



25<sup>th</sup>  
Fellows  
USA  
Anniversary

# NEWS ABOUT PEACE CORPS FELLOWS/USA

# fellows

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FROM THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

## Special 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition

### What a Difference 25 Years Make!



A Fellows/USA legacy: Denise Maduli-Williams (Teachers College 2000) and husband Stephen (Carnegie Mellon 1999) wonder if their sons Quincy (left) and Miles will join the Peace Corps.

Peace Corps Fellows may have trekked from Akron to Acra or Indiana to India and back again, exhibiting their courage and dedication to promote world peace and friendship. This year, as Fellows/USA celebrates its silver anniversary, it's hard to believe that a quarter century has passed since our founding partnership with Teachers College, Columbia University in 1985.

In those 25 years, great things have happened. Our partnership with one school has grown into a national network encompassing 52 institutions of higher learning in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Fellows can earn their master's degrees in a wide variety of disciplines, ranging from business administration to forestry. As of our last program census in October 2009, 512 Fellows were

*continued on page 5*

### First Cohort Fellow Carries Teacher Education Torch

Twenty-five years after the first Fellows/USA program was launched at Teachers College, Columbia University, one alumnus of the first cohort finds that his Peace Corps and Fellows/USA experiences are as relevant to him today as they were more than two decades ago. Randy McGinnis, professor of science education at the University of Maryland-College Park, has a succinct answer for how the Fellows/USA program launched his highly successful career as an educator: "I'm authentic," McGinnis says.

McGinnis explains, "The fellowship program launched me into my career in higher education. I think it made me a unique researcher... People know me as authentic, as being able to teach.

I've been able to take on unique leadership roles."

The story of how McGinnis developed that authenticity and uniqueness, and of how he is able to share these qualities with his own students today, spans two continents and three higher education degrees.

In 1981, McGinnis began his Peace Corps career in Swaziland where he taught junior high school English, math, and science. Upon returning to the United States, he enrolled in the newly-launched Fellows/USA program at Teachers College. As part of his training, he taught at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx; a school, he says, that was known at that time as "the school of last resort" because students who could not get into



First cohort Fellow Randy McGinnis' student Emily Hestness shows off Mr. Hoots for National Science Foundation initiative, Project Nexus.

other schools were accepted into DeWitt.

While other teachers may have been daunted by the in-

ner city surroundings, McGinnis flourished. He describes the students as "a good group of

*continued on page 2*



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# Peace Corps Digital Library Celebrates 50 Years of Service

Your experiences as a Peace Corps Volunteer will stay with you, but they can be more than just a fond memory. Sharing your unique story enriches Americans' understanding of what it means to be a PCV by bringing to life the people you've met, the country you served, and the changes you've made.

A new opportunity for you to share your personal experience is provided by the online Peace Corps Digital Library. The library houses an ever-growing, searchable collection of Peace Corps materials dating back to the agency's beginnings in 1961.

The library sheds new light on Peace Corps history by demonstrating the effect five decades of Volunteer service has had on people throughout the world. But this collection would be incomplete without the individual stories of the Volunteers who made this all possible.

In addition to being added to the digital library, many of the stories and photos submitted will be used to honor Volunteers' legacy of service during the Peace Corps' 50th anniversary celebration in 2011.

The digital library will collect and preserve Peace Corps history, not only to honor the past, but also to help ensure that the stories, photographs, and history of our Volunteers, our posts, and our agency can live on to inspire and inform future generations.

Don't miss your chance to be a part of the 50th anniversary. Submit your stories and photos today! Who knows? You might

even inspire others to make a difference!

For more information, such as submission guidelines and story ideas, go to <http://archive.peacecorps.gov>.



RPCV Jim Landmesser of the first Peace Corps cohort submitted this photo, taken during his service in Pakistan, to the digital library.



## Carrying the Torch

*Con't from page 1*

kids to teach," and says that he gleaned valuable experience from instructing in an urban environment which has bolstered his credentials as an educator.

McGinnis credits Fellows/USA with inspiring him to go as far as possible in pursuing his education. "I just carried it all the way. I got two master's degrees at Teachers College, Columbia, and then a Ph.D. at the University of Georgia ... I encountered some of the best minds in teacher education at Teachers College, and it prompted me to grow," he says.

At times, McGinnis has the opportunity to work with recent

RPCVs or students who are interested in joining the Peace Corps. He says he tries to recruit students who have international experience, noting that "They tend to seek me out, too."

On one particularly gratifying occasion, one of McGinnis' students joined the Peace Corps and was sent to Swaziland, where McGinnis himself had served. McGinnis found it rewarding to stay in contact with the student after she finished her service. He invited her to give him a debriefing and she told him about her Volunteer experiences. He comments, "I saw the growth in her from an undergraduate to

someone who had experienced the Peace Corps world."

McGinnis' current academic work focuses on advancing understanding of how science teachers and science teacher educators may interact successfully with diverse learners. He was previously a GATE (Global Awareness in Teacher Education) Fellow, and he currently serves as principal investigator for a multi-year [National Science Foundation](#) initiative, Project Nexus, which is researching an innovative model of science teacher preparation. Thus far, he has supervised 23 graduate students to degree completion.

# Where Are They Now?

Shawn Kaskie  
RPCV/Papua New Guinea, 1999–2000  
Fellow/Western Illinois University, 2004



Shawn Kaskie, second from right in back, builds an earth oven with villagers in Papua New Guinea.

Although I grew up in a metropolitan area, I learned to love rural community development as a PCV and have been passionate about this vital, but challenging, work ever since. The operational practice of sustainable community development is much more challenging than most Americans realize. I have found this to be true in a village of 1,000 in a developing country and in rural America. Both abroad and in the United States, local politics are the biggest challenge rural community developers face.

My wife, Jessica, and I served as Volunteers in Papua New Guinea from 1999 to 2000. I applied to the Peace Corps to experience another culture beyond the perspective of just being a tourist. I was not overly concerned about my role or where I was to be placed. When I found out my wife and I were to be placed in Papua New Guinea, we had to find it on the globe, but we were very excited.

Our site was so remotely located in the mountainous rainforest that we had to use a helicopter during the rainy season because there were no airstrips nearby. The 50-mile

minimum maintenance road was only accessible by tractor.

As an RPCV, I participated in the Fellows/USA program and earned my master's degree in regional planning from [Western Illinois University](#). I have served as the executive director at the Sherman County Economic Development Board in Loup City, Nebraska, and currently serve as the director of the Center for Rural Research and Development in the College of Business and Technology at the University of Nebraska–Kearney.

My work today—and all of my work since I returned from the Peace Corps—has generally revolved around empowering people to help themselves through education, resource networking, and connecting. In a time of decreasing volunteerism, I wish all Americans would attend or participate in local community planning or economic development to give them a better understanding of these programs and of the efforts of professional practitioners. Who knows? You might even learn about an opportunity to help yourself or your community.

# Get out of Debt Faster with Student Loan Forgiveness

Fellows have a lot of wonderful things in common, such as their Peace Corps experience, compassion, and a commitment to service. Unfortunately, though, many Fellows also have debt, stemming from both undergraduate and graduate student loans. And, like most of us, you're probably planning on paying off these loans well into your golden years.

That might not be necessary, though. In fact, you may be able to get rid of your student loans in a mere 10 years under the new Public Service Loan Forgiveness Option.

This law was created in order to encourage and reward public service by providing loan forgiveness to college graduates who take up careers in the public service or nonprofit sector, as many RPCVs do. Careers in health care, education, and civil service are just some of the included professions. Additionally, people serving as Peace Corps Volunteers also qualify.

Under the law, eligible candidates will make regular payments for a period of 10 years, after which time the remaining interest and principal will be forgiven. There are, however, some impor-

tant stipulations in regard to loan forgiveness. For example, only federal direct loans are eligible for forgiveness.

It gets even better, though. Individuals with student loans are now able to reduce their monthly payments through the Income Based Repayment Plan. Through this plan, monthly payments are determined by a debt to income ratio. That way, your loan payments won't constitute such a large percentage of your monthly income that you're forced to move back in with Mom and Dad.

Altogether, this means RPCVs working in the public service or nonprofit sectors may be able to make reduced monthly payments on their federal direct student loans and then have the remaining balance cancelled after 10 full-time years of public service. Translation: get out of debt faster!

[IBRinfo](#) has useful information on the Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, as well as an IBR calculator. Detailed descriptions of the option can also be found at the [National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators](#) and the [Department of Education](#) websites.

Would you like to see yourself in the Fellows/USA newsletter?

We would like to increase the visibility of individual Fellows and programs. If you have a story to share about your experience as a Fellow, or your Fellows/USA program, let us know!

Email story ideas, profiles of students and staff, and photos to [fellows@peacecorps.gov](mailto:fellows@peacecorps.gov).

## Fellows/USA Welcomes New Marketing Specialist

Ellen Alderton began her tenure at Fellows/USA in February. Alderton received her bachelor's degree in psychology from Wellesley College and her master's in international relations from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies.

She has worked at the United Nations in Austria, as a business reporter in Belgium, and as an executive producer of national Spanish-language social marketing campaigns serving Latino audiences. Alderton has lived overseas in eight countries, including developing countries Bolivia and Jordan.



Ellen Alderton is serving as the new Fellows/USA marketing specialist.



## New Program Specialist Joins Fellows/USA

The Peace Corps world is a small one, as Debra Timmons, program specialist for Fellows/USA, discovered on her second day of work. During a tour of the headquarters building, Timmons noticed a familiar face on an International Women's Day poster. The face belonged to a Peace Corps

Rwanda staff member named Gloriosa. Timmons met Gloriosa eight years ago when both women were working for another international development agency. The two were able to re-connect through email later that day, and shared a good laugh at the pleasant surprise of working at the same agency once again.

Timmons joined the Fellows/USA team in March. She received her bachelor's degree in international studies from American University and her master's in international education policy from Harvard University. Timmons has worked as associate director of graduate advising at the [George Washington University](#), academic assistant at the University for Peace in Costa Rica, education project coordinator at Catholic Relief Services, and program officer at The Fund for Peace.



Debra Timmons began her tenure at Fellows/USA in March.

## Network with Us!



## University Partners Cited for Honors

The annual [President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll](#), released in March, commended a staggering 29 Fellows/USA universities. Launched in 2006, the honor roll's Presidential Award is the highest federal recognition an institution can receive for its commitment to service learning and civic engagement. As we look back on a proud history of a quarter century of service, it is wonderful to see national recognition for the work Fellows/USA universities contribute to their communities. The 29 colleges and universities cited include 25 schools on the honor roll and four schools on the honor roll with distinction:

### Honor Roll with Distinction

- Duquesne University
- Fordham University
- University of Michigan
- University of Pennsylvania

### Honor Roll

- Bowling Green State University
- Carnegie Mellon University
- Drew University
- Duke University
- Florida Institute of Technology
- The George Washington University
- Georgia College and State University
- Humboldt State University
- Kennesaw State University
- Marquette University
- Southern New Hampshire University
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Arizona
- University of Cincinnati
- University of Denver
- University of Maryland–Baltimore County
- University of Maryland–College Park
- University of Missouri–Columbia
- University of Missouri–Kansas City
- University of Rochester
- University of South Carolina–Columbia
- University of Southern California–Los Angeles
- University of Vermont
- University of Wyoming
- Western Illinois University



Fellows at the University of Michigan take pride in receiving presidential honors with distinction. From left are Angela Michalek, Lauren Cotter, Andrea Liberatore, Elizabeth Senecal (at the highest), Natalie Gordon, and Nick Deyo. (Not shown is Nate Springer.)

# Volunteerism Action Guide Helps Fellows to Increase Impact

According to the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#), approximately 62 million people in the United States serve as volunteers each year, giving a

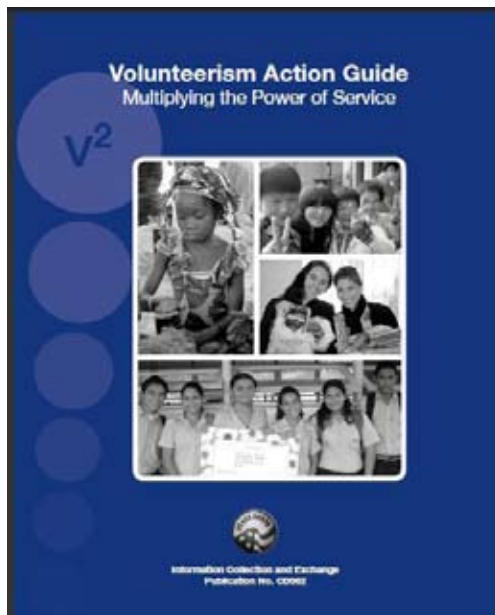
massive eight billion hours of their time. Peace Corps Fellows, of course, rank proudly among these numbers. Not content with donating their sweat equity abroad, Fellows return to the United States to reach out again with their dedication and concern to American communities.

Peace Corps Fellows today can be found rolling up their sleeves on domestic volunteer projects ranging from promoting environmental conservation with the [Florida Institute of Technology](#), to teaching migrant children through [Bowling Green State University](#), or fostering small business development through [Duquesne University](#).

The Peace Corps has also updated a classic publication, *Volunteerism Action Guide: Multiplying the Power of Service*, to help current Volunteers, RPCVs, and Fellows alike cultivate the spirit of volunteerism in the communities where they live, study, and work.

The *V2 Action Guide*, available both in Spanish and in English, challenges volunteers to “multiply the power of service.” The guide draws upon the case study of the Morning Star Girls’ Club, a communitywide volunteer project to reduce litter in a small town, and walks readers through an evidence-based process to encourage and facilitate volunteerism.

To download the *V2 Action Guide* for use with the community you serve, go to <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=library.comdev>.



The *V2 Action Guide* is available for free online at the Peace Corps website.

enrolled in programs across the country, interning in organizations from inner city Atlanta to rural Oregon.

Over the years, we have gathered some interesting statistics about the people who choose to take part in Fellows/USA. First and foremost, we have found that our program is not just for those embarking on their careers, but also for people who are ready to embrace the Peace Corps’ third goal at any time in their lives. Indeed, Fellows have enrolled as young as 22 and as old as 65.

# USC Fellow Named Graduate Student of the Year

[University of South Carolina](#) Fellow Rebecca Holderman has been named Graduate Student of the Year by the National Association of Social Workers, South Carolina chapter. This is one of only four awards given each year by the organization.

Set to graduate in May with her Master of Social Work degree, Holderman has committed herself to community and volunteer activities for years. She is an interpreter in the Center for Child and Family Studies’ HABLA Project, the telephonic interpretation service for state agencies. She also interns in the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs. “Social justice is one of my passions,” she explains.

Holderman, who hails from Chehalis, Washington, is also president of the Black Social Work Student Association and a member of the Social Work Student Association and Phi Alpha, the social work honor society. After earning her undergraduate degree in social work at Eastern Washington University, Holder-



University of South Carolina Fellow Rebecca Holderman.

man conducted her Peace Corps service in St. Kitts in the [Eastern Caribbean](#), where she worked with youth in afterschool, empowerment, and AIDS education programs.

Reprinted with permission from the University of South Carolina website.

## What a Difference 25 Years Make

Con’t from page 1

Of all RPCVs who choose to participate in Fellows/USA, the largest number—107—served in [Guatemala](#). The next highest-ranking countries to produce Fellows have been the [Dominican Republic](#), [Honduras](#), and [Paraguay](#), with [Ecuador](#) and [Kenya](#) tying for fifth place.

Our alumni have gone on to pursue careers in both the arts and the sciences. As you read this, the spring edition of *Fellows*, you will learn about Randy McGinnis, a member of the first Teachers College cohort who is now a professor of education. You

will also hear from a more recent alumnus, Shawn Kaskie, whose Fellows and Peace Corps experiences launched him into a career in community rural development.

Whatever the stories, wherever the universities and service projects, we are honored that so many Americans have chosen to take part in this quarter-century journey with us. We look forward to the next 25 years together.

## From the Fellows/USA Program Manager

I've been traveling professionally for a number of years. As the marketing manager at my last company, I went to trade shows and industry conferences, and was away from home, on average, one week a month all year.

In contrast, my travel for Peace Corps tends to be concentrated in the early spring and early fall months, when schools are in session. This fiscal year has been unusually light with only eight schools on the schedule, as opposed to the record 19 schools I visited last year. In theory, these visits are evaluative in nature, but in practice, they're so much more.

Meeting the Fellows and getting to know them as individuals rather than as bits of information in a database is a pure delight. Each of the Fellows has a unique story to tell. Without the site visits, I would have extremely limited opportunities to hear those stories.

Take Chris, for instance. He has an undergraduate degree in medicinal chemistry, he's hiked the full length of the Appalachian Trail, he came to love teaching in [Ghana](#), and is now studying for a master's degree in education in rural New Mexico.

Then there's Thor. With his bachelor's in architecture, he's interned for two years at a neighborhood redevelopment center while studying regional planning in Cincinnati. He hopes to return to the [Philippines](#), his country of service, after graduation.

Angela also comes to mind. She was an [AmeriCorps](#) volunteer in Montana, then went to [Senegal](#), where her French undergraduate degree proved quite useful. She's studied the health risks of recreation on the Chicago River, and now she's in Michigan earning a degree in environmental resources policy.

These are just three examples of more than 3,000 Peace Corps Fellows stories. This year, for the program's 25th

anniversary, we're celebrating all of our Fellows—their accomplishments, their dedication, and their continued service to those in need of encouragement or a helping hand.

Although travel is tiring, working with our partners, meeting Fellows, and witnessing the phenomenal work of everyone involved with Fellows/USA re-energizes me. Washington can, at times, seem like a world unto itself. But when I get out into communities across the country where thoughtful people are reaching out to their neighbors, I'm reminded of my own small-town upbringing and what it means to be a good citizen.

Sure, there's bad news almost daily, and problems sometimes overwhelm us with their apparent intractability. The good news is that the very same Peace Corps Volunteers who have already given so much of themselves to communities abroad, come back to the U.S. and continue giving. They work with government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and grassroots groups as force multipliers for change.

As Fellows/USA alumni, they'll have careers in every industry and every sector, where they'll continue to have a positive impact, not just on America and Americans' understanding of other cultures, but also on other cultures' understanding of us. Understanding often leads to acceptance, and acceptance to peace, and in the end, isn't that the point?



Julie Driver

## Fellows/USA Schools Make Top College Rankings



The George Washington University ranked number one among medium-size schools in producing Peace Corps Volunteers. From left, are fellows Lucy Callard, Nathan Kaczynski, Liz Nardin, Mandy Ewing, and Rachel Bennett.

Each year, the Peace Corps ranks those colleges and universities across the nation producing the [largest number of Volunteers](#). This year, 11 schools in the Fellows/USA network made their marks on this list:

### Peace Corps Ranking School

#### Large Colleges and Universities

8	University of Michigan
11	University of Oregon
20	University of Arizona
25	Indiana University–Bloomington

#### Medium-Size Colleges and Universities

1	The George Washington University
3	Cornell University
13	University of Vermont
	Marquette University
	University of Pennsylvania
23	Yale University

#### Small Colleges and Universities

17	Johns Hopkins University
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