

THE MAGAZINE OF THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

WORLDVIEW

\$4.99

Winter 2011-12

worldviewmagazine.com Vol. 24, No. 4



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WorldView (ISSN 1047-5338) is published quarterly by the National Peace Corps Association to provide news and comment about communities and issues of the world of serving and returned Peace Corps volunteers. WorldView © 1978 National Peace Corps Association.

Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C. & additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER

Please send address changes to
WorldView magazine
National Peace Corps Association
1900 L Street NW, Suite 404
Washington, DC 20036-5002

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Questions regarding advertising should be sent to
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Magazine subscriptions may be purchased from the National Peace Corps Association by check or credit card. Prices for individuals are \$25 and institutions \$35 [add \$10 for overseas delivery]. Order forms are also available on the NPCA website at www.peacecorpsconnect.org or www.worldviewmagazine.com.

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Letters to the editor are welcomed. Unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, or other illustrations will be considered. The editors prefer written proposals before receiving original material. Send queries or manuscripts to the editor at news@peacecorpsconnect.org or by mail to the NPCA address.

All inquiries can be addressed to the appropriate person at NPCA by fax at 202 293 7554 or by mail to NPCA, or through the NPCA website at www.peacecorpsconnect.org or www.worldviewmagazine.com

Winter 2011-12

Volume 24 Number 4

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PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

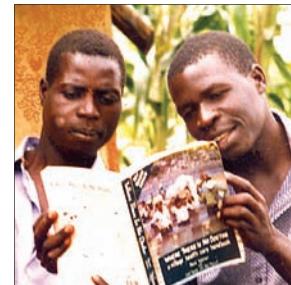
Technology Innovation

Bridging the Digital Divide Where There Is No Doctor:

A beloved Peace Corps resource increases its reach

by Zena Herman

30



TEDxUlaanbaatar:

Ideas worth sharing in Mongolia... and beyond

by Travis Hellstrom

32

African Tech Talk:

A roving Gathering sparks ideas, connections

by Molly Mattessich

34

DEPARTMENTS

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The 50th Anniversary Is Over:

What's next?

by Kevin F. F. Quigley

6



50th ANNIVERSARY

Peace Corps Advocates Blanket Capitol Hill:

50 years to the day, hundreds tell legislators why Peace Corps still matters

by Susan Stine

8



A Day of Service:

Returned Volunteers give back for the 50th Anniversary

by Khalisa Jacobs

10

Difficult Decision:

Peace Corps community selects Global Community Project Fund winner

by Erica Burman

11

COVER

Thousands of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers stream over Memorial Bridge towards the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. on September 25, 2011. Photo credit: David Lena – National Peace Corps Association. To see and purchase photos from the September 50th Anniversary events, visit www.peacecorpsconnect.org/merchandise.

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WORLDVIEW

PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

Departments

50th ANNIVERSARY

Captivating Conversations:

Global leaders reflect on the Peace Corps' impact, legacy
by Erica Burman

Celebrating in Style:

NPCA gala marks Peace Corps 50th anniversary milestone
by Erica Burman

Peace Corps Community Reunites for the 50th:

Hundreds of group events take place over five days
by Emily Bello

A Peace Corps Writer Reflects:

Library of Congress honors Peace Corps Writers
by Sarah Erdman

The Spark Burns as Brightly as Ever:

Thousands of Returned Volunteers gather to reflect on 50 years,
look ahead

by Chris Austin and Kristina J. Owens

COMMENTARY & OPINION

Henry Reuss:

Another founding father of the Peace Corps
by Tony Carroll

Making It Work:

Panama RPCVs set out to reforest denuded lands,
create economic opportunity
by Andrew Parrucci

BOOK LOCKER

Day One: The Dawn of (Im)Possibility:

An excerpt from Cold Snap: Bulgaria Stories
by Cynthia Morrison Phoebe

PROFILES IN SERVICE

Kinyarwanda: Love Life Life Hate:

Peace Corps filmmakers bring story of hope and forgiveness
to the screen

by Lori M. Piskur

COMMUNITY NEWS

Edited by JoAnna Haugen

ADVERTISER INDEX

12



13

16

20



24

36

38



40

42

43

45

NPCA

NPCA

NPCA

THE PUBLISHER

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

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THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY IS OVER

What's next?

by Kevin F. F. Quigley

The Peace Corps community just completed its most remarkable anniversary celebration ever.

Thank you to everyone who participated, making the anniversary year the resounding success that it was.

For each of the prior major anniversaries, occurring every five years, the celebration was highly-centralized with a conference-type event generally organized in Washington, D.C. For the 50th anniversary, we decided on a very different, highly-decentralized model that would rely on individuals to design programs reflecting their interests and utilizing new social media so that everyone, everywhere who wanted to participate in some way could do so. This approach resulted in more than 1.3 million individuals participating in close to 2,000 events in more than 80 countries and all 50 states.

These anniversary events included reunions, country updates, service projects, and our community's largest advocacy day ever with nearly 400 meetings on Capitol Hill discussing why the Peace Corps still matters. Among many memorable events, there was an energetic staff reunion with all the living directors of the Peace Corps organized by Ken Hill and Jody Olsen; an uplifting lunch for Peace Corps writers held in the Member's Room of the Library of Congress organized by Congressman John and Patti Garamendi; a stimulating discussion on Peace Corps and "smart power" in the Capitol Hill Visitor's Center organized by Congressman Sam Farr; a panel discussion with the first Peace Corps staff moderated by Director Mark Gearan at the Mayflower Hotel where the blueprint for the Peace Corps was created; an inspiring discussion with former President Alejandro Toledo of Peru, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar of Nigeria, and former Finance Minister Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan talking about their direct experiences with Peace Corps Volunteers

and how the Peace Corps might help build needed global civil society moderated by renowned journalist Bill Moyers; a stellar Gala with Chris Matthews as the Master of Ceremony; a rollicking dance party organized by the Peace Corps Fund; a poignant commemorative event at Arlington Cemetery followed by a colorful parade of the 139 Peace Corps country flags organized by Kristina Owens and many other volunteers from RPCV/Washington.

These amazing anniversary events and activities also included a YouTube contest, the largest ever independent survey of RPCVs, poetry jams, film festivals, numerous books, happy hours for each of the first 13 Peace Corps countries, an exhibit in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and my personal favorite—the more than 700 house parties that ranged from a small group lifting a glass to the Peace Corps' birthday to a catered lunch for 90, to events in Baghdad, Kabul, Ouagadougou, and Ulan Bator, among many exotic locales. These myriad events and activities reminded me of the quintessential fact about our community: *we love to get together to share our Peace Corps stories.*

Now that the 50th anniversary year is over, the NPCA has begun a series of strategic discussions to consider how best to maintain the momentum from this remarkable year in ways that help advance the Peace Corps' timeless mission of working towards a more prosperous world at peace. We also want to build on the hard work done by many groups, like the Friends of Cameroon and Columbia, to identify those who served in their countries and to work to strengthen the network of individuals, groups, and organizations who support the Peace Corps and cherish its values.

To help us with our planning, we recently completed an NPCA staff retreat, which was followed by an NPCA board retreat. While our plans are still developing, we recognize the urgent need to continue

to find ways to generate opportunities for the community to come together, face to face, as well as virtually. These connections can be around a variety of common interests, supporting the values of the Peace Corps, networking for professional and personal reasons, and working together on community projects, among other reasons.

We also plan to build on our most successful advocacy day ever. The cumulative effect of those nearly 400 meetings helped move passage of the Kate Puzey bill, added nearly 30 co-sponsors to the Peace Corps commemorative bills and spurred hearings in both the House and Senate, and solidified support for Peace Corps' funding in this most challenging budget environment. Advocacy for our values and in support of Peace Corps service is one critical area where we must continue. We also want to expand chances for networking, developing stronger mechanisms to support community projects and creating more international service opportunities.

In the weeks and months you'll be hearing a lot more about our plans. Please feel free to share your ideas about how best we can build on this magical 50th anniversary year at kevin@peacecorpsconnect.org.

Although the 50th anniversary year is over, this golden year emphatically demonstrated that our community wants to continue to connect with each other and extend our experiences in a variety of ways that improve communities at home and abroad. It also dramatically demonstrated that the values of Peace Corps service and understanding are not simply of the past but are enduring.

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

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PEACE CORPS ADVOCATES BLANKET CAPITOL HILL

50 years to the day, hundreds tell legislators why Peace Corps still matters

by Susan Stine

Some would say working 13 hours straight is crazy, but as every Peace Corps Volunteer knows it can also be a lot of fun!

As an intern for the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) I joined over 500 Peace Corps advocates who flooded Capitol Hill on September 22, fifty years to the day of final passage and signing of the Peace Corps Act, to encourage congressional support for the agency. My fellow volunteers and I started our day

on the Hill at 7 a.m. frantically preparing for the arrival of pumped-up advocates. Registration ran smoothly although throughout the day there were many last-minute sign ups by individuals who decided to get in on the action. At 8 a.m. there was a kick-off morning pep rally with speeches by Congressmen Sam Farr (CA-17) and John Garamendi (CA-10), and NPCA President Kevin Quigley—all Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs). The speeches generated

excitement in the crowd and soon everyone was on their feet marching out the door behind Congressmen Farr and Garamendi towards the Capitol Building.

Once at the Capitol, advocates separated into their groups and headed off to meetings with their representatives. Jonathan Pearson, Advocacy Coordinator, and I, however, headed to a room in the Hart Senate Office Building which became the NPCA's base of operations during



The Florida delegation.



RPCVs connect at orientation.



Sen. Barbara Boxer meets constituents.



Advocacy orientation on Wednesday night.



Orientation Panel.



(R to L) Rep. Sam Farr, NPCA President Kevin Garamendi and Patti Garamendi, and NPCA Vice



NPCA Advocacy command center.



Comparing notes before appointments.

the marathon day of advocating. While advocates dropped in between appointments, Jonathan focused on managing the over 300 scheduled meetings with representatives and their staffers and kept a tab on the numerous impromptu meetings created by determined advocates. Although I spent most of my time in Hart, other volunteers were able to help out while I met my House Representative, Robert Andrews (NJ-1), and sat in on a meeting with Senate Majority Leader, Harry Reid.

As the day continued advocates stopped by Hart to take a break and many told stories of their time in the Peace Corps. RPCVs seemed to enjoy topping each other's tales of adventure. I heard stories about everything from helping deliver a baby to dodging armed militias!

When evening arrived advocates made their way to the Kennedy Caucus Room in the Russell Senate Office Building for a reception with representatives and their staffers. Senator Johnny Isakson (R-GA), and Congressmen Sam Farr (CA-17), Mike Honda (CA-15), Dennis Kucinich (OH-10), and Congresswoman Nita Lowey (NY-18) all stopped by to thank Peace Corps Volunteers for their service to the United States.

As the day wound down, several advocates told me how Advocacy Day made them feel like they were back in the Peace Corps, making a difference. Advocates definitely did make an impact on the Hill: since September 22, 47 lawmakers have co-sponsored Peace Corps related legislation, including 15 lawmakers who had never co-sponsored previous Peace Corps legislation.

Furthermore, both the Senate and House have passed the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, which the President signed into law on November 21.

Advocates also showed that the long day did not hinder the fun they had on the Hill. In evaluations about NPCA advocates were asked what they would tell others about NPCA's advocacy efforts, the number one response from advocates was "Join!"

Susan Stine is a senior at American University majoring in International Studies with minors in Education and Spanish. Previously, Susan has interned with Partners of the Americas, El Centro de Estudios de Justicia de las Américas (in Chile), and the District of Columbia Public Schools. She hopes to join the Peace Corps after her graduation.



Rep. Kucinich speaks with an RPCV.

Sen. Jay Rockefeller.

Advocacy Team Leader Jayne Booker.

Rep. Farr greets an RPCV.



Quigley, Sen. Harris Wofford, Rep. John, President Anne Baker begin the march to the Capitol.



Sen. Kent Conrad of North Dakota (seated).



U.S. Territories and D.C.



Sen. Isakson (third from right) meets with the NPCA delegation.

A DAY OF SERVICE

Returned Volunteers give back for the 50th anniversary

by Khalisa Jacobs

The 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps was about more than celebrating the accomplishments of the past. It was also about keeping the values of service and understanding front and center.

To help do this, Friday, September 23 was set aside as a Day of Service. That day, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) streamed into the National Peace Corps Association offices to pick up their t-shirt and a coupon for a scoop of ice cream courtesy of Ben and Jerry's before heading to their sites. In fact, there was such overwhelming interest

Linda Goetzinger



India Group 28 (1966-78) pitches in at Food and Friends during the National Peace Corps Association's Day of Service.

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DIFFICULT DECISION

Peace Corps community selects Global Community Project Fund winner

by Erica Burman

The National Peace Corps Association created the Global Community Project Fund to support innovative and scalable projects addressing today's pressing challenges, led by members of the Peace Corps community. As part of the Conversations: The Future of Peace Corps event on Saturday, September 24, several hundred Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) listened to 15-minute multimedia presentations by the two RPCV project finalists: Andrew Dykens (Mauritania 94-97) for the PeaceCare / Kedougou, Senegal partnership and Thomas Robertson (Nepal 92-96) for Friends of Nepal and Janasewa Samaj Nepal's Jana Sewa Community Hospital and Smokeless Stove/Kitchen Garden Project.

And that's when things got really interesting. Following the presentations, the audience was asked to choose the winning project proposal, the one which best incorporated the principles



Andrew Dyken and Thomas Robertson.

“Imagine the thrill it was for me to present our organization’s work to a room full of Peace Corps leaders and advocates that just ‘get’ the importance of this approach—community participatory work aimed at highly technical solutions for health systems strengthening. The reception that my presentation received was moving, and the repeated congratulations and words of support directed at our work that I received throughout the weekend were absolutely encouraging. I can’t offer enough appreciation for the support that Returned Peace Corps Volunteers have shown and continue to offer to our organization.”

of the Peace Corps. The prize: a \$25,000 grant.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the audience refused to choose a winner, declaring that both projects were worthy of support. Then, in true Peace Corps fashion, the hat was passed and within the space of 15 minutes over \$10,000 in cash and pledges was raised.

“Global Health is what I intend to



RPCVs queue in front of the National Theater.

David Lena – NPCA



RPCVs reconnect while waiting to go in.

David Lena – NPCA

CAPTIVATING CONVERSATIONS

Global leaders reflect on Peace Corps' impact, legacy

by Erica Burman

Conversations: The Future of Peace Corps was the featured 50th anniversary event for Saturday afternoon, September 24, 2011. Bill Moyers, esteemed journalist and member of the Peace Corps' founding team, took to the stage of the National Theater to moderate a panel of global leaders who, over the years, have frequently and publicly acknowledged their personal indebtedness to Peace Corps Volunteers for their own education and careers.

Alejandro Toledo, president of his native Peru for 5 years, told of how Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) took him under their wing, supported him through high school and helped him get to the University of San Francisco where he earned his bachelor's degree. He went on to earn a doctorate at Stanford University. The second thing he did upon becoming president of Peru? Calling the president of the United States and asking for Peace Corps to return.

Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, UN adviser, former finance minister and 2009 presidential candidate in Afghanistan told of how he learned English from

Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai.



All photos David Lena - NPCA

PCVs, who taught him between 1963 and 1966. At the time, Peace Corps provided a strong contrast in Afghanistan to the image of the U.S. in Vietnam. For Volunteers "to delay graduate school and getting jobs, and to live in difficult circumstances is an act of greatness," said Ahmadzai.

Atiku Abubakar, former vice



Atiku Abubakar.

president of Nigeria, joined the conversation via satellite hook-up. He spoke warmly of the impression his Peace Corps teachers in Yola, Nigeria made on him. "The Peace Corps is committed to avoiding a clash of cultures and that is what the world needs. There should be no fortress for Islam, no fortress for Buddhism; we need people to connect, to live and work in a network."

The conversation was wide-ranging and thought-provoking. NPCA filmed this and many 50th anniversary events of the week and we hope to be able to provide a transcript and video selections in the near future.



Alejandro Toledo makes a point.



Moderator Bill Moyers.

CELEBRATING IN STYLE

NPCA gala marks Peace Corps 50th anniversary milestone

by Erica Burman

Embroidered vests and cummerbunds. Beads. Exotic hats. Rich fabrics. There was even a gentleman in a kilt.

The Peace Corps community turned out in high style for National Peace Corps Association's The Promise of the

Peace Corps Gala on the evening of September 24, 2011. Over 800 people streamed into the dramatically lit atrium of the Ronald Reagan Building to celebrate 50 years of the Peace Corps. Chris Matthews (Swaziland 68-70) did a rousing job of welcoming

the assembled guests and hosting the program, sprinkling in anecdotes from his own Peace Corps service. NPCA President Kevin Quigley recapped highlights of the anniversary year, and screened the winning video in the My Piece of the Peace Corps contest.



The Promise of the Peace Corps Gala in the Atrium of the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C.





Master of Ceremonies Chris Matthews.

All photos David Lehman - NPCA



Timothy Shriver.



Former Acting Peace Corps Director Jodi Olsen, Chief of Staff Stacy Rhodes, Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams and David Weiss.



Patti Garmendi, Rep. John Garamendi, Fred O'Regan and guests.



Sam Goldman accepts the Shriver Award.



Adamu Abubakar accepts the Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award on behalf of his father, The Hon. Atiku Abubakar, while his father's Peace Corps teacher, Steve Clapp, looks on.

Special Olympics CEO Timothy Shriver presented the Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service to this year's winner, Sam Goldman (Benin 01-05), and later in the evening Sen. Harris Wofford presented a new award—the Harris

Wofford Global Citizen Award—to Atiku Abubakar, the former Vice President of Nigeria, business leader and university founder. Also recognized were Becky Straw, winner of \$5,000 NPCA / Seven Fund essay contest prize, and Returned Peace Corps

Volunteers (RPCVs) Andrew Dykens and Tom Robinson, who shared the Global Community Project prize.

During dinner the tables buzzed with conversation, but all quieted when singer-songwriter Crystal Bowersox took to the stage for a five-song set.



Crystal Bowersox, center, flanked by her husband and guests.



Crystal Bowersox.



Accepting the Global Community Project Competition prize.

Clearly the soulful singer-songwriter had done her homework for this Peace Corps crowd, opening with “Stop, Hey, What’s that Sound,” tearing through a rocking rendition of “Me and Bobby McGee” and closing with her own song, “Home is a Place” set to a

montage of Peace Corps images. Some in the audience might not have been familiar with the young performer’s career, but by the end of her five-song set, she won over many new fans.

The Gala was a fun and festive highpoint to the 50th anniversary year.

So “happening” in fact, that it even warranted a photo spread in the Sunday Washington Post Style section!

Photos from The Gala are available for viewing and purchase! Visit www.peacecorpsconnect.org/merchandise

PEACE COMMUNITY REUNITES FOR THE 50TH

Hundreds of group events take place over five days

by Emily Bello

While the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) organized some of the largest events of the 50th Anniversary weekend in Washington, D.C., a myriad of NPCA member groups and

others took the reins and brought their groups together for Peace Corps-related events of every description. Embassy receptions, backyard brunches, dance parties, film screenings, briefings, exhibits, casual happy hour meet-ups,

and more. By our reckoning, over 250 events took place during this crowdsourced celebration. Because NPCA couldn't be everywhere at once, we asked people to tell us about their group events. Here is just a sample:



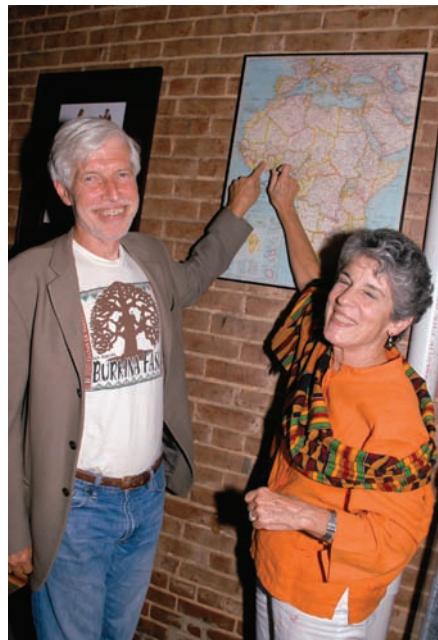
Friends of Liberia.



Friends of Afghanistan.



With former Peruvian president, Alejandro Toledo.



Friends of Burkina Faso.



At the Sierra Leone Embassy.



Philippines reunion.



Greeting at the Afghanistan Embassy.

Approximately 100 of the 5,000 volunteers who have served in Guatemala reunited in Washington D.C. to celebrate Peace Corps' 50th Anniversary and 48 years of Peace Corps work with the people of Guatemala. Guatemala-specific events included a reception with the Guatemalan ambassador and a day of service in coordination with Bikes for the World collecting and processing bicycles to be sent to Guatemala. The reception was held at the Woodley Park residence of the newly appointed Guatemalan Ambassador to the U.S., His Excellency Julio Martini and Mrs. Rosa Martini. We were fortunate to have several other special guests including former Ambassador Francisco Villagran; Carol Bellamy, Guatemala Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) and the first RPCV to become Peace Corps Director, and Dr. Timothy Shriver, CEO of the Special Olympics and son of Peace Corps founding Director Sargent Shriver.

—Margaret Rice, Guatemala 83-87

Over 35 Nepal II RPCVs gathered for the weekend at the Holiday Inn / Rosslyn for a reunion. The highlight of Friday morning was a visit by H.E. Ambassador Shankar P. Sharma, who provided a very comprehensive and informative overview of the current political and economic developments in Nepal. We reminisced throughout the weekend. Many of the group had recollections of the time Sargent Shriver visited Nepal and how he was just a "regular guy." There were pictures of him during an early visit to a hill village wearing a suit and tie. Toward the end of his visit to other locations in Nepal he had "dressed down" to work pants, boots and a leather jacket. To some, the highlight of his visit was a bottle of scotch that he brought along. What will we be doing as we enter our 70s? Discussing this question, we shared their aspirations and our fears about the future. The recurring theme was to seek a "balance."

—Don Reese (Nepal 63-65)

The Friday night dinner exceeded all expectations—more than 300 attended—with a highlight being the address by the U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, who talked about the challenges and the progress in getting Liberia on track to become again the wonderful nation we remember. A letter from Peace Corps Liberia Director Vince Groh added an unexpected poignancy (see his letter on the Friends of Liberia website). Saturday's event at the Liberian Ambassador's Residence, in addition to having delicious food and a warm and welcoming environment, had the added bonus of a visit from Liberian Vice President Joseph Boakai who saluted his Peace Corps teacher, Dennis Ramsier, and thanked everyone who served in Liberia since 1961 for their contribution.

—Jim McGeorge (Liberia 68-71)

Continued on page 19

50th Anniversary

A VERY SPECIAL GATHERING

Earliest staff reunite at Senator Rockefeller's home

On Friday, September 23, Senator Jay Rockefeller and the National Peace Corps association co-hosted a gathering at the Senator's home of some of the earliest Peace Corps staff and special guests.

David Lena



First row: Bill Moyers, Mitzi Wertheim, Mariane Orlando, Bill Josephson, Charlie Peters, Julianne Heyman, Liz Pathy Salett. Second row: Brad Paterson. Third row: Blair Butterworth, Ray LaMontagne, Joe English, Lewis Butler, Jack Vaughn, Gretchen Handwerger, Lefty Vaughn. Fourth row: Sen. Jay Rockefeller, Harris Wofford, Pat Kennedy, Hal Pachios, George Nicolau.

PEACE CORPS STAFF REUNION

Former Peace Corps Chief of Staff and NPCA Board President Ken Hill (Turkey 65-67) and several other agency veterans organized a Staff Reunion at the National Building museum on Friday, September 23. Hundreds roamed the grand space, reconnecting with friends and colleagues. Highlights included remarks by Mark Shriver, son of the late Peace Corps founder Sargent Shriver and an appearance by the 19 living Peace Corps Directors.



Peace Corps Directors,
front row left to right:
Gaddi Vasquez, Ron Tschetter,
Jack Vaughn, Mark Schneider,
Carol Bellamy, Mark Gearan,
Elaine Chow.

Back row: Joe Blatchford,
Kevin O'Donnell,
Richard Celeste, Aaron Williams,
Nick Craw, Donald Hess.



The National Building Museum.



Mark Shriver with Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams.

Continued from page 17

*F*riends of Afghanistan took advantage of almost every aspect of the 50th celebration. During a dinner on Friday evening hosted by the new Afghan Ambassador Eklil Hakimi, the Friends of Afghanistan's Board of Directors presented him with an antique hand scribed copy of the Quran for repatriation back into Afghanistan. The gift was presented as a symbol of respect and as a declaration of the affection and friendship that we RPCVs feel in grateful recognition of the hospitality and kindness that we received during our service to their country. The embassy event also offered the occasion to present Friends of Afghanistan's two most prestigious awards: the Third Goal Award and the Starfish Award. Dr. Louise Pascale, who developed the Afghan Children's Songbook Project (www.afghansongbook.org), which has been featured by the National Geographic Society, was the recipient of the Third Goal Award. The Starfish Award, was presented to Ted Achilles, founder and director of SOLA, The School of Leadership Afghanistan (www.sola-afghanistan.org). This award is given to the person who truly "makes a difference" in an individual's life. Through his support for gender equity educational programs and scholarships for girls, Ted is helping to build and sustain the next generation of Afghan female leaders.

—Tony Agnello (Afghanistan 71-74)

Want to tell the Peace Corps community about your event? In the coming months we'll be featuring stories about many of these anniversary happenings in the News section of the NPCA website. Send an engaging account of your event with at least one good quality digital photo (600 pixels width minimum) to news@peacecorpsconnect.org. In the meantime, share your photos in our special September 50th events Flickr group (www.flickr.com/groups/peacecorsseptember2011/) and visit our expanding 50th Anniversary Landmark Events page.



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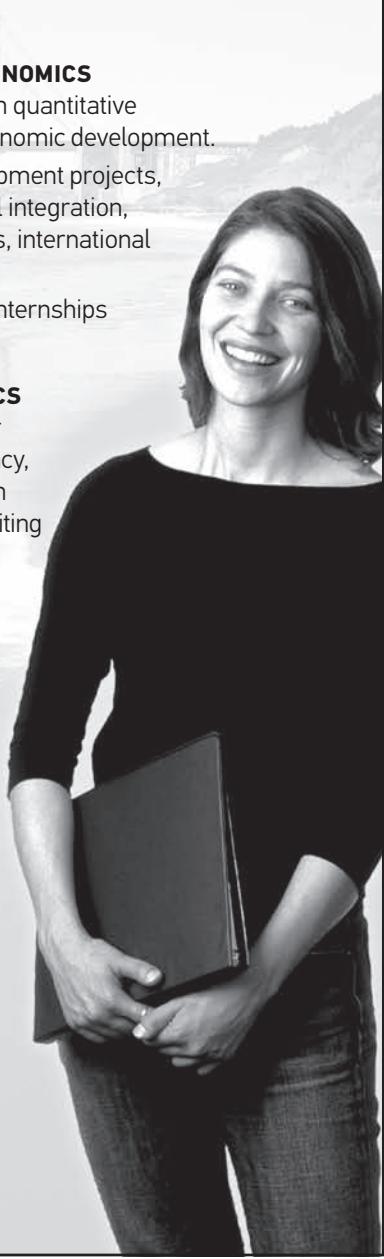
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A PEACE CORPS WRITER REFLECTS

Library of Congress honors Peace Corps Writers

by Sarah Erdman

In September Congressman John Garamendi and his wife Patti (both Ethiopia 66-68) hosted a festive luncheon in the Library of Congress Members Dining Room to honor Peace Corps writers, who collectively have played an important role in carrying out the Third Goal of the Peace Corps for the past fifty years. Following are the remarks of keynote speaker and author Sarah Erdman.

An amazing thing happened just after my book, "Nine Hills to Nambonkaha," came out in 2003. I got an email from a man who was nearing thirty years in the development field. He had become

cynical and bitter about aid work. His daughter had given him "Nine Hills" for Christmas, he told me, and as he read it, the two of them corresponded by email. "I thought you might like to read our conversation," he wrote, and he tacked on at the bottom their very moving email exchange. Reading "Nine Hills" had brought him straight back to his days as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ethiopia in the early 60's. He remembered the people who made him want to help; the passion and idealism that drove him into his career. He thanked me for giving him a second wind.

Over the years Volunteers have

written from the field to say they're serving in Fiji or Ukraine but still my experience rings true or to tell me they were inspired to start a baby weighing program after reading about mine. A woman who left Peace Corps early wrote, "I hope as I keep reading, I can figure out exactly what inside me made me leave Africa."

At a book reading in Portland, Oregon a delicate-looking woman stood in line so that I could sign her book. Her son Zach Merrill had died while serving in Mali. She wanted to understand his life there better. As a Placement Officer at Peace Corps Headquarters, I spent an hour on the



Chris Matthews (Swaziland 68-70) speaks at the Peace Corps Writers luncheon, as Rep. Garamendi looks on.



Display of Peace Corps books.

phone with the mother of an applicant I had worked with extensively. He had been killed in an ice climbing accident and his invitation to Peace Corps had arrived in the mail just days afterwards. She called to say he couldn't come, and to tell me she had buried my book with her son—it brought tangibility to the dream he had had and the future he would not.

This February, I heard from a woman who had asked me to sign a book for her 16-year-old daughter at a book reading back in 2004. She found me on Facebook to tell me her daughter had read my story and "made a plan." Seven years later, she had majored in international relations and was awaiting her invitation to Peace Corps. "We are BOTH filled with excitement and anticipation," she wrote.

But those are just the members of the Peace Corps family. When I was writing my book in rural Montana, I was invited to speak at a women's club. I read a chapter I had polished up for the occasion, showed slides of

village life, discussed women's roles, described mask dances and funerals, and even delved into the mystery of sorcery. When I was done, the first question I got from the audience was, "So, let me get this straight. You were the only white person?" But they had questions—lots of them. They had never really thought about what life in Africa was like before.

I am just one Peace Corps author. My book is just my story. How many Americans have learned the nuances of modern China from Peter Hessler? How many midwives have broadened their perspectives after reading "Monique and the Mango Rains?" How many armchair travelers have crossed continents with Paul Theroux or mused about the idiosyncrasies of island life with Bob Shacochis?

For those who missed out on the eye-popping, mind-blowing, heart-warming, exquisite and impossible experiences that we had as Volunteers, our words unveil the unknown and convey the hope, dedication, and

goodwill that Peace Corps embodies.

Within our community, there are RPCV groups all over the world that help keep the Peace Corps flame alight. But I think it's fair to say that we as Peace Corps' writers have a unique ability to touch something deep and elemental, to connect with people one-to-one. Our voices resonate with the retiree who stepped off the plane in Columbia in 1961 with a crew cut and horn-rimmed glasses, as well as the iPhone-toting graduate who is about to step into a Peace Corps recruiting office. To be one of those voices is greatest honor I've ever known.

Sarah Erdman (Côte d'Ivoire 98-00) is a writer currently living in France.

The Library of Congress has compiled an annotated bibliography of selected books in the Library of Congress collections authored by returned Peace Corps volunteers and a few former staff members. It can be found online at <http://www.loc.gov/peacecorps/>.

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Arlington ceremony speakers Maeve Kennedy McKean, Caitlyn Givens, Joe Kennedy, Aaron Williams, Pamela Levin Cameron, Maureen Orth, Joseph Chow, Joseph N. Bokai Sr., Al Guskin, Chris Austin, Kevin Quigley

50th Anniversary

THE SPARK BURNS AS BRIGHTLY AS EVER

Thousands of Returned Volunteers gather to reflect on 50 years, look ahead

by Chris Austin and Kristina J. Owens

On Sunday, September 25, 2011, the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, D.C. (RPCV/W) had the distinct honor of hosting three events at Arlington National Cemetery commemorating 50 years of the Peace Corps. These events included a private wreath-laying ceremony for families of fallen Volunteers at President John F. Kennedy's gravesite, an inspirational spoken and musical program at the Memorial Amphitheater, and a celebratory walk of flags representing all 139 countries that Peace Corps Volunteers have served in.

These events reflected not only on the first 50 years of the Peace Corps, but on the next 50. Together, we honored half a century of building global friendships and cultural understanding, helping others help themselves, and bringing our service back home.

Despite a forecast calling for rain, Sunday, the 25th was a beautiful day.

The events at Arlington Cemetery began at 8:00 a.m., when RPCV/W Honorary Director Corey Taylor along with National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) President Kevin Quigley led an intimate reflection with the families of the Volunteers who have given their lives in service to the ideals of the Peace Corps. After reflecting at a site near the 101st Airborne Memorial, the group silently proceeded to the Eternal Flame at President Kennedy's gravesite where a wreath and a yellow rose for each fallen Volunteer were laid.

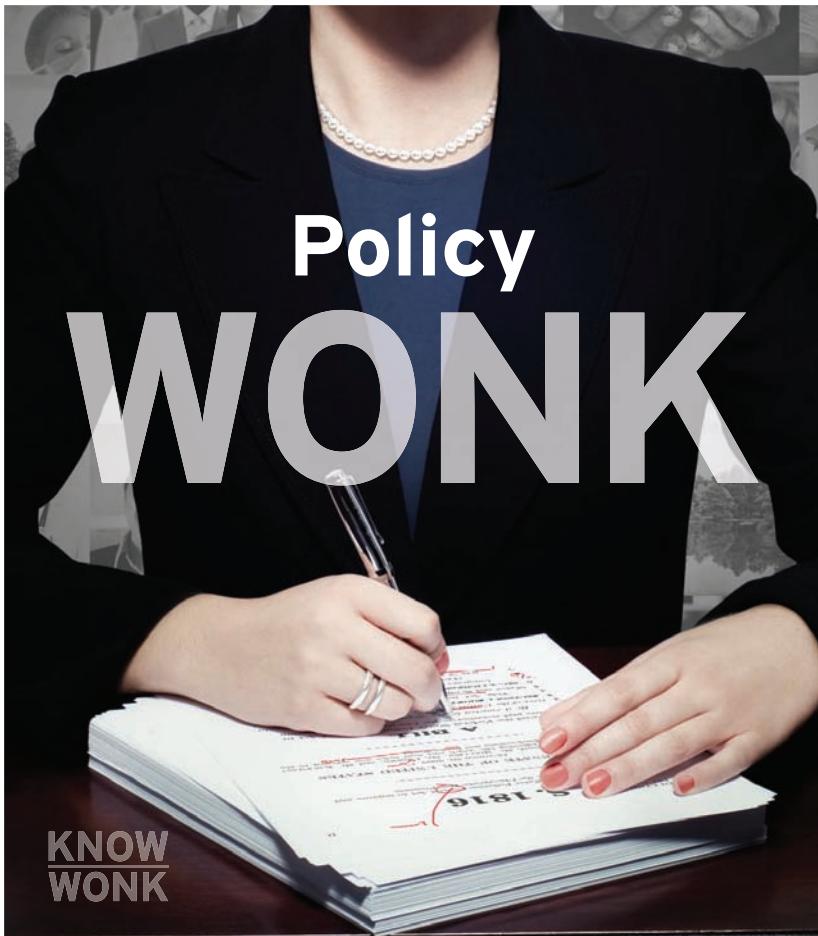
Meanwhile, volunteers at the Memorial Amphitheater were busy preparing for the spoken and musical program, which began promptly at 10:00 a.m. In the amphitheater sat thousands of RPCVs who had come in from across the world, representing every Peace Corps generation and the myriad of paths that RPCVs take after completing their service.

Vanity Fair Special Correspondent Maureen Orth (Colombia 64-66)

served as the Master of Ceremonies for the Arlington Presentation. Senator Chris Dodd (Dominican Republic 66-68) gave a resounding keynote address, RPCV/W 50th Anniversary essay contest winner Caitlin Givens (Senegal 07-09) read her essay on delivering a baby roadside in her host country, and Peace Corps Director Aaron Williams (Dominican Republic 67-70) closed out the program with a powerful speech in which he declared:

"I am confident that the Peace Corps' future will be as proud as its past. In meeting with returned, current, and aspiring Volunteers across the country, and across the globe... I've seen how that spark that President Kennedy ignited, that Al Guskin witnessed, on the steps of the Michigan student union, still burns as bright as ever before. There is just no doubt about it."

Other speakers included (in order of appearance): brother of Fallen



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Senator Dodd (second from left) prepares to take to the podium.



Everywhere . . . reunions.



Master of Ceremonies Maureen Orth.



Volunteer Joseph Chow (Kenya 07-08; Tanzania 08), Kyle Chow; mother of Fallen Volunteer Matthew Costa (Chad 03-05, Mali 05), Pamela Levin Cameron; RPCV/W President Chris Austin (Kenya 03-05); NPCA President Kevin F.F. Quigley (Thailand 76-79); Antioch University professor and former co-leader of the Americans Committed to World Responsibility at the University of Michigan—the group credited with

inspiring President Kennedy to fulfill his campaign promise of creating the Peace Corps—Al Guskin; Senior Advisor at the Department of Health and Human Services Office of Global Affairs, Maeve Kennedy McKean (Mozambique); Middlesex County, Massachusetts Assistant District Attorney Joe Kennedy (Dominican Republic 04-06); and Vice President of Liberia Joseph N. Bokai Sr.

In addition to the speakers, the

crowd was uplifted by a powerful performance by the Duke Ellington School of the Arts Choir which sang two songs a cappella. Instrumentalists Haley Schoenberg and Aaron Myers also performed beautiful compositions before and after the spoken program.

Following the event at the Memorial Amphitheater, the estimated 4,000 RPCVs, family and friends gathered on Memorial Drive in front of Arlington's Visitors Center for the start of the Walk



RPCV/W President Chris Austin and
NPCA President Kevin Quigley.



Thousands filled the amphitheater.



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Many Volunteers met for the first time as they sought out their country of service flag. Inevitably they had much in common.



Judith Guskin (Thailand) and Gordon Radley (Malawi). Considered the “founding mother” of the Peace Corps, Guskin, with then-husband Al Guskin, co-founded Americans Committed to World Responsibility at the University of Michigan, and mobilized students in support of a peace corps. Both of Radley’s siblings served in the Peace Corps; his brother was the first Peace Corps Volunteer to lose his life in service.



of Flags. Director Williams and one of the Peace Corps’ founders, Senator Harris Wofford, led the massive parade of RPCVs carrying all 139 flags in which volunteers have served down Memorial Avenue, across the Memorial Bridge and around Lincoln Memorial Circle to 23rd Street NW, where the walk ended, not far from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. Given that the three events of that Sunday were over a year in the planning, it was a

bittersweet moment to see the massive crowd disperse and realize that we had done it—that we had put on a fitting commemoration of the experience that has changed all of our lives, the U.S. Peace Corps.

Appropriately, the day’s events were planned and carried out entirely by volunteers. Throughout the planning process, we relied upon the values that we refined in the Peace Corps - patience, perseverance, cooperation,

and relentless optimism. Success meant listening to you, the RPCV community, about previous events and anniversaries, and we are grateful for your guidance. To all of these volunteers and mentors, thank you for the time and energy you have given.

Chris Austin (Kenya 03-05) is RPCV/W President. Kristina J. Owens (Bolivia 00-02) was the 50th Anniversary Event Manager.

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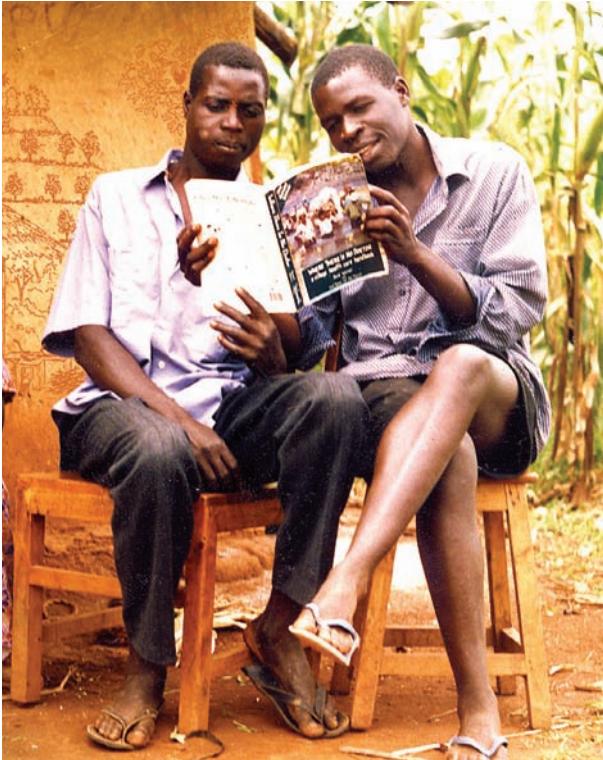
A beloved Peace Corps resource increases its reach

by Zena Herman

Like many Peace Corps Volunteers, I was given a dog-eared copy of “Where There Is No Doctor” as I nervously headed to my site in Ghana after my introductory training. It didn’t take long to realize that this was the most valuable resource among the pile of books Peace Corps had provided me for my work and my own personal health. Without libraries or Internet readily available, access to trustworthy information was an hour-long bumpy and dusty tro-tro ride to the one Internet café in the regional capital. “Where There Is No Doctor” served as the core material for the health education talks I gave in my community, as the go-to guide whenever my neighbors or friends came to me with a health question, and as the lifesaving resource that helped me diagnose my own appendicitis.

When I started my service in 2003, only a handful of Ghanaians had mobile phones. By the end of my time in-country, almost every family in my village had one, despite the fact that the only place you could receive a signal was under one particular mango tree, and most homes lacked electricity to charge phones. The lone Internet café in my regional capital had multiplied into five during the two years I was there. The technology boom had started and the changes in communication and access to information were impressive.

After returning home, I began working for Hesperian Health Guides, the organization that publishes “Where There Is No Doctor” (available in 80+ languages), and other life-saving



Far from medical facilities, “Where There Is No Doctor” is an invaluable health resource.

community health materials including “Where Women Have No Doctor,” “Disabled Village Children,” and “A Community Guide to Environmental Health.” In these resources, I found the philosophy that drove me to join Peace Corps in the first place—a belief in people’s own capacity to improve their lives and health if the information was made available to them.

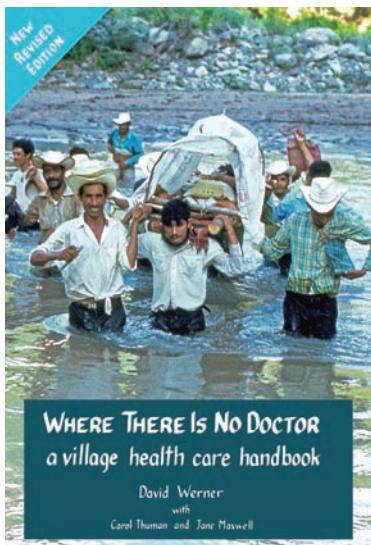
The influx of technology in the communities where Peace Corps Volunteers serve is changing the way information becomes available to both host-country nationals and Volunteers themselves. Technology alone, however, is not enough to make lasting change. People also need access to quality

information, in their local language, that is empowering and user-friendly. Hesperian is now developing exciting new ways to take advantage of advances in technology to provide the accessible information that community health workers and Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) have been relying on for over 30 years.

This fall, Hesperian launched a brand new set of digital tools to vastly expand and simplify access to resources online. In addition to making Hesperian books available in digital formats, the new Hesperian Digital Commons enables users to easily search health topics, navigate among languages, and adapt materials to fit their own context. With the same content available in 10 languages (and more on the way) and an adaptation tool, Volunteers seeking to create nutrition pamphlets in Spanish, or maternal health posters in Chichewa, can easily adapt existing Hesperian content to fit their specific needs.

Despite the incredible growth in connectivity, most of the world lacks reliable Internet access. Recognizing this, Hesperian has made this easy-to-use adaptation tool available both on- and off-line.

The Digital Commons also features an image library of over 10,000 Hesperian illustrations that help explain complex health information. Users can search for images related to specific topics and download them to use or adapt in their own health materials. If PCVs are working in a low-literacy community similar to



the one I worked in, the image library is a treasure trove for their health education efforts.

Materials created using these tools can be saved in the online Health Materials Exchange, and shared for use with people around the world. For example, if a health promoter in Bolivia makes a flyer about sanitation and saves it in the Health Materials Exchange, a Peace Corps Volunteer in Peru can find it, adapt it to her context, and save it again for other volunteers to use. The Health Materials Exchange lets health workers doing similar work in different settings learn from each other, build capacity, save time, and avoid “reinventing the wheel.”

A Returned Peace Corps Volunteer who recently served in Namibia field-tested an early version of the Hesperian Digital Commons and commented on the usefulness to PCVs:

“I did lots of redrawing of ‘Where There Is No Doctor’ pictures onto posters at the health center where I worked in Namibia, because the book had great drawings — on topics like dehydration and bilharzia. I would make posters for the waiting room with nice big images and a few bullet points that I’d have a friend translate. I would have loved to have something like [the adaptation tool] when I was a Peace Corps Volunteer.”

“It would be great to be able to build on experience of other volunteers. When I left I took photos of posters I’d made to give to new volunteers to put on their external hard drive. But it would be great to direct the new Peace Corps Volunteers to posters I’d made online!”

In addition to these Web-based tools, Hesperian has developed a prototype iPhone and Android mobile phone app on “Danger Signs during Pregnancy and Birth” that health providers can use to access basic health information and support outreach and training. While Internet access is needed to download the app, once it has been downloaded, the app can be used in the most remote communities. As more and more PCVs have smartphones, we’re excited to be able to expand the reach of Hesperian content through mobile devices.

As I think back to my beloved copy of *Where There Is No Doctor*—which I left in the village with my counterpart, and which had been used by others before me—I wonder how many lives that one copy has helped. Now, a new generation of Peace Corps Volunteers will be able to use the Hesperian Digital Commons to leave even more valuable knowledge behind to the communities they serve, and to other volunteers around the world, increasing their impact exponentially.

Please help spread the word about these exciting new resources. To learn more about Hesperian Health Guides’ work, to get involved, or to make sure these resources are available in the language of the community you served, please visit www.hesperian.org/RPCV.

*Zena Herman served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ghana from 2003-2005. She is currently working on the major revision of *Where There Is No Doctor* and the digital distribution of Hesperian’s health guides.*



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TEDxUlaanbaatar

Ideas worth sharing in Mongolia...and beyond

by Travis Hellstrom

If you've ever looked at TED.com online, I don't have to tell you how inspiring those videos there can be. Every year speakers come from around the world to the prestigious TED conference with a common mission: Ideas Worth Sharing. Topics range from human rights to scientific exploration, happiness to architecture. (TED stands for Technology, Entertainment, Design.)

On August 20, 2011 we brought this same spirit to the other side of the world in Mongolia and created the first TEDx conference in the land of blue sky. TEDx events are licensed by TED.com but independently organized so they can reflect the unique needs of their intended community. At TEDxUlaanbaatar our team, made up of Mongolians and Americans (including dozens of Peace Corps Volunteers and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers), decided that our TEDx conference would be organized around the theme Legacy: Honoring Tradition and Designing the Future. Hundreds of people came from Mongolia and around the world to attend the conference where more than 100 attendees, 50 speakers and performers, and 50 volunteers and organizers joined together. Our performers included traditional musicians and throat-singers, contortionists, and modern bands like Altan Urag, Tumen Ekh and hip hop artist Quiza. Our speakers included members of parliament like Oyun who created the Zorig Foundation, famous author Jack Weatherford who wrote "Genghis Khan and the Making of the Modern World," and head lamas from the Gandan Monastery who even read a letter written especially for us by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Several of our speakers talked about programs in Mongolia, like tele-medicine and

Katie Borkowski



The TEDxUlaanbaatar team.

educational hotspots, that are really changing the country.

Technology played an incredibly important role in bringing the TEDxUB event to life. The TEDxUB website was crucial, allowing us to connect to many of the speakers, some of whom came from America, Australia, England and many other countries. The event was live streamed around the world, with participants watching online from over 4 continents. Mongolia Peace Corps Volunteers live blogged, facebooked and tweeted the event. The local live audience had dual language earpieces so they could hearing the speaker in both Mongolian and English, as about 80% of the speakers spoke in Mongolian and many attendees could only speak English and vice versa. (A team of volunteers live-translated the event.)

The conference took almost a year to organize, with the talented organizing team devoting every Saturday for months to work on the project. But it

was all worth it. We are humbled by the positive response we have received from the event and can't wait to host the conference again next year.

Creating TEDxUlaanbaatar as the first TEDx event in Mongolian history has given us a great start and, more importantly, has encouraged others to dream. The wife of one of the organizers heard a young Mongolian man in the audience say that he now dreams about speaking at TEDxUlaanbaatar in the future. By creating this event together, the volunteers, speakers, organizers and attendees encouraged each other to dream about what is possible.

On October 15, we led a TEDx Organizer's Workshop for which almost 100 people signed up to hear about how we can create more TEDx events around Mongolia. We are also working with Returned Peace Corps Volunteers like Chris DeBruyen and Kevin Johnstone to create TEDx events in Iraq. We aren't experts on how to start



Burnee Bataa shows the audience traditional Mongolian Buddhist relics.

your own TEDx event, and we couldn't have done it without an incredibly talented team, but we certainly learned a lot of things over last few months that we think are worth sharing.

TEDxUlaanbaatar is just the beginning of many great things in Mongolia. As one of our youngest audience members, a teenager named Bolortuya, told us, "To believe in the heroic make heroes. Let's all become heroes."

To see more please visit TEDxUlaanbaatar.com and tell us what you think on YouTube, Flickr and Facebook.

Travis Hellstrom just finished serving three years with the Peace Corps in Mongolia where he was a Health Volunteer in Sukhbaatar province and a third year Volunteer Leader serving with the World Health Organization in national capital of Ulaanbaatar. He founded TEDxUlaanbaatar with Mend-Orshikh Amartaivan in 2011. Travis is also author of the Unofficial Peace Corps Volunteer Handbook (www.peacecorphandbook.com) and writes for a small army of everyday humanitarians at AdvanceHumanity.com.



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AFRICAN TECH TALK

A roving Gathering sparks ideas, connections

by Molly Mattessich

On a recent crisp autumn Saturday in Washington, D.C., members of the African Diaspora—and those just passionate about Africa—came together for one day to hear ideas about projects on the ground by and for Africans. Started three years ago, it was in a sense, NPCA's Africa Rural Connect program come to life. Africa Gathering provides Africans with a unique and welcoming space to discuss technology, music, art, youth, and agriculture, and forge new connections and potential business acquaintances and partners. Typically there have been four to six Gatherings per year, mostly in Europe and Africa.

The convening of this Africa Gathering was co-hosted by the National Peace Corps Association's Manager of Online Initiatives, Molly Mattessich, along with Kathleen Bomani, event curator of TEDxDar, and Marieme Jamme, co-founder of Africa Gathering. Jamme was a judge of the Africa Rural Connect contests

for 2009 and 2010, and is a strong supporter of NPCA's efforts to maintain the relationships and dialogue between Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and people on her home continent.

The day was filled with articulate presenters sharing their passions, from Semhar Araia, founder of the Diaspora African Women Network (www.dawners.org) whose mission is to "develop and support talented women and girls of the African Diaspora focused on African affairs," to Kambale Musavuli of the Friends Of the Congo organization (www.friendsofthecongo.org) who shared his perspective on how the situation in the Congo is relevant to all African countries. One of the most moving parts of the program was when Sosena Soloman shared clips of her film, "Merkato," filmed in the markets of the biggest open air market in Addis Ababa.

A prize winner of the 2009 Africa Rural Connect contest, Katherine Lucey, of Solar Sister (www.solarsister.org), also presented on the successes her project has had in recent years.

Solar Sister uses the Avon sales model to empower rural women to sell solar lights in their communities and "light up Africa" while also earning a livable wage. Of note, the lights sold by the Solar Sister women are made by 2011 Sergeant Shriver Award winner Sam Goldman's company, d.light.

Wendy Lee (Cameroon 08-10) tweeted during the event, "So many amazing projects @africagathering. I keep getting ideas on how to advertise & promote these ideas to the world." Cherisse Gardner (Liberia 80-82) tweeted, "If the brilliant energy here is reflective of the people working for change in Africa, things are looking up!"

The emcee of the day, Jackson M'vunganyi of Voice of America's Upfront Africa (www.upfrontafrica.com), told everyone about his work on the radio youth show aimed at getting the youth in Africa engaged with their civic leaders. Khwezi Magwaza, formerly at the magazine Seventeen South Africa, spoke on how her former organization was able to research and implement the



Attendees at Africa Gathering came from all over the East Coast to attend the event held in Washington, D.C.



Kambale Musavuli, National Spokesperson for the Friends of the Congo, discusses his presentation with Jackson Muneza M'vunganyi, VOA Radio Host and event moderator.

most efficient way to communicate with adolescent girls. Dr. George Ayitteh, a Ghanaian economist, author and president of the Free Africa Foundation (www.freeafrica.org) in Washington, D.C., was the final speaker of the day, and he energised the audience after his powerful talk on, amongst other things, the "Cheetah" generation, which is what he calls young Africans in the Diaspora making their way back to the continent to invest in it.

Abou Kone, a Cote d'Ivoire native and technology programmer living in Washington, D.C., called it, "a refreshing, inspiring experience, really unlike anything I had been to before and reminded me that African people are achieving things worldwide."

During the week following the event, attendees were so energized by the discussions and presenters that they announced on Twitter the start of weekly gatherings in Washington, D.C. called, "Thought Leader Thursdays," when leaders in the African Diaspora will continue the "lively and thought-provoking discussions" following Africa Gathering. All are welcome to attend these events. Learn more on Twitter using hashtag #TLThursdays.

The Africa Rural Connect online platform is gearing up for another round of contests to share ideas in 2012. We hope that you will post your plans and collaborate with others to build the best ideas for Africa.

More information on future events can be found on the Africa Gathering website at www.AfricaGathering.org. To join Africa Rural Connect, visit www.AfricaRuralConnect.org.

Molly Mattessich is the Manager of Online Initiatives and leads the Africa Rural Connect project for NPCA.



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HENRY REUSS

Another founding father of the Peace Corps

by Tony Carroll

Shortly after Sargent Shriver's death earlier this year, I began to do some research on the late Congressman Henry S. Reuss, of Wisconsin. Having served as Assistant General Counsel of the Peace Corps in the late 1980s, I was of course aware of Congressman Reuss's contributions to the formation of the Peace Corps. But what I was not aware of were the similarities between these two men and the relationship between the Peace Corps and the "Wisconsin Idea."

As with Shriver, Henry Reuss was born into a privileged household just before WWI. Both gentlemen attended Ivy League institutions for undergraduate and law school; in Shriver's case Yale for both; in Reuss's case Cornell and Harvard. Both gentlemen spent their formative years in industrial towns (Milwaukee and Baltimore) hard hit by the Great Depression and showed early interest in good works: Reuss as an Eagle Scout and Shriver as an altar boy. Both served in military combat in WWII, Shriver in the Navy in the Pacific Theatre and Reuss in the Army in Europe (for which he was awarded the Bronze Star) where he attained the rank of major. Reuss learned first hand about humanitarian relief efforts by serving in the Military Administration of Germany after the war and then as Deputy General Counsel to the Marshall Plan, the precursor of USAID and the World Bank. This experience of wartime service and post war economic and social turmoil must have inspired Reuss not only to pursue a career in public service but to develop institutional responses through legislation that might avoid such devastating conflict brought on by economic duress.

In 1948 Reuss returned to Wisconsin and went into the practice of law and



Rep. Henry Reuss

then, changing from a Republican to Democrat, ran successfully as Milwaukee Corporation Counsel, a position he held until his election to Congress in 1955. Reuss entered politics at a time when America's place in the world had changed from rising to world power. Perhaps his experiences in the Depression and WWII and resultant devastation, and service as a municipal official caused him to think about the creation of a volunteer youth corps that could spread mutual understanding between those providing good works and those receiving them.

Indeed, such inspirations found ample incubation in a state renowned for the "Wisconsin Idea" as a laboratory for creative governance. The Wisconsin Idea emerged in 1904 when University of Wisconsin Chancellor Charles Van Hise envisioned a university in service for "the general welfare of Wisconsin." Another legendary figure, Governor Robert "Fighting Bob" Lafollette, Wisconsin's progressive Republican Governor

from 1906 to 1925, gave voice to Chancellor Van Hise's vision. In 1911, Lafollette and the state's ambitious legislature passed legislation to create the minimum wage, workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, home rule for cities, direct election primaries and popular election of U.S. senators. Many of these programs later formed the centerpiece of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal.

In the first of his 13 terms in Congress, Henry Reuss took a trip to South East Asia where he was impressed by the humanitarian work of a team of UNESCO "Young Leaders." Between 1957 and 1960, Reuss championed the Four Point Youth Corps, a precursor to not only the Peace Corps but to present day USAID. In 1960, Reuss introduced HR 9638, otherwise known as the Reuss-Nogburger Bill, as an amendment to the Mutual Security Act. Upon introduction, Mr. Reuss said that "young Americans in their late teens and early 20s need a sense of purpose—the excitement and stimulus of taking part in great events." This resolution directed the federal government to conduct a study on the feasibility of implementing the Four Point plan which, in keeping with the Wisconsin Idea, was undertaken by Colorado State University, another public university with a strong Peace Corps pedigree. The work by CSU and later contributions by Warren Wiggins and Bill Josephson formed the blueprints upon which Peace Corps still operates. Reuss's Four Point plan garnered an impressive roster and diverse array of supporters including WWII General Bill Gavin, U.S. Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, Connecticut Governor (and later Secretary of State) Chester



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Bowles and a couple of young U.S. senators, Hubert Humphrey and John F. Kennedy.

The rest, they say, is history. On October 14, 1960, John F. Kennedy made his famous call to service on the steps of the University of Michigan Union and in 1961 the Peace Corps Act was passed. Its respective floor sponsors were Hubert Humphrey in the Senate and Henry Reuss in the House.

Tony Carroll (Botswana, 76-78) is Vice President of Manchester Trade Ltd. and Adjunct Professor at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

Germany's Alexander von Humboldt Foundation awards ten **German Chancellor Fellowships** annually to young professionals in the private, public, not-for-profit, cultural and academic sectors who are citizens of the United States. The program, which also includes fellowships for citizens of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China, sponsors individuals who demonstrate the potential to strengthen ties between Germany and their own country through their profession or studies. The fellowship provides for a stay of one year in Germany for professional development, study, or research. Prior knowledge of German is not a prerequisite. Fellows are provided with intensive language training prior to and during the fellowship.

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MAKING IT WORK

Panama RPCVs set out to reforest denuded lands, create economic opportunity

by Andrew Parrucci

My host father Juan Cruz was one of the first settlers to homestead Panama's Darien province in the early 1980s. With a mixture of pride and exasperation in his voice, he would say things like "*Habia puro monte cuando llegamos aqui*"—"there was nothing but jungle when we arrived here" or "*Habia madera en todos lados, y mucho para cazar*"—lots of wood and plenty of hunting.

Not anymore. Today much of the Darien is subsistence plots and cattle pasture, hacked out of the jungle by settlers from Panama's interior provinces. In true Cowboys and Indians fashion, these settlers occasionally clash with the indigenous groups who claim ancestral land rights but struggle to legalize their titles.

THE CHALLENGES

During my service in Panama from 2004-2006, subsistence deforestation was the backdrop for the environmental health issues I worked on. Depleted forest cover in the watershed threatened the community water supply; increasing erosion would dirty the river water; fewer trees means less firewood; and so on. It is estimated that subsistence deforestation comprises 40% of tropical deforestation worldwide.

In Panama, teak plantations have worsened this problem by buying up thousands of hectares of deforested land to plant. While this model is profitable for the business and its investors, it decreases the amount of arable land available to smallholders and encourages them to homestead new plots.

Another challenge that we faced as Volunteers was project funding. The temporary nature of development funding—and the meager amounts we could raise—limited the effectiveness of our projects.

RIGHT TIME, RIGHT PLACE, RIGHT PEOPLE

As our Peace Corps service wound down we sensed an opportunity among these challenges. We synthesized them into a business charter: to leverage the potential of private capital to reforest degraded land and create alternative economic opportunities for our local communities. We called the business Planting Empowerment to reflect our goal of empowering local communities to better manage their natural resources. One of our first partners was my host father, Juan Cruz.

Our operating model—Equitable Forestry as we call it—is based on best development practices we learned as Volunteers. Its foundation is our belief that local communities should be an integral part of the business. We manifest this through land leasing (not buying), profit sharing, technical training, and employing a local workforce.

From 2007-2008 we raised \$140,000 from friends and family and "angel investors," people who invest in early-stage ventures. This financed the planting of 50 acres of tree plantations in our two partner communities, along with land lease payments to our partners. Through these pilot projects we established a base of operations in our partner communities and worked through some of our most persistent planting and maintenance challenges.

IMPACT INVESTING

Planting Empowerment is moving beyond the proving stage into a growth period. To unlock this growth, we are focusing on the growing number of impact investors—investors who have social and environmental motivations in addition to their financial goals.

Impact investing is different from socially responsible investing in that it is intended to proactively produce a positive social or environmental



Forester Jose Deago explains the growth of a cocobolo tree to the author.



The Arimae Agro-forestry committee explains the boundaries of its reserve.

outcome. Socially responsible investing is broader, and includes “negative-screened” funds—ones that don’t hold tobacco company stock, for example. Impact investors tend to prefer opportunities in the \$10,000 range that address their specific interests.

Even though we don’t think it is the right answer for every issue, impact investing represents a \$120 billion market opportunity to drive positive change. We’re hoping that this article will spark healthy conversation about the role capital markets play in meeting development challenges.

WHAT NEXT?

Planting Empowerment recently issued an offering to raise capital for a 250-acre agroforestry project. Our Advisory Board and organizations like Kichoco Capital are playing an important role by helping us fine-tune our social and financial proposition connect us with the

kinds of investors we need to scale. And an exciting new certification system called GIIRS (Global Impact Investment Rating System) finally makes it possible to compare our social and—environmental performance with that of other impact investments.

With 20,000 trees already in the ground we’re off to a good start. But there are thousands of acres of deforested land in Panama and beyond. With strong interest from our local partners to reforest more land, we are only limited by the amount of impact capital we can raise.

Andrew Parrucci co-founded Planting Empowerment (www.plantingempowerment.com) in 2006 to address the subsistence deforestation he and his partners experienced as Peace Corps Volunteers in Panama. Parrucci holds a BS in Product Design from Virginia Tech.



The damage from illegal squatters in Arimae's reserve.



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DAY ONE: THE DAWN OF (IM)POSSIBILITY

An excerpt from Cold Snap: Bulgaria Stories

by Cynthia Morrison Phoel

Dobrin didn't see his mother fall, but he heard about it afterward.

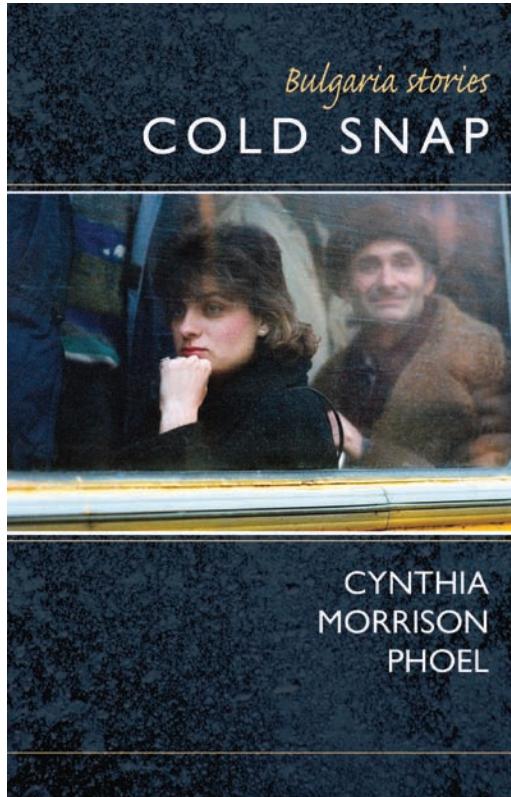
Marina from upstairs said you could hear it crack. She said she had just stepped out of her office to get a breath of fresh air when Maika fell. While she hadn't actually seen it, she'd heard the crack clear across the schoolyard. At first she'd thought a tree branch had broken, but then she realized someone was hurt, and there was Maika at the bottom of the schools stairs. She said you couldn't even see the ice. She said invisible ice was the worst kind.

She said this in a hushed voice so Maika wouldn't hear, even though she was in the other room with the door closed, and Dobrin's father had turned on the TV. They had just settled her on the sofa with her leg resting on two pillows, and Marina, making to leave, had asked Dobrin to put water on for tea.

It was cold in the apartment—so cold you could see your breath. All the apartments in Old Mountain were attached to a single switch for central heat; because heat was expensive, the town had set a rule that the temperatures had to remain below freezing for four days before it was turned on.

For Dobrin, these days were a torture even worse than school.

That day, Dobrin had stayed home sick and spent the entire day in the hol, where they had set up the space heater until the central heat was turned on. They'd bought this heater the year before, when they could not afford central heat for Dobrin's room; at least this would keep him warm at night. Now Dobrin regarded the small, portable radiator with the kind of fondness he usually reserved for stray



dogs and pretty girls. And sometimes for his mother.

But the space heater was not helping him in the corridor, where Marina was zipping up her boots. "You look cold, Dobrin," she said. "Why aren't you wearing a sweater?"

Dobrin did not know why. Only now he was too cold to go into his unheated bedroom to retrieve one.

"Don't forget the tea, Dobrin. *Chuvash li?*" she said. The way she looked at him, he knew she was trying to decide if she could trust him.

Clearly, she could not trust Tatko. Dobrin's father said that was the way it was with Maika. Tatko said if it wasn't her head, it was her shoulder. If it wasn't her shoulder, it was her ankle. He said unless there was blood, he wasn't going to worry about it.

Dobrin did not particularly want to be trusted either. He was not really sick. But it was so cold, he had not slept well. And he had not done his homework for English class. In fact, he had not done it for several days. So, he had lied to Maika and told her he was not feeling well. He had vowed to himself to do all his homework, even to do extra work in his English workbook. But then Tatko had turned on the TV, first one soccer match, then another, and the next thing he knew, Maika was home from the hospital with her broken ankle and it was dark outside and he still hadn't done a thing for school.

"Dobrin, the tea?" Marina pressed.

"Da," he said, even though the thought of one more minute away from the space heater was unbearable.

Dobrin put the water on to boil, then went back to the hol, where his mother was stretched out on the couch with her eyes closed. He tried to avoid looking at her—she did not look good—but it was hard not to look at the purple circles that ringed her eyes. He was no stranger to black eyes, but these were the worst he had ever seen.

Sensing his gaze, his mother spoke. "It was a bad fall," Maika said, her eyes still closed. "The doctor said I'm not going to be able to do much for a couple weeks."

Silence, except for the TV and the sound of Tatko breathing through his nose. Dobrin did not like to hear his mother talk this way. He wished the tea would boil faster.

"I don't know what this is going to mean," she said, and then another silence. Dobrin did not know either—only he did know. If Maika could not teach extra classes at the Technikum

and private lessons at home, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to afford heat. Dobrin could not imagine living in this cold all winter long.

That night, Tatko made pork and onions for dinner, a dish Dobrin liked well enough when his mother made it. But Tatko had added too much salt, and Dobrin could barely eat it. Maika on the couch. Tatko sipping slowly on his rakiya. Silence and more silence, because the TV hurt Maika's head. As Dobrin picked at the food on his plate, he thought he could not possibly be more miserable.

Finally, Tatko took a bite of the pork. "Plah!" he said, spitting out a half-chewed chunk of meat. "Plah! Plah! Plah!" he said, until they were all laughing, even Maika. "Plah! Plah!" Tatko said as he poured them each a rakiya, one for Tatko and one for Maika, a swallow for Dobrin to erase the taste. Dobrin drank it too quickly and felt the burn in his chest for the rest of the night.

Later, when he took the leftovers out to feed the stray dogs that rushed their ground-floor *balcon*, not even they would touch the pork and onions. Still, they whimpered and nuzzled Dobrin: even without his mother, who they loved more than anyone, they were happy to see him, and Dobrin felt a sob rising in his throat. They always did this to him, only usually Maika was there, and he couldn't show he was crying.

But tonight he was alone, and his mother was inside with purple eyes and a broken ankle. And the kisses of so many cold wet noses were too much. Under this wriggling mass of gratitude that would refuse the ruined pork but lap eagerly at the salt of his tears, he was not sure what was wrong with him, if he was happy or sad. Or if the two weren't one and the same.

Cynthia Morrison Phoel served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in a Bulgarian town not unlike the one in her stories. She holds degrees from Cornell University and the Warren Wilson MFA Program for Writers. Her work has appeared in the Missouri Review, The Gettysburg Review, and Harvard Review. She lives near Boston with her husband and three children.

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KINYARWANDA: LOVE HATE LIFE DEATH

Peace Corps filmmakers bring story of hope and forgiveness to the screen

by Lori M. Piskur

Kinyarwanda, which opened in selected cities on December 2, 2011, is a beautifully transformative film that interweaves six separate stories of love, forgiveness and reconciliation into one sweeping narrative, providing a complex and realistic depiction of human resilience and daily life during the Rwandan genocide of 1994. Bringing this emotionally moving film to fruition are filmmakers and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Alrick Brown, Writer/Director, and Joshua Rodd, Co-Producer whose intercepting lives and work experiences, along with a brilliant cast and crew, eventually brought these life-affirming stories to the big screen.

Born in Kingston, Jamaica and raised in Plainfield, New Jersey, Alrick Brown joined the Peace Corps to experience the world, learn a language, and to broaden his understanding of others whose lives were different from his. Joshua Rodd was drawn to the Peace Corps by the idea of the unfamiliar and of the potential for learning in a place that was as far away as possible from the world he knew. From 2000 to 2002, Alrick and Josh served as education Volunteers in Cote d'Ivoire, working with literacy programs, primary schools, agricultural projects, HIV/AIDS awareness trainings and other education initiatives in their respective villages and regions. Alrick brought with him a Masters in Education from Rutgers, while Josh had the foundation of a degree in Religious Studies with a focus on Islamic Studies and Buddhism.

They were both deeply affected by their experiences as PCVs, especially by the relationships and bonds built with people in their communities—through their projects, daily life, and even global events. Josh remembers in particular the experience of learning about 9/11. He had been away visiting the Volunteer



Filmmakers Alrick Brown and Joshua Rudd.

closest to him, and returned to his village which was 100% Muslim. On September 13, 2011, a delegation of Imams from all the neighboring villages came to his house to express their condolences for the deaths in America. These men were in their 70s and 80s and had walked or ridden on the backs of bicycles for miles to reach his house to express their sympathies. It was a gesture of graciousness that he would never forget, and an expression of the Muslim faith that he felt an ongoing responsibility to share with others.

Alrick also had a deeply transformative experience in the middle of his tour of service. On a visit to the slave castles of Elmina on the coast of Ghana, he was shaken to his core. He saw not only a deeply painful history, but also a set—and an opportunity for education. While walking on that Ghanaian beach he knew that he was put here to tell stories, and in particular, the stories of those whose voices would otherwise go unheard, the voices to which we as Westerners most need to listen.

After the Peace Corps, Alrick was accepted to and earned a Masters in Film from NYU, where he met another

RPCV, Micah Schaffer (Guinea). Alrick and Micah collaborated on a film called *Death of Two Sons*, which deeply questions the religious, social and political implications of the deaths of Amadou Diallo, a West African migrant and street vendor who was gunned down in New York City, and Jesse Thyne, the PCV who lived in Amadou's village and was killed in a car accident in Guinea a short time later. *Death of Two Sons* explores the common humanity of these two men, the equally tragic loss of life, and the global disparities of justice based on race. Along with Micah, Alrick won HBO's *Life Through Your Lens Emerging Filmmaker Award* for this critically acclaimed documentary.

Meanwhile, Josh followed his Peace Corps service with graduate studies in epidemiology and political geography, and continued his work in Africa, including Rwanda. It was there that he met Ishmael Ntihabose who was driving a taxi to put himself through engineering school. Ishmael helped Josh to navigate both Kigali and Rwandan culture, and shared with him the story of the role Muslims played in sheltering people from the genocide. Ishmael dreamed of making a film, and because the story resonated so deeply with Josh, he and his wife helped Ishmael to interview people who had been sheltered at mosques and madrassas in 1994.

Knowing that they needed a filmmaker with a sensitive ear and delicate hand to tell this story, Josh put Ishmael in touch with his friend Alrick in New York. Over the next couple of years, Alrick and Ishmael discussed film over email, and in the spring of 2009 Ishmael told him about the role Muslims played in protecting people from the genocide. Later that year, Alrick made the trip to Rwanda.



The Kinyarwanda film team on stage at the Sundance Film Festival.

Once there, he took the time to listen to stories—of real people, of love and heartbreak, of fear, of courage, of defying unspeakable odds—and decided to make a film that interwove various stories of real life, with the Muslim centers of refuge as its center point. When Josh and Ishmael applied for and received production funding from the European Commission's European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, Alrick re-wrote the original script in the span of several weeks.

In the fall of 2009, with a \$250,000 production budget and a primarily Rwandan cast and crew, *Kinyarwanda* was shot on location in just 16 days. The shoot was wrought with logistical challenges, being both the rainy season and grasshopper-mating season. Most of the cast had never acted before, and everyone involved had to relive, to a certain extent, the experiences they went through personally during the genocide. The experiences of the filmmakers as PCVs helped in their preparation of navigating multiple physical and cultural situations that would prove cumbersome to others, and their sensitivity on set is something the Rwandan cast and crew continue to talk about being the best and most healing experience of making the film. Sharing these personal stories of love and daily life helps us all to see our common humanity, especially stories coming from a world that we oftentimes see from the U.S. as one reduced to statistics and generalizations of “the other”.

Kinyarwanda had its world premiere at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, where it won the Audience Award in the World Dramatic Narrative category. The film has won audience awards at multiple festivals this year, including

AFI and Starz Denver, and recently won the Jury Prize at festivals in Japan, Atlanta. Especially meaningful was the Jury Prize at *Kinyarwanda*'s Rwandan premiere, the 2011 Hillywood Film Festival in Kigali. Awards are validating, but the most beautiful experience on the circuit for these filmmakers is to share *Kinyarwanda*'s message of love, hope and forgiveness with the Rwandan diaspora and interfaith communities and with fellow RPCVs. Five of the members of Alrick and Josh's Côte d'Ivoire cohort have been to screenings this year, including Camber Cauthen Brand, Donald Lopez, Amanda Pincock, Nikki Schram and Kate Whitmore. Tricia Vannatter, an RPCV who served in Rwanda, stopped by during filming to lend her support and recently attended the screening in Los Angeles. It's been amazing to witness those reunions and to watch their faces light up as they are moved and transformed by this film.

Kinyarwanda was released in selected theaters on December 2nd by the African-American Film Festival Releasing Movement (<http://affrm.com/>). To learn more about the film, visit www.kinyarwandamovie.com or the Facebook page, www.facebook.com/KinyarwandaMovie.

Lori M. Piskur is an anthropologist and development worker who has served as a consultant to the Kinyarwanda team during the film's production. Her twin sister Julie Piskur Sierra (Ecuador) and uncle Jerry Schoeberlein (Ukraine) are both RPCVs, and while working in El Salvador from 2001-2005, her home served as a refuge for PCVs traveling to and from their sites. Her own experience of taking refuge in a mosque during the Palestinian Intifada of 1989 drew her to be involved in spreading the message of this film.



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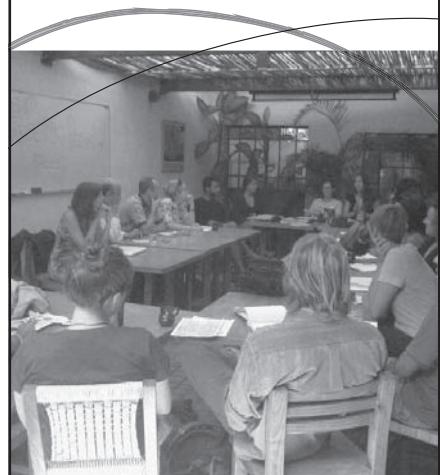
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RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF OUR COMMUNITY

by JoAnna Haugen

CHINA

Peter Hessler is one of the 2011 winners of the MacArthur Fellows “Genius” Grants program. The award is given annually to people who have “shown extraordinary originality and dedication in their creative pursuits and a marked capacity for self-direction” and consists of a \$500,000 cash prize. Hessler has been a staff writer at *The New Yorker* since 2000 and has written several books and articles about China. He currently lives in rural Colorado but will be moving to Cairo in the near future to cover the Middle East for *The New Yorker*.



John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

CONGO

Former Associated Press deputy Asia editor **Beth Duff-Brown** (79-81) has accepted a reporting position covering San Francisco and Northern California. Duff-Brown has worked with AP for 20 years in a variety of reporting and editing assignments. She covered wars in West Africa in the mid-1990s and served as bureau chief for Malaysia, New Delhi and Toronto. She was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for a story about her return to her Peace Corps village in the Congo and was a Knight Journalism Fellow at Stanford University from 2010-2011, where she focused on creating a digital platform to tell stories about women and girls, particularly in the developing world.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Daniel Evans and Julia Tully were presented with the University of California-Davis’ Award of Distinction as outstanding alumni for their devotion to international development, conservation and volunteerism. The couple met while serving in the Peace Corps. In 1989 they moved to the Galapagos Islands where

Evans worked as executive director of the Charles Darwin Research Station. In 1992, Evans became executive director of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory in California. In 1999, both Evans and Tully took jobs with USAID in Nairobi, Kenya, and in 2002, Evans took a new position with USAID in Mexico City while Tully worked at the U.S. embassy. In 2008, Evans became the Peace Corps country director in Guinea and Tully worked in the U.S. embassy. Today, the couple lives in Mexico, where Evans is the Peace Corps director in the country.

INDIA

Dr. Harris Berman (65-67) recently took over as dean of the Tufts University School of Medicine. He has been serving as interim dean since December 2009.

Prior to that position, Berman was the dean of public health and professional degree programs and served 17 years as chief executive officer of Tufts Health Plan. He was also a Peace Corps physician in New Delhi from 1965-67, in Nepal during the summer of 1966 and in Western Samoa during the summer of 1969. Berman has held leadership roles in several organizations including the American Association of Health Plans, the Massachusetts Association of HMOs and the Group Insurance Commission. He is also a board member at Tufts Medical Center, NEHI and Tufts Health Plan, and he is a fellow of the American College of Physicians.



MALAYSIA

Mark Davalos is the new superintendent for the St. Helens School District in Oregon. Prior to this position, Davalos was the deputy



superintendent for the Portland School District and principal of Sprague High School in Salem. He is a graduate of the University of La Verne.

MOZAMBIQUE

Village Enterprise has hired **Konstantin Zvereff** (05-07) as its senior director of programs and operations in Kakamega, Kenya. The company is involved with rural microenterprise development, and Zvereff will be tasked with helping to start small businesses, oversee the development of pilot projects and manage partnerships with other community-based organizations. Prior to this position, Zvereff worked as the director of operations of a Bear Stearns/JP Morgan joint venture and as an independent consultant for Developing World Markets.

NEPAL

Richard Adkins (85-88) is one of seven recipients of the True Professionals Award from the International Society of Arboriculture. He has more than 30 years in forestry in a variety of positions around the world and has been an ISA-certified arborist for 12 years. This award recognizes industry professionals who have demonstrated achievement in a professional setting by cultivating meaningful relationships with clients, participating in successful initiatives in community education and offering unique contributions to the profession.

NEVIS

The Santa Monica College Foundation honored **Terry R. Green** (69-71) with a 2011 Alumni Recognition Award. Currently a professor at the college, Green attended the school from 1965-1967, where he earned an associate of arts degree before transferring to the University of California Santa Barbara, where he finished his studies. After his Peace Corps service,

Green taught at John Adams Middle School from 1971-1986 and was hired in 1986 as SMC's first full-time developmental math instructor. Green has participated in a number of community service events including the AIDS Walk Los Angeles and the EIF Revlon Run/Walk for Cancer.

PHILIPPINES

Michael Abrahams is the recipient of the John A. Roebling Medal, which recognizes an individual for lifetime achievement in bridge engineering. Currently the technical director of structures for Parsons Brinckerhoff, Abrahams career in planning, design and construction of all types of bridges spans 46 years.

POLAND

Dr. Peter Gess (94-96) was recently elected to the Arkansas Chapter Executive Committee of the Sierra Club. He currently teaches environmental policy, public administration and policy analysis at Hendrix College, where he is also the director of international programs and a member of the environmental studies and Asian studies programs.

SIERRA LEONE

Gary Schulze (61-63) received the "Who's Who Award" presented by the Albert Academy Alumni Association in recognition of his service to the school. Schulze, who is on the NPCA Board, is largely responsible for initiating fundraising actions that restored the

school to its former status as one of Sierra Leone's finest.

TONGA

Lia Valerio (98-00) is the founder of Stop Traffick, a non-profit organization to help stop human trafficking in Chicago and Cambodia. The organization has partnered with the Chicago Alliance Against Sexual Exploitation and Goutte d'Eau, Domnok Toek in Cambodia, organizations that also fight child trafficking. Six years ago, Valero started Malia Designs, a fair trade company that sells purses and accessories made by women in Cambodia who were victims or are at risk of human trafficking. Part of the profits are donated to the women's groups.

WESTERN SAMOA

The Oregon Zoo Foundation has named **Jani Iverson** as the new director of the organization. Prior to this position, Iverson served with the Nonprofit Association of Oregon, where she was a part of the executive transition services team, and she held senior leadership positions with Planned Parenthood of Central Washington. Iverson also facilitates trainings on organizational effectiveness and community collaboration for the Ford Family Foundation.

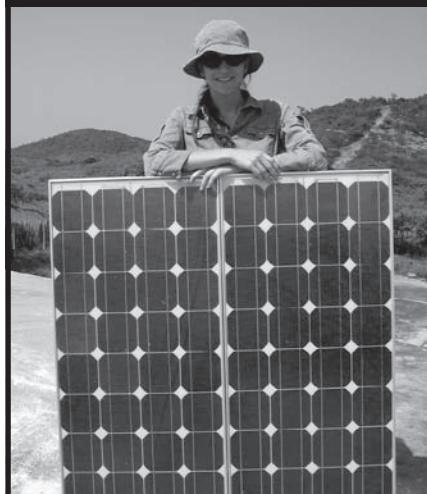
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ADVERTISERS INDEX

American Friends of Humboldt 37
American University, School of Public Affairs 25
American University, College of Arts & Science 29
Antioch University, PhD in Leadership & Change 33
Brandeis University, Heller School 25
Bryn Mawr College 35
Clark University 2
Duke University, Environmental Leadership Program 41
George Mason University, School of Public Policy 35
Goucher College, Postbacc PreMed 29
Greenheart Travel 10
Indiana University, SLIS 39

Indiana University, SPEA 45
Johns Hopkins University, Postbacc Premed 31
Johns Hopkins University, School of Nursing Cover 2, page 1
Lesley University 41
Monterey Institute of Int'l Studies 7
Texas A&M University, Bush School 33
Tufts University, Fletcher School 5
UCSD, Int'l Relations & Pacific Studies 21
University of Denver, Korbel School 27
University of San Francisco 19
Western Illinois University, Peace Corps Fellows 37
World Learning/SIT 43

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