schaberg O'Brien, Amadou Cissoko, and Yansane Naby. Dare to Innovate is a program aimed at engendering sustainable social change in Guinea. Read more about this and other changemaking initiatives on pages 16-28. Credit: Dare to Innovate

# WorldView

A magazine of news and comment about the Peace Corps world

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### 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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Knowledge Advancing Social Justice

# One Person Can Make a Difference, and Everyone Should Try

by Glenn Blumhorst

*"One person can make a difference,  
and everyone should try"*

— John F. Kennedy

As global citizens, the Peace Corps community is one of the most proactive groups committed to bringing about change in our world. Whether promoting dental hygiene among village kids as a Peace Corps Volunteer, encouraging the recycling of household waste back home in the United States, or writing to members of Congress to advocate for legislative issues, we tend to be practicing change agents in our communities.

Our motivation often stems from personal experiences or exposure to disparities, injustices or tragedies. I vividly recall the dreary evening years ago when, as a Peace Corps Volunteer, I helped a Guatemalan family carry the small coffin bearing their young daughter through the muddy streets of their village.

The little girl had ingested a chemical pesticide that her father had unwittingly stored in a soda bottle within her reach at their home. Hers was an agonizing death.

I vowed to devote my effort to changing the way farm families lived and worked with chemical pesticides. I trained hundreds of farmers in their safe management or use of organic alternatives.

Whether it truly made a difference, I can't say for sure, but if even one life was saved, it was certainly worthwhile. I was doing my best to make a difference in one remote corner of the world.

From our Peace Corps service, we become particularly adept at our role as change makers in our global communities. We learn from our experience to be sensitive to cultural

norms and to understand that even small changes can be significant.

"Just one family in my village was initially interested in having a vegetable garden," said Bethany Arnold (Senegal 2008-10), my seatmate on a recent flight. (Yes, I run into Returned Peace Corps Volunteers everywhere!) "It was frustrating. But other families eventually saw the fruit of our labor and were soon growing their own vegetables rather than walking 15 miles to the nearest market. My efforts with just one family eventually made a big difference."

That's what the Peace Corps community is all about—each of us doing our part to make a difference. Ours is a vibrant community, one that is built by active, engaged and invested members.

I know that you and I, in the months and years to come, can do much to make a difference in the world. As we continue our lifetime of service, I encourage you to be a part of building your Peace Corps community.

Get involved in a local RPCV group, as well as *your* national organization, the



National Peace Corps Association President  
Glenn Blumhorst

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---

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

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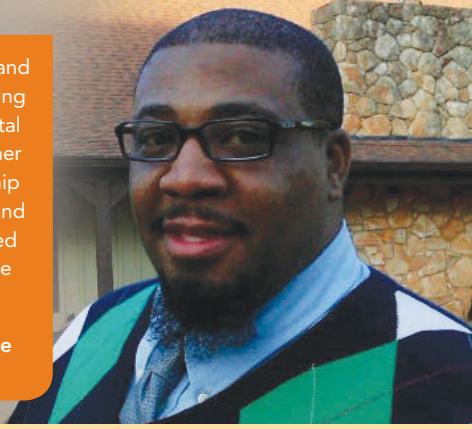
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PCV Guyana 97-99



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# Group News Highlights

A look at what National Peace Corps Association member groups are up to

by Jonathan Pearson

## AFGHANISTAN

**The Friends of Afghanistan** remain busy supporting projects in the country where they served. The group coordinated the collection of school supplies from 1,000 students from 20 different U.S. schools in western New York. The supplies were subsequently forwarded to support the operations of a girls school in Kabul. Group members were also able to organize a gathering in New York state with Afghanistan girls education activist Shabana Basij Rasikh, in conjunction with her visit to the Robert H. Jackson Center earlier this year.

## ALBANIA

**Friends of Albania** (FOA) awarded six project grants in 2013 to Peace Corps Volunteers currently serving in Albania. These funds supported a summer camp in the city of Shkodër, a reading program in the schools of Peshkopi, improved visitor resources for tourist in Përmet, and technological updates to equipment in the public health laboratory of Lezhë.

## ARIZONA

It is one of the main community service events of the year for the **Phoenix Returned Peace Corps Volunteers**. In late September, several group members participated in a health fair for kids organized by the Arizona Coalition for Tomorrow. Families with small children were offered free physicals, immunizations, hearing and vision screenings, lead exposure testing and nutrition information. The Phoenix RPCVs helped out by assisting with checking families in, providing information and providing bilingual assistance for Spanish-speaking families.



CARV member enjoys the holiday season with new Americans.

## OHIO

Congratulations to the **Cincinnati Area Returned Volunteers** (CARV), who host a “new Americans” event each year in early December, introducing people newly arrived in the U.S. to Christmas in Cincinnati. Special guests in 2012 came from the Central African Republic, Rwanda, Tanzania, Congo, Cameroon, Colombia, Guatemala, Mexico, Morocco and Panama. CARV members volunteer to drive their new neighbors to view festive holiday sights, from the Krohn Conservatory to art museums to toy train displays. The tour concludes with a gathering at a local church featuring music, conversation and a lunch prepared by CARV members. This continues to be the most popular CARV event, drawing dozens of guests and RPCVs together.

## ILLINOIS

If it's winter, that means the **Chicago Area Peace Corps Association** (CAPCA) is partnering with the group Housing Opportunities and Maintenance for the Elderly (HOME) to weatherize homes in Hyde Park, a neighborhood on Chicago's southside. Just as they have done before, CAPCA members will gather to service the elderly community in some of the city's most needy neighborhoods. The volunteers work in groups to install hefty plastic sheeting on the inside of windows to prevent drafts. By working in the homes of elderly residents without local family to help, the RPCVs get to engage in warm and open conversations as they carry out their service project.

## NEW JERSEY

NPCA President Glenn Blumhorst was among those on hand over Labor Day weekend for the 30th annual Plowing Match at the Howell Living History Farm in Titusville, New Jersey. Glenn

met a number of members of the **New Jersey Returned Peace Corps Volunteers**, who have long-standing connections with the farm. Peter Watson (Benin 1972-76), who is director of the Living History Farm, hosted the Labor Day event. Other members of NJRPCV provided volunteer assistance to make sure the day was a success.

## VIRGINIA

One of the newer NPCA member groups is the **Northern Virginia RPCVs** (NOVARPCV), which organized in the Fairfax County area in the aftermath of Peace Corps 50th anniversary celebrations. Since it formed, the group has held Sunday monthly potluck meetings with a guest speaker. They are also building a presence in the community. The group maintains a portion of a local walking trail as a service project and organized a well-received information booth this fall at the Reston Multicultural Festival.



# HOW DOES THE RISE OF CHINA AFFECT GLOBAL PROSPECTS FOR SUSTAINABILITY?

## JUDITH SHAPIRO

- Director, Dual MA degree in Natural Resources and Sustainable Development (NRSD) with the University for Peace in Costa Rica
- Author, multiple books on China, including *Son of the Revolution*, *Mao's War against Nature*, and *China's Environmental Challenges*
- Teacher, core undergraduate and masters courses for NRSD and Global Environmental Policy

## GREAT CHALLENGES OF OUR TIME DEMAND A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Judith Shapiro was one of the first Americans to live and teach in China after normalization of relations in 1979. Her books, articles, and media appearances have made her one of the world's leading scholars of China's environmental challenges.

Her latest research focuses on China's impact on global resources, particularly in Latin America, where she is directing a graduate student research team in partnership with the World Resources Institute.

For more information, visit [www.judithshapiro.com](http://www.judithshapiro.com).



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# Outstanding Member Groups Honored with 2013 Ruppe Award

Friends of the Dominican Republic & the Northern California Peace Corps Association

by Patricia Sullivan

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) annually honors particularly outstanding member groups with the Loret Miller Ruppe Award. The award is named after the tenth longest serving Peace Corps Director, and is given out based on commitment to "projects supporting the Third Goal of the Peace Corps, or those who continue to serve their host countries, build a cooperative and spirited network, and promote service in general." In June, at Peace Corps Connect – Boston, NPCA honored the 2013 winners: Friends of the Dominican Republic (FDR) and the Northern California Peace Corps Association (NorCalPCA).

## Friends of the Dominican Republic

Friends of the Dominican Republic group is singled out this year for its Community Challenge Fund (CCF). The CCF provides grants of up to \$2,500 for community-based projects that help the poorest communities in the DR with basic needs such as water, electricity, educational facilities, sanitation and health. Community members as well as on-site Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) carry out the projects.

"The Community Challenge Fund grew out of the recognition that small amounts of money—contributed to Dominican communities that are working to help themselves—can make a big difference," said FDR President Kim Herman. "The Community Challenge Fund gives our members and friends the opportunity to continue making a difference in the lives of Dominicans in simple yet very important ways."

To date, the CCF has helped a total of 16,762 Dominicans in 4,083 households, and 2012 marked the

highest amount of funds and largest number of projects awarded in the history of the program. The CCF was able to provide \$33,613 to 14 projects.

A recent aqueduct project in El Guayabo, a town in the hills of Cordillera Central, brought clean water into the homes of 38 families from a year-round spring. The CCF made this project possible through its contribution of \$2,000 and long hours of labor put in by volunteers. In addition, PCVs provided training on maintaining the underground pipe system, while also speaking about health and nutrition to villagers.

Projects such as the El Guayabo aqueduct represent the purpose of the Community Challenge Fund, and are a microcosm of the far reaching effects that the fund has on the lives of poorer Dominicans. It is for these reasons that the NPCA has honored the FDR with the 2013 Ruppe award.

FDR President Herman expressed appreciation; "the Ruppe Award is recognition from the larger Peace Corps community that FDR is making a difference through our programs and it is very gratifying to receive that recognition from NPCA and RPCV's who understand why we do it."

## The Northern California Peace Corps Association

The Northern California Peace Corps Association's mission is "to educate the public about the work of Peace Corps Volunteers and the countries they serve and support prospective, current and returned Volunteers." This year NorCalPCA is acknowledged for its involvement in projects supported by their grants program, their speakers bureau, and their mentoring program, all of which represent a strong commitment

to the Third Goal of the Peace Corps.

NorCalPCA's grants program was established in 1981 and its funds provide support for both domestic and international community development projects. Most grants average between \$500 and \$2,000, and funds are raised at conferences and RPCV gatherings such as the recent "Support Girls, Support the World concert" benefit concert, which raised \$2,000 to be shared between the NorCal grants program and the Bay Area Girls Rock Camp.

NorCalPCA has developed a critical selection process for their grants program in order to ensure that funds are delivered where they are truly needed and can be used effectively. The group evaluates each fund request based on its technical and economical possibilities, its ability to improve the general welfare of the community, and whether or not the project addresses community needs. Past projects have included \$1,150 for kitchen equipment to the Vocational Training School at Bwanda, Masaka, Uganda in 2004 and \$1,100 given to Cristobal Colon, Ecuador, for a waste management project in 2003.

In addition to the grants program, NorCalPCA spreads the word of the Peace Corps through a speakers bureau program that aims "to share the Peace Corps experience and to increase global awareness of the American public." The group is also active in NPCA's mentoring program whereby "NorCalPCA mentors help RPCVs readjust, give career advice or just provide a sympathetic ear."

---

*Patricia Sullivan is a communications intern for the National Peace Corps Association. She is originally from New York, and currently attends the University of Maryland, College Park, studying English language and literature.*

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# Capitol Hill Update

Advocates busy back home

by Jonathan Pearson

**N**ot all advocacy action happens “inside the Beltway” of Washington D.C. With that in mind, congratulations to the many members of the Peace Corps community who participated in NPCA’s third annual district office meetings initiative. This past August and September, at least 52 advocacy meetings were held across 19 states.

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) organized local meetings with their members of Congress and utilized materials provided by the NPCA to provide a unified message. Advocates urged support for the Senate Peace Corps funding recommendation of \$385 million for the agency (nearly \$30 million above the House request) in the

current fiscal year. Advocates also helped pick up additional co-sponsors for the Peace Corps Commemorative Act (H.R. 915) and the Respect for Peace Corps Volunteers Act (H.R. 1573).

*Jonathan Pearson (Micronesia 1987-89) is the advocacy director for the National Peace Corps Association.*



San Diego RPCVs meet with staff of Congressman Duncan Hunter (R-CA).



“(l to r) RPCV Sheldon Schafer (India 1970-72) meets with Congressman Aaron Schock (R-IL) in Peoria.



(l to r) The Field Director for Senator Al Franken (D-MN) sits down in the St. Paul office with RPCV constituent Carol Freeman (Philippines, 1965-67).



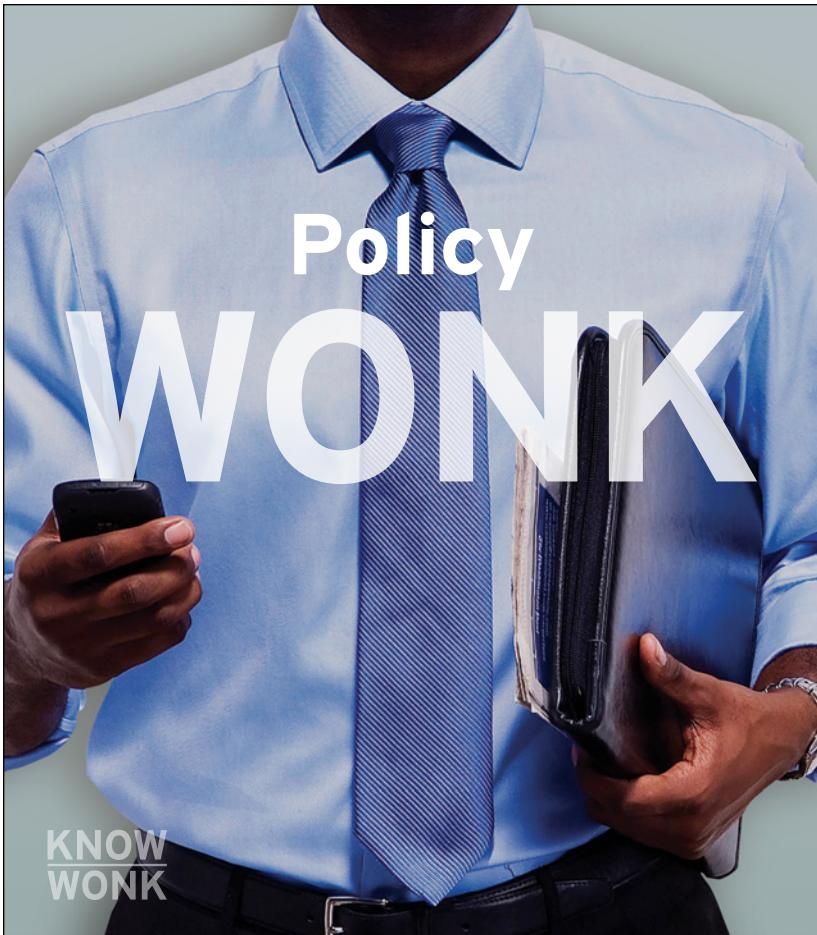
Georgia Advocacy Coordinator Mary Novotny helped organize this August meeting between Atlanta area RPCVs and staff of Senator Saxby Chambliss (R-GA).



Members of the West Virginia RPCVs talk Peace Corps issues with the State Director for Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV).



(l to r) RPCV Bruce Jay (Brazil, 1967-69), Congressman Ted Deutch (D-FL) and RPCV Helene Dudley (Colombia 1968-70, Albania/Slovakia 1997-99) meet in south Florida.



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# Next Step: Thailand

NPCA launching trips to Thailand in 2014

**A** little over a year ago, the National Peace Corps Associations launched its Next Step Travel program: respectful hyper-local immersion travel in developing countries. These trips combine unparalleled local access, cultural immersion, non-extreme adventure, and hands-on volunteer opportunities that open pathways for connection with local people. Given the success of the trips to Guatemala and the Dominican

Republic, NPCA is pleased to announce that it will be adding trips to Thailand in 2014.

"Next Step Travel is a great way to learn about new places through volunteering, and a meaningful way to connect to—or reconnect to—the Peace Corps experience," says NPCA Vice President Anne Baker. "We provide travelers with unique knowledge-on-the-ground that you can't get elsewhere."

Feedback to date has been

overwhelmingly positive. A participant on a Dominican Republic trip wrote, "I hope NPCA continues with Next Step Travel. It's a chance to travel with others who have the same objectives of helping others and giving back."

These trips are all-inclusive, so that participants can focus on getting the most from their experience. Group rates' frequent traveler and Director's Circle discounts are available. Learn more at <http://travel.peacecorpsconnect.org>.

## Capitol Hill Update

continued from page 12



Several district advocacy meetings were held in Massachusetts during the summer, including this gathering of central Massachusetts RPCVs and Congressman Jim McGovern (D-MA).



An important meeting concerning the Peace Corps commemorative took place in September, when Central Washington RPCVs met with their Congressman, Doc Hastings (R-WA), Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee.



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Manjula Dissanayake is the founder of Educate Lanka Foundation, Inc., a global, crowd-funded philanthropic initiative which has impacted 500 students in his home country of Sri Lanka.



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Read more about Manjula's Fletcher experience.



# Everyone a Changemaker

The New Literacy

by Bill Drayton

**W**e all know, at least intuitively, that we are now living through the death of how society has always been organized. The game's goal until now has been efficiency in repetition—think, for example, of the assembly line and the law firm.

Now value comes from contributing to change.

This emergent new world is not just different; it is in every important characteristic the opposite of where we have been.

Until now, a few people choreographed everyone else to repeat together efficiently in organizations characterized by walls and vertical nervous systems. "A" fit with "B" because they both kept doing the same thing.

Until now, education gave people a set of skills and rules that defined them—be it as a baker or a banker. The reasonable assumption was that they would usefully repeat for a lifetime.

However, since at least 1700 the rate of change has been escalating at an exponential rate. As have the number of changemakers and, probably more important, the combinations and the combinations of combinations of changemakers. This is the historical force driving the old world down and rapidly opening up a new and far better society.

In this world, "A" changes and bumps "B" through "Z," each of which bumps all those around them. Change begets and accelerates change. This is the new game. Which is the death of repetition reinforces repetition and all its rigid, top-down, inherently unequal hierarchies.

The new organizational paradigm is a fluid, open team of teams. It has to be because we now must serve an interconnected kaleidoscope where everything is changing faster and faster. This means we must keep up with an

## change·mak·er

A Changemaker is an individual building creative solutions to our world's challenges and taking initiative for the greater good



Ashoka

Bill Drayton, CEO and founder of Ashoka.

ever-changing lineup of talent, ideas, resources, and access.

It also means that, at the latest, in 10 or 15 years no one will be able to afford to have anyone on their team who is not a changemaker.

Imagine what an "everyone a changemaker" world will be like.

It is a wildly, dramatically better place.

There is no way the problems can keep outrunning the solutions.

When everyone (*everyone* everyone, not just everyone in the one percent!) has the power to change their world, the world will be a far more equal and therefore fair and respectful place.

Most important, everyone will have what almost everyone in the Peace Corps community has—the ability to express love and respect in significant action. Both the prophets and the scientists recognize that this is what brings health, longevity, and happiness.

The greatest gift, of course, is giving others this ability to give.

For both that reason and because of the urgency and substantial risks of the transition, you and all of us have a great opportunity. We can help society and also those about whom you care see

this profound change in the strategic environment and make the transition quickly and successfully. This is a gift and a responsibility we have right in front of us.

That is why this issue of *WorldView* is devoted to changemaking.

Last summer I attended a gathering of several hundred Ashoka Youth Venturers. (This Ashoka program tips youth communities so that it will be normal for every 11- or 12- through 20-year-old to have a dream, build a team, and change his/her school or community—i.e., to be a changemaker, the only way of mastering the identity and skills.)

Shortly after I sat down for lunch, a diminutive young woman came and sat down next to me. I felt her power before she sat down. But I wondered, was she eight? (I've learned not to guess out loud.) She quickly let us know she was twelve.

I asked her what her venture was. "My brother is autistic, and I have hated how other kids treat him. We have now changed that." She then explained how she and her team had changed how the whole middle school thought about and treated special classmates.

If you had been there, you would have been certain that she will be a changemaker, a power for the good, all her life. She already has her power.

I asked one more question: How many student-run groups are there in your school? Her answer: Over 50.

This is, except for a very few elite schools, wildly unusual. And her town is in a poor, rural area with Appalachian-like styles of demoralization. (This is one of 16 townships in that region where Ashoka's Youth Venture has succeeded in tipping the schools.)

When she entered that school with her problem, her classmates let her know how to handle it. Dream a solution. Organize a team (which some of them would join). And change the picture. They provided 50 case examples. They supported and respected her for doing what she did.

That's what every school should be like—an "everyone a changemaker" place.

That's what every school must be like. Immediately.

Otherwise its students won't be able to become changemakers. One can't master the complex, learned skills required (cognitive empathy, teamwork, a very different type of leadership, and changemaking) from a book or an app. One must practice and practice.

Over 80 percent of Ashoka's leading social entrepreneur Fellows started something in their teens. This is no accident.

If students fail here and are in consequence marginalized, the future of their communities and country will quickly turn towards Detroit, not Silicon Valley. It took 50 years for Detroit to go from technical mastery and great wealth to the bottom. Given the exponential nature of the rate of change curve, every country has maybe 15 years to ensure every one of its children and young people are changemakers—like the young woman who joined me for lunch—before 21.

They also must ensure that young children start on this path by mastering and practicing cognitive empathy. As change accelerates, the rules cover less and less. Anyone relying only on diligently following rules will hurt people and disrupt groups. Which means that they're gone. Empathy is the critical foundational skill.

Over the last 150 years, the world decided that everyone must master written language. This was a radical decision that ended powerful de facto monopolies.

Ensuring that everyone is a change-maker by 21 is the next New Literacy.

You can help any child or young person you love enormously by enabling him/her to see where the world is going and how they can be powerful and good players. You can also help any group or

institution about which you care see their new strategic environment and help it become a fluid, open team of teams.

There is no community more self-selected or long-committed to this revolution than the Peace Corps family.

*Bill Drayton began his career at McKinsey and Co., later moving to the US EPA where, as assistant administrator, he launched*

*emissions trading reforms. In 1981, he founded Ashoka, to which he was able to devote himself fully after being elected a MacArthur Fellow in 1984. In addition to his leadership of Ashoka, Mr. Drayton is the chair of Youth Venture, Community Greens, and Get America Working! He has won numerous honors throughout his career, including honorary doctorates from Yale and New York University and the Essl Social Prize.*

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# Getting to Exponential Changemaking

What is a social entrepreneur?

by Greg Van Kirk

*Greg Van Kirk developed the MicroConsignment model, which employs vital technologies to solve healthcare, energy, water and other needs by empowering remote villagers to help themselves through entrepreneurship. A former Guatemala Peace Corps Volunteer, Greg is the Co-Founder of Community Enterprise Solutions and Social Entrepreneur Corps and was elected to the Ashoka Fellowship in 2008.*

Traditional thinking about social entrepreneurship involved finding leaders who work with marginalized populations to design and implement innovative solutions that catalyze positive social impact and scale sustainably over time. This is what my team and I are working toward with our MicroConsignment Model. This is what so many Peace Corps Volunteers strive to do and what most Ashoka Fellows achieve. We will always need social entrepreneurs to lead world-changing social innovations, but such work is asymmetrical to the scale of the world's problems. Instead of just a handful of social entrepreneurs, we need everyone to be a changemaker.

Our new vision of social entrepreneurship is about creating a multiplier effect and scaling self-efficacy. It is about creating an ecosystem in which local changemakers are empowered to design and push forward solutions that respond to the complex challenges facing billions of marginalized people. To truly change the world, we need to get proximate to local populations, understand their "capital

mix" and empower them through a comprehensive toolbox.

## Getting proximate

High-impact change happens when those most proximate to problems drive the solutions. As a Volunteer, I learned that unless local people felt ownership of the problem and the solution, anything



Author Greg Van Kirk.

I tried to implement would fail. Our MicroConsignment Model allows local women entrepreneurs who truly

## What is a Social Entrepreneur?

Social entrepreneurs are individuals who have **innovative solutions to systemic social problems**. They commit to bold new ideas and prove that empathy, creativity and collaboration are tremendous forces for change. Ashoka elects the world's leading social entrepreneurs, Ashoka Fellows, into its network and provide them support to build and scale their ideas. Ashoka Fellows work in over 70 countries globally and **in every area of human need**.

### Ashoka Fellow Selection Criteria

Ashoka's selection process is based on five core criteria:

- **A New Idea:** Candidates must be possessed by a new idea that will change the pattern in their field.
- **Creativity:** Successful social entrepreneurs must be creative engineering their visions into reality.
- **Entrepreneurial Quality:** Ashoka looks for serial entrepreneurs for whom entrepreneurship is a fundamental mindset and lifetime commitment.
- **Social Impact of the Idea:** Ashoka is only interested in ideas with potential to change the field significantly and trigger national or continental impact.
- **Ethical Fiber:** We invest significant time and energy vetting social entrepreneurs before electing them as Ashoka Fellows to ensure they have the integrity to successfully implement their social vision.

**Do you know a social entrepreneur who is changing patterns across society?** Nominate her or him to be an Ashoka Fellow:  
<https://www.ashoka.org/nominate>

understand the problems to come up with the best solutions for their own communities. Our role is essential in the beginning but then becomes less and less important over time. We step back and they step forward.

### **Understanding the capital mix**

Poverty isn't what we tend to think it is. The poor are actually very wealthy in many ways. Though we call people "poor" because they lack economic capital, this is a myopic way of defining poverty. There are many other forms of capital besides economic capital that should be valued and utilized. There is certainly physical capital and human capital. There is also knowledge capital, cultural capital, organizational capital and, often of great importance, social capital. And now I would say we have "connectivity capital" (the Internet, cell phones, etc.), which were previously impossible. In order to empower those most proximate to realize their changemaking potential, we need to understand where they are wealthy (strong) and where they are poor (weak). Only then can we help them leverage their existing capacity into changemaking potential and create capacity where it is lacking.

### **Empowering through a comprehensive toolbox**

We need to empower these potential changemakers with a comprehensive toolbox of existing tools to solve problems in their communities. Eventually, changemakers will start modifying these tools into entirely new solutions for their unique problems. Think about it this way. We empower women to sell vital technologies through our MicroConsignment Model tool. And they change the model (as they should) here and there based on what they feel is needed. We start off with one idea for a cook stove and they take it to communities, get feedback and come up with marketing ideas and design changes. This happens in our work every day.

We live in a world of limited resources

and need exponential change to occur. Let's find local changemakers, help them understand their capital mix, and give them the tools they need to change the world. As Volunteers or Ashoka Fellows our role is to set things in motion for local changemakers to change their own worlds; only then will we truly change the world.

*Greg Van Kirk is the co-founder of Community Enterprise Solutions and Social Entrepreneur Corps. He is a former Guatemala Peace Corps Volunteer. Greg is an Ashoka Lemelson Fellow, Ashoka Globalizer and Schwab Foundation "Social Entrepreneur of the Year (Latin America)" for 2012. He has taught social entrepreneurship at Columbia University and New York University.*

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# Empathy Curricula and the Next Generation of Changemakers

by Britt Anderson

**E**mpathy is the fundamental changemaking skill, and much like math or reading, it can be taught. At Prospect Sierra, an independent K-8 school in the San Francisco Bay Area, I've seen empathy education in action. Prospect Sierra was inspired to teach and practice empathy because it aligned with our parents' and educators' goal of shaping our children into happy, engaged citizens.

One of our best empathy-building ideas was inspired by the radio show *This American Life*. We recorded group conversations among our teachers about their family roles and what they wanted others to know about their experiences. We shared the recordings with the students, enabling them to identify characteristics they shared with

the adults in their lives. After the initial project's success, we allowed students to start their own conversations around common experiences, such as wearing glasses or being bilingual. Each dialogue became a *This Prospect Sierra Life* podcast that the students shared with the school community.

Sometimes, students featured in the podcasts fielded questions before an assembly of their classmates. The courage of the students and the empathy and genuine curiosity from the audience were beautiful. One student explained how the side effects of his ADHD medicine impacted his school days. Several black students reiterated their serious requests that others not touch their hair without asking. As the project caught on, students started facilitating

conversation groups on topics of their choice, which often touched on weightier issues like the experiences of being multi-racial, having LGBT parents, or coping with divorce.

Prospect Sierra proudly boasts the accomplishments of its alumni through its student council-run Alumni Action Awards, which have recognized students who have gone on to launch an economic and community development program in Colombia, create a documentary about street children in Brazil, and institute a district-wide recycling program. And what keeps me motivated every day is the knowledge that I have the privilege and the pleasure of teaching what is no doubt the next generation of changemakers. They all begin their journeys right here, in our



Students of Prospect Sierra collect groceries for families in need.

Prospect Sierra

## Starting with Empathy

Empathy is a foundational skill in driving social change.

**Empathy doesn't just mean treating others better—it means doing better. It gives us both the will and the tools to be effective changemakers.** If we can empathize, then we can communicate, collaborate, and lead.

Empathy motivates us to act and build something better together. It also ensures we act well—Informed by a deep understanding and respect for others, working collaboratively across disciplinary boundaries, and creatively addressing problems at their root.

As a Volunteer, empathy allows—or allows—you to relate to your community. If you're an educator, you've probably experienced how empathy creates an ideal learning environment. We invite you to consider how empathy is at the core of social change, and how this perspective can inform your Peace Corps service, as well as life beyond Peace Corps.

### Help spread empathy by:

- Joining the *Start Empathy* conversation at [startempathy.org](http://startempathy.org)
- Practicing empathy at home and in the classroom using practical tips at [startempathy.org/how/tips](http://startempathy.org/how/tips)
- Nominating a changemaker school at [startempathy.org/about/changemaker-schools/](http://startempathy.org/about/changemaker-schools/) or continental impact.

school's empathetic classrooms.

In the end, it's not just about these students. Empathy matters to them, of course. But the impact of empathetic curricula is of grave importance to our common future, as well; these kids will be better equipped with the brainpower, the will, and the emotional intelligence to tackle the most challenging global problems than any generation before

them. And I can't wait to see what they do with those abilities.

*Britt Anderson is Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Prospect Sierra in El Cerrito, California. In addition to fostering emotional intelligence, she thinks stories—both the courage to share them and the curiosity to listen—are key to developing empathy and building strong and loving communities.*

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# Open Eyes, Minds and Hearts in Senegal

by Vy Nguyen

I never imagined I would have the opportunity to work with a team of Peace Corps Volunteers in Africa at the age of 16. It wasn't until I decided to venture outside of my local community that my life changed.

During my sophomore year of high school, I started looking for opportunities to travel abroad. I applied for and received a scholarship from Wandering Scholar to travel to Senegal. My experience in Senegal gave me a new perspective, enabling me to become a changemaker.

During the four weeks I spent in Senegal, I worked with Peace Corps Volunteers to establish a local library in a small village called Dinefelo. I was blessed to also live with a host family. I had a tiny, but unforgettable glimpse into their life—I lived in a hut, I showered with buckets, and I ate simple but nourishing food.

## The Power of Young Changemakers

Empowering young people to realize their potential as changemakers is one of the most important investments we can make. As the pace of change accelerates, and as global problems become increasingly complex, every individual needs to be a changemaker for his or her own success.

Over the past 15 years, Ashoka has helped nearly 10,000 teams of young people to launch and lead social ventures and has built a global network of young changemakers. Young people who lead ventures tend to become more involved in school and are more prepared to tackle tough challenges in their communities. The changemaker skills they learn are critical to their success in college and their future careers.

### Here's how you can get involved:

- If you're working with young entrepreneurs, learn more at [www.youthventure.org](http://www.youthventure.org).
- Check out [ashoka.org](http://ashoka.org) if you're going back to school and changemaking is important to you.

One of my most vivid memories is a conversation I had with a man about Senegalese culture. In a Senegalese family, he explained, if a brother became

rich he would immediately share that wealth with his family. I asked myself, "Would I share all my wealth with my family?" To be honest, I wasn't sure.



The author with her Senegalese host family.

Being in Dindifelo and interacting with my host family and the community gave me a new life experience and a desire to immerse myself in their culture. My time in Dindifelo made me realize that my attitude of just caring about myself was selfish. I wanted to move beyond my individualistic mindset, and I wanted to give back to the community of Dindifelo for teaching me to prioritize the welfare of others.

When I returned home, I founded Imagine EducAfrica (<http://imagineeduafrika.weebly.com>). With the help of three friends, and Ashoka's Youth Venture, we worked to bring awareness of the importance of education for young children. Through Imagine EducAfrica, my friends and I make necklaces out of colorful Senegalese beads. We then sell them and use the profit to provide French books and school supplies to children in Dindifelo.

My time in Dindifelo catalyzed my determination, passion, and ambition to make positive change. I believe that everyone is capable of becoming a changemaker; it's just having an experience that activates one's internal changemaker potential.

My experience working with Peace Corps Volunteers and Youth Venture has influenced the direction of my academic studies and future career. As a freshman at the University of San Diego, an AshokaU Changemaker Campus, I'm studying international relations and cultural anthropology to learn more about global challenges and opportunities for solutions. Once I finish college, I hope to bring my experience full circle and become a Peace Corps Volunteer.

---

Vy Nguyen was born in Malaysia but raised in Seattle, Wash. Vy became an Ashoka Youth Venturer in 2011. She is currently a freshman at the University of San Diego. She loves going on adventures, meeting new people and eating delicious food.

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# Changemaking: An RPCV's Fourth Goal in Life

by Grace Eickmeyer

**D**espite being someone who disdains personal, public displays of emotion, I bawled my eyes out at my Close of Service (COS) conference. I was terrified that if my readjustment was easy, the less my

life in Ukraine had meant. This is why, six months after my return to the United States, I left again. Last year, as I taught my Karen and Burmese colleagues basic Russian phrases and cooked *varenyky* in a jerry-rigged Dutch oven in Thailand, it

occurred to me that I was still behaving like a Volunteer, even though my service had technically ended.

While it is true that not all Volunteers are the same, I believe we all have the same potential. We are given a unique

## Changemaking in the Workplace

If you've changed jobs in the last few years, you know the workplace is radically different from what it used to be. In the past, a four-year degree was generally sufficient to get you a job. Now, the overabundance of people with degrees still doesn't seem to be meeting employers' needs because the skills in demand are not always taught in school. Instead, employers seek changemakers—individuals who have honed their skills in empathy, leadership and teamwork and solve problems and adapt to a dynamic work environment.

As a current or returned Peace Corps Volunteer, you are more prepared for this changing work environment than the average employee. Peace Corps by its very nature confronts Volunteers with uncertainty and ambiguity. Everything in the host country is unfamiliar, from the obvious to the hidden. It might be easy to love a new dish, but how do you learn to navigate your community's power structures, appreciate its history and overcome institutional barriers to change? There is no one path to building trust and finding success in Peace Corps; it is mostly up to the individual Volunteer to figure out how to live and work effectively for two years. The qualities and skills that service instills in Volunteers are the same ones needed in this new workplace.

Every employer has its own specific, hiring criteria. Ashoka, for example, assesses potential staff in five areas:

1. **Entrepreneurship** – compelled to take creative initiative and ownership over what she does; a lover of ideas; a track record of creating change
2. **Understanding of and belief in Ashoka's Everyone a Changemaker mission** – passionate and able to think about realizing social change in light of current context and historical patterns
3. **Social and emotional intelligence** – able to work in teams while putting personal glory and recognition second to organizational goals
4. **Ethical fiber** – has integrity and empathy
5. **Self-definition** – believes that scaling social change is what she is meant to do in life

**Interested in working at Ashoka?** Apply today at [www.ashoka.org/getinvolved/team](http://www.ashoka.org/getinvolved/team). **Want to work for social change outside of Ashoka?** Consider checking out [www.idealyst.org](http://www.idealyst.org) and [www.rework.jobs](http://www.rework.jobs). **Want more information about integrating changemaking into your career?** Read more from Ashoka's blog series on Forbes at [www.forbes.com/sites/ashoka](http://www.forbes.com/sites/ashoka).

environment, a variety of diverse experiences and the skills to become more empathetic human beings. These qualities and skills don't become less relevant once service ends. I know it can be difficult to see how bazaar haggling and bucket bathing are transferable to a post-Peace Corps context, but they are emblematic of a larger transformation Volunteers can choose to undergo. My time in Peace Corps showed me that being a "good" Volunteer is largely a choice, and that what makes Volunteers "good" is a conscious act of identifying as and becoming a confident and empowered problem solver—what we at Ashoka would call, a "changemaker."

Some Volunteers see Peace Corps service as a break from real life. I think it's more useful to see it as a proving ground. It can define who you are and who you become. Once Peace Corps is over, you don't stop learning and you don't stop making an impact on the world around you. Instead, Peace Corps serves as the catalyst for more changemaking, wherever life takes you. Since COS I have learned that the relative ease or difficulty one has in adjusting to post-Peace Corps life doesn't always indicate mental or emotional distance from service. My readjustment process is similar to what I did to adjust in Ukraine. Sometimes I feel even more connected to Ukraine now, precisely because of the many ways it has prepared me for my current challenge, working at Ashoka. Here are three:

**1. Ukraine helped me become an intrapreneur.** An intrapreneur is somebody who works to bring about change from within an organization. In Peace Corps, Volunteers take an existing system and bring new ideas and energy to the perceived problems that exist inside it. Tasked with teaching English to secondary students in a post-Soviet education system, I was faced with outdated textbooks but needed to work with them to be effective. Being an intrapreneur requires creativity,

patience, and risk-taking; it also helps you look at problems in a new way. Volunteers can leverage those skills and experiences post-Peace Corps.

**2. Ukraine taught me to value people.**

No matter how high a Volunteer's technical skill level, it isn't possible to be effective without building relationships. In Ukraine, I built relationships by drinking tea with teachers, tutoring neighbors' children and practicing Russian at the bazaar. Although I've swapped the tea kettle for the water cooler, the same principles that governed my integration in Ukraine are helping me now.

**3. Ukraine forced me to be selective.**

Peace Corps training helped me learn to say, "Yes" and "No." When it came to trying unfamiliar food, I'd say, "Yes, please." When it came to another shot of vodka, I learned many ways of saying, "No, thank you."

Today I am selective in everything from the job I chose to my household behavior. For me, it has meant saying, "Yes" to a job that is aligned with my values and it means saying, "No" to whatever I deem nonessential, like cable television. My time in Ukraine enabled me to discover my personal values and put them into practice post-Peace Corps.

While I am no longer a Volunteer, the Peace Corps ethos has infiltrated nearly every aspect of my life. Although I no longer have to choose to be a "good" Volunteer, I am still deliberate in my process of developing as a person. One of the best ways I know to do that is by acknowledging the privilege and responsibility of being a changemaker.

*Grace Eickmeyer is a proud RPCV (Ukraine 2008-11) and current Ashoka staff member. She can be contacted at geickmeyer@ashoka.org.*

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CHANGE THE WORLD FROM HERE

# Applying My Peace Corps Experience to My Corporate Career and Beyond

by Jack Edwards

In 1968 I was in graduate school, but I was looking to start a new chapter: I was tired of school, not ready for a career, didn't want to go to Vietnam and was hoping to change some small part of the world. Peace Corps offered to send me to Colombia and I was assigned to work with the Colombian Agrarian Reform Agency (INCORA) on a new project near Santa Marta, in the Banana Zone by the north coast of Colombia.. At INCORA, my team walked farm to farm to help farmers improve their livelihoods and plant new crops like melons, peanuts and okra.. Our team of changemakers inside a government agency helped farmers repay their debts, gain confidence and revive a dying

agricultural area.

Since this experience with the Peace Corps, and throughout my career, I have been drawn to apply my business skills to help solve social problems. After the Peace Corps, I married a wonderful woman from Colombia (we've been happily married for 41 years) and I started a 30-year business career with a multinational, Cummins Engine Company. I joined Cummins because it had strong integrity and was a pioneer in corporate social responsibility. Cummins hired former Peace Corps Volunteers to help their international expansion in ways good for the company, but also good for the local community.

At Cummins, I was a changemaker:

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- Become a part of the Ashoka Support Network, a global community of successful businesspeople who engage with Ashoka.
- Learn more about Ashoka's Executive in Residence program which develops business executives into leaders who drive change in their companies, communities, and beyond through dynamic pro bono collaborations with the world's leading social entrepreneurs. For details, contact: [executiveinresidence@ashoka.org](mailto:executiveinresidence@ashoka.org)
- Read *The New Alliance for Global Change* by Bill Drayton and Valeria Budinich about how for-profit companies can collaborate with citizen-sector organizations.



Author Jack Edwards.

I utilized my Peace Corps-developed skills in cross-cultural communication, and helped the company establish deep roots in the countries where it operated. Moreover, I led the company to view international sales as a vibrant, expanding market; international business came to account for more than half our business. In looking for win-win initiatives, I helped start an elementary school for 700 kids from the slum adjacent to our factory complex in Brazil; I helped create a carpentry business that employed 100 blind people in our Mexico operations; and I helped start the Cummins Women's College of Engineering in India, which now graduates 1,000 engineers annually.

In 2003, I took early retirement from Cummins to start an "encore career" and help Ashoka solve some of society's most intractable social problems. Ashoka's ambitious vision of building bridges between the business and social

sectors seemed a perfect way in which to apply my skills. I have volunteered with Ashoka for 10 years and have had the chance to work with some of the future Muhammad Yunuses of the world—the cutting-edge social entrepreneurs who are realizing enormous social impact.

Through my work with social entrepreneurs, I have learned there is a new vision of scaling impact: multiply your social impact one-hundred-fold while only doubling the size of your organization. It sounds impossible at first, but some Ashoka Fellows have figured out how to do this through new business-social sector models. For example, I have been working with Thorkill Sonne, an Ashoka Fellow from Denmark and founder of Specialisterne, whose vision is to see one million autistic people gainfully employed. This would be transformative since autistic adults suffer unemployment rates around 90% globally. Rather than trying to find and employ autistic people on his own, he has established major partnerships with software companies such as SAP. The consultants' unique competencies, which include being able to concentrate deeply for long periods of time and persevering with repetitive tasks or actions, make them excellent employees.

I have come to see through each of my experiences that every one of us can be a changemaker—in business, government or the social sector. By focusing on improving your work, constantly innovating and reinventing, you will have more fun in what you do, will accomplish more and will help your organization have greater impact than it could have ever imagined.

*Jack Edwards was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Colombia 1968-70, and then worked for more than 30 years with Cummins Engine Company, eventually becoming president of Cummins Power Generation, a business with sales of more than US \$1 billion and 15,000 employees worldwide. Since 2003, he has been a valuable advisor to Ashoka.*



Edwards with Ashoka Globalizer Fellows.

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# Dare To Innovate

Social Business as a Tool for Leadership, Employment, and Social Innovation

by Meghan McCormick & Amadou "Chico" Cissoko

*I once asked my mother if it was possible to become wealthy in Guinea without taking advantage of people. She told me that the rich in Guinea were either close to the President or corrupt public servants. But she added that with hard work and dedication to a greater purpose it was possible to become prosperous. Since then I have been driven to demonstrate this positive model to the future generations of Guineans. For the last fifty years, Guinea has been unable to nurture the human capital capable of transforming its resources into assets for development. The Dare to Innovate program aims to do so by inspiring, educating and supporting young leaders to become responsible citizens, social entrepreneurs and policymakers who will change Guinea and the world.*

-Amadou "Chico" Cissoko

It only takes a moment to see that Guinea is an underdeveloped country, and it only takes one conversation to be inspired to change it. Guinea's natural beauty is stunning and its soil fertile and rich in minerals. Yet most Guineans suffer from an abundance of corruption and a lack of infrastructure and basic conveniences like running water and electricity. As a Peace Corps Volunteer serving in Guinea, this environment can be intimidating. When I met Chico a few months into my service, I instinctively knew that although I did not know where to start, I knew with whom I wanted to work. His open mind, spirit of innovation, and dedication to youth development made him the perfect partner.

Together, we have developed a philosophy: If you don't know which problem to tackle first, go for the base. Start with the youth—they have time and the passion to make real change. Teach people to see a lack of development as an opportunity. Give them the entrepreneurial skills they need to create and manage innovative projects for success. Teach them the benefits of networking so that they can have access to resources. Provide them with mentors who know how to operate in the context to serve as their guides. Seek out positive deviants and give them

the confidence to be visionaries.

Working with Chico, other Volunteers and my host country partner, the Guinean Association for the Development of Private Enterprise, we have created Dare to Innovate, a program that will engender sustainable social change in Guinea. Social business is our tool and the youth are our operators. The program is being launched in four parts.

- The first is an **annual conference** for motivated graduates of Peace Corps Guinea's Youth Entrepreneurship Training Program. The conference introduces youth to social enterprise, generates ideas for social businesses and pushes participants to innovate.
- The second phase is **community research**. Participants will complete an in-depth market analysis and prototyping to see if their idea can be



Volunteer Wiatta Thomas leads a session "Introduction to the Mentorship Program." The program pairs each of our participants with a successful entrepreneur or business skills trainer for the duration or at least one year.



Ramata Bah and Fatoumata Binta Diallo work together on their action plans hoping to upset societal expectations by having a woman be the first winner of the Dare to Innovate competition.

## Starting Your Own Social Venture?

If you are like the Dare to Innovate team and have an idea for or are leading a social venture, consider joining the Ashoka Changemakers community ([www.changemakers.com](http://www.changemakers.com)), a thriving online community in which you can nominate solutions, enter competitions and even list your own project as a changeshop. Moreover, it is a convening space for both innovators and funders to collaborate and discuss insights from their work.

profitable and have the desired social impact.

- The third phase is **funding**. We have structured Dare to Innovate as an annual competition. The most feasible ideas with the highest potential for impact will receive their start-up funds, but all participants will gain the competencies necessary to receive credit from a microfinance or other funding institution.
- The fourth phase is the **launching of a movement**. We hope our facilitators, mentors, and participants will become proponents of the Dare to Innovate movement, using it to promote “doing well by doing good.” Our first class of daring entrepreneurs has been paired with 10 Guinean mentors from the public and private sector who have achieved stunning success under difficult circumstances. Chico understands the importance of strong mentorship: “In my family, developing perseverance and an innovative mindset was possible through learning from the failures and successes of my parents. Most of the youth in Guinea do not have this opportunity—not only because most of the parents do not share quality time with their children, but because most of them are unemployed or uneducated.”

We used our local networks to recruit mentors who share our commitment to youth development. For example, we are working with a Volunteer’s neighbor who is the president of a large shipping corporation and who, after a global career, wanted to return to his home country to make a difference. “The Dare to Innovate Mentorship Program connects young entrepreneurs to a support network of socially minded leaders, who will share their expertise and provide guidance to these youth and develop a future generation of leaders, changemakers and parents,” says Chico.

We have also created an online resource, OsezInnover.com, to connect our social innovators with information and changemakers from around the world.

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## Buzz from the Field



A view onto the market, Conakry, Guinea.



Participants vote on the most critical social problems and the greatest entrepreneurial opportunities after creating a mind map encompassing all the trends having an impact on life in Guinea.



Mamdou Lamine Balde and his team work on a critical thinking puzzle to find a creative solution for three households to effectively share water sources.



Meg and Chico confer on how the training is going.

Additionally, we are building a Center for Excellence in Social Entrepreneurship and Human Development to serve as an incubator and training center that will bring together passionate people with a common desire for change. The training center will be the headquarters of the movement and a gathering place for young changemakers from all over Guinea.

Dare to Innovate gives youth the lens to see the entrepreneurial opportunity present in each of the many challenges that Guinea faces. It charges youth to become actors in their economy while addressing social issues. I am proud that it has already inspired our partners and changed the way people think. Ibrahima Camara, one of the participants, told me, "Before, I was discouraged. Now, I see that life is full of opportunity waiting to be seized and I have the support I need to seize it. I am starting my new life today!" Our youth can and will make

Guinea a country where innovation is the norm, creativity is fostered, necessary services are available for the population, and opportunity can be seized by all.

Our work is just beginning, but we believe that Dare to Innovate is creating a changemaking ecosystem in Guinea. Chico foresees a bright future for Guinea:

"In 30 years, Guinea will be an emerging economy with a strong and organized private sector, with changemakers consistently offering innovative solutions to social and environmental problems in a financially sustainable manner. The policy makers will be responsible leaders promoting good governance, social integration, and a peaceful exchange of ideas. Guineans will be more educated and will have a sense of control and responsibility in the strengthening of their nation. Guinea will no longer be sought out solely for

its natural resources, but for its valuable human assets as well. Before initiating the Dare To Innovate movement, this was a mere dream. Now with our first group of young changemakers, it is my goal."

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*Meghan McCormick received her bachelor's degree in finance from Georgetown University in 2011. She is a Community Economic Development Volunteer working in the domain of entrepreneurship and innovation and the coordinator of the Dare to Innovate project. After her service, she hopes to continue to apply creative solutions to strategic problems as a consultant.*

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*Amadou "Chico" Cissoko is the Director of the Dare to Innovate movement, which he hopes will become a model for social innovation around the world. He is the marketing manager of the social enterprise Ferme Fabik and founder of Guinea's first agrotourism site, the Vathaba.*

# Rebuilding After The Rwanda Genocide

by David Arnold

**C**arol Pott and John Berry were married shortly before John started a U.S. Agency for International Development small enterprise development project in Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, a small, poor, heavily populated but relatively peaceful Central African country that John's boss told Carol was "Africa for beginners."

Seven months later when John left for a conference in a neighboring city, the plane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down over Kigali. The crash ignited events that gave Rwanda's reputation new meaning for Carol, and the world.

"I heard the plane crash while I was eating dinner with my neighbor," Carol recalls. "It shook the ground. Soon after, mortars began flying over the house." A mortar struck the back of Carol's house. She hid some neighbors in her ceiling. Later that night, militia broke into the neighbors' house and hacked to death the guard and gardener.

"The militias were killing children in the streets."

When John heard about the violence he was directing a conference in a southern Rwanda convent. He quickly paid final wages to some staff, then death benefits to the widows of others who were early casualties. He asked two nuns at the convent, Sister Gertrude Mukangano and Sister Maria Kisito Mukabutera, to look out for the remaining staff and left.

Traumatized by their experience, Carol and John were evacuated from Rwanda and saw the full scope of what they had escaped as they watched on U.S. television some of the more than 10,000 Rwandan bodies floating down the

Kagera River, washing ashore in Uganda or onto the islands of Lake Victoria. The total of Rwandan dead is still not known, and is believed to be 500,000 to a million.

## Planning began in a San Rafael bar

"We were back in San Rafael, California watching the genocide on TV, feeling depressed," said John, when they also saw a local news reporter interview Steven Smith, a former Peace Corp Volunteer (PCV) in Zaire, the neighboring Central African country

where many of Rwanda's refugees had fled. Smith was recruiting Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to help in Rwanda, so John—a Niger RPCV—called.

"We wanted to return to Rwanda and do something that was positive," Carol said. Carol had not served in Peace Corps but she was deeply moved by her time in Rwanda conducting economic surveys and volunteering for a Kigali human rights group.

Smith called then-President of the National Peace Corps Association



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**Student Ayman Yassa conducting a survey in Kono district, Sierra Leone (Summer 2010)**  
Credit: Yolanda Barbera Lainez, International Rescue Committee



Photographed ten years after the genocide at the Sovu convent in Southern Rwanda, a mass grave memorial stands for the hundreds of genocide victims who were killed at the convent (including half of John Berry's project staff). Berry raised funding for the memorial and the sisters of the convent organized its construction.

(NPCA) Chic Dambach and they set in motion grassroots initiatives that became known as the RPCV Rwanda Project, a project that almost 20 years later many experts in post-conflict peace building believe had a profound impact on post-conflict Rwanda and continues to constructively influence other crises.

### What they did in Rwanda

Chic found funding through USAID for Smith to build the NPCA's Emergency Response Network (ERN), a pre-Internet telephone tree that gathered the names, contacts and resumes of hundreds of RPCVs willing to turn their cross-cultural experiences, language and skill sets to the Rwanda crisis. ERN became a popular recruiting source for NGOs and U.N. agencies for years to come. Mark Gearan, who was then director of the Peace Corps, understood the long-term implications of ERN and asked permission to borrow the concept when he created the federal agency's own Crisis Corps, later renamed Peace Corps Response.

Carol flew to Washington to work in the NPCA office on a training curriculum for the U.N. High Commission for Human Rights' and U.N. human rights field monitors. Many were fresh law school graduates and most had no knowledge of the country, the issues, or Rwanda's indigenous languages, yet they were supposed to find Rwandans needing protection and identify evidence

such as mass graves to preserve for later prosecutions.

Carol sifted through Peace Corps training manuals and *Where There is No Doctor*, and interviewed such experts as a forensic anthropologist, the head of Physicians for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch specialists on Somalia, and the director of the Congressional Hunger Center to write the curriculum she and John could provide for the first Geneva training.

Later, Steve and Carol returned to Rwanda to evaluate the work of the monitors.

USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Response funded U.N. monitor training and provided intern support for the High Commission for Human Rights. Carol and John—who had just completed another short-term USAID project—then returned to Rwanda and conducted four training workshops for 150 of Rwanda's U.N. human rights field monitors.

Rwanda was then being flooded with relief organizations hoping to serve disaster victims. Independent of The Rwanda Project, the Berrys organized "Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory," a conference funded by the UN Rwanda Emergency Operation and designed to provide context to foreign organizations working in Rwanda. The conference became known for hosting Rwandan survivors who discussed history and culture and gave witness testimony.

"We felt Rwandans needed to tell their story," John said. John and



The text reads (very roughly): "To the victims from the village of Sovu who were killed in the genocide in April 1994, May God bless their eternal rest."

Carol transcribed recordings from the conference and published a follow-up book for attendees. Those transcriptions also provided the basis for their book of the same name published by Howard University Press.

### Can RPCVs do the job?

"The idea was that RPCVs within a region are better adapted than a lot of other folks," says Steven. "They've adapted to difficult physical and circumstances, often in isolation, and they have two to three years of language skills."

But Steven also argues that a Peace Corps Volunteer's legendary flexibility to new environments was severely stretched in Rwanda. Some could not cope with the psychological challenges of Rwanda's high-stress, dangerous environment. "This is a different thing when you have mass murder ... and you yourself do not feel physically safe."

Steven's first job was coordinating with U.N. agencies sponsoring camps along Rwanda's border for an alliance of NGOs including CARE, the International Rescue Committee that provided the services.

*Genocidaires* had infiltrated the camps where the killing continued. When Steven spoke out at a conference of the service providers for a response to the camp violence, some in NGO leadership objected. Major players were constantly changing, agencies waged competition against one another, debated goals.

Meanwhile, Steven took an offer

to start a new program for USAID's fledgling Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) in Rwanda. The timing was perfect. He spent five weeks traveling in the countryside and returned to Kigali with a pioneering three-page proposal called Women in Transition to offer small seed grants to women to start their own small, sustainable enterprises.

"This was a traumatized population," Steven says. "Seventy percent of the remaining population of Rwanda were women ..." As a result, small projects sprouted up all over Rwanda, run by women who led and became integral to the long social, cultural and political healing of Rwanda, a process that continues today. The project has been replicated elsewhere in the world. "It served as a world model," Steven says.

Steven continues consulting on conflict resolution in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

John, who manages USAID projects in Africa, learned seven years after the genocide began, that the nuns who vowed to look after his remaining staff were sentenced to 12- and 15-year terms for their role in the deaths of those staff and approximately 7,000 other Rwandans.

Carol Pott—the Berrys later divorced—is a mother of two, an author and editor. She operates an editorial content strategy and development business, and is lead singer for Rue '66, a French yé yé revival band in California.

Carol has mixed feelings about the impact of their work with the monitors in Rwanda. "I know that our interference had a negative impact ... We were naïve." She feels certain, though, that "making the genocide in Rwanda real for people, actually putting a face on the victims ... that is a good thing."

*David Arnold is a reporter and editor for Voice of America's English language web site. He was previously NPCA communications director and editor of WorldView magazine. He served as a Peace Corps Volunteer and teacher in Asbe Teferi, Ethiopia, from 1964 to 1966 before entering journalism.*

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# Two RPCVs, a Singular Honor

It's not every day one is made an honorary African chief

by Patricia Sullivan

**I**magine entering a ceremony to be crowned as an honorary African chief. Your senses are piqued by the sounds of voices and footsteps as the townspeople sing and dance through the streets. The colors of traditional clothing surround you as you work your way through the celebrations. You are on your way to be honored by the country you serve in.

Though this may seem surreal to most, two Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs)—National Peace Corps Association board member Gary Schulze (Sierra Leone I 1961-1963) and Buffalo University anthropology professor Dr. Philip Stevens Jr. (Nigeria 1963-1966)—have both been deemed worthy of this honor by their Peace Corps countries of service.

## Gary Schulze

Before he received the traditional gifts for chieftdom installation—a bag of rice, a container of palm oil and a live goat—Gary Schulze was carried in a hammock, per Sierra Leone tradition, from the Court Barrie to his chieftaincy ceremony in Shenge, Kagboro Chiefdom, Moyamba District, Sierra Leone.

There, on May 4, 2013, Paramount Chief Charles Caulker, chairman of the Council of Paramount Chiefs in Sierra Leone, placed a ceremonial robe around Schulze's shoulders and pronounced him an honorary paramount chief.

According to a February 2013 letter from the Ministry of Local Government & Rural Development, Schulze was awarded this honor “in consideration of his relentless contributions to the development of Kagboro Chiefdom in particular and the nation as a whole.”

As a member of the first group of



Gary Schulze accepts a gift.



Dr. Stevens' ceremony.

Peace Corps Volunteers in Sierra Leone, Schulze began his 52-year relationship with his Peace Corps country teaching history at Albert Academy. He later became Acting Curator in the Sierra Leone Museum.

Post-Peace Corps service, Schulze served on the board of the Friends of Sierra Leone group, which assisted in securing political asylum status in the United States for thousands of Sierra Leoneans during the rebel war in the 1990s. He also acted as a U.N. election observer in the 1996 election and helped establish the Magic Penny elementary school in Kagboro Chiefdom.

Schulze has provided assistance to many relief projects in rural areas like Kagboro Chiefdom, but has also demonstrated his commitment to Sierra Leonean culture as a collector of African art. From April 2005 to Sept. 2005 his collection was displayed at the Queensborough Community College Art Gallery in New York. Schulze hoped the exhibit, titled “Artists and Patrons in Traditional African Cultures,” gave “students and visitors a chance to understand and appreciate African art, and to see how creative people on the African continent really are.” While in Sierra Leone for his chieftaincy ceremony, Schulze shared his most

recent collecting discovery with the Sierra Leone people: The only known face-on photograph of national hero Bai Bureh. He brought the rare photo with him and was present for the opening of the exhibit, “The Face of Bai Bureh” at the Sierra Leone National Museum.

## Dr. Philip Stevens Jr.

Esie King Alhaji Yakynu Babalola declared Dr. Philip Stevens Jr., and 16 others, honorary chiefs of Nigeria under canopies on a football field with 1,000 guests and about 1,000 more on-lookers, in what Stevens deemed “a really grand affair,” on Dec. 1, 2012. Stevens was guided by a group of supporters and drummers, and as he knelt before the king, a cap inscribed with his village nick-name “Erewumi,” or “he gets along with images,” was placed upon his head.

“The newly crowned chief stands up, turns and faces the crowd, and is surrounded and supported by well-wishers, and any who want to grab his arms,” explains Stevens. “You’re not supposed to walk by yourself. So there were people on both sides of me holding my arms and hands and leading me back into the world after this transformation.”

The ceremony was followed by a large meal for everyone, and then

continued on page 39

# Grandmother Jilanda

by Katie Holder

The bright midday sun poured through the entrance of the hut like liquid gold. It revealed two pairs of feet. The first were my Grandmother's: jet black, cracked, stubbed, wrinkled, crooked, small and beaten. Her name is Ba Jilanda. The second were mine: white, smooth, Chaco®-tanned, freshly bathed, big and lotioned. That day I had come to visit her in a neighboring village. She was not well and was staying with her friend to be cared for. Her Kiikaonde accent was thick and from the variety deep Kiikaonde, which is only spoken in the far reaches of the north western province of Zambia. She was explaining to me how she broke her hip.

Though she is an old woman her beauty maintains. It pierces through her charcoal black eyes, shining in the form of wisdom that penetrates deep in to your being when she looks at you. Her beauty is one that is earned over the years of a long life as a strong Zambian woman.

She told me that she had fallen twice. The first time she broke her right arm. This broken arm caused the harshness of her second fall, as she couldn't catch herself properly and broke her hip. She can't walk anymore and she can't afford the 60 Kwacha (\$12) 300 kilometer bus ride to Ndola where the nearest legitimate hospital is.

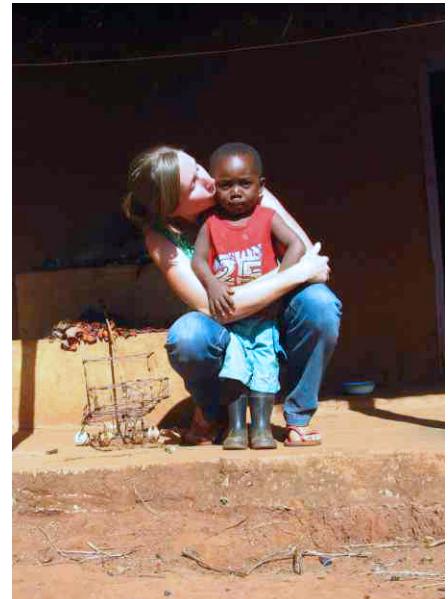
I looked down at our feet again. The tattoo on my right foot cost me \$50. I hardly had to save to buy it in America. It was more of a question of what I should spend my extra money on that month—steak dinner, ski lift ticket, concert. That tattoo looked back at me with disgust. For that price I could have purchased the Ndola bus ticket many times over without a thought. My eyes drifted to my brand new *kitenge* (traditional Zambian

cloth) on up to my Patagonia® tank top and over to the seven bracelets I have been collecting from my time in Zambia. Then I gazed over to my Grandmother's arms. They were bare. Her shirt was ages old, stained and torn. Her *kitenge* could have passed for a bunch of rags sewn together and her feet were canvases painted with decades of working in the fields to feed her family.

I thought I could come to Sub-Saharan Africa and live like an African bush child for two years and feel better about my time on this earth. I have now seen what I already knew deep down inside. Change and development take decades of hard work and determination. Along this path of change are people like Grandmother Jilanda that get chewed up and spit out.

I walked home that day thinking about what I could possibly do to help. I couldn't give her the money to get to the hospital because thousands of other deserving villagers would come to my doorstep asking for the same. Once she got to the Ndola hospital the bills would be endless until her body finally passes years from now. I decided what I could do is show my respect and love for her as best I know how. The following day I spent the morning baking a loaf of fresh whole grain bread over charcoals. I returned to her hut and approached the doorway slowly. At the threshold I met her friend. She turned to yell inside the dark entrance that there was a visitor. I heard Grandmother Jilanda fumbling around amongst the clutter and chickens. THUD ... THUD ... THUD ... she slowly hobbled with her walking stick to the entrance. It took her a good two minutes.

She was holding her foot completely off the ground, not bearing any weight



Katie Holder

The author with her youngest brother Nana in front of her hut. Katie's hope is for the next generations of Zambians to break out of the cycle of poverty and suffering their grandparents have endured.

on her broken hip, and gripping both white knuckled hands around a smooth tree branch. I got down on my knees and greeted her with clapping and respect words, as is custom in Kaonde land. As I rose, I handed her friend the warm bread, then leaned through the doorway and placed my hands around my grandmother's. I kissed her on both cheeks and held my head on her shoulder for a moment. The emotions of rage and fear and sadness couldn't be held back any longer and my eyes watered up. I backed away and looked in to her eyes hoping to absorb some of her beauty. They too had welled up emphasizing what she knew behind them.

There were no words spoken. I took the long way home that day.

---

Katie Holder (Zambia 2011-2013) is a rural aquaculture extension agent currently finishing her Peace Corps service in a village in the North Western Province of Zambia. Her primary focus is food security; she has helped a fish farming cooperative in her village secure a hammer mill that they use to feed their seven fishponds.

# “I Guess Anyone Can Write a Book These Days”

One Peace Corps writer’s self-publishing journey

by Kitty Thuemer

**I** first met Julie Dargis through her writing. She wrote a story about how proud she was that, as a new Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) in Morocco, her command of Arabic enabled her to order bread from the local baker every day. Except she wasn’t asking for bread. She was asking for sex. No wonder that the crowd around the baker’s shop grew larger every day, with men grinning in appreciation of her fine mastery of their language.

I read that essay in 1988—and, as Julie recently said, “It took me 25 years to get the rest of my story out.”

Once inspired to write her tale, Julie then embarked on an intense journey of self-publishing discovery—one that led her down a rabbit hole of choices and platforms that were nowhere on the landscape just a few years ago.

Julie’s inner poet first emerged while she was teaching in Morocco and her first sonnet was inspired by her Peace Corps boyfriend—thus launching a lifetime love affair...with poetry. And it was by pouring her heart out into sonnets over the next few decades that she was able to sustain herself doing humanitarian service in some rough corners of the world: Rwanda, the Darfur/Chad border, Serbia, Somalia, and South Sudan, among others.

Once back home in Minneapolis, Julie attended a poetry conference in Maine in 2010, which she marks as the real beginning of her book project. “What I learned,” she said, “was that only one percent of manuscripts submitted to traditional publishers are published.”

She also learned another thing: “I



Author Julie Dargis sporting eighties hairdo while visiting Peace Corps/Morocco boyfriend at his site in Agadir, 1987.

realized there was too much power on the mainstream side of the publishing dance, and there was an arrogance toward the 99 percent of people who had stories to tell.”

The stories that Julie had to tell propelled her to publish under her own imprint. “I created Indie House Press ([www.indiehousepress.org](http://www.indiehousepress.org)) as a platform not only for myself,” she said, “but for other writers to share information on independent publishing.” Once she had created a home base, two things happened: “I began a healing journey, and then I threw myself into the technical aspect of publishing.”

Writing can often be a cathartic experience, but when Julie sent her

manuscript to a developmental editor, the woman said there was something missing. “Why did you run off to all those places?” she asked. The editor urged her to be more honest about her life before Peace Corps, and that sent Julie on a separate journey to resolve some longstanding family issues, about which she writes in the book, giving context to her overseas story.

The editor also recommended that the prose part of the manuscript needed to be expanded—to go beyond the sonnets and tell the story, a suggestion confirmed by outside readers. Never one to do things by half measure, Julie quit her job and went to Italy to get

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inspired. "I came back and wrote down all my favorite stories, structuring them around the poetry. And that's how the book became a book," she said.

When it was time to start the publishing process, one of the big questions that loomed was which platform to choose. Although Julie had created her own Indie House Press as a website and community for writers, she needed help with the mechanics of publishing her own work. As it happens, Julie's acupuncturist had published a book that looked very professional, so in June 2012, she called CreateSpace.com and purchased services, including an editorial evaluation and three levels of manuscript editing: contextual editing for content, line editing for grammar, and copyediting.

She also bought design services for the cover and for the interior. While wrestling with a title, Julie was advised that *Reckless Abandon* was a popular romance title and might send readers the wrong signal. For the cover, Create Space took Julie's ideas and gave her back two possible drafts. It was during this process—viewing images of AK-47's and humanitarian relief scenes—that Julie broke down, recalling the emotional toll of her story, separate from the mechanics of publishing it.

On the marketing front, like many commercially published authors these days, Julie had to execute her own plan. It was three-pronged: producing a trailer, creating a reader's guide, and launching the book in three U.S. cities.

Although most people associate trailers with movies, many books now promote through them. Julie bought video services from a small publishing company, but the results were disappointing, causing her to enlist her sister Kathleen to do the final cut. They launched the trailer on YouTube, "and as of today it has close to 1,000 views," Julie said proudly. Most independent author trailers have about 100 views.

The next step was publishing a reader's guide, but why? For Julie, the reader's

guide was important for two reasons: for one, it was a slim and elegant marketing tool, but more importantly, the teacher in Julie wanted to help outside readers put her overseas experience in context.

For her book launches, Julie chose three cities in which she had a group of friends: Minneapolis, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco. The San Francisco launch included a reading at the Commonwealth Club of California, arranged by local RPCVs.

What next? For now, Julie Dargis has rejoined the formal working world in Washington, D.C., recognizing that at some point—and for many self-publishing authors—"you have to stop." Earlier in the process she toyed with creating an e-book version of her story, but that is for another day. Social media, too, can provide a never-ending promotional thrust. "What I cared about more than the literary or the structural aspects of the book project was the story itself," she said.

Over the last 10 years, as publishing has undergone a digital revolution, it appears that some of the big publishing houses are admitting that if you "can't beat 'em you better join 'em," which some of them have done by buying do-it-yourself publishing platforms and providing those services themselves.

But just as the democratization of publishing has released legions of new voices for others to enjoy, so too has it unleashed 10 times as many critics.

Over coffee at Busboys & Poets, Julie told me about one of her most recent critics, an Amazon reviewer who railed about this and that, and finally issued the ultimate putdown: "I guess anyone can write a book these days...." To which Julie threw back her head, laughed hysterically, then looked me in the eye and said: "As a matter of fact, yes, they can. Yes. They. Can."

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*Kitty Thuemer grew up in India, Ghana and Germany and served in Peace Corps/Mali. She is an independent consultant in Washington, D.C.*

# Global Mamas in Ghana

Peace Corps friends found a fair trade social enterprise

by Kristin Johnson

**A**t 21 years old, Renae Adam and I departed for the Peace Corps in Ghana ready to change the world. Even with such similar backgrounds, we were unlikely friends. Once in Ghana, I wanted an urban assignment, Renae a rural post; I exceeded the luggage allowance, Renae brought one backpack; I was voted most likely to early terminate, Renae most likely to succeed. But, fate located us together. I was placed in Cape Coast, and Renae in a fishing village just outside of town. We were assigned to women's economic development projects, and discovered that we shared values, a passion for business, and the ability to make our individual ideas stronger by working together.

We both fell in love with Ghana and lived in awe of the Ghanaian women with whom we worked. Peace Corps gave us the chance to work very closely with women entrepreneurs over a three-year period and their businesses prospered. Even after our service ended, we returned to our communities several times to visit our friends and colleagues from our former projects to provide continued support. But, these sporadic trips were not enough. Each time, we noticed that the women's lives had not measurably improved despite continued foreign aid.

Upon finishing her graduate studies in 2002, Renae returned to Ghana to research why the economic development models implemented throughout Ghana were unsuccessful. She found that a long-term, comprehensive approach to economic development was lacking. In direct response to Renae's findings, we decided to form the non-profit organization, Global Mamas, to work with struggling, women-led businesses.



Hannah Mansa Darbah, seasoned batiker from Cape Coast, with two of her children.

Renae remained in Ghana to provide on-the-ground technical and business support, while I focused on developing a market for the women's products in the U.S. The response has been beyond anything we anticipated.

In 2003, Global Mamas started with six women producing small quantities of batik apparel and accessories in Cape Coast. Today, we work with over 500 women in seven different locations around Ghana. We still produce batik textiles, but have replicated our model with women working in the recycled glass bead and shea butter industries. Global Mamas' sales have grown immensely over our decade of work in Ghana, reaching one million U.S. dollars in 2011. Our products are sold in nearly 400 stores in Ghana, the U.S., Europe, Asia, Brazil, and Australia.

With an average annual sales growth of 66%, Global Mamas is faced with the rare challenge that demand for our products has outstripped production. In recent years, our growth has slowed because production cannot keep pace with the



Cape Coast seamstress, Vida Arthur, with her son.



Utilizing the textile scraps from Global Mamas' apparel products made in Cape Coast, the women in Ajumako weave recycled batik scraps into trivets.

constantly increasing demand; orders go unfilled. To address this problem, we've initiated plans for a new eco-friendly production facility, the Fair Trade Zone, to increase our current production output by over 50%. Once built, the Zone will provide 200 full-time jobs in a sustainably designed, green production center that cultivates an atmosphere of learning, healthy living, and team work. An onsite daycare center will foster a comfortable working environment for mothers while not being far from their children. We are excited to be leaders in ethical fashion and believe our fair trade garment factory will further set Global Mamas apart in an industry built on exploiting workers.

### **RPCVs working with Global Mamas**

Renae Adam (Ghana)  
Kristin Johnson (Ghana)  
Carrie Hawthorne (Guatemala)

### **Global Mamas' husbands/ongoing volunteers**

Dave Hollis (Zanzibar)  
Tom Neill (Guatemala)

### **Global Mamas' Peace Corps Volunteers**

Meredith "Murph" Ryder-Rude  
Emily Henke  
Rebecca Riccitello  
Kathryn Jacoby  
Suzanne Pasztor

### **RPCVs who volunteered with Global Mamas**

Jennifer Schueler (Namibia)  
Jenny Chalupnik (Mongolia)  
Sally Fillmore (Philippines)  
Fran & John Kennedy (Ghana)

### **Global Mamas' volunteers who went on to serve in the Peace Corps**

Brooke Olster (Mauritania)  
Leslie Shages (Mali)  
Amanda Shanahan (?)  
Chris Clark (Niger)  
Samantha Yoon (Mauritania)  
Anne Gretzman (Burkina Faso)  
Melissa Miller (Philippines)  
Grant Copenhaver (Namibia)

During Global Mamas' decade of work in Ghana, we have invested over two million U.S. dollars in Ghanaian women through wages alone, with very little outside support. Eighty-five percent of Global Mamas' producers have not studied beyond high school, yet the average wage of a Global Mamas' producer is 75% higher than the Ghanaian minimum wage, and they make on average 30% more than the average Ghana craft and trade worker\*. We also believe that education is essential to individual empowerment, so we provide personalized trainings designed to enhance our employees' technical and life skills.

The relationships we developed during our Peace Corps service were transformational and forever changed the direction of our lives. We wanted to incorporate a volunteer program into the organization to impart a similar, albeit shorter, experience for others. We designed a program for volunteers to share their expertise, mentorship, and encouragement with the Mamas. Our robust and ever-growing global community supports the Mamas in realizing their dreams: to support their families; send their children to school; improve their health; and save for the future.

Over 400 volunteers, including five RPCV's, representing 25 countries have spent more than 100,000 hours in Ghana sharing their time and skills to forever improve the lives of the women Global Mamas works with. Inspired by our dedication to the Mamas and the impact of the organization, eight of

### **Two RPCVs, a Singular Honor**

continued from page 34

Stevens was whisked away to a meeting with representatives of the National Commission for Museums and Monuments. There, he learned that a research center would be built in his name, and would be a site of study for the soapstone carvings he worked to preserve in the 1960s.

"It was a double honor, and total surprise," said Stevens.

Stevens began his work in Nigeria as a Peace Corps teacher from 1963-1964. During school vacations, he worked for the Federal Ministry of Education's Department of Antiquities, who were in charge of the Nigeria's museums and preservation of the country's art and artifacts. In 1965 Stevens was sent to Esie, when he started full time for the

Global Mamas' volunteers have gone on to serve in the Peace Corps (and all successfully finished their services). We have worked closely with the Peace Corps in Ghana and have had five of our very own Peace Corps Volunteers.

As we reminisce about our journey over the past 21 years since first arriving to Ghana, we feel fortunate to be a part of a network of talented businesswomen, driven to pay it forward to other women, their families, extended families, and communities. Global Mamas' success is a direct reflection of the success achieved by the Ghanaian women we work with.

\* The original industry study was done in 2008. Average GNI growth rate per year (7%) was used to estimate the increase in average wages between 2008 and June, 2013.

*Kristin Johnson (Ghana 1992-95) is the co-founder of Global Mamas, a female-owned social enterprise focused on empowering women through employment. Learn more at <http://www.globalmamas.org>.*

Antiquities Department (currently the National Commission for Museums and Monuments).

It was around that time the current shelter, built in 1945 for Africa's largest collection of fragile soapstone figures found in a sacred grove outside Esie, began to collapse. Stevens was hired to catalog and restore as many of the 1,000 carvings as possible, and to help supervise building a new museum to house them.

In 1978 Stevens published a book, "The Stone Images of Esie, Nigeria," cataloging the carvings, explaining the history, and offering a report of the possible origins. His book remains the authoritative text on one Africa's greatest mysteries.

*Patricia Sullivan is a communications intern for the National Peace Corps Association.*

# Investing in Peace

Wayne and Wanita Blumhorst

by Patricia Sullivan

The National Peace Corps Association's (NPCA) Director's Circle consists of the leaders of the Peace Corps community; donors such as Wayne and Wanita Blumhorst who help to ensure that the values of Peace Corps service effectively permeate American life. Through financial backing and a strong commitment to community service, Director's Circle members help the NPCA to maintain a vibrant presence in the Peace Corps community.

However being the parents of the current NPCA President, Glenn Blumhorst, these two are not your average donors.

"While they understandably have a special fondness for the NPCA president," said Glenn, "at the heart of the gift is their firm commitment to the pursuit of global peace and, specifically, to the mission of the NPCA as we further that vision."

Their choice to give was not made in haste. Although they did not serve in the Peace Corps themselves, they witnessed the value of the experience

through their son's service nearly 25 years ago. In addition, Glenn's current position opened their eyes to all that the NPCA does in the Peace Corps community. "They consider NPCA's role of championing RPCVs in 'bringing the world home' to be so very important in creating greater cross-cultural understanding and goodwill here in the United States," Glenn said.

Glenn admits that his parents' donation was "unexpected, but not so surprising" given their increased peace advocacy over the years, which began with their first trip abroad to visit him in Guatemala in early 1990. According to Glenn, his father told him that their "eyes were opened to the world" after that first trip. "The experience motivated them to learn more about the disparities and injustices in the world, leading them to be progressively more involved and active in peace and justice issues," said Glenn.

The Blumhorsts' proactive commitment to making a difference in the world was initially centered on issues relating to Guatemala and Latin



The Blumhorsts in Guatemala.

America. From there, their advocacy increased to joining peaceful protests and writing to members of Congress in opposition to the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

The two soon began engaging their local communities by joining organizations connected to larger social movements. Mr. Blumhorst, a peacetime Marine Corps veteran, joined Veterans for Peace and eventually made a trip to Iraq before the Gulf War "as a gesture of goodwill to the Iraqi people," and later went to Cuba "to show solidarity with Cubans living under the trade embargo," said Glenn.

In a similar fashion, Mrs. Blumhorst became a member of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and eventually made a trip to Cuba, along with Glenn's sister, as a part of a 75-woman delegation known as "De Hermana a Hermana." She also helped establish the first WILPF organization in Columbia, Missouri, jointly with three other WILPF members.

"They are not your typical world travelers who see the world through a business or tourist optic," Glenn said. "Their personal motivation is to learn firsthand what the world is all about, and then to do their part to bring about change for the better. Those ideals have taken them to places like Guatemala, Bolivia, Cuba, Mexico, Belize, and Iraq, as well as to Capitol Hill—numerous times."



Guatemala Peace Corps Volunteer—and now NPCA President—Glenn Blumhorst.

The NPCA president admits “my work ethic, my adventurous spirit and my desire to help others in the world certainly is a product of my parents’ nurturing,” and he acknowledges that many of these traits are what led him to his Peace Corps service in the first place. They were always supportive of him and they encouraged him to attend college and “to pursue his passion for travel, agriculture and altruism,” said Glenn.

The lack of phone and Internet during Glenn’s time of service meant a sacrifice in communication for the Blumhorsts, but they knew the sacrifice was well worth it when they saw Guatemala with their own eyes. According to Glenn, “they had left the United States with a perspective quite typical of many Americans and returned home with vivid images of our rural village, its indigenous people and the tremendous poverty in which so many Guatemalans were living.”

A similar sacrifice is echoed in the Blumhorst’s charitable donation to the NPCA, as they knew their money was going to the greater good. “My first reaction was of hesitation, knowing that such a large donation represented a stretch of their financial means,” Glenn said.

“However, once they shared with me their personal motivation to support the NPCA mission, and their firm conviction that it would render a good return on the investment, I relented. They are bona fide members of the Peace Corps community and confident investors in the NPCA mission.”

To learn more about the many ways you can support the National Peace Corps Association, visit our Contributing page. You can make a donation online at [www.peacecorpsconnect.org/donate](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/donate).

*Patricia Sullivan is a communications intern for the National Peace Corps Association. She is originally from New York, and currently attends the University of Maryland, College Park, studying English language and literature.*



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# Recent Achievements of Our Community

by Jonathan Pearson

## AFGHANISTAN

**John A. Benkhe** (1971-73) has recently become assistant presiding judge of Mendocino County, Calif. After his Peace Corps service, he served as deputy district attorney in Mendocino County before working for 21 years in a private practice Carter, Behnke, Oglesby and Bacik, specializing in civil law.

## ARMENIA

**Jennifer Cochran** (1996-98) has been elected to the Athens Ohio City Council. Cochran was appointed to the council last June to fill out the term of another council member who had resigned. She was elected to a full term in November. Along with Peace Corps and Americorps service, Cochran has been active with the Athens Shade Tree Commission, the Friends of the Athens Public Library and Live Healthy Appalachia.

**Matthew Hamilton** (2006-08) was awarded the Fairfield University Peace Corps Writers 2013 Best Book of Poetry for his first book *The Land of the Four Rivers*. His poems received high accolades from various members of the literature department of Fairfield University. His previous accomplishments include being nominated for a 2013 Pushcart Prize and being published in *A-Minor Magazine*, *Atticus Review*, *Boston Literary Magazine*, *Cha: An Asian Literary Journal*, *Noctua Review* and *Wilderness House Literary Review*.

## BOLIVIA

**Erica Barajas** (2007-08) of Livermore, Calif. has been named the executive director of Fair Food Matters. This Kalamazoo, Mich. based organization is dedicated to

providing education and networking for local food sources in this area.

## BOTSWANA

**Richard G. Frank** (1975-76) was recently nominated by the President Obama as assistant secretary for planning and evaluation of the Department of Health and Human Services. He is currently the Margaret T. Morris Professor of Health Economics at Harvard Medical School. Among his many accomplishments is his Peace Corps service, as well as being the recipient of the Distinguished Service Award of the Mental Health Association of Maryland. He is the co-editor of the *Journal of Health Economics*.

## BRAZIL

**Mary Woodward Pillsworth** (1965-67) is featured in the recently released documentary *JFK Assassination: The Reporters' Notes*. This documentary reveals the thoughts and emotions of those who were at the site of the president's assassination, as well as the first responses of the reporters who covered it. Mary states that President Kennedy's death incited her to take action and serve in the Peace Corps after years of working as an editor at a newspaper. While in Brazil, she helped members of a village to develop and circulate a local newspaper.

## BURKINA FASO

**Joshua Gates** (1997-99) was awarded a Woodrow Wilson fellowship. He taught math in Burkina Faso during his service. He interned at the United States Mission to the United Nations, and has a bachelor's degree from Taylor University in Psychology. He will attend Western Michigan University on this fellowship.

## CAMEROON

**Deb Nelson** (1987-89) is the executive director of the Social Ventures network, which recently launched a new campaign, called "Triple the Triple Bottom Line" to raise money for minority- and women-owned businesses on the website Indiegogo. This campaign highlights the opportunity gap faced by women and minorities and seeks to bridge this gap by providing opportunity for women and minority investees. Her previous achievements include working for Working Assets and American Express.

## EASTERN CARIBBEAN

**Clifford Clark** of Alton, MO donated 35,000 books to a public library in his country of service, Antigua. Clifford has said that he considers this project a continuation of his Peace Corps service. These books are both new and used and cover a range of topics. Most Antiguans can read and speak English, allowing this project to have a profound and lasting impact on education and the quality of life in this country.

## CAMEROON

**Peter Kim** (2003-05) was featured in an article in the *Huffington Post*. Kim has been the executive director of the Museum of Food and Drink in New York City since May 2012. This article chronicled a week in his life as the executive director, demonstrating his responsibility and creativity. His previous experience after the Peace Corps includes a fellowship with the Congressional Hunger Center and advising at the USDA.

## GABON

**Blaine Barrick** (1979-81) is the new president of the Merced Union High School District Teachers Association.

He has been a French teacher at various high schools for over 10 years.

**Michael Shereikis** (1992) was featured in the *Washington Post* for the success of his band Chopteeth. Michael describes how his experience in Gabon, listening to local musicians, inspired the music of this band. He is able to capture an authentic sound due to his inspiration from dance clubs in Gabon, and he has been applauded for recreating this Afrofunk music despite his American heritage.

## THE GAMBIA

**Francisca Paulete** (2003-05) was awarded the Outstanding Young Alumni Award from Michigan Technological University's School of Forest Resources and Environmental Science. Her accomplishments include her Peace Corps service as well as becoming the environmental coordinator for the Bureau of Land Management in Oregon.

**Mary Trimble** recently wrote a book entitled *Tubob: Two Years in West Africa with the Peace Corps*, chronicling her experiences with her husband in the Peace Corps. Mary has previously written fictional books on runaway children and ranching.

Award winning schoolteacher **Bob Williams** (1987-89) is running for lieutenant governor in Alaska. He won the Alaskan Teacher of the Year award in 2009. He is a strong advocate of funding education, and is currently working toward a PhD in Public Policy and Administration at Walden University.

## GHANA

**Ken Hackett** (1968-70) has been appointed U.S. ambassador to the Vatican. Hackett is the former head of Catholic Relief Services, and is a recipient of Notre Dame University's Laetare Medal, which celebrates Catholic individuals who show a commitment to service. He has had a long career of service and development, as well as cross-cultural communication.

## HONDURAS

**Kelly DeRango** (1986-88) was awarded a Woodrow Wilson fellowship. She studied Spanish and Political Spanish at Indiana University before earning her master's degree from University of Michigan in finance, another master's degree in economics from the University of Wisconsin, and her PhD in economics at the University of Wisconsin. She will attend Western Michigan University on this fellowship.

## INDIA

**Tom Wolf** is running for governor in Pennsylvania. He recently celebrated the opening of a campaign office. He cites his past experience as an asset to working in office, stating, "I think we're capable of being a really great state, of doing great things and being a beacon to the rest of the country. To do that, we're going to need someone who's had experience doing different things." Wolf's other work experience includes Pennsylvania Secretary of Revenue. He is the chairman and CEO of the Wolf Foundation, and holds degrees from Dartmouth, the University of London, and MIT. He has stated that, if elected, his main focus would be education.

## JAMAICA

**Annie Donovan** (1987-89) is the new Chief executive of Coop Metrics, a Washington, D.C. technology company which draws upon technology to solve social issues. She was featured in the *Washington Post* Business section in an article detailing her career. Donovan has also recently served a term at the White House Office of Social Innovation. Her other accomplishments include heading the New Market Tax Coalition, encouraging private investing, and working for NCB Capital Impact, and helping investments in the charter school market.

## LESOTHO

**Dave Gorman** (1989-92) recently completed a 100-mile bike ride in Lesotho to raise awareness for localized

bicycle fundraisers in this country which are raising money for orphans. Gorman's bike ride attracted attention from around the world and boosted local fundraising efforts. Gorman explains that an American taking part in such a project tends to garner more international attention to otherwise localized projects such as this one. He hopes to encourage this use of bicycling and fundraising in the country of his service.

## MALAWI

Esteemed travel writer **Paul Theroux** (1963-65) has published a new book entitled *The Last Train to Zona Verde: My Ultimate African Safari*. Theroux has written numerous novels and travel books, for which he has received literary acclaim. He is currently on tour promoting this new book, which he says is the last of his accounts of his African trips.



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### MAURITANIA

#### Matthew Harrington (1988-89)

has recently been nominated for the position of ambassador to the Kingdom of Lesotho. Harrington is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service. He has served in several U.S. embassies in Africa, and was the Sudan desk officer at the Bureau of African Affairs and the foreign policy advisor to the commander of the U.S. Army South. Additional positions include working as a program associate for the American Association of State Colleges.

### MEXICO

#### Daniel Evans

was recently named one of University of California Davis's Distinguished Alumni for his outstanding service. Evans got his start in the Peace Corps, and is currently living in Queretaro, Mexico with his wife while he serves as the director of 85 volunteers working in technology transfer and natural resource management. His career has focused mainly on ecology, conservation, and development.

### MICRONESIA

#### Richard Burbridge (2007-09)

of Pontiac, Ill., was chosen as the president and CEO of the Pontiac Area Chamber of Commerce. He is enthusiastic to serve this position in his hometown city, building on his Peace Corps service, which included teaching and environmental work.

### NEPAL

#### Republican Arthur Orr (1989-91)

of Alabama has announced his intention to run for a third term as senator of Alabama's Third Senate District. Additional overseas service includes working with Humanity International in Bangladesh. Accomplishments during his service as senator include decreasing unemployment and operational costs, as well as passing laws to maximize efficiency and accountability in taxing practices. Orr's focus is on economic development and reform.

### SENEGAL

This summer, the Irish Ambassador to the U.S invited **Geri Critchley** (1971-72) to represent the Peace Corps community in a trans-Atlantic transfer of the eternal flame from President John F. Kennedy's gravesite at Arlington Cemetery, to New Ross, Ireland, to mark the 50th anniversary of JFK's historic visit to his ancestral home. Rep. Joe Kennedy III (Dominican Republic 2004-06) was among the speakers at a gravesite ceremony at Arlington Cemetery.



### NIGER

#### Leslie Natzke (1987-90)

recently founded an organization called Expanding Lives, which is dedicated to developing leadership skills in young women in West Africa to empower them to become pillars in their communities. Her service in the Peace Corps inspired this work to increase equality and opportunity for women.

### NIGERIA

On November 2, 2013 the Islamic Speakers' Bureau of Atlanta recognized **Gerald Durley** (1964-66) for his work at bridging differences between Christians, Muslims, and Jews. His recent achievements include serving as a head of the Concerned Black Clergy, and Dean of Clark Atlanta University. He is also a frequent speaker on environmental and peace issues.

### PARAGUAY

**Mark Simakaski** was featured in the *Times Argus* for his and his wife's mead brewery in Groton, Vt. Drawing from his Peace Corps experience, where he made his first brew, Mark has headed a successful mead company, Artesano, since 2008. Artesano sells its mead at 85 locations throughout the state.

**Ned Farrell** (1989-91) a beekeeper in Clinton, Conn. has created a global honey business and recently implemented a plan to help orphans and orphanages in his country of service. This plan involves teaching honey harvesting techniques and providing resources to allow these institutions to bring in revenue of their own

using simple practices. Farrell believes that beeswax has many uses that would benefit rural groups in need in South America.

### PHILIPPINES

#### Meghan Pinsonneault

was recently featured in the TED talk-style talk rollout in Los Angeles called NextDayBetter. This event was organized to feature the accomplishments and stories of the Philippines and Filipino-Americans. Meghan talked about her experience in the Peace Corps, during which she raised money to help children with cleft palates to get the surgery they needed. Additionally, she helped to orchestrate the donation of a fishing boat to a Filipino family in need. She now focuses on creating films about the Philippines and their education and culture.

### ROMANIA

#### Kim Tompkins

opened up a wellness center in her native Ipswich, Mass. This center offers yoga, meditation, life coaching and expressive arts therapy. Tompkins got the idea to open such a center after running one in Beclean, Romania during her Peace Corps service. She says the sense of community and fellowship that resulted from running the center in Romania inspired her to open up the U.S.-based wellness center.

### THAILAND

#### Martha Cooper (1963-65)

is an art activist and was recently featured in the *New York Times* for the publication of her book, *Subway Art*, and her work with graffiti artists in the South Bronx. This

book is credited with spreading this urban art form globally. The article features her interactions with local graffiti artists and how she learned about their work and its significance. Since this book's publication, Cooper has worked touring the world to show her exhibits and keep abreast of new art developments.

## TOGO

**George Packer** (1982-83) staff writer for *The New Yorker*, was recently interviewed by Al Jazeera America about income inequality, his experiences reporting in Togo and Iraq, and the current political climate in the Middle East. He is the author of several books, and recently completed a tour for his latest work, *The Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America*.

**Rose Hyde** founded a company called Alaffia together with her husband, selling raw shea butter to personal care companies. This company has found success in Whole Foods and other distributors. This company also takes part in many community service missions in Togo, including donating bicycles, nutritional education, maternal care, educational advocacy, and women's health initiatives. Additionally, the brand practices fair trade initiatives, which contribute to its socially conscious economic impact.

## TUNISIA

The national headquarters of the American Institute of Architects recently concluded a four month exhibition of "The Design Comedy," featuring 150 cartoons drawn by **Roger Lewis** (1964-66), as part of his "Shaping the City" column which is a Saturday feature in the *Washington Post*. The cartoons from 1984 to present touch on various themes and topics including architecture and urban design, smart (and dumb) growth, transportation, construction technology, housing, sustainability and public policy. Lewis is Professor Emeritus at the University of Maryland School of

Architecture, Planning and Preservation. He is also president and director of the Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation.

## USA

Former Peace Corps language and cultural trainer in the U.S., Dr. **Tulinabo Mushingi** has been recently appointed by President Obama as ambassador to Burkina Faso. Dr. Mushingi, after beginning his career as a Peace Corps Volunteer, has also held career positions in the Senior Foreign Service, the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia, and the U.S. Embassy to Tanzania. He earned degrees at the Institut Supérieur Pedagogique in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Howard University, and Georgetown University. Dr. Mushingi will be the 18th ambassador to Burkina Faso.

## VENEZUELA

**Alberto Ibarguen**, president and CEO of the Knight Foundation, was awarded the Center for Leadership's Transcendent Leader Award. This award

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is given to an individual who has made important steps in business leadership and community development. Ibarguen is also a board member at American Airlines, PepsiCo and AOL. After his Peace Corps service in Venezuela, Alberto became a Peace Corps training officer in Colombia. He was formally presented this award at the Chapman Leadership Honors on October 3rd.

## In Memoriam

The National Peace Corps Association has begun to remember those in our community who passed away. Our **In Memoriam** webpage ([www.peacecorpsconnect.org/in-memoriam/](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/in-memoriam/)) provides links to obituaries of RPCVs and former Peace Corps staff who recently passed away. We also highlight some of these individuals in a monthly tribute, found in the Community section of our homepage.

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“The itinerary was a nice blend of working, learning, and enjoying the Dominican Republic. While it was beneficial to meet PCVs (Peace Corps Volunteers) and learn about their projects, it was equally important to talk to NGOs working in the area and to independent scientists and ecologists. It gave us all a richer and broader perspective on the enormous challenges the DR faces and some of the emerging solutions. ” – Rob C.

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