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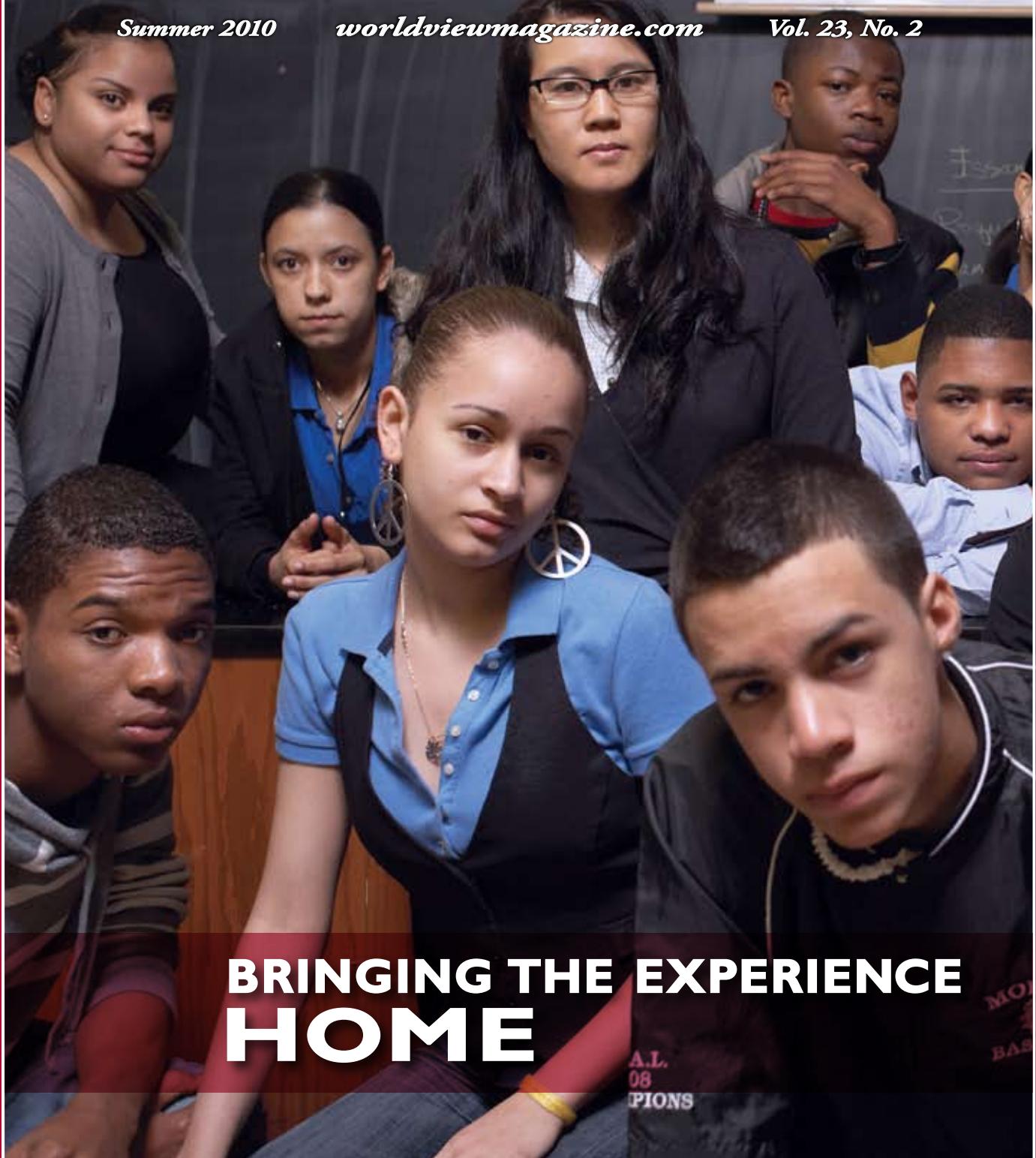
# WORLDVIEW

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Summer 2010

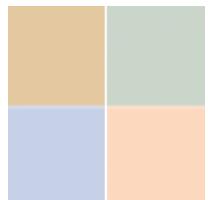
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Vol. 23, No. 2



**BRINGING THE EXPERIENCE  
HOME**

A.L.  
08  
PIONS



People Places



**“To really make an impact on your community you have to be really connected to it.”**

— Katherine Hartman, Accelerated '10  
Peace Corps Fellow, Gurtler Foundation Scholar

**Katherine Hartman**, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (2005–2007) has taught Costa Rican women how to run a business, worked on state-wide dental care and vaccine policies, and helped slow the sale of flavored cigars to Baltimore City youth. And she isn't stopping there. Today, as a Peace Corps Fellow at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Hartman brings health information to Baltimore Hispanic populations. Says Hartman, “Hopkins was such a perfect fit because of the emphasis on giving back to the East Baltimore community. It just felt like all the pieces fell in place.” When she graduates in 2010, Hartman will combine her education, the skills she acquired in the Corps, her volunteer spirit, and her policy know-how to continue serving her community—as a public health nurse.

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Summer 2010

Volume 23 Number 2

# WORLDVIEW

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

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University of Washington

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Patricia Chang (back row, center), alumna of the Columbia Teachers College Peace Corps Fellows program that teaches English at the Bronx International High School. She was a Peace Corps Volunteer in China from 2001 to 2002. Credit: Mike McGregor

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# WORLDVIEW

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

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# THE THIRD GOAL IS OUR FIRST GOAL

*Now is the Time to Finally Bring the World Back Home*

by Kevin F. F. Quigley

**P**resident John F. Kennedy articulated the enduring vision for what is known as the Peace Corps' Third Goal\* when he suggested that, "The logic of the Peace Corps is that someday we are going to bring it home to America."

So far, we have not really done that. The agency's Third Goal effort has never reflected this powerful initial vision or its importance to the Peace Corps' long-term viability. During its first five decades, the overwhelming focus of the Peace Corps has been volunteer recruitment, training, placement, and volunteer support. The Third Goal has never been fully embraced as central to the Peace Corps, and consequently the Third Goal has received scant attention and resources.

At his July 2009 confirmation hearing, Director Williams spoke compellingly about creating a robust Third Goal program. His attention to this presents a unique opportunity for the Peace Corps community to bring the world home in ways that raise the Peace Corps' profile, assist with recruitment efforts, and finally fully realize one of the agency's three foundational goals.

Now, on the eve of the golden anniversary of the Peace Corps, we think that the time is especially ripe to create a comprehensive and innovative set of activities that finally bring the world home. Here are a few initial steps:

First, we should begin not calling it the Third Goal. To many, this suggests that these efforts are not of primary or secondary priority, but tertiary. In



In addition, the term "Third Goal" has been largely meaningless beyond the immediate Peace Corps community.

Second, the requirement to bring the world back home needs to be clearly and consistently expressed throughout every stage of the recruitment, training, volunteer, and after-service processes. This should also include a voluntary nine-month period when returning volunteers are expected to complete a set of these activities, report back on them, and receive a modest financial incentive for doing so.

Third, new activities including a small grants program should be created. New audiences should be reached. The current activities primarily connect serving and Returned Volunteers with classrooms and involve group projects in communities at home or abroad.

These current programs are a necessary first step, but there are many more steps required to create a comprehensive and innovative program building on new technologies, engaging new audiences and advancing the Peace Corps' mission.

All of these efforts need to receive much greater public attention. Each Volunteer should be expected to regularly communicate about her/his experiences during and after service using traditional and new media.

Without a much more robust effort to Bring the World Back Home, I fear that the recent increases in funding that the Peace Corps has received and is projected to continue to receive will not be forthcoming—especially in today's very challenging fiscal environment.

I welcome your comments and suggestions regarding how we can realize this yet unfulfilled vision to bring our Peace Corps experience back to America in the compelling way that President Kennedy expressed.

With thanks and best wishes,

Kevin F. F. Quigley

\* *"to help promote ... a better understanding of other peoples on the part of the American people."*

*Kevin F. F. Quigley is President of the National Peace Corps Association. He served in Thailand, 1976 to 1979. Please send your comments to president@peacecorpconnect.org.*

## RPCV MENTORING

*Help for coming home so we can bring the world home*

by Erin Madsen

**R**eturning home from Peace Corps service is rarely an easy process. The thought of "What now?" is often a daunting one, and is frequently exacerbated by reverse culture shock that can be more difficult to navigate than the culture shock experienced at the start of one's service. What was once familiar now seems foreign, making it all the more challenging for a newly-returned Volunteer to re-establish him or herself.

This situation is one with which that nearly every Returned Peace

Corps Volunteer (RPCV) can identify. However, today's Volunteers are returning to one of the harshest economical environments in decades, further complicating their transition. When considering these issues in relation to the Bringing the World Home goal, a significant question emerges: How can recently returned Volunteers bring the world home when they're having enough trouble getting through the process of simply coming home?

Back in 2007, NPCA sought to develop a solution to address this question. Through a cooperative agreement with Peace Corps, they launched the RPCV Mentoring Program in three US pilot cities: Chicago, Miami, and Portland. NPCA's member groups in those areas matched mentors and mentees and also provided orientations, get-togethers and opportunities for Third Goal activities for the mentoring pairs.

Today, the program has expanded to 35 participating NPCA member groups (which now includes both geographic and country of service groups), and nearly 1,000 mentors and mentees have participated. Although there are instances where there are no mentors located near a mentee and vice-versa, participants are utilizing both traditional (phone, email) and new communication media such as Skype to connect. Mentee Anne Varnell (Jamaica 03-06) maintains that "I have only good things to say because I was very isolated and just having someone reach out to me even though they were not living in my area, helped me through some very hard times. Though your loved ones want to help, having the ability to reach out to a RPCV mentor provides a safe

environment to ask for guidance or to voice frustration, fear, and confusion."

While there have been many successes in the four years that the RPCV mentoring program has been active, there is always room for improvement. Recognizing this, NPCA will soon launch a new mentoring site that will allow the matching process to become both easier and more user-driven. Mentees who register will be able to search for a mentor themselves, and seek assistance from both NPCA and the participating member groups should they need help finding a match. The site will also feature a social-networking space where mentors and mentees can share ideas and resources on a wide range of topics related to the mentoring process, including careers, education, networking, and transitional guidance.

When thinking about bringing the world home, we must also consider the process of coming home itself. The RPCV Mentoring Program provides both support for Volunteers who are grappling with this process, as well as guidance on how to begin to achieve the Bringing the World Home goal—so that its message of understanding continues to be manifested in the future.

*If you are interested in becoming either a mentor or a mentee or want more information about the RPCV Mentoring Program, please visit [www.rpcvmentoring.org](http://rpcvmentoring.org).*

*Erin Madsen is the Global Education Program Assistant at the National Peace Corps Association.*

## What Is Your Next Step?

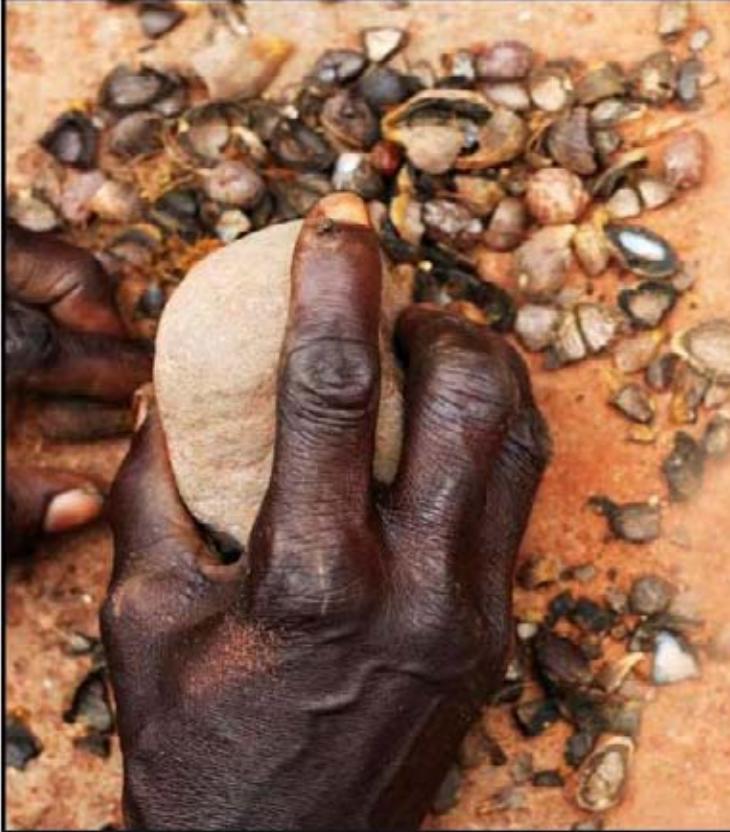
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## GROUP NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

*A look at what NPCA member groups are up to*

by Erica Burman



Learning about the Peace Corps.

### RPCVS OF COLORADO

The RPCVs of Colorado and the Dallas Peace Corps recruiting office recently hosted an Invitee/Nominee brunch. Over 50 RPCVs were on hand to answer questions and quell the fears of the 100 Invitees/Nominees and their family members who also attended. Also participating were a group of local RPCV Rotarians who are working diligently to create a formal Memorandum of Understanding between Rotary International and Peace Corps. They presented the resources available to serving Volunteers (connecting to an existing Rotary project in their communities, connecting to a local Rotary club before departing for financial and technical support while in country) and to RPCVs (connecting to Rotary projects that may be taking place in their country of service). Group president Arianne Burger hopes RPCV groups around the world can replicate this pilot partnership. "Rotary and Peace Corps are a natural fit for one another!"

[www.rpcvcolorado.org/](http://www.rpcvcolorado.org/)

### FRIENDS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

The Friends of the Dominican Republic (FDR) are planning an in-country celebration of 50 years of continuous service in the Dominican Republic in 2012. The proposed dates are February 9-12, 2012. Since 1997, reunions have been celebrated every five years, with the lead rotating between FDR and the Fondo Quisqueya Foundation, a small non-profit founded by RPCVs that provides low income Dominicans in the Dominican Republic with scholarships and grants for educational and training purposes.

[www.fotdr.org/](http://www.fotdr.org/)

### FRIENDS OF FIJI

Over 120 friends attended the May 15 Friends of Fiji Gala Fundraiser, a biennial celebration of the warm

relationship between the Peace Corps and the island nation of Fiji. Pork, chicken, fish, palusami, dalo and other delicacies were cooked beforehand in a lovo (earth oven) at an area park, then safely transported to the fundraiser site, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association in Arlington, Va. The festive evening featured dancing, bounteous Fijian and Indian cuisine, a silent auction of items by indigenous artisans, and a raffle for roundtrip airfare/holiday in Fiji. Winston Thompson, the Fiji Ambassador to the U.S. made introductory remarks and former Ambassador Jesoni Vitusagavulu gave the Fijian blessing.

<http://fofiji.org>

*For a listing of NPCA member groups, visit [www.peacecorpsconnect.org/member-groups](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/member-groups).*



Returned Fiji Volunteers watch dinner cooking in the lovo.

Jim Reiterson

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# THE THIRD GOAL: YES, NO, AND MAYBE

*Reconsidering “the roads not taken”*

by Harris Wofford

**R**emember the Peace Corps' Third Goal and give it renewed emphasis? Yes! Separate it out for special Congressional appropriations? Maybe. These activities need to receive far greater funding, whether from the private sector or the government, but beware of government restraints on what can be done and said using government money—the piper may try to control the tune.

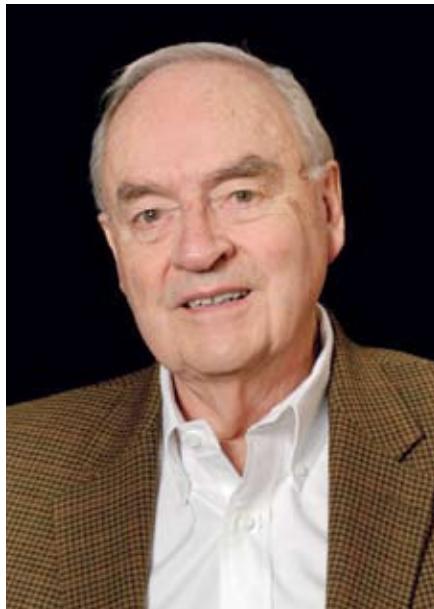
Forget the Third Goal's integral part in the founding formula—an inseparable three-in-one proposition that set the Peace Corps on the path to greatness? No.

Here's a little history.

In the “President's Task Force” that Sargent Shriver assembled right after he was given the assignment during President Kennedy's inaugural parade, we explored ways to present the Peace Corps to the President and Congress. After day-and-night probing, proposing and arguing, we agreed on what we called the “three propositions”:

- It can contribute to the development of critical countries and regions.
- It can promote international cooperation and goodwill toward this country.
- It can also contribute to the education of America and to more intelligent American participation in the world.

Shriver's report to the President was delivered on February 28, 1961, about a month after we started. It outlined the proposed Peace Corps, stated those three aims, and urged “its immediate establishment” by executive order, pending authorization by Congress as a permanent agency. Many of the questions about it, the report said, “will only be finally answered in



Peace Corps

**Harris Wofford**

action, by trial and error.”

On March 1st, the President issued the executive order, sent a message to Congress urging legislation to establish a Peace Corps in line with Shriver's recommendations, and announced Shriver's appointment as Director. In his message to Congress, Kennedy concluded with a further aim: “Although this is an American Peace Corps, the problem of world development is not just an American problem. Let us hope that other nations will mobilize the spirit and energies and skill of their people in some form of Peace Corps—making our own effort only one step in a major international effort to increase the welfare of all men and improve understanding among all nations.”

Some members of the task force and many others later urged Shriver and the President to choose a single purpose or at least settle for a main one. Shriver firmly disagreed. He found the competing purposes creative, and

thought they should always be there in tension. Promoting Peace was the overarching purpose, but the process of promoting it was necessarily complex, so the Peace Corps should learn to live with the complexity.

In terms of sequence, the work to be done by Peace Corps Volunteers to contribute to the development of host countries came first. As Volunteers did the work and lived in the communities where they served, the people in those communities would get a better understanding of the American people, thus promoting international cooperation and goodwill toward our country. And last, as an ever-larger number of Volunteers returned home to America, their stories and their work in American communities would “contribute to the education of America and to more intelligent American participation in the world.”

I don't recall anyone thinking that the three goals would become budgeting divisions with special appropriations. But although the third goal was the last, it was not at all the least. As Shriver and the President presented it, “The Peace Corps is in fact a great venture in the education of Americans and of people in the newly developing nations.”

In an approach that has been largely forgotten, Shriver's report recommended another way the Peace Corps would contribute directly to the education of America, not just through the work of Volunteers. “Wherever feasible”, the report urged, the overseas projects should be administered through contracts or grants with colleges and universities, and other educational institutions. Such involvement would help American education expand its horizon—its research and its curriculum—to the

world. "The Peace Corps will help them with this transformation," Shriver's report stated. "As a high education venture, the Peace Corps' proper carriers are our traditional institutions of higher education. It is time for American universities to become truly world universities."

We also had in mind the large resources of those universities and colleges, including students, faculties and alumni. We hoped that by deep and direct involvement with the Peace Corps, those constituencies could be mobilized in support of the Corps' development and expansion.

The report added two other ways for the work of Peace Corps Volunteers to be administered overseas: through grants to non-government agencies with successful experience in international service such as CARE, the Experiment in International Living, and the American Friends Service Committee; and through United Nations agencies engaged in international education and development and able to utilize the Volunteers.

Then, the Shriver report added, there would be "some projects of a size or complexity or novelty or urgency which cannot be carried out, or carried out well, through any of the above channels." These would need to be administered by the Peace Corps staff.

Given the tendency of government bureaucracies, we should have guessed that direct Peace Corps staff administration overseas, as well as at home, would become dominant. Notre Dame was the only university to seek direct administration, which its great president Father Hesburgh accomplished through the Indiana Association of Colleges and Universities, and for some years that was the main form of Peace Corps operation in Chile. And CARE may have been the only private agency to directly administer an overseas project.

As Director, Shriver did not press the idea of such diverse ways of overseas administration because he believed the Peace Corps, as in a parachute jump, had just one jump—one launching which had to succeed in

those first years. So he felt he had to be responsible for the whole operation.

In Barack Obama's message to Peace Corps Volunteers in the fall 2008 WorldView, he called for "a bigger, better, bolder" 21st century Peace Corps. In planning for such a Corps, in its 50th year, I hope the outstanding new leaders of the Peace Corps, and the President and Congress, will consider those roads not taken in the 1960s.

Direct administration of many of the overseas projects by experienced universities and colleges or by non-government organizations engaged in overseas service with proven track records may be the best and fastest way to achieve Obama's aim of doubling the Peace Corps and moving toward Kennedy's hope for a Corps of 100,000 volunteers a year.

When Kennedy lifted our sights to



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that expansive vision he had just sent forth a large Peace Corps contingent from the White House lawn. He turned to several of us helping that day and said this Peace Corps will be really serious when in each decade there are a million former Volunteers with first-hand experience in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Then, he said, for the first time America will have a large constituency for a good foreign policy.

He may have said "for an intelligent foreign policy." But his intent was clear: it was the powerful potential of Goal Three, writ large. By 1962, the success of the first Volunteers and anticipation of a bright future had caused Kennedy to joke that when he asked Shriver to undertake the Peace Corps assignment, he thought it might turn out to be a lemon. But Sarge had turned it into lemonade.

Now as we approach the Peace Corps' 50th anniversary, we can be proud of what some 200,000

Volunteers and thousands of staff have done, overseas and back home. But none of the three goals have been achieved on the scale intended. Perhaps most disappointing is what the Third Goal might have meant to "the education of America and to more intelligent American participation in the world" if our numbers had been ten times larger.

When Shriver and others of us in at the beginning left in 1966, there were 16,000 Volunteers overseas or in training. As the Vietnam War drained resources to support the War Corps, the Peace Corps dwindled to about 5,000 a year. After calls for expansion by Presidents Carter, Clinton and George Bush, the numbers have been notched up to about 8,000. Doubling would only bring us back to about where we were on the 5th anniversary, when planning was underway to grow to 50,000.

I think I know what Sargent Shriver

would say to all of us supporting the Peace Corps, and to the President and Congress. We turned his name into a very active verb: To "Shriverize" meant to do it faster and bolder, bigger and better. The watchwords today would be: To do our duty to make the bigger and better Peace Corps of our dreams come true, we must be more inventive—and be fast and bold.

*Harris Wofford (Special Assistant to President Kennedy 1961-62, Peace Corps Representative to Africa and director for Ethiopia/Eritrea 1962-64; Associate Peace Corps Director 1964-66) served as a Democratic U.S. Senator from Pennsylvania from 1991 to 1995, CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service, 1995-2001 and as president of Bryn Mawr College. His books include Of Kennedys and Kings: Making Sense of the Sixties. He is a member of the National Peace Corps Association's Advisory Council.*

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## PEACE CORPS PROSE

*A promoter of Peace Corps writing reflects on the role of story*

by John Coyne

**W**hen I first came back from the Peace Corps and was living and working (and writing) in New York, I invited a young book editor out for dinner and she said, "I'll go to dinner with you, John, but I won't read your Peace Corps novel."

Well, we have been married 30 plus years now and she *still* hasn't read my Peace Corps novel!

It has always been difficult to find anyone to read a book about the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps is not war. We do not fly into the face of danger. If a Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) writer is lucky, or perhaps unlucky, he or she will get caught up in a coup in their host country and have something exciting to write home about as happened to Tony D'Souza (*Cote d'Ivoire 00-02; Madagascar 02-03*). He turned the Cote d'Ivoire coup into his first novel *Whiteman*. Or Jan Worth (*Tonga 76-78*) who used the murder of a PCV in Tonga as part of the plot for her first novel, *Night Blind*.

Most of us lived ordinary lives in the developing world, and it is only the gifted writer, like George Packer (*Toga 80-82*) in *Village in Waiting* or Ellen Urbani (*Guatemala 91-93*) in her memoir *When I was Elena* who can take the ordinary Peace Corps tour and turn it into memorable prose.

When I first started to track "Peace Corps writers," in 1987, and began to publish the newsletter *Peace Corps Writers & Readers* with Marian Haley Beil (*Ethiopia 62-64*), I thought the publishing world had had enough Peace Corps first-person-experiences and no RPCV would ever publish another account. I am continually surprised that year after year very important and well-written memories of Peace Corps life are published, find

an audience, and are critically well received. Just this last year we had

*When Things Get Dark: A Mongolian Winter's Tale* by Matthew Davis

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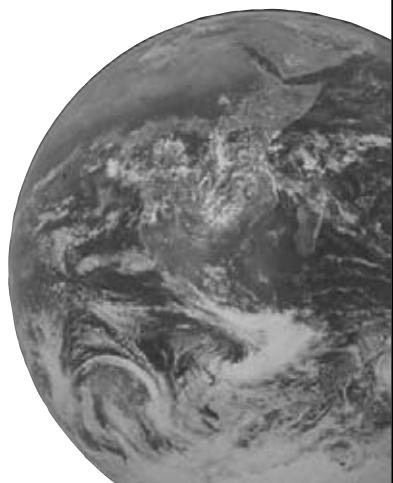
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(Mongolia 00-02). Memories of the Volunteer experience are still finding publishers nearly 50 years after it all began.

Our Peace Corps footprint in the publishing world is small. We have managed to place only a few of our books on any literary shelf. While approximately 200 RPCVs have published books about their tours, the majority of them have been self-published, print-on-demand publications that have found limited readership.

Nevertheless, it is the 210,000 former Volunteers and staff in the Peace Corps and the teaching and writing that they do, who will educate others about the developing world. It is through books written by RPCVs that the majority of Americans will learn of the societies and cultures that are distant and distinct from whom we are in America. It is the hope and purpose of all Peace Corps writers that our prose and poetry will fulfill the Third Goal of the Peace Corps and educate Americans about the worlds where we have spent two years of our lives.

Today, many Volunteers have email, Internet blogs, cell phones, Twitter, Facebook, and what have you, that keep them linked back home in ways we never thought about in the days when it took a week or two for a thin aerogram to reach the U.S. from any Peace Corps country in the world.

But while aerograms and emails are great for assuring Mom you are still alive, they do not move the needle when it comes to 1) creating literature; 2) enlightening Americans of new cultures and modes of being in the Third World.

More than one PCV has in the 50 years of our history packed an Olivetti Lettera 32, or today an iPad, into carry-on luggage in the hopes and plans of banging out a memoir over the next two years. And some have accomplished that.

We kept journals—at least for a while. Bob Shacochis (Eastern Caribbean 75-76) kept his for nearly a week, he remembers, and then stopped writing, but he still came home to



Peace Corps

#### Writing—and reading—have always been a part of the Peace Corps experience.

write *Easy in the Islands*, a collection of stories published in 1986 that won the National Book Award for Fiction. Mark Brazaitis (Guatemala 91-93) was afraid when he left Latin America that he would forget what his life was like as a PCV, but when he sat down to write his award-winning collection of stories, *The River of Lost Voices*, his days in Guatemala, he said, came rushing back to him.

What must be remembered is that what we do overseas as PCVs is only our first draft in life, as well as the literature we write. It takes time and distance and much reflection to carve with insight and perception that intense two-year experience into meaningful prose. If a PCV wants to write about the Peace Corps the way to do it is not by tweeting. The PCV has to live the life of a Volunteer, be immersed in this new world, its language and culture. The PCV needs to cut the electric cords that keep one forever tied to the world back home. And then with time, and distance from the host country, the Peace Corps writer will have more to say than just the obvious.

And the Peace Corps writer will also find that he or she is part of a larger Peace Corps community of writers, and that with the Internet and emails, and PeaceCorpsWorldwide.org, RPCV writers are able to share and shape their experience with others. They will find that while they might have served in different regions of the world, and in different decades, the core experience of being an American in a foreign land pulls them together like a secret handshake. And in time, I believe, we will produce a genre of literature that will be known to everyone who studies fine writing, great stories, and insights into other cultures, “Peace Corps Prose.”

*John Coyne (Ethiopia 62-64) is the editor of five books of Peace Corps writing: To Touch the World; (1995); At Home in the World (1996); The Great Adventure (1997), all published by the Peace Corps, and Going Up Country: Travel Essays by Peace Corps Writers (Scribner's 1994); Living on the Edge: Fiction by Peace Corps Writers (Curbstone Press, 1999).*

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# RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS WHO TEACH

*Fulfilling the Third Goal*

by Angene Wilson

**P**resident John F. Kennedy, speaking to the first group of Peace Corps volunteers in 1961 said, "Come back and educate us." In 1981 Peace Corps Director Dick Celeste told returned Peace Corps volunteers: "There is a third goal and, in many ways, it may be the most important." He urged a consistent, determined effort to educate Americans about the people and cultures of the so-called developing world.

*Twenty Years of Peace Corps* cited figures of 26 percent of 1960s returnees going into teaching and 27 percent in the 1970s employed by educational institutions. Author Gerald T. Rice concluded that "perhaps the most exciting and profound impact of returned volunteers has been in the field of education," one of the primary benefits being that sharing their experiences took "some of the fear and mystery out of the American view of the Third World." He also quoted a 1980 poll of universities which attempted "to evaluate what effect returned volunteers had. The response was overwhelmingly favorable," especially in public health and international studies.

In the mid-1980s, as a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) university teacher educator, I wondered what RPCV teachers themselves thought about our impact. So I visited and interviewed 17 RPCVs who taught in Illinois, Kentucky, Ohio, Michigan, North Carolina, and Washington D.C. and then used their comments to develop a questionnaire which garnered responses from 36 RPCVs teaching in 23 states, from New York to California, Alabama to Alaska. The surveyed teachers responded most positively to the statements "I teach that American culture is not the only culture; just because you don't believe it or understand it doesn't mean it's wrong" and "It's not just knowing a country's

economics but also a cultural sensitivity to the country's point of view that's important in my teaching."

Bob Leupold, (Indonesia, Thailand 63-65), the teacher who stressed that American culture is not the only culture, explained: "When some student has his feet up on the desk pointing toward me, I point out that pointing the sole of your foot toward someone is a deep insult in some cultures." The teacher who made the second statement, Washington D.C. teacher Billie Day (Sierra Leone 61-63), talked about the African side of exploration and colonization in her classes.

Although teaching about one's Peace Corps country was not always possible, fourth grade teacher Kurt Liske, who was in an early Tunisia group before teaching in Ohio, told me: "There isn't a day goes by that I don't use my experiences. Today we were talking about communication in a story we were reading and I talked about calling my friend Beshear in Tunis who sounded like he was next door. I also tell lots of stories. So someone talks about oranges and I tell my story of riding on top of an orange truck in Morocco."

Other teachers I visited described how Peace Corps had made them accepting, understanding, and appreciative of differences. A Michigan teacher whose high school had a large minority of Hispanic students and also had six exchange students in his classes said, "I just accept that kids are brought up differently." An English as a Second Language teacher in an Illinois elementary school tried to attack problems from a cultural perspective. She told about a teacher who had diagnosed a student as dyslexic because he was writing from right to left—he was Arab and Arabic is written from right to left! Surveyed RPCV teachers wrote about "conferencing with Spanish-speaking students in Spanish," "helping



Patrick Bell (Costa Rica 97-99) teaches Spanish at Sayre School in Lexington, Kentucky. Over the years he has taken students to Costa Rica, Spain, Argentina and Mexico for educational trips into Spanish-speaking culture.

Iranian and Afghan students," and being more understanding of both poor and problem children.

In the last six years, for the Oral History Center at the University of Kentucky, my husband and I have interviewed 86 Kentucky-connected Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from all decades, a third of whom are educators, not surprisingly since 35 percent of Volunteers are still in the education. Examples? A county math supervisor who learned to write curriculum as a math teacher in Ethiopia, an elementary school Spanish teacher who learned the language in Ecuador when she was a special education Volunteer, an electronics technician Volunteer who became a teacher of English on the Internet to people all over the world because he learned French in Côte d'Ivoire.

RPCVs have made their mark in colleges and universities in teaching, research, and service, too. At the University of Kentucky (UK), for instance, historian Bob Olson (Turkey 63-65), retiring as a Middle East specialist, told us: "Being in Peace Corps introduced you to international politics, and I got introduced not only to the Turks but also to the Kurds who subsequently became my academic career." Education professor Kristen Perry (Lesotho 99-01) won an award for her research on how culture impacts literacy development, a topic she got interested in partly because of an old man's perceptions about the relative difficulty of Sesotho and English languages. Theater professor Andrew Kimbrough (Sri Lanka 84-86), found Peace Corps helpful in applying for a teaching job. "One of the questions

I was asked was ‘How do you think you’d be able to support our efforts with multiculturalism?’ Well, one of the degrees I earned was with the Peace Corps. I might be some middle-class, middle-aged white guy, but the Peace Corps puts all of us ahead of the curve in that respect.” Andrew teaches a course in Asian theater that includes the bharata natyam, an Indian dance form he first became acquainted with in Sri Lanka.

Another university-connected educator is Kay Roberts. For Roberts (Ecuador 82-84), “bringing the world back home has been something I’ve worked very hard at.” As Community Liaison as well as Kentucky-Ecuador Partners Director at UK’s Office of International Affairs, she led a project with Kentucky Educational Television in 91-92 and another more recent project at public libraries around the state, both with RPCVs. The earlier Wavelengths to the World project, developed for sixth grade geography teachers, included short stories and classroom activities written by RPCVs. Roberts also organized three telecasts featuring returned volunteers and international students and sent teachers information on World Wise Schools and Peace Corps Partnership programs. She remembers sixth graders calling in to ask questions about guinea worms of a returned health volunteer.

In the end, of course, “educating us” is not just the job of RPCV educators but of all returned Peace Corps Volunteers. We all know that until one has visited other villages one will think only Mother’s cooking is sweet!

\*You can read and hear the more recent interviews online at the Center for Oral History at University of Kentucky.

*Angene Wilson (Liberia 1962-64) began bringing the world back home in 1965 by developing a primary source curriculum unit about Nigeria for a new world studies course at her alma mater high school in Lakewood, Ohio. She led the secondary social studies program at the University of Kentucky from 1975 to 2004 and taught African history for three years after she retired. With fellow RPCV Merry Merryfield she wrote Social Studies and the World: Teaching Global Perspectives in 2005.*



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# 45 CHANCES A DAY TO CHANGE THE WORLD

*A look back at the founding of the first Peace Corps Fellows program*

by Jody K. Olsen

In 1985, around a wooden table nestled in a small office at Teachers College, over sandwiches and sodas, six people discussed the initial ideas for what soon became the largest, oldest, most prestigious, and influential Fellows/USA program in the United States: The Peace Corps Fellows Program at Teachers College. Today, with over 40 Fellows/USA programs in graduate schools throughout the country and over 600 graduates of Teachers College Fellows/USA program alone, it seems that the power of that table conversation should have been obvious. But at the time, it was just an uncharted idea, backed by a strong advocate and a great college.

Having sat at that table 25 years ago, I would like to share my impressions of where we have come from and how we have ended up where we are today.

Perhaps the most intense energy and passion behind the idea that eventually became the first Fellows/USA program came from Beryl Levinson (Colombia 67-69), a doctoral student at Teachers

College at the time. She knew that Teachers College, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), and the New York City school system could bring together experienced and talented teachers for special programs and disadvantaged students throughout the city.

Her passion for the idea convinced then-Peace Corps Director Loret Miller Ruppe, one of the six attendees who sat around the table, that the Peace Corps could embrace the idea, talk to potential donors, and partner with Teachers College to create this Fellows program. That same day, in the multistory, glass headquarters of Xerox Corporation, a new grant was approved, and the program was launched. The enthusiastic first group of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers entered the Fellows/USA Program at Teachers College in the fall of 1985.

The initial program recruited RPCVs as math and science teachers. The Memorandum of Understanding noted: "The program ... has been developed

to attract and train a professional pool of Math and Science educators to teach in the inner city schools of the United States and to upgrade present levels of instruction in the fields of Mathematics and Science." (1/30/85)

Other financial supporters, in addition to Teachers College, soon joined the program: the New York City Board of Education, the Hebrew Technical Institute, the Prudential Insurance Company, and Chase Manhattan. Later the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, supplemented by funding from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, added significant scholarships.

As broader needs became evident a few years later, the initial Fellows/USA Math and Science Program at Teachers College expanded to bilingual education, special education, and TESOL. The Peace Corps Fellows Program at Teachers College has continued to grow and change to meet new Fellows' skills, New York City's education needs, and Teachers College own evolving academic assets.



Wanda Dingman (Mali 92-94 & PCFP 96-98) with her students from the Marble Hill High School for International Studies, a small college preparatory school for students interested in foreign languages and international studies.



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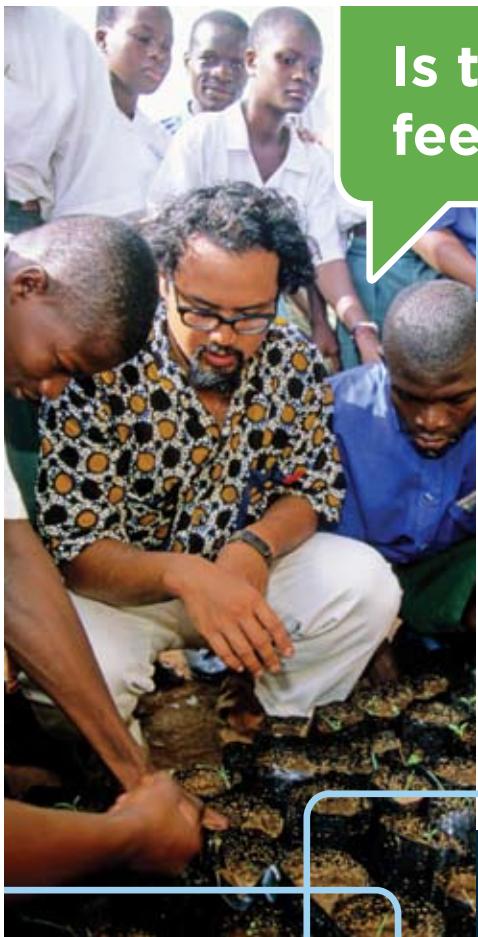
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This program's impact is one teacher, one student, one classroom, and one institution at a time. In 1997, a 10th grade student from the Bronx said, "You've been the best teacher we ever had. You're also the perfect teacher because you don't criticize anything and you're funny. You made humanities fun. You're also the only teacher that's open-minded and who concentrates on developing the positive side of things."

That same year, a Peace Corps Fellow communicated: "Since I arrived in New York, I have experienced the worst and the best; I have felt painfully naïve and joyously wise; that I made the worst choice and the best that I could for myself. Like an aging and battered prizefighter, I don't know when to quit. Maybe this is endemic to most Peace Corps Fellows. Maybe it's just me."

Another Fellow noted: "Teaching humanities in the South Bronx has changed my life almost as much as my Peace Corps experience had in Lesotho, Africa. My job as a teacher allows me to make very real human connections everyday that I couldn't have with practically any other job. I've always been accused of wanting to change the world



**Patricia Chang (China 01-02) teaches English at the Bronx International High School..**

by my family and now I see that I have 45 chances a day to change the world: one chance for each student."

Similar sentiments have been documented throughout these 25 years. In a meeting that I attended a few years ago, a senior staff member in the New York City Board of Education Office of Personnel praised the work of Peace Corps Fellows and talked specifically about their language and cultural sensitivity, their commitment to public education, and their flexibility and passion for their work in classrooms and in schools. One administrator said that they look for Peace Corps Fellows knowing that they can succeed in

challenging school environments.

Teachers College took a risk 25 years ago, and like the risk Peace Corps Volunteers take when boarding a plane to begin two years of service that will change their lives, Fellows/USA has changed RPCVs, graduate schools, and most importantly, the communities where they have served in New York City and beyond.

As Deputy Director I saw these changes first-hand while visiting Fellows and former Fellows at three different schools in New York City. In one neighborhood school with a strong immigrant population from the Dominican Republic, the principal praised a former Fellow, whose Peace Corps service was in the Dominican Republic, for her sensitivity to individual student needs and tailored ways of gently integrating the students into new cultures and systems.

In April of 2009, I spent a morning at the Marble Hill High School for International Studies in the Bronx talking with the founder of the school and watching current and former Fellows teach at the school. Returned Volunteers comprise one-third of the faculty who teach a student body almost entirely made up of immigrants. Their teaching programs affirmatively integrate English as a second language with the math, history, and science curriculum into one strong curriculum. The students spoke proudly about "their" teachers living two years in some of their own countries of origin, speaking local languages, and knowing their own home



**Rachel Blair (Morocco 04-06 & PCFP 07-09) with her students from the Bronx International High School, a team-based and community-based school dedicated to serving the academic and the social needs of recently immigrated youth.**

traditions and cultures. That trust, built on the foundation of the Peace Corps experience, encouraged and allowed the students to take risks in their own adjustments to language and culture.

The support from donors Elliot and Roslyn Jaffe and Amity Buxton has continued to strengthen the program, such as through innovative high-quality service-learning projects. This last year, over 1,000 students engaged in 14 mini-grants projects from HIV/AIDS education to video and website development to raise awareness on crucial social issues. The Fellows at Marble Hill talked of using this grant opportunity to bring students and classrooms closer to social issues and their communities. Innovations in service learning have also become a major focus of the Corporation for National and Community Service, the agency of which the AmeriCorps branch has become a major partner and funder of the Peace Corps Fellows Program at Teachers College.

I am honored to have been one of those sitting around the table 25 years ago, and now to have seen, 25 years later, the profound effect that committed educators, a graduate school of education, and over 600 RPCVs can have honoring the Peace Corps' third goal, helping to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans, and improving the lives of dozens of thousands of New York City students. I have no doubt that the idea that created the first Fellows/USA program in the country will continue to evolve, develop new partnerships, and extend its reach to ever more partner communities.

*Jody K. Olsen, Ph.D. (Tunisia 66-68) served as Deputy Director of Peace Corps from 2002 to 2009 and as Acting Director from January to August 2009. She has held numerous positions within Peace Corps, including Chief of Staff, Regional Director (North Africa Near East, Asia, Pacific), and County Director (Togo). Dr. Olsen is currently a visiting professor at the University of Maryland School of Social Work. This article first appeared in the Summer 2009 edition of the Teachers College Peace Corps Fellows Times.*

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Kutner credits Guatemala's Jonathan Miller (Guatemala 2006-2008) with being the brains behind bottle-school construction. She had heard of a project completed by Miller and other Volunteers and proposed the design at an Earth Day event in 2008. The idea stuck.

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hours with the elementary school teachers, for about five months, putting the bottles in the wall. We worked with middle school and high school students for about three hours once a week, mostly putting bottles in the second

fellow Scott and I were looking for ways to raise money and involve the community in our search for a new school building. Pura Vida, that had been built by us, was a one-room school, made of wood and corrugated metal. It was unable to house all of the students in the community. Miller and Scott then began a petition among areas schools to collect dry, clean plastic bottles filled with inorganic, clean trash. They gave the trash to the teachers, respectively, who collected the most bottles. One student collected

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# BRINGING REAL WORLD EXPERIENCE TO THE TABLE

*University of Washington becomes newest participant in Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program*

by Catherine O'Donnell

**A**n agreement signed in April makes the Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington (UW) the newest participant in the Peace Corps Fellows/USA Program. It's also the first such program at the UW.

As the 52nd participant, the Evans School will provide fellowships leading to masters degrees in public administration. The agreement comes as Evans prepares to celebrate the tenth anniversary of its Peace Corps Master's International (PCMI) program on May 13. The degree includes a 27-month assignment abroad, and the event will include a send-off for PCMI students leaving on their assignments.

Alix Furness, who manages Evans School international programs, said the new Fellows program grew out of inquiries from Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. "We just never had one to offer them," she said.

As a Peace Corps volunteer herself, Furness taught undergraduate American history, politics and literature at the University of Constantine the Philosopher in Nitra, Slovakia from 2000 to 2002. She had a degree in English literature from Seattle University but no graduate degree. Members of the English language department nevertheless welcomed and accepted her as part of the teaching faculty. "I'd never have had an

opportunity for that kind of teaching in the U.S.," Furness said.

She subsequently received a UW master of arts in teaching English to speakers of other languages.

"I would have done the Fellows program, but Evans didn't have it," Furness said.

"We currently have a thriving group of students and faculty interested in international development issues, and returned Peace Corps volunteers bring a wealth of on-the-ground experience that enriches discussions both in and out of the classroom," said Joe Cook, an assistant professor in the Evans School who coordinates the Peace Corps Master's International program.



Peace Corps volunteers often participate in secondary projects. As part of helping a Moroccan teacher coordinate a week-long day camp, Kirsten Rogers taught American games.

Founded in 1985, the Peace Corps Fellows/USA program has served more than 3,000 returned volunteers. It promotes better American understanding of other cultures and brings Peace Corps learning to domestic situations. The program makes possible certificates and graduate degrees at 40 institutions in a wide range of disciplines, including law, nursing and education, but according to the Peace Corps, no two programs are exactly alike. Along with the Evans School program, the UW offers Peace Corps Master's International degrees in the School of Forest Resources and the Department of Global Health.

In 2009, 14 students entered the Evans PCMI program, the largest group in Evans history. For the class that will enter in September, 20 of the 50 who applied were accepted. Applications for the UW Fellows program will be accepted starting in January, with the first class beginning in September 2011.

Kirsten Rogers, 27, who recently returned from a Peace Corps stint in Morocco, said that a year of intensive Evans courses afforded her the practical information in economic development she needed to help women weavers and wool spinners grow their businesses.

Rogers learned Arabic along the way, realizing the importance of personal connections between Americans and people they work with in host countries. "I came back thinking how to help family, friends and colleagues develop relationships," she said.

These days, Rogers works with One World Now, an after-school language and study-abroad program for underserved high school students. They're learning Arabic and Mandarin Chinese. This summer, Rogers will be program manager for a One World Now summer language camp.

"Volunteering abroad showed me that more high school students and more undergraduates need the opportunity to go abroad, to become more global citizens," Rogers said. "We can't afford not to do this."

*Catherine O'Donnell is a Public Information Officer at the University of Washington.*

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## CONNECTING WITH CAMEROON

*Elementary students correspond with a Peace Corps Volunteer in the field—and learn of life there first-hand.*

by Mark Mahoney

**A**s a former Volunteer I was excited about following-up on the “bringing the world home” goal. And, so it was that I approached my son’s fifth-grade teacher at the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year to discuss the possibility of students learning more about the Peace Corps experience. One of the programs of the Peace Corps World Wise School initiative matches up Peace Corps Volunteers serving in the field with U.S. classroom teachers. This unique program known as “Correspondence Match” allows for a vibrant exchange of ideas, stories, pictures and artifacts that helps students in the classroom learn about the people, geography, environment and culture of the world

from the direct experience of Volunteers living in other countries. The idea is simple: Pair the participants and the exchange takes off.

After discussing the program and assisting the fifth grade teacher in completing the application, a match was subsequently made with Kelly Gillin, 23, a Volunteer from Florida who was serving in the town of Banyo in Cameroon, West Africa. A host of activities were undertaken during the school year focusing on learning about the Cameroon both through individual in-class research, correspondence with the Volunteer and through exchange of letters with school children in Cameroon.

Imagine the excitement when we learned that Kelly’s father (who lives

in Orlando) would be traveling to Cameroon to visit his daughter for a two-week period. It took little discussion to convince him to make a presentation to the fifth-graders upon his return to Florida.

The kids could hardly sit still in their chairs when Mr. Gillin began to share his story, illustrated by numerous slides. His enthusiasm was apparent when he told the students that the trip was “simply incredible.” “The generosity of these people with virtually nothing was absolutely overwhelming,” he said. There is no television, no radio, dirt roads, and the average wage is about \$1,200, but these people are content and appreciative for what they do have. It’s amazing.”



School children in Banyo, Cameroon.



Kelly Gillin

Fifth grade students listen the presentation.

Following the presentation, students were ready with questions: What does the food taste like, how do they keep things cold without a refrigerator, why families don't have pets, how do Cameroon kids carry book on their heads?

One of the students noted that she wanted to visit Cameroon and be the next Kelly. "I want to be an animal rescuer or conservationist," she said, "that is if I don't join the Peace Corps." Another student explained the colorful bulletin board devoted to Cameroon and pointed out the correspondence program letters. "There are animals from the country...like snakes, gorillas and monkeys and then there are letters from Kelly, the history of the country and pictures she sent to us over there."

Afterward, Mr. Gillin remarked that his classroom visit exceeded his expectations. "This is a tremendous experience for the kids to be exposed to other cultures. We'd all be better off if we do more of it, and these kids are definitely on the right track."

If this experience is indicative to the possibilities of programs like Correspondence Match, the Peace Corps will definitely have a long life well after the 50th anniversary celebration in 2011.

*Learn more details about the Correspondence Match program at:  
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/correspond/about.cfm>*

*Mark Mahoney (Ecuador 75-77, Chile 78-80) is a Research & Training Specialist for the State of Florida. He has worked in the field of health promotion/disease prevention for over fifteen years including three years in worldwide blindness prevention activities with an international NGO, Project ORBIS, Inc.*



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# THE MOST ENDURING IMPACT

*By working with victims of torture, an RPCV*

by Charlie Rounds

**W**hen I was in high school, my mother volunteered with Amnesty International—something that often left me scratching my head.

I helped my mother translate into French and Spanish letters to dictators throughout the world urging them to stop torturing and killing prisoners. When I was 16, she built a mock-up of a “tiger cage,” the infamous cells used to torture prisoners in Vietnam. The sign posted on it described what was happening in Vietnam with our tax dollars.

The cage stood there for weeks.

Our neighbors and I really wondered what it had to do with us.

It was not until my Peace Corps service in Cameroon that my mother’s work to stop human rights abuses resonated in a way it never had before. My service molded me to become a board member of an international NGO that treats torture survivors around the world.

By design, Peace Corps aims to

improve the lives of people around the world and strengthen ties between people in the Global South and the developed world using three approaches. Public awareness centers primarily around the first two paths: the invaluable technical assistance that volunteers provide in developing countries; and the fact that Peace Corps volunteers act as informal ambassadors of America in those countries.

Yet the service that comes after our two (or more) years in the developing world may be the objective that has the most enduring impact. The Peace Corps changes the way you see the world. And out of that shift is often borne deep compassion and a strong desire to continue to serve others that results in a lifetime of service.

As a teenager in suburban Minneapolis, the concepts of prison, torture, and mass killing were not readily comprehensible for me. My worst fears were not being chosen (again and again) to be on a team in

gym class or getting invited to the “A group” parties.

That is where Peace Corps transforms your view of the world around you. Peace Corps service takes pictures of global poverty and suffering off of magazine pages, television monitors and computer screens and places them front and center in your life. Many volunteers have seen hunger, corruption, poisoned water, and government violence firsthand.

Like many Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, when I came back to the U.S., I searched for meaningful ways to stay connected with the country in which I volunteered and to continue to give back. Today, unlike in 1978, I can’t simply pick up and leave the country for three years. Like many people, I have a career and family that are important to me.

But I discovered that my global service can continue through an organization in my own backyard. As a board member of the Minneapolis-



A counseling hut in Sierra Leone.



Author Charlie Rounds.

based Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), I support an organization that treats survivors of politically motivated torture who live in the U.S., as well as trains refugees in post-conflict regions overseas to provide mental health counseling to their communities.

My involvement with CVT showed me the devastating consequences of torture on individuals and societies. Survivors of torture are targeted because they are leaders. Their torturers attempted to destroy them, and in so doing, frighten and silence the community. This is how corrupt officials maintain power. But healing services helps torture survivors rebuild their lives. And it helps communities break the cycle of fear, silence and apathy.

Part of this work is personal—as it directly relates to my Peace Corps experience. Cameroon ranks second as the country of origin of torture survivors in Minnesota. For privacy reasons, I can't talk about those individuals because many have family members still in Cameroon. But because of their age, I know that many of them were likely the students of my fellow Peace Corps volunteers who taught in Cameroon. Knowing that the children with whom we worked in Cameroon have had their lives disrupted by torture means that I view these men and women in a very different way than most Americans. Because of my Peace Corps service, I can play a role in helping Americans feel connected to individuals from countries halfway around the world.

There are an estimated 500,000 torture survivors living in the U.S. They have fled countries in which many Peace Corps volunteers serve. Many survivors are refugees and even more are asylum seekers. For them, the U.S. is not only a safe haven from violence and repression; it is also a place to heal from the massive amounts of trauma that they endured.

During the last 25 years, CVT has treated more than 18,000 individuals from more than 70 countries. Eighty-five percent of the new clients we treat in Minnesota are from Africa. Additionally, CVT partners with local torture survivor rehabilitation centers

around the world to strengthen their clinical and organizational skills. We work with centers in Bangladesh, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Guatemala, India, Kenya, Kosovo, Namibia, Pakistan, Palestine, Peru, Romania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, and Uganda.

The important thing is to find your passion and commit to it. I'm committed to helping survivors of torture and war trauma and their families heal and to ending torture worldwide. Others have found other worthwhile causes.

Above all, the key is to truly make your Peace Corps experience transformative, not just for yourself, but for men, women and children from disadvantaged communities around the globe. One mark of Peace Corps' incredible success is serving as the first step in a lifetime of service. I am grateful for that experience and that I found a way to help people whose needs are extraordinary.

*Charlie Rounds (Cameroon 78-81) is a member of the board of the Center for Victims of Torture, Minneapolis, Minn. To learn more, visit [www.cvt.org](http://www.cvt.org).*

## GOODWILL RETURNED

*Kara Garbe (Burkina Faso 01-04)*

**W**hat initially drew me to CVT was the opportunity to use the French I'd learned overseas to work as a befriendeer with one of CVT's French-speaking clients from Africa. The client ... didn't speak much English, so I was one of the few Americans she could communicate with. I think former Peace Corps volunteers make great befriendeers because we understand at least one part of the client's experience: how difficult and confusing it can be to adjust to life in a foreign culture. When I was in the Peace Corps, so many people there helped me adjust to life in a new and very different environment. Volunteering at CVT helps me feel like I can return a little of that goodwill."



**Kara Garbe working...**

CVT



**... and relaxing in her Burkinabe village.**

CVT

# SUSTAINABLE THINKING AT THE PEACE CORPS

*An renewable energy and climate change initiative holds promise for Latin America*

by Joel Rubin

The Obama Administration is ushering in new debate on the issues that impact the lives of people in the developing world like no other administration in recent memory. Ranging from the president's pledge to double international aid, to helping farmers in Africa, to empowering women, and to addressing climate change, the administration has challenged the international development community to think big as it grapples with how to advance global development in concert with American interests in the 21st century.

The Peace Corps has joined this momentum and is now poised to implement as much innovation in the field as we are witnessing in Washington.

Specifically, on April 17th, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced the creation of the "Peace Corps Renewable Energy and Climate Change Initiative" as part of the "Energy and Climate Partnership of the Americas," which is part of the Summit of the Americas multilateral work.

This exciting sustainable development initiative will, according to press accounts, provide training to the more than 2,000 Peace Corps Volunteers serving in the rural areas of the Americas for work on renewable energy and climate change activities. The goal of the program, according to the State Department press release, is to "...address energy poverty by using small grants and local training to build the capacity of local communities." To do this, "...volunteers will introduce energy-efficient practices and alternative-energy technologies, including small-scale solar panels, cook stoves, small wind turbines and other energy-efficiency solutions."

It is clear that, in true Peace Corps fashion, the decision to integrate a new, climate-oriented activity into the Peace Corps is based on a very realistic assessment of both the needs of the people in the poor areas of Latin America and of the longer term challenges that we face globally.

This combined pressure to eradicate poverty while ensuring environmental sustainability is at the forefront of the discussion about how to advance development in Latin America.

And the development challenges in Latin America are daunting. According to the Inter Press Service, roughly one-third of all the people living there—182 million people—live in extreme poverty. In addition, according to the Brookings Institution, "... between 2001 and 2005... climate-related disasters had an impact on 7.5 percent of the population in lower-middle income countries (in Latin America), up from 1.5 percent of the population in 1976-1980."

What is intriguing about this initiative is that it comes at a time when there is a vibrant debate both in Congress and within the Obama Administration about how to reform the U.S. government's international aid apparatus to more adequately address the needs of the developing world in concert with American priorities.

The Peace Corps has clearly picked up on both the real world challenges in Latin America and the policy debate in Washington to come up with an innovative way to utilize its volunteers. It is showing real savvy, listening to partner governments while also demonstrating to Washington policy makers that it understands that creativity and effectiveness is needed in order to advance our country's international development goals.

My own personal experience tells me that now is the right moment for such a creative initiative. I served in Costa Rica in the mid-1990s, at a time when that country was leading the charge in Latin America on environmental issues, most notably by protecting nearly a quarter of its territory for national parks. Yet at the same time that it led on the environment, it was also committed to developing itself, so much so that it had some of the highest literacy, life expectancy, and income rates in the region.

I saw first-hand that real sustainable development was possible. If Costa Rica, a small country without many natural resources that relies heavily on its own innovation could do it, then it was—and is—clear that other Latin American countries can do it as well.

Much to its credit, the Peace Corps has demonstrated creativity through this bold energy, development, and climate initiative. It is lending a clear hand to partners in Latin America, making it relevant both on the ground and in Washington through bold, practical, and creative ideas. This type of sustainable thinking should give us hope about the future of the Peace Corps and its relevance in the 21st century.

*Joel Rubin is the Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer of the National Security Network in Washington, DC, a progressive foreign policy advocacy organization; the views expressed in this article are his own and do not necessarily reflect the National Security Network. He served in the Peace Corps in Costa Rica from 1994 – 1996 as an Environmental Education volunteer. You can follow him on Twitter at [twitter.com/JoelMartinRubin](http://twitter.com/JoelMartinRubin).*

## EMERGENCY LANDINGS

*Applying Peace Corps experience to humanitarian aid*

by Patrick Maguire

The airstrip was too short. Way too short. From the cockpit window, it looked to be barely twice as long as it was wide, and it wasn't very wide. Our pilot didn't care. He was ex-Kenyan Air Force, his face and neck covered in scars from a previous airplane accident that none of us dared ask much about. He simply turned around and asked, "Do you think this is it?" We nodded. It seemed right. There was a small stream a few miles south of it, and you could make out the Nile to the west. This is what we had been told to look for. We just expected something that resembled an airstrip more than it did an unleveled dirt football field.

We were coming in at what seemed like a forty-five degree angle. We would need every inch of strip available, yet tall trees ringing the clearing prevented us from making a flatter approach. The single-engine Cessna, crowded with three passengers, nearly a ton of medicine, food, and camping gear, was too heavy. The pilot needed to hit the ground as hard as possible to cut his speed, or he wouldn't be able to come to a stop in the 600 yards he had to work with. I cringed, but managed to keep one eye open as the ground rushed up to meet us. After nine months working with Doctors Without Borders in Sudan, I was no stranger to nerve-wracking flights, and the doctor and nurse traveling with me were more experienced still. Tree branches flashed by disturbingly close, but the pilot nailed the touchdown, and after furious braking we came to a stop with maybe twenty yards to spare. We had arrived.

Sudan wasn't my first experience in Africa. Four months after graduating from college with a

degree in engineering, I joined Peace Corps Tanzania as a secondary-school math and physics teacher. I spent my two years both in the classroom and managing various school improvement and construction projects, and—most importantly—getting the hands-on, grass-roots education in community relations and development that only Peace Corps can provide. I had never planned on getting into humanitarian aid work, but upon returning home I happened across the Doctors Without Borders website and discovered that they need far more than just medical personnel. Despite my only post-college work experience being with Peace Corps, I met their minimum requirements and applied for a field logistician position. In January 2009 I was off to one of the many remote hospitals they run in southern Sudan. Then, after nine months working at that hospital, I was chosen to join an emergency outbreak response team.

Our flight had brought us to Rom, a small village on the east bank of the Nile in southern Sudan. We were responding to reports of an outbreak of Kala Azar (Visceral Leishmaniasis), a parasite spread by sand flies that is fatal without proper treatment. Our team consisted of a Sudanese doctor, a Cameroonian nurse, and myself. While the two medics focused on testing and treatment, I was responsible for setting up camp, finding food and water, installing solar-powered radio and satellite communications, managing the medical supplies, and clearing at least 300 more yards of airstrip. My Peace Corps experience was a great help for almost every one of these tasks. I already knew the importance of having long talks with the village chiefs and elders, and that they were

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**A Doctors Without Borders nurse and doctor walk back to the plane with local residents in Rom, Somalia.**

Patrick Maguire

the ones who would tell us where to get food and charcoal and then mobilize the community to extend the airstrip. After two years' experience drinking from Lake Victoria I could purify water in my sleep. When preparing our equipment, I knew what I could expect to purchase locally and what we had to bring with us, freeing up space for enough medicines to last us two weeks without resupply. And perhaps most importantly, when the sun went down, when the mosquitoes came out in swarms, hippos started grunting, and I had nothing to eat but rice and beans, I could still feel completely at ease.

The third night of our stay in Rom, we had our first death. The boy was perhaps eight years old, and had arrived so sick he could barely sit up, let alone walk. He needed a blood transfusion, specialized medicine, and an intensive care unit. We had none of that. Two days later another patient, a girl of the same age, followed. She had been getting better, but developed complications

and crashed. In Tanzania I had seen children die of preventable diseases such as malaria and diarrhea. I can't say I learned to accept it, but I did come to terms with it, and grew to understand that such deaths are inevitable in countries lacking functioning health-care and education systems. Without that understanding I don't know that I would've been able to handle the death, suffering, and frustration that confronts relief workers on a daily basis.

With the incredible devastation caused by the recent deluge of powerful earthquakes combined with the ongoing conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere consuming the resources and personnel of all the main relief agencies, the need for new, top-quality humanitarian aid workers is great. These organizations need flexible, resourceful individuals with prior experience in the developing world, advanced language skills, and a strong desire to help those most in need. I cannot think of a better way

to describe Returned Peace Corps volunteers. While many development organizations require applicants to have advanced degrees in public health or international development, relief agencies often prefer demonstrated technical, financial, management, or administrative experience for their non-medical personnel. This provides an excellent opportunity for Volunteers who want to continue working overseas without having to return to school. Returned Peace Corps volunteers already play a crucial part in governmental and private development organizations worldwide. They can make the same contribution in the world of humanitarian aid.

*Patrick Maguire (Tanzania 05-07) began working with Doctors Without Borders in 2009 as a technical logistician in south Sudan. He is currently overseeing the construction of a new emergency obstetrics hospital in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. For more information, visit [www.doctorswithoutborders.org](http://doctorswithoutborders.org).*

## SPEAKING MY TRUTH

*HIV positive and serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer*

by Elizabeth Tunkle

**W**hen you join the Peace Corps, many people ask you "Why?" I never had a very good answer, and in retrospect, I really had no idea what I was getting into. I thought two years would go by in a flash and I would come home better for having gone so far from home and for having done such a "noble" thing. Two years did not go by in a flash and I came home changed—but not how I'd imagined I would.

As I was settling in to my village in Zambia, I met my future boyfriend. We started dating and I asked him if he had been tested for HIV. He told me, "Yes." The previous year, he told me, he tested negative, and had not had unprotected sex since. Knowing that, we mutually decided it would be safe for us to use birth control without condoms. We were wrong. Despite the fact that I knew all about HIV prevention I had unprotected sex with him anyway.

A few weeks later, I decided we should get tested. I tried telling myself that it couldn't be me. I was going to be fine. Too many times in my life I had played with all kinds of fire and survived. Not me. I was too nice and honest and fun and giving and I practiced yoga and meditation. We get bonus points in life for being good, right?

No, I guess we don't. HIV doesn't just choose mean people or people who tell lies. It turned out it chose me. We found out my boyfriend was positive and that I was also infected. As if that news isn't devastating enough, the Peace Corps

told me I had to go home and that I would not be able to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer anymore, anywhere. I was too shocked to fully understand what was happening, but I did feel that Peace Corps was acting contrary to what they teach us: "Fight the virus not people with it. Treat people with HIV just like you would treat anyone else." Yet, here I was going home.

I was shocked and traumatized as I packed up my things and said goodbye to my life in Zambia. I felt like a failure. I had come to teach prevention and here I was infected. I was asking myself that "Why?" question all over again. Why did I come to Zambia? Did I come to ruin my life? Who did I think I was coming over to Africa to tell people how to live? I didn't even know the meaning of my own words.

As soon as I arrived home I traveled to Washington, D.C. Peace Corps headquarters told me that I would be evaluated and then separated. I asked my Peace Corps nurse if it was possible for me to continue to serve and she said, "No." If I was positive, I would have to be separated. However, after I had been home for a month, Peace Corps changed its mind. Why? My friend was digging around on the Internet and found a story about another Volunteer who had been sent home earlier that year because of an HIV infection. He felt like his rights had been violated and had asked the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to intervene. The ACLU informed the Peace Corps that their policy discriminated against people with HIV and they needed to be more



The author has some company as she waits for a bus in Mansa, Luapula Province, Zambia, four and a half hours from her village by bicycle.

Paul Tunkle

accommodating\*. Peace Corps simply told me they were considering clearing me; everyone seemed to agree that I was physically and mentally well enough to continue my service.

It was suggested that my asthma was reason enough to keep me from going back to Zambia but I could go to Lesotho if I wanted. It seemed like a difficult decision at the time but I think I knew all along that I wanted to finish. Neither this illness nor my shame was going to stop me from returning to do the work I had set out to do. Maybe I could even do it better the second time around. So I said yes.

I made the most of my new home and my new Peace Corps family in Lesotho. I started making friends—but I kept my HIV status to myself. It was a heavy secret, but I felt too vulnerable and I wasn't sure how I would be received. Two months into my service I attended a Volunteer training session where Volunteers talked about struggling with the emotional toll of living in a country where so many people were infected with HIV. I sat there, knowing that no one in the room knew about me. One Volunteer confessed, "I found out my counterpart was positive and I am trying to give him support and but it is emotional for me to know." They were all being so honest; I wanted to run out of the room screaming.

After many people spoke, our director said, "One good thing about all this is that you have each other. We are all in the same boat." At that point I did leave heading for the medical office and the only people who did know the truth. "I am not 'in their boat,'" I said. I felt even lonelier and more left out than I had before—something I hadn't thought possible.

After I calmed down a bit, I went to see the Country Director. I told him I had been thinking and I wanted to share my HIV status with all of the Peace Corps Volunteers in Lesotho, all 87 of them. We were going to have an All-Volunteer conference in January and I wanted to have a session in which I would share my story. I knew I couldn't keep it a secret and this way I could control how the information was revealed.



**Post med-evac/pre-transfer, the Tunkle visits her village and is surrounded by children. They spent all their spare time at her house doing yoga, playing games, and creating art projects.**

On the day of my talk, I was terrified. I was going to be taking my most personal and private reality and laying it bare for everyone to see. I started my talk with a news article about the ACLU case against the Peace Corps. Then, I told them my story. I told them I knew better than to have sex without a condom. I told them I knew all the things they know that make them feel immune and I still got infected. In the end I asked them to make good use of me. I was the first infected person in service and I wanted to tell people what happened to me so that maybe they could learn from my mistake and not repeat it. That was, after all, why I returned to Africa.

I am happy to say my fellow Volunteers embraced me—and they started using me immediately. I went to a Diversity Camp in Butha-Buthe district where 20 teenagers came together to learn to be more accepting of the differences around them. I was one of the key speakers and I asked them to brainstorm words that came into their minds when they heard "HIV." "Don't censor yourselves. Just say what ever comes to mind. Good or bad!" They did. I heard words like "prostitute" and "sex," "anger" and "fear," "stigma" and "blood." We made a long list. And then I told them my story.

I told them everything. They were teenagers and statistics said they all were probably having sex already. They really listened, and afterwards asked questions. One woman asked, "How do you have so much courage to stand up in front of us and tell us these things?"

I just looked back at the list we made and said, "If I feel too afraid to speak about this to all of you then I let this list define me. I refuse to let this illness keep me locked up in my own world of shame. And if by sharing my story with you, maybe one of you rethinks having unprotected sex, then I have accomplished something." For the first time, I felt like I hadn't become infected for nothing. Maybe this happened to me so that I could share it with people. Maybe it had a purpose in my life.

I did that many more times during my time in Lesotho. I went to four Diversity Camps. I spoke at schools and youth centers. I spoke to peer educators, youth groups, and students. I spoke to primary schools and secondary schools. I even traveled two days up into the mountains to speak to a HIV-positive support group about a healthy way to deal with hard and dark emotions. People really heard me. I felt connections with the people of Lesotho like I had never felt in

Zambia. People came and shared their stories back with me. They asked me questions and invited me to their homes. I felt the force of belonging to a community.

I spent my second year of the Peace Corps speaking my truth over and over again. The fact is none of that would have been possible if it weren't for the courage of other Volunteers who stood up to the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps did something they had never done before and let me, an HIV-positive Volunteer serve out my time in Africa. I received more from sharing my story than I could have ever given to the people of Lesotho.

I think the Peace Corps is like that. We go to faraway lands to give of ourselves, to help, to make something better but it is the people who house us and love us and work beside us that truly give to us. They gave me a sense of purpose. They made me believe that something good could come out of getting a very scary, chronic illness diagnosis. And I believe that it did. I would never have asked to become infected with HIV. But without it, the community of people living with the virus around the world would be just out of reach, and I want to connect. I want to cross over the line that separates and make a connection.

So here I find myself. My service is complete. I am back in America. I served my country. I told my story. Somehow I think I answered my "Why." The work I did as a volunteer in Zambia was forever on the outside looking in. Later, infected in Lesotho, I felt as though I had stepped through an invisible barrier and was welcomed with open arms.

\*See the August 2008 issue of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Returned Peace Corps Volunteers newsletter for information about the Jeremiah Johnson case and changing Peace Corps policy related to PCVs with HIV. ([http://www.lgbrcv.org/articles/08\\_08\\_johnsoncase.html](http://www.lgbrcv.org/articles/08_08_johnsoncase.html))

*Elizabeth Tunkle (Zambia 07-08, Lesotho 08-09) can be contacted at elizabethtunkle@yahoo.com*



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## COMPASSION IN ACTION

*Open hearts in Lesotho*

by Kaye Thompson

**H**ere in Lesotho, Africa's Mountain kingdom where I serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer, I often have the good fortune to observe subtle and quiet acts of kindness. They are simple yet breath-taking.

A Maseru friend, '*M'e* Mobula (*M'e* serves for "Mrs.") invited me to her graduation party at her home in a nearby village. Many friends, family and neighbors attended the event that included a feast, speeches, live music and lots of *joale* (homemade beer). When the speeches began, my friend's adult son, *Thepe*, who was already overflowing with drink, took center stage to talk about his mother. *Thepe*'s words were slurred, he kept breaking down in tears, and he didn't seem to know when to quit.

After a reasonable amount of time, *Ntate* (Mr.) Mobula went up to his son, put his arm around him and sat down with him, effectively quieting him without any shame or blame. Everyone applauded and the speeches proceeded. I was impressed with the gentleness and generosity in which this was handled by the father and by the guests.

*M'e* Mobula's family is known for their open-heartedness to those in need and therefore often have a few of the poorest showing up on their doorstep. They gather food for the village orphans and do small acts to support the homeless and disabled. One of the individuals they regularly feed is Teboho, a developmentally disabled man who is given food and treated kindly when he stops by.

Teboho wandered into the gathering while the speeches were going on. He had only his tattered blanket, his toeless shoes and a smile. He stood in front of the tent in a prominent spot and waited. Within minutes, *Ntate* Mobula approached Teboho and ushered him into the tent where everyone was sitting. *Ntate* gave him a seat alongside other family members and he became a part of the group. Again, I was struck by the spontaneous, quiet kindness of this action by father of the family.

Soon after, another village regular, Thato, came into the gathering. Thato is a teenage orphan who is mute, mentally disabled, and wanders the village half-clothed. This child is the essence of "vulnerable" with no guardian, no communication skills, and little ability to care for himself. He is completely at the mercy of the good will—or bad will—of those around him.

Kaye Thompson

This day was warm, so Thato had no desire for clothing. He came into the gathering and stood behind the speaker, naked and oblivious. The speech went on and people acted as if they didn't see anything unusual. I, on the other hand, was shocked, uncomfortable, and fascinated. I kept looking around to see if anyone was taking notice besides me. Finally, a Maseru woman, looking a bit flustered, went to the young man and led him away, back onto the road outside the party. But both *M'e* and *Ntate* Mobula jumped up from the table and brought the young man back into their compound.



View of the Peka area near St. Rose Mission, in Lesotho.



Kaye Thompson

**Grandmothers and their grandchildren gather at St. Rose Primary to receive donated food for orphans.**

While the speeches went on, the family bustled around behind the scenes looking for some spare clothing. They found a pair of sweat pants, assisted the young man in dressing, and brought him a plate of food. The speeches continued, the hosts rejoined the gathering, and I breathed a sigh of relief.

To me these are the ultimate examples of compassion in action. This is the true spirit of all religions. Compassion is the simplest of actions, yet it takes us to the deepest part of our values. Much is said about the breakdown of the family support system in Lesotho due to poverty and the high AIDS infection rate. But this couple displayed such spontaneous and authentic care not only to their own, but to whoever wandered into their sphere. They offer a fine example of what “walking the talk” looks like, what the Golden Rule suggests.

I now carry within me their example of what compassion can look like. I will remember through their actions that humankind, even in its most impoverished state, has enough to feed and clothe the neediest of us. And I see that the

core values of Basotho people are still living and breathing. After the basic needs for food and water are met, there comes our need for contact, our need to be seen.

We are surrounded both by needs and by opportunities to address these needs. Compassion is the opening of our own hearts to the Other. We may only be able to give others a moment, some eye contact, a greeting, a sympathetic murmur. But perhaps that is enough for both us and the other to feel that there is a connection, that caring exists, and that there is hope. Although we may feel helpless and at a loss to address so many overwhelming needs of others, we always have our compassion to offer. In that we are offering the best of ourselves, the truest part of ourselves, the part of us that will live on in Lesotho long after our bodies and our project monies have left.

*Kaye Thompson is a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho. In a prior life, Kaye worked as a psychiatric social worker in Sacramento, Ca. for 25 years.*

*For more of her experience in Lesotho, visit <http://kayeinlesotho.blogspot.com>.*

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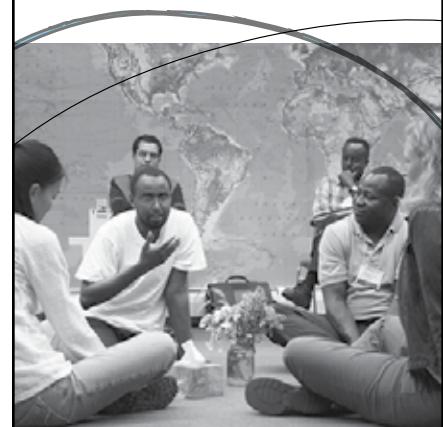
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## UNFAILING LIGHT, PART II

*An RPCV brings D.light to West Africa*

by Doug Ricket

December 19, 2009, 9:00pm, Sanche Ndaxar village, Senegal

**D**arkness hangs over the village like a heavy black felt curtain, occasionally yanked aside as people burst into my hut with a wad of money in their hands.

"I'll take two!" says the tall Wolof man in the long kaftan, and there's a flurry of activity for the next minute as we count dozens of ragged bills and pull out a couple of brand new D.light Kiran solar lamp boxes. This nocturnal bustle carries on for some time, with people coming and discussing, going home, coming back with money, and listening to us explain how you only need to put the lamp in the sunlight all day, and at night it will provide light for your house.

This frenzied session began earlier that day, when my wife, Jennifer, at her Wolof lesson, correctly understood our host-uncle's comment "*Seerut! Seerut!*" ("It's not expensive") and we decided to offer the lamps for sale.

My story here began in 2003 when I came to The Gambia as a Peace Corps Volunteer and left with the idea that business is vital to sustainable development. I taught high school and university classes here for two years, which gave me a concrete day job insulated from what I came to see as the dependency-breeding effects of foreign aid and charity running wild in The Gambia. When I left Peace Corps, my mind was spinning with the idea of starting a business, something that would create local jobs. A chance at success for those willing to pursue it.

I returned to my roots in Silicon Valley, working at Google for four years, but twice visiting the Gambia, unable to erase from the corner of my



The D.light / Gambia team on a road show.

mind that still throbbed with memories of my host family.

In December 2008, my wife Jennifer and I caught up with a close friend who had co-founded D.light, a company with the mission of bringing affordable light to the world's poor. Something clicked. Jennifer and I stayed up late that night, discussing the possibility of abandoning our easy California lifestyles and throwing our lot in with D.light in Africa. We decided that, worst case, we could survive on our savings for a couple of years, and come right back to where we had started. We were in.

After two weeks in the village last December, we came back to the capital, Banjul, and began cutting our way through the red tape of business

and residency registration. One early surprise was the \$1,500 fee for a work permit; the endless waiting in line and shuttling from bureaucratic office to office across the city in the dust and the heat was expected. Driving was a new experience—I didn't drive in the Peace Corps—and it came with plenty of lessons on how to deal with police; in the US, I'm most on the lookout for a speeding ticket—here, I've been stopped repeatedly for a dusty car, among other offences.

In March I drove to the port every day for a week to clear my first shipping container. I was satisfied with the result, but I did notice that my forms had an extra digit in the tax column compared to everyone else's—something to work on for next time.

Despite the occasional bumps, and although my focus is distribution, it's been a fantastic adventure being part of D.light's development process:

1. Understand: Go into the poorest parts of the world, sit down with the locals, observe and listen to their problems.
2. Design: Brainstorm solutions on the whiteboard using the most advanced technology.

3. Manufacture: Produce the highest-quality products for the lowest price.

4. Distribute: Get the products to the people who need them at a price they can afford.

I believe this cycle, which itself is inspired by Peace Corps' grassroots ethos, is a core strategic approach that will let D.light bring many useful products to millions worldwide. I also have faith that if I sell a product to a customer, and that customer comes back again or brings a friend to buy, it means we have found a win-win situation for progress and growth.

Another adventure has been co-managing the business with my wife. The best part is that I get to spend all day with the woman I love, rather than just seeing each other around the borders of a 9-to-5 workday. And of course the hardest part is that we spend all day together, so some limits have been set, e.g. no



**Alieu and Doug unloading D.light lamps.**

business meetings at 11:00 p.m. in the bedroom. We've each found our hobbies: my gardening, her cats. I wouldn't trade it for anything else.

Last month I accepted the invitation of a village shopkeeper, who had bought several lights, to introduce me to other merchants in the large town in his area. After giving our sales pitch at various market stalls, one merchant agreed to place the biggest order we had seen yet! But the real surprise came

at the next stall when that merchant started explaining and demonstrating the lights to a third potential customer as I sat silently. I felt a wave of awe wash over me at how people can look at these products and see their inherent goodness, bringing light to those who live in the dark; I felt hopeful, seeing other people take up the idea and promote it, from conversation to conversation, handshake to handshake, beyond what I could accomplish if limited to just myself; and I felt joy that I can be a part of this network, neither the first link nor the last in the chain, but part of something bigger.

"Why are you helping me like this?" I asked the village shopkeeper as we walked out.

He turned to me and replied, "I'm doing this to help my people."

*Doug Ricket (Gambia 03-05) is Managing Partner at Silicon Valley Technology Partners, a distributor for D.light in West Africa. "Unfailing Light," a profile of D.light founder and RPCV Sam Goldman, appeared In the September 2007 issue of WorldView and can be read at <http://peacecorpsconnect.org/unfailing-light>. To learn more, visit [www.dlightdesign.com](http://www.dlightdesign.com) or contact Doug at doug@svtechpartners.com.*



**The D.light table at a weekly market.**

## PIGS FOR PEACE

*With the help of pigs, Nancy Glass gives Congolese women economic security*

by Jennifer Walker

**H**ow can Nancy Glass, Ph.D., MPH, RN, help Congolese women recover from the violence, rape, and displacement from their homes and families that they have endured during their country's civil war? She wants to start by giving them hope, empowerment, economic security—and a pig.

Glass first began working with the Congolese as a young Peace Corps volunteer in a rural hospital in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (then Zaire) from 1990-1991. The experience inspired her career. "The reason I became a nurse is because I worked with nurses there," she says. "I realized all the things that nurses could do."

She read about the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing's Accelerated Baccalaureate program—a 13-month curriculum for students who already have bachelor's degrees—in *WorldView*. Glass returned to the U.S., enrolled and went on to receive master's degrees in both nursing and public health from Johns Hopkins and a doctorate in nursing from the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Her Peace Corps experience informs her work daily. As an Associate Professor in the Department of Community Health at the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing, Glass teaches a global health elective to undergraduate nursing students, many of whom are Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. She is also an Associate Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Global Health, an agency that addresses international health challenges like malnutrition and HIV/AIDS.

Glass' work in the U.S. has focused on victims of violence so it's no surprise that she feels a pull to help Congolese women. After spending two years talking to the country's rape victims, Glass and her colleagues learned that they just wanted



Mitima Remy

**Dr. Glass with a child survivor of the violence that spread throughout the Congo**

to rebuild their lives. "Everyone said that, over and over again... [But] they needed the economic resources to do that," Glass says. "Raped women in any society are isolated. But when they have wealth, the rape becomes less important. They're a productive member of the community."

To provide those economic resources, Glass started the microfinance program Pigs for Peace in 2008 with the nonprofit Great Lakes Restoration, an organization founded by local Congolese Matthias Cinyabuguma, Ph.D. "We work with women who are in their villages and want to stay in their villages," says Glass. "[And] in rural Africa, survival is agriculture and your animals."

Enter the pig. Pigs for Peace began by loaning four pigs to four Congolese families. The pigs breed twice a year and the piglets can be used for meat or sold for about \$40 at the market per animal—a good return for the average Congolese woman who makes \$89 a year. "They use the money to get their kids back in school and buy clothing," Glass explains. "One

woman built a house; another woman is going to start a business selling shoes in the market. They become very creative in how they use their pigs for the future."

Unlike traditional microfinance programs, Pigs for Peace does not require cash as repayment for a pig. Instead, the first four families gave two piglets back to the program, one from each of their first two litters. The piglets were loaned to other women in the village, who also repaid their loans with two piglets. This system has helped Pigs for Peace grow exponentially – to date, 110 families have received pigs.

Pigs for Peace also recently loaned five pigs to a nun who runs an orphanage for 30 Congolese children, many of whom are rape victims. The money she receives from the pigs will be used to pay the children's school fees and to buy food until they are reintegrated into their families. "It will also be an education for the kids," says Glass. "They'll have a skill and know about pigs and how to raise them."

But why did Glass choose pigs instead of other animals common to the Congolese culture, like cows and goats?

Glass explains that these animals are typically associated with wealth and, thus, controlled by men. “[But] women can be the proprietors of the pig,” she says. “They’ve been raising pigs for generations.” Pigs are also relatively easy to manage: they live on a small area of land, they eat everything, and women can take care of them with limited training.

But there is a downside: women have to wait several months before their pig has its first litter. “In that time, the woman has to be able to feed and manage the pig,” says Glass. “That’s not easy for families who are struggling.”

To provide additional support in the beginning, as well as throughout the process, each village has an association—

“kind of like a solidarity group,” Glass says. Women learn practicalities like how to build a pig pen and what to feed their pigs, but they also share advice with each other about raising and managing their animals.

Although the program has had a successful first year, Pigs for Peace still needs to grow tremendously to provide pigs for the 700 families on its waitlist, and for Glass to implement her plans to expand the program. (She wants to open a butchery where women can make and sell sausage in the region’s largest city.)

The good news is that it doesn’t take much money to purchase a pig: with a \$50 donation, Pigs for Peace can loan one pig to a family, and provide a pen, veterinary care, some food, and education about pig farming. “One pig in six months is going to be six piglets,” says Glass. “That \$50 has an impact.”

It will also help build a program that has a lasting effect. “People say ‘Oh, you’re not serving 10,000 people like other organizations’ and that’s true...but we’re building projects that are sustainable,” Glass says. “We’re trying to do it village by village and then we let the village take over.”

*To learn more about Pigs for Peace or to donate a pig, please visit [http://www.glrctp.org/projects\\_p4p.html](http://www.glrctp.org/projects_p4p.html).*

*Jennifer Walker has long been fascinated with healthcare thanks to the stories she heard from her mother, a urology operating room nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital. A native Baltimorean, her work has also appeared in Baltimore magazine and The Baltimore Sun, and she maintains a website at [www.jenniferwalker.com](http://www.jenniferwalker.com).*

## Giving Back

# THE PEACE CORPS COMMUNITY MAKING A DIFFERENCE

by JoAnna Haugen

## PROMOTING SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN ROMANIA

When her Peace Corps service came to an end, Leslie Hawke (Romania 00-02) stayed in the country and founded **The Alex Fund**, whose mission is “to promote self-sufficiency among marginalized people through education, job training and community empowerment.” One of the organization’s recent initiatives is Every Child in School, a 15-year plan to put every Romanian child on a path that can lead to high school graduation. It hopes to eradicate illiteracy and primary school abandonment by providing at-risk children with skill sets that will help them succeed and complete school, which will then lead to increased career opportunities and improved living conditions.

<http://www.alexfund.org/>

## BETTER HEALTH AND PRESERVED RESOURCES IN TANZANIA

To address the high rates of deforestation and respiratory diseases that are caused by using wood as a source of fuel in Tanzania, **Solar Circle** is distributing low-cost solar ovens in the country. Villagers in Tanzania are not just given solar ovens; rather, they have donated their time by digging latrines, building homes and providing care for those who are HIV-positive in exchange for the ovens. Board member Judy Martin (Tanzania) helped introduce solar cooking in the Masasi District in 2001. Approximately 1,100 solar ovens have been distributed since the program began.

<http://solar-circle.org/>

## WORKING AT THE NEXUS OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND ENTERPRISE IN KENYA

TARA works with impoverished communities to help improve the quality of life through the exchange of ideas and resources. The organization’s flagship community, a town called Kojwach, is where director of project development Alyssa Lowe (Kenya 04-06) served in the Peace Corps. Creation of a community center is at the core of TARA’s focus. By creating a dynamic, safe space in the community, local people have a tangible representation of community ownership around which economic-, health- and education-based projects can be created. One of TARA’s first major initiatives was a girls’ education project that provided resources and skills training for girls on how to manufacture, market and distribute sanitary napkins from locally available resources.

<http://www.taraproject.org/>

# RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY

by JoAnna Haugen

## BENIN

**Monique Schmidt** accepted a position as the director of the Akilah Institute for Women in Rwanda last November, and the school has been open since February 2010. The school is free of charge for young women who are accepted into the program. The school was founded to give Rwandan women orphaned by the genocide a chance to receive an education and learn skills needed in Rwanda's growing tourism industry. It offers a two-year-degree program that teaches English, hospitality skills, leadership and empowerment. As director, Schmidt essentially built the school from nothing; even so, the Akilah Institute for Women is already proving to be a success.

Prior to this position, Schmidt was an adjunct professor at Topkins Cortland Community College. She is the author of *Last Moon Dancing*, which was published in 2005.

## CAMEROON

Three years ago **Brian and Diane Murphy** (88-90) posed a challenge to a group of boys involved in a local Cub Scouts troop. In order to expand their horizons, they asked the boys if they'd be willing to raise money to assist kids in other parts of the world. Since then, the boys in Webelos2 (the group the Murphys created) have raised \$750 for Ryan's Well project, an organization dedicated to funding a clean water drinking well in Malawi; \$350 for the KIVA Loans Program; and \$550 for the Nothing but Nets organization.

**Thomas S. Lewis** (87-89) was recently appointed as Johns Hopkins University's vice president for government and community affairs. He will also be the vice president of Johns Hopkins Medicine. Prior to this appointment, Lewis served as director of state affairs of the university and was a part of

Maryland's state government for more than 17 years. Lewis earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland, College Park; his law degree from the University of Maryland, Baltimore; and his master's degree from the American Graduate School of International Management.

Cameroon RPCVs are continuing to make a difference—this time in Iraq. While at a Provincial Reconstruction Team leaders conference in Baghdad earlier this year, several RPCVs had the chance to meet and catch up, presumably discussing where it was possible to find fufu in Iraq.



Pictured (l-r) are: Andy Snow (75-78), Patrick Murphy (85-88), U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Christopher R. Hill (74-77), John Underiner (82-84), Ron Verdonk (80-83). Not pictured but also in Iraq: Charlie Russell (81-84) and Jim Dobson (PC Country Director)

## CONGO

**Steve Smith** (84-86), an expert in renewable energy and conflict resolution, was instrumental in guiding the United Nations, USAID and many other non-governmental organizations in dealing with the genocide in Rwanda, which began in 1994 and has had residual affects in the region. He originally led a team of former Peace Corps volunteers and conflict resolution specialists to assist on the ground in Rwanda. Today Smith has turned his expertise to Sudan, where he is currently on assignment as the early

recovery adviser for Darfur with the U.N. Development Program's Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery.

## COTE D'IVOIRE

Fourteen years ago, **Jan Schilling** (62-64) decided to dedicate her savings to a scholarship program that awards \$5,000 a year, renewable for four years, to a low-income, black, female student at Kennedy High in El Cerrito, California. Her ongoing gift has allowed many young women to attend college at universities around the country where they have pursued a variety of careers. Schilling is currently the executive director at Weigh of Life, a nonprofit that helps families improve their lives through better eating habits, regular physical activity and social support.

## EASTERN CARIBBEAN

**Amy Dreves** (84-87) is a research and extension entomologist at Oregon State University, where she is an integrated pest management specialist working with many crops including hops, grapes, berries, stone fruits, grasses grown for seed and vegetables. Her interest in entomology has taken her to Mali, Nepal, Alaska, South America and Morocco with government agencies and private companies. Dreves has master's and doctorate degrees from Oregon State University.

## ETHIOPIA

Rep. **John Garamendi** (66-68) recently became a member of the U.S. Congress when former representative Ellen Tauscher became an Undersecretary of State. Prior to this position, Garamendi was a state legislator in California for 16 years. He also served two terms as California's Insurance Commissioner, one term as California's Lieutenant Governor and three years in the U.S. Department of the Interior under President Clinton.

## GAMBIA

**Robert Leoni** (02-03) is an investment advisor at OnPath LLC, where he focuses on socially responsible investing as it relates to issues such as the environment, human rights, weapons production, gambling and corporate responsibility. Leoni has worked in the financial field for five years. After his Peace Corps service he held a leadership role with Church World Service / CROP Walk.

## GHANA

Nearly 50 years ago **Ford Tucker Johnson, Jr.** was the successful plaintiff in two cases before the Supreme Court: An appeal of a 1960 conviction for trespassing at a lunch counter and a 1962 contempt conviction in a traffic court. Both cases helped lead to the desegregation of courtrooms and other public facilities. Upon return from his Peace Corps service, Johnson went to Harvard Law School. He is currently the president of the Koba Institute, which provides services for children with emotional and behavioral problems in Silver Spring, Maryland.

## HAITI

**Paula Egan-Wright** (85-87) recently returned from Haiti, where she spent 10 days translating for doctors, dentists and patients at a clinic in Port-au-Prince. Since returning to the United States, Egan-Wright has undertaken a number of initiatives to help raise money and collect supplies for the country. She and her students are participating in a walk for water in conjunction with World Water Day; the funds they raise will go toward a well for Maissade, Haiti. Egan-Wright is also helping an orphanage in Les Cayes by developing a secure website for the organization, working on securing scholarships at a local community college for three young men from Haiti whose schools were destroyed by the earthquake and creating medical kits, which will accompany a physician's assistant on a future trip to the country. She is also designing a calendar made of her sketches that she plans to sell to raise money.

## JAMAICA

Now nearing retirement, **David Adams** (66-68) is looking forward to spending more time and energy on fish pond

projects. Over the past eight years, Adams has helped finance almost 20 ponds around the world. In order to finance more ponds, he is loaning money for community growth through Kiva.

## KOREA

After serving as MetLife Korea's CEO for nearly a decade, **Stu Solomon** (71-73), now MetLife Korea's chairman, will be able to devote more time to his role as chairman of the MetLife Korea Foundation. Solomon has served as chairman of the Foundation since its inception in 2005. In this position, Solomon has the opportunity to lead many projects that help underprivileged members of society. He has a particular interest in supporting projects for children with disabilities. In addition to providing financial support, the Foundation evaluates its recipient organizations, holds workshops for social workers and offers expert feedback through advising professors. More recently, it has been focusing on the elderly and the many issues facing this growing segment of Korean society. Solomon received his degree from Syracuse University.



Stuart Solomon

## LESOTHO

**Catherine Zandonella** (90-92) recently wrote *Green Guide Families: The Complete Reference for Eco-Friendly Parents*, which serves as a go-to reference for parents who want to make eco-friendly and healthy choices for



Catherine Zandonella

their families. Zandonella is a science journalist and has published numerous articles in New Scientist, Nature and other publications. She has also been the science editor of National Geographic Green Guide since 2002 and is a member of the National Association of Science Writers, the Society of Environmental Journalists and the Author's Guild. Zandonella received her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and her master's degree from the University of California, Berkeley.

## LIBERIA

As a Peace Corps volunteer, **Bill Holland** relied upon his copy of *The James Beard Cookbook*. More than 40 years later, he is revisiting his love for cookbooks with the launch of an online cookbook store called Cookbook Bazaar. Holland worked as a journalist for Billboard Magazine until it folded its Washington, D.C., office in 2005. Today he spends his time hunting for cookbooks at thrift stores and estate sales two or three times a week.

## MALI

**Mai-Lan Tomsen Bukovec** (94-95) is currently the product unit manager for Internet information services at Microsoft, where she runs a team of 50 engineers who work across test, development and program management. She earned her degree from the University of California at San Diego.

## MOROCCO

The Wikimedia Foundation recently hired **Danese Cooper** (81-82) as its chief technical officer. In her new position, Cooper will oversee the foundation's technical strategy and tech team, which includes Wikipedia. She is the only female CTO in the top 10 websites, a member of the Apache Software Foundation and serves on the board of the Open Source Initiative. Prior to joining Wikimedia Foundation, Cooper worked at Intel, Sun Microsystems and REvolution.

## NEPAL

**Doug Biggs** is the executive director of Alameda Point Collaborative, a homeless services center in the Bay Area that has 200 housing units for 500 residents. Biggs previously worked for CARE International, San Francisco Conservation Corps (where he taught job skills to inner-city youth) and Sojourn to the Past, a nonprofit that takes children to sites from the civil rights movement. In addition to his work with Alameda Point Collaborative, Biggs also serves on the city's Social Services Human Relations Board.

## NICARAGUA

Four days after the earthquake in Haiti, **Myk Manon** (70-73) and two other power specialists from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association were in the country to help restore electricity. All four power plants serving Port-au-Prince were offline and power lines were strewn everywhere, but Manon and his colleagues had the first of the four plants running within 10 days of the earthquake. Two of the four plants are now back online and service has since been restored to 25 percent of the country's customers, including to critical areas such as the University Hospital.

The School Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS) has selected **Ruth G. King**, the principal of the Homer Elementary School, as the 2010 New York State Elementary School Principal of the Year. She has been an elementary-level administrator for 20 years, 18 of which have been in her current position. King is an active member of SAANYS and the National Association of Elementary School Principals. She is also a member of Phi

Delta Kappa and Seven Valleys Reading Council. King received her bachelor's degree from Kean University and a master's degree and certificate of advanced study from SUNY Cortland.

## NIGER

**Kim Arth** (99-01) is the director of Arizona State University's Deer Valley Rock Art Center, which has more than 1,500 Native American petroglyphs made between 800 and 5,000 years ago. It was the first public education and curation facility established by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Arth has her master's degree in anthropology with an emphasis in museum education.

**William V. Timmons'** (65-67) book *Becker's Farm* has been picked up for a movie and is currently in pre-production. The book is about a German POW on a Nebraska farm. After his Peace Corps service, Timmons became a special adviser to the president of Niger and then spent 10 years as an educational missionary in the Philippines. He most recently worked as an adjunct art professor at California Baptist University.

**Shannon Honeybloom**, a blogger and actress, recently authored a book called *Making a Family Home*. The book is a guide for families on how to create a consciousness-rich existence focused on basic things like being together, paying attention and staying attuned to the needs of loved ones. In the book, Honeybloom also shares her story on how her family was introduced to slow living. The book grew out of her master's thesis in early childhood education from Sunbridge College in Chestnut Ridge, NY. She also has a bachelor's degree from the University of Florida and a master's degree from New York University.

## PARAGUAY

**Julie Connor** (91-93) is the program director for Groundwork Denver, a nonprofit organization that provides sustained improvement of the physical environment and promotes health and well-being through community-based partnerships and action. It is currently focused on green jobs for youth, lead-based paint poisoning prevention and greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

Conner trains volunteers to go door-to-door, educating residents on the things they can do to retrofit their older homes for energy conservation.

## SAMOA

**John C. Dean** (69-71) is Central Pacific Bank's newly appointed executive chairman of the board. He has spent 29 years as a financial services industry executive and is currently managing partner of Startup Capital Ventures. Forbes called Dean one of the 50 most powerful dealmakers and Business Week called him one of Silicon Valley's top 25 movers and shakers. He is co-founder and chair emeritus of the Entrepreneur's Foundation of Hawaii, and he endows a faculty position at the University of Hawaii's Shidler College of Business.

## SIERRA LEONE; WASHINGTON, DC

**Billie Ann Day** (Sierra Leone 61-63, 64-66, Washington, D.C. 66-68) is being inducted into the Southwestern College Leaders in Service Hall of Fame for the social sciences. She taught with the Urban Teacher Corps and inaugurated the global perspectives course at Banneker High School. Day also served as an international election observer in Bosnia and Sierra Leone and volunteered with as a Crisis Corps Volunteer in Mississippi after Hurricane Katrina. She has been president of social studies associations, Peace Corps alumni groups and the World Hunger Education Service; Day is currently the president of the District of Columbia League of Women Voters. Day has also served on the boards of the National Council for the Social Studies and the National Peace Corps Association. She has earned the Daniel Roselle Lecture Award and Fulbright Scholarships to the Netherlands and Brazil.

## SIERRA LEONE

**Allen Mondell** (63-65) for the last 40 years has been a documentary filmmaker working in both commercial and public television although for the past 30 years, with his wife Cynthia, they have worked as independent filmmakers producing and distributing documentary and educational films ([www.mediaprojects.org](http://www.mediaprojects.org)). He is now working on a documentary about



**Allen Mondell**

the Peace Corps experience, telling the story of PCVs through letters, diaries and journals written while overseas. His goal is to complete the film during the celebration of our 50th anniversary. To contribute photographs, drawings, and any footage shot on both film and videotape, you can contact him at allen@mediaprojects.org.

## **SURINAME**

**Jeff Follett** (02-04) has been working as the South America program officer for Trees for the Future since 2008. The organization teams up with Peace Corps volunteers to provide resources for reforestation and agroforestry projects; Brazil is currently the cornerstone of the South America program. Follett received his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota and graduate degrees from American University and the University for Peace.

## **SWAZILAND**

**Steve Kallaugher** helped organize and will be driving the support vehicle for a 200-mile bike trek fundraiser across Swaziland. The fundraiser is for Young Heroes Foundation, an organization Kallaugher founded four years ago to help children orphaned by the AIDS epidemic in Swaziland. He hopes the trip, which will take place from May 3-May 10, will raise \$10,000 in sponsorships.

## **THAILAND**

**Bekah Douglass** recently returned from her Peace Corps service, where she worked

as an English teacher. The experience was so meaningful to her she plans to return to Thailand and continue teaching English for up to four more years. She is also working on creating a nonprofit organization, which would help Thai students afford a college education.

## **TOGO**

The National Association of Women Business Owners of Cleveland recently selected **Victoria Tifft** (08-10) as a Top Ten Woman Business Owner of Northeast Ohio for 2010. Tifft is president and CEO of Clinical Research Management, which is a full-service contract research organization that supports the development of FDA-regulated vaccines, pharmaceuticals and medical devices for both government and commercial customers.

## **TONGA**

University of Washington is honoring epidemiology professor **Laura Koutsky** (76-77) with the 2010 Grace Hopper Award for Outstanding Achievement by the Seattle Girls' School. Koutsky is credited with developing the world's first human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine along with Dr. Kathrin Jansen.

## **UGANDA**

**Kathryn Quinones** (66-68), who splits her time between Brookings, South Dakota, and New York City, is currently in the production of *And Then There Were None* at the Brookings Community Theatre. She earned her bachelor's degree from South Dakota State University and a master's degree from the University of South Dakota.

## **UKRAINE**

**Heather Sarkissian** (99-00) is the CEO of mp3Car.com, a mobile computing technology company. She also co-organizes Ignite Baltimore, which lets a variety of speakers share their creative passions, and is the founder of BmoreSmart, which brings together Baltimore social entrepreneurs to discuss potential growth in the city and collaborative program ideas.

## **UZBEKISTAN**

**Bob Lee** and **Ann Walker** (04-05) met in the Peace Corps and have been involved in

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volunteer work ever since. They work with the American Red Cross, where they've done a variety of jobs including working in shelters and conducting disaster assessments. They also teach disaster classes, and every ten weeks they are on call as part of the local Red Cross Disaster Action Team, which assists people after fires. Lee and Walker have also spent time volunteering in Tanzania and Cameroon. Lee is a volunteer at Carriage Town Ministries and for the Genesee County Literacy Council as well. He is currently preparing for a seven-week volunteer trip to Haiti.

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