



United States
of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 100th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

June 8, 1988

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD — Extensions of Remarks

PEACE CORPS FELLOWS PROGRAM

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 8, 1988

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, as the saying goes, "Nothing succeeds like success." A follow-up might be, "Nothing should be praised and copied like success." Both are applicable to the Peace Corps Fellowship Program.

Originally established in 1985 to attract mathematics and science teachers, the Peace Corps Fellowship Program is currently providing 29 returned Peace Corps volunteers with the opportunity to teach in the New York City schools. The program is sponsored by Teachers College at Columbia University, with help from the Xerox Corp. and the Hebrew Technical Institute.

In part, the program addresses the desperate shortage of math and science teachers, but more significantly, it seeks to utilize the experience and commitment of Peace Corps volunteers for problems closer to home. As explained by Lottie Taylor, principal of A. Philip Randolph High School in my Harlem congressional district, "They have a demonstrated commitment to an ideal."

I believe that it is time to praise the program, thank the sponsors and look forward to an expansive future. These former volunteers are experienced, motivated, culturally sensitive, and most importantly, they are a unique, educational source ready to be tapped. With that in mind, it is my pleasure to introduce the "Peace Corps Fellows Program Spring 1988 Update."

PEACE CORPS FELLOWS PROGRAM SPRING 1988 UPDATE

"Columbia's Teachers College deserves an acknowledgment of leadership for the outstanding example of a public-private initiative," wrote Lorett Müller Ruppe, Director of Peace Corps, referring to the Peace Corps Fellows Program. On June 8th, in the Delegates' Dining Room of the United Nations, Teachers College President P. Michael Timpane will accept a "Leadership for Peace" award from the Peace Corps for the College's support, in spirit and in substance, of Volunteers abroad and those who have returned.

Now well into its third year, the Peace Corps Fellows Program offers a Returned

Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV) scholarship support towards a Master's Degree and a salaried teaching position. One of the program's partners, the Board of Education of the City of New York, licenses and hires the qualified and motivated RPCV educators for duty in the public schools.

Well-deserved applause goes to the Peace Corps Fellows, such as Thomas Pearson, Cathy Cross and Steve Wynn, who have distinguished themselves in their respective schools. Tom, a mathematics teacher in the South Bronx, had the highest student attendance rate of any teacher at his school. Asked by President Timpane what his secret was for success, Tom replied that it was calling parents every night and rewarding the students that came to class. Seventeen of Tom's high school students had perfect attendance last semester. But Tom does more than call parents; he stays after school to review lessons with students, submits detailed lesson plans on the days he is absent, and expects and receives quality work from his pupils.

Cathy teaches science at a school near Tom's. Last year she organized the first science fair in recent memory at her school. Nathan Quinones, who was then the Schools Chancellor, visited the fair and noted how interested the students were in their projects. She subsequently organized two other fairs, recruiting other Fellows to be the judges for the projects. One of her students won second place in a science fair this year for Bronx high school students. Cathy continues to motivate her pupils daily to investigate scientific principles for themselves. Many of them now say they want to become doctors or laboratory technicians.

Named Assistant to the Chairman of the Mathematics Department (probably one of the youngest in a New York City school), Steve is actively involved in redesigning the school's curriculum. The Principal asked Steve to join a panel of teachers in planning a school-within-a-school. This educational program will coordinate studies around a theme or profession. His contribution at the school does not end with that project; he is also charged with training a student-teacher from Fordham University.

Collectively the Fellows also can make a difference. Nine of the present Fellows or alumni of the Peace Corps Fellows Program are teaching in a public high school in Harlem, cited this year for "Excellence in Education" by President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of Education William Bennett. The Principal attributes part of the success of the school to the Peace Corps Fellows, who teach at all levels—from fundamental mathematics to Advanced Place-

ment Chemistry and Neuroendocrinology. Three of the former Peace Corps Volunteers teaching in the Harlem school, Don Chambers, Mark Keegan and Bill Sorensen, who served in Zaire, Liberia and Kenya respectively, also teach on Saturdays in a special program exposing their pupils to science and engineering.

Another component of the Peace Corps Fellows Program includes the in-service training of Peace Corps Volunteers. Teachers College professors have conducted graduate-level classes overseas for Peace Corps educators and their native counterparts to improve their teaching skills. The workshops have been enthusiastically received. Dr. Bruce Vogell, Chairperson of the Department of Mathematics and Science Education and coordinator of the summer initiatives, received nine invitations from Peace Corps country directors to hold workshops this year. The plans for this summer are now being negotiated with Peace Corps personnel in Washington, D.C.

The success of the Peace Corps Fellows Program would not have been possible without the support of the donors, who provide the financial assistance for the fellowships and scholarships to attract the RPCV's. Special thanks are in order for Xerox Corporation, which gave the funds to start the program, Hebrew Technical Institute, which has pledged to contribute funds for the fourth year in a row, and Chase Manhattan Bank, which joined the partnership this year.

Most Peace Corps teachers return to the United States without the teaching certificates needed to be hired. In this unique program, the RPCV's skills and past experience are utilized in schools that desperately need dedicated and competent teachers. The training at Teachers College allows them to apply for a permanent teaching certificate and plan careers in education.

Attracted to New York City by the scholarship assistance and by the quality education at Teachers College, the Peace Corps Fellows bring diversity and motivation to the public school classrooms. As a bonus to their students, they share tales from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and their own hometowns. The 33 former Peace Corps educators in the program today served in 19 nations and represent 18 different States. New York children need more teachers like Tom, Cathy, Steve, and others in the Peace Corps Fellows Program at Teachers College.