



PEACE
CORPS

Times

INSIDE ISSUE 2, 2012

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- ▶ CWWS a 23-year Success
- ▶ Briquettes Serve as Charcoal Alternative

Employers See RPCVs as 'Natural Fit'

Today a Volunteer may be explaining the benefits of proper hand-washing to his host mother in her native language. Tomorrow an international organization may ask another Volunteer to put together a program to train young women to be leaders.

Peace Corps Volunteers are in high demand from organizations working both domestically and internationally. On February 29, 40 employers from nonprofit organizations, government agencies, and businesses participated in the Winter 2012 RPCV Career Conference at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. Nearly 400 RPCVs attended the event, learning about job opportunities and pitching their service as proof that they are well equipped to work across cultural barriers, come prepared with grassroots development experience, and have the patience and fortitude for any position.

The bottom line: Employers want to hire RPCVs.

"We recruit returned Peace Corps Volunteers because they share the same commitment we have to making a difference in people's lives," said Darlene Andrews, director of recruitment management for Chemonics International, an employee-owned international devel-



Returned Volunteers line up to register for the Winter 2012 RPCV Career Conference at Peace Corps headquarters. The Washington, D.C., event attracted nearly 400 RPCVs and 40 employers.

opment agency. "Their Peace Corps experience is very similar to the project work Chemonics conducts around the world. It's a seamless cultural fit."

Whether RPCVs choose to continue their work in international development or enter another field,

companies and government agencies understand that it takes commitment, drive, and resilience to serve for 27 months or more as a Volunteer.

"Peace Corps experience provides a deep level of cultural knowledge," said Marshall Stowell of Population Ser-



Joy Liu (right), a member of the human resources staff at the Smithsonian Institute, talks with RPCVs during the Winter 2012 RPCV Career Conference.

vices International (PSI). "PSI actively seeks candidates with Peace Corps experience, as PSI's health solutions are culturally appropriate and locally led. Experience in the Peace Corps provides a shorthand that is extremely useful."

Hiring recent RPCVs is also an easy choice for government agencies. Non-competitive eligibility (NCE) allows hiring managers to skip the competitive hiring process and choose candidates who meet basic qualifications for an open position. For more information about NCE, visit peacecorps.gov/nce.

Angela Grimes of the Social Security Administration Office of Central Operations attended the job fair in

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Social Media Helps Volunteers Stay Connected, Educate Public

Do you tweet, tumble, or +1'd? Have you tagged, liked, and shared? Are you waiting for your vlog* to go viral? We understand! The Peace Corps social media presence is evident across the Web, from Facebook, Twitter, and You-

Tube to Flickr, Tumblr, and LinkedIn.

Even the most keen Twitter users would be hard pressed to convey in 140 characters or less how social media benefits the Peace Corps and Volunteers worldwide. In addition to allowing

you to stay connected with friends and family back home, social media helps educate the public about the work you are doing in the field and allow you to communicate with other Volunteers to share ideas and support.

Volunteer in the field is liked and shared by so many people. The public is really excited to see what our Volunteers are doing."

Such posts may inspire you as well. Have you heard about soccer-based HIV-prevention training in Tanzania? Did you know Volunteers in Azerbaijan organized an open mic night to give youth in their community a positive outlet to express themselves? Or how about the Volunteers who organized a 375-kilometer (233-mile) bike ride across Costa Rica to promote biking and healthy living? These are just a few of the stories that have been shared on the Peace Corps' social media channels.

New and Improved Peace Corps Digital Library
Speaking of sharing, have you browsed or submitted your photos and stories to the Peace Corps digital library?

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"Conversations"—50th Anniversary Special Edition Peace Corps PSA

One of the most popular videos on the Peace Corps YouTube Channel over the last year has been a public-service announcement released during the 50th anniversary celebration. It features a string of short conversations that unfold throughout an RPCV's daily interactions as he shares his Peace Corps experience with friends, family, and others. These vignettes represent what many returned Volunteers feel as they return from their service overseas, prepared to share life-defining experiences, accomplishments, and stories. Watch it at youtube.com/watch?v=KwuDH5BkHvw



*See Social Media Terms Cheat Sheet on Page 3.

“Maintain your language skills. IRG is specifically looking for applicants who can speak ‘very niche languages.’”

—Molly Wilkin, International Resources Group



Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams speaks with recently returned Volunteers during February’s RPCV Career Conference at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C.

“[While you’re in-country] build relationships with local NGOs. [When you’re freshly back]: Look at your resume. What’s the portrait you want to show? Who do you want to be? Try to make it as professional as possible. Come to job fairs, see what people are looking for and find out how things are being done now and how resumes are written.”

—Mark Strohhahn (RPCV/The Gambia 2007-2009, Jordan 2009-2011), International Relief & Development



Participants practice their job interviewing skills during the Winter 2012 RPCV Career Conference.

hopes of hiring RPCVs with NCE.

“We’re excited. We’re hiring right now. [RPCVs’] level of commitment is evident and they’ve done great things for others,” Grimes said. “Most of our jobs are customer service-based and it’s a natural fit. RPCVs have customer service skills and interpersonal skills.”

Other government agencies that attended the conference include: U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Department of Education, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the National Institutes of Health, Centers for Disease Control, the State Department, General Services Administration, Department of Justice,

and others.

Patrick Driscoll of the International Resources Group (IRG), a nonprofit professional services firm working in 140 countries, said, “Peace Corps Volunteers come with significant field experience. It’s a very strong quality on a resume, especially if they successfully completed [their service].”

IRG already has a large number of RPCVs on staff. The organization looks for project management to be listed on resumes and recommends that RPCVs join networking groups and the Society for International Development upon return to the United States. Driscoll urges RPCVs to set up informational interviews, which often lead to jobs.

The private industry is also in need of RPCVs’ set of skills.

John Snow, Inc., a health care consulting firm that works in the United States and abroad, has hired countless RPCVs—both recently returned and those back for 20-plus years.

“Peace Corps Volunteers are a really good cultural fit because of their interest in development and actual experience overseas,” said Leif Daulaire, a JSI employee. He noted that the company looks for those RPCVs with a master’s degree in public health or degrees in public policy and development.

“RPCVs have done really well [working for us],” said Courtney Conching, a recruiter for EF English First, a

company that sends teachers to China, Russia, and Indonesia. “We’ve had a lot of success. They want to do something meaningful and for themselves.”

She noted that RPCVs also understand what it takes to learn and teach another language. “Until you learn another language yourself, you’re not going to understand how hard it is or how much confidence it takes,” she said, adding, “Returned Volunteers have experience and they’re really committed. I’m looking for teachers to go to China, which is not like anywhere else. There’s a lot of culture shock and RPCVs have gone through it already. It’s perfect for us.”



Peace Corps Returned Volunteer Services Program Support Assistant Kathryn Edwards welcomes participants to the Winter 2012 RPCV Career Conference.

“You’ve got to network. A lot of what happens is because you know someone. Tap into the RPCV network. Go for informational interviews. I temped on a project that worked with JSI and that’s how I got my job.”

—Heather Casciato (RPCV/Burkina Faso, 2006-2008), John Snow, Inc.



Participants of the Winter 2012 RPCV Career Conference prepare to enter Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. The event attracted nearly 400 RPCVs.

“Add training experience, especially if it was a USAID project, to your resume. If you worked with a local NGO, put it on your resume.”

—Mica Jenkins (RPCV/Dominican Republic 2008-2010, Mozambique 2010-2011), International Relief & Development

SOCIAL MEDIA FROM PAGE 1 ■■■■■■■■■■▶

You don't have to have completed service to start sharing your experience. A searchable collection of imagery and stories contributed by the Peace Corps community, the digital library was recently redesigned to make it easier for you to share and view the archive of material submitted by fellow Volunteers. We draw from this resource for Peace Corps' promotion and social media, so add to the collection of inspiring experiences by submitting your photos and stories today at peacecorps.gov/collection.

The more you share with us, the more we can share with the world and help educate and spread the

word about the amazing work you do in the field.

New Social Media: Tumblr, LinkedIn, and What's Next

The Peace Corps is one of the first federal agencies to launch a Tumblr blog (peacecorps.tumblr.com) and has garnered praise for microblogging the Peace Corps experience. Through photos, short videos, and quotes, Tumblr has helped us reach another audience that may not have previously been exposed to the Peace Corps. There are also many current Volunteers microblogging on Tumblr about their experiences that are reblogged on Peace Corps

Tumblr, allowing them to share their stories with an even wider audience.

You can also find the Peace Corps on LinkedIn, allowing you to connect with other Volunteers, development professionals, and employers to expand your professional network. Start your job hunt before you even finish your service by joining Peace Corps' network at linkedin.com/company/peace-corps.

The Peace Corps continually explores other emerging social media platforms to find the best places to engage with the public about Peace Corps service and share Third Goal activities. Got a suggestion? Let us know at socialmedia@peacecorps.gov!

Top 10 Peace Corps YouTube Views



Peace Corps - A Legacy at Home and Abroad

91,527 Views



Be a Volunteer - Peace Corps

82,245 Views



Peace Corps - A 50-Year Legacy at Home and Abroad

59,205 Views



Peace Corps or Grad School? Get the Best of Both Worlds with Master's International

39,773 Views



"Conversations" - 50th Anniversary Special Edition Peace Corps PSA

34,470 Views

Lifetime Views for channel:
1,036,054

Peace Corps Social Media Numbers*

150,000 Facebook likes

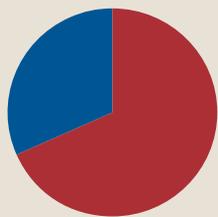
10,800 Tumblr followers

10,250 LinkedIn followers

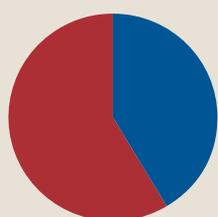
2,500,000 Flickr photo views

1,012,000 YouTube views

450,000 Twitter followers



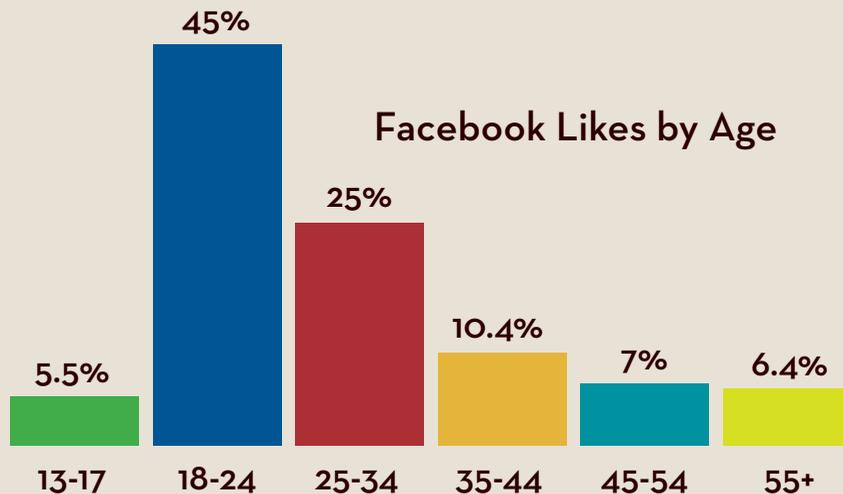
Facebook Likes
68% female
32% male



YouTube Viewers
58% female
42% male

Social Media Terms Cheat Sheet

- Tweet:** 140-word message on Twitter
- Tumbled:** a microblog post on Tumblr
- +1'd:** a click on the Google+ +1 button
- Vlog:** a video blog



*Numbers are approximate and current as of April 13, 2012

Peace Corps Social Media Sites

- facebook.com/peacecorps
- twitter.com/peacecorps
- flickr.com/peacecorps
- youtube.com/peacecorps
- peacecorps.tumblr.com
- linkedin.com/company/peace-corps

Office Reorganized to Emphasize Third Goal



The office dedicated to providing career assistance to returned Volunteers recently reorganized in an effort to better implement Peace Corps' commitment to the Third Goal: "To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans."

The Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services is staffed entirely by RPCVs, including its director, Eileen Conoboy (RPCV/Mali, 1995-1997). They work daily to help RPCVs of all ages transition back to the U.S.

On the home front, the agency will actively encourage RPCVs, PCV families, and other friends of the Peace Corps to participate more vigorously in Third Goal activities. In addition to these efforts, the office will coordinate and oversee the Coverdell World Wise Schools (CWWS) program and Returned Volunteer Services (RVS).

With this reorganization, the office hopes to capture Volunteers' perspectives on new ways to integrate Third Goal activities into Peace Corps service. Volunteers and RPCVs are encouraged to email thirdgoal@peacecorps.gov with insights on their own successful Third Goal activities or ideas.

RVS also remains dedicated to serving the RPCV population with its career and transitioning needs. In fact,



Peace Corps staff members provide advice to RPCVs during the RPCV Career Conference in Washington, D.C.

it enjoyed record numbers at its Winter 2012 RPCV Career Conference, which took place at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C., February 27 to March 3. This weeklong event attracted nearly 400 RPCVs from around the country—a substantial increase from last fall's conference.

The conference included new interactive sessions, such as one-on-one resume review stations that provided individualized feedback and the inaugural "Take an RPCV to Work Day." On March 1, RPCV conference participants shadowed employees at local organizations and agencies. This provided them with the opportunity to network while sharing stories of their Peace Corps experience with participating employers.

rience with participating employers.

In addition to two national RPCV Career Conferences each year (the next one is tentatively scheduled for September 2012), smaller-scale regional career events will be conducted in Chicago, Denver, and San Francisco. The office will also continue to offer monthly webinars on a variety of career-related topics so RPCVs throughout the U.S. and around the world can participate.

Visit peacecorps.gov/rpcv/events for the latest listing of events (new events will be posted as they are confirmed). Also be sure to visit peacecorps.gov/rpcv and peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal for additional career and Third Goal resources.

CWWS Still Going Strong

"The whole key to teaching geography is finding ways for kids to make some sort of connection, personally, with a culture. What better way than to write to a friend who lives there?"

Such words were penned by a seventh-grade teacher from Maine in 1991. She was writing in reference to what is now known as the Coverdell World Wise Schools (CWWS) program—named for the Peace Corps Director (Paul D. Coverdell) who launched the program in September 1989. A full-time office was established at Peace Corps headquarters to coordinate the program in April of 1990 and 10 schools in the Houston area were among the first recognized as CWWS partners.

"Through the exchange of letters, artwork, artifacts, and other educational materials, the Volunteer will serve as a window for U.S. students to view and experience new countries and cultures," Coverdell said to students and staff at Conley Elementary School in Houston on February 9, 1990.

Within a year of its founding, all 50 states were represented, with nearly 3,000 teachers expressing an interest in the program during its infancy.

Countless Volunteers and nearly 7,500 teachers/classrooms have participated in the program, with 3,662 Volunteers currently being paired with a classroom in the U.S. As a result, it is estimated that nearly 600,000 students benefit from the program annually.

While written correspondence was the medium of choice at the program's outset, today's technology finds some Volunteers posting videos of their homes and villages on YouTube to present an innovative picture of their everyday lives to students back in the U.S.

Macedonia Volunteer Helene Wade regularly corresponds with her CWWS partner, a second-grade classroom at Ronceverte (West Virginia) Elementary School. Providing students the opportunity to learn about a foreign culture in a safe environment, Wade is able to chat with them by Skype on a monthly basis.

However, CWWS Program Analyst Jocelyn Sarmiento also points toward the benefits of corresponding by mail. "We live in a culture of immediate gratification and it becomes more and more difficult for teachers and students to fathom a way of life that doesn't involve sharing information at the click of a button. This is what I really appreciate about Peace Corps' correspondence match program—it's a chance for American students and teachers to share in a PCV's challenges and experiences in an extremely real and practical way. When they have to wait six weeks to hear from their PCV, it's a reminder that other places in the world still don't have the luxury of a reliable postal system."

Go to peacecorps.gov/wws for more information or to register for the program.

Peace Corps Response Wants You!

Is your service coming to a close? Have you considered serving in another country with the Peace Corps? Peace Corps Response has many great positions that will begin this summer and fall. Go to peacecorps.gov/response for a complete listing.

Country	Start Date	Position	Language Required
Benin	September	Music Teacher	French
Benin	September	Visual Arts Teacher	French
Burkina Faso	July	Organization Development Advisor	High Level Proficiency Written/Spoken French
Guyana	August	Special Education Teacher—Deaf Ed	English
Guyana	August	Youth Deaf Development Specialist	English
Liberia	August	Associate Professor of Teacher Training—Math	English
Liberia	August	Associate Professor of Teacher Training—Biology	English
Liberia	August	Science Teacher	English
Liberia	August	English Teacher	English
Liberia	August	Math Teacher	English
Mexico	August	University English Teacher	Intermediate Spanish
Mexico	November	Tech Transfer Volunteers	Advanced Spanish
Sierra Leone	September	Lecturer in Physics	English
Sierra Leone	September	Lecturer in Chemistry	English
Sierra Leone	September	Lecturer in Mathematics	English
Sierra Leone	September	Mathematics Teacher/Lecturer	English
Sierra Leone	September	Lecturer in English Language	English
Ukraine	August	University Educator and Teacher Trainer	Intermediate Ukrainian or Russian

Making a Difference—One Briquette at a Time

By JAROD RING | PCV RWANDA

Many organizations around the world are working to reduce the impact of deforestation in national parks, in part to protect the habitat of mountain gorillas. One of those initiatives is the Village Briquette Factories Initiative started by Virunga National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It has created a combustible biomass briquette that is an ecologically sustainable fuel alternative to charcoal.

The great thing about these briquettes is they do not require destruction of forests or habitats to produce because they are made from biomass materials such as agricultural waste, leaves, grass, and scrap paper and sawdust. In addition, they are sold at half the price of charcoal.

I was fortunate to accompany two of my Rwandan counterparts to the Village Briquette Factory training in northern Rwanda on the outskirts of Virunga National Park. After the two-day training and with the help of my partnering non-governmental organization (NGO), we were able to purchase a briquette press and supplemental materials. They were



A member of Volunteers Jarod and Sarah Ring's community uses a press to make briquettes. Used as an alternative to charcoal, the briquettes are made from sawdust left over from local carpenters and scrap paper from the local schools.

transported to my village on the outskirts of another park, Nyungwe Forest National Park, the largest mid-altitude rain forest in Eastern and Central Africa and one of the most ancient, dating back to before the Ice Age. Unfortunately, Nyungwe Forest National Park has seen its fair share of deforestation over the years as well.

In no time, three workers were hired and trained and the briquette factory was up and running. Soon the factory was producing over 300 briquettes a day. Our briquettes are made from sawdust left over from local carpenters and scrap paper from the local schools. However, at times, the school runs out of paper and



there is none to be found in the village. To solve this, factory workers came up with a mud/clay mixture used to manufacture bricks and roof tiles. Combined with sawdust, it proved to be very efficient, with minimal smoke and a good burn time.

Now, with the construction of a community kitchen nearly complete and rocket stoves designed to work with briquettes, the effects of deforestation are sure to continually decline. More community members will soon learn the importance of briquette use, others will be employed at the factory, and village resources and materials will continue to be recycled in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way.

The Village Briquette Factory Initiative is very promising and has the potential to radically change the impact of deforestation. It was a wonderful secondary project for me and my wife, supporting our primary project of improving community health care through recycling solid waste, thus improving community sanitation.

(Jarod Ring is a health extension agent Volunteer from Alma, Arkansas. He serves with his wife, Sarah Ring. They are both scheduled to close their service in 2012.)



Agency News

Familiar Names Among Top PCV-Producers

There are many familiar names among the 2012 rankings of the top Peace Corps Volunteer-producing colleges and universities.

The University of Colorado Boulder outpaced other large universities with 112 undergraduate alumni currently serving overseas, duplicating the top spot it held in 2011. In the medium school category, The George Washington University ranks number one for the fourth consecutive year, with 78 undergraduate alumni serving overseas. And, for the second year in a row, the University of Mary Washington tops the small school category, with 29 undergraduate alumni currently serving.

The University of Florida holds the top spot in the graduate school category with 30 currently serving Volunteers holding master's degrees from the school. It was in second place

last year. Historically, the University of California, Berkeley maintains the number one all-time rank, with 3,497 Peace Corps Volunteer alumni.

This year, Howard University in Washington, D.C., holds the top rank for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) with 17 undergraduate alumni serving as Volunteers. California State University, Fullerton holds the top rank among Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs) with 27 undergraduate alumni serving.

Michigan Technological University holds the top spot for Master's International schools with 31 students currently serving as Volunteers worldwide. The University of Denver is the top Paul D. Coverdell Fellows program with 77 returned Peace Corps Volunteers enrolled as students.

Go to peacecorps.gov to see where your alma mater ranks.

Peace Corps Response Expands Program

A recent expansion of the Peace Corps Response program now allows Americans with at least 10 years of work experience and required language skills to apply for positions overseas. The program, which has historically only been available to returned Volunteers, helps the agency further meet a demand for trained men and women.

"This is an exciting opportunity for more Americans to serve with

Peace Corps and help us better meet the needs of our host country partners. Peace Corps Response assignments are challenging, but for Americans with significant work experience and an interest in serving overseas, the assignments are extremely rewarding," said Director Aaron S. Williams.

Nepal Welcomes Back PCVs

Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Assistant Administrator for Asia Nisha Biswal signed an inter-agency agreement to re-establish a Peace Corps program in Nepal after a seven-year absence. The agreement was signed at a ceremony at Peace Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. Attending the event were Nepali Ambassador to the United States Shankar Prasad Sharma, Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asian Affairs Robert O. Blake, Jr., and returned Peace Corps Volunteers from Nepal.

"The partnership between Peace Corps and Nepal originated in 1962, during Peace Corps' early years, and it is an honor and a privilege for us to have the opportunity to renew our work with Nepal," said Williams.

The first group of approximately 20 Volunteers is scheduled to arrive in Nepal later this year and will be trained as agriculture-nutrition extensionists.

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A publication for Peace Corps Volunteers serving worldwide

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NOTES *from the* FIELD

A Brief Look at Posts and Projects

Malawi

Volunteer Oversees Music Workshop

Thirty aspiring musicians, ages 13 to 23, participated in the third annual Malawi Music Project, organized by Volunteer Phillip Rich (2010-2012) and his Malawian community. The weeklong camp included sessions on music composition, harmony, rhythm, improvisation, and music appreciation.

On the first day of camp, participants were split into three bands and assigned a band manager. Throughout the week, each band worked to compose an original song with choreography that was then performed at a “Battle of the Bands” on the last day of camp.



Participants give music lessons during the Malawi Music Project.

Zambia

Carpentry Trainings, Workshop Offered

Volunteer Nathaniel Quesenberry (2010-2012) organized a series of carpentry trainings and is building a workshop with a group of Zambian farmers. The project teaches farmers basic carpentry skills and provides them with proper tools and a building with six large carpentry benches that have space for two to three individuals. Quesenberry is also organizing four trainings to teach participants about furniture making. Each two-day workshop will be conducted by a professional carpenter in the area. Training also includes financial sessions and lessons about creating tree nurseries and plant seedlings to replace trees used for furniture.



Zambian farmers are learning carpentry skills with Peace Corps Volunteer Nathaniel Quesenberry.

Sierra Leone

Girls Benefit From Leadership Conference

More than 60 girls attended sessions aimed to promote gender equality and empower young women during the first “Girls Leading and Developing Sierra Leone” conference. During the conference, 20 Volunteers worked with local community members to teach girls about such topics as leadership, self-esteem building, and healthy lifestyle choices. Additionally, participants attended a panel discussion led by Sierra Leonean women who have been successful in various fields of work.

Madagascar

Cultural Center Benefits Those at-risk of HIV/AIDS

Health Volunteer Glenda Guzman (2010-2012) created a cultural center for adolescents at-risk of HIV/AIDS. The center contains a 3,000-book library that includes a media/recreational component. Community members must buy an annual membership card that allows them to take books home for a week, watch educational films, and play board games.

Proceeds from membership fees are used to pay a librarian’s salary and buy supplies. An HIV/AIDS awareness carnival and parade was held during the inauguration of the center, bringing together more than 600 students from 11 private and public schools. A little over a month into its opening, the cultural center already had 200 members.



Children celebrate the opening of a cultural center to benefit adolescents at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS.

Georgia

Film and Media Promotes Tourism

Volunteer Ruta Casabianca (2010-2012) developed and narrated four informational documentary films highlighting the history, landscape, and attractions of her south-central Georgian village. Since July 2010, Casabianca has been working with a local nongovernmental organization to provide support to regional television stations through program development, fundraising, and management in an effort to strengthen independent media and keep community members informed.

Thailand

Mosquito Traps Used to Combat Dengue Fever

Volunteer Roger Brubaker (2011-2013) is working with his Thai community to prevent incidences of dengue fever by promoting the use of homemade mosquito traps. To date, Brubaker has helped more than 900 community members build the mosquito ovitraps with common household products.

Each house is equipped with about six traps, which are made with bamboo, a 1.25-liter soda bottle, a metal screen, thumbtacks, paperclips, grass, water, and a dark cloth. According to the World Health Organization, dengue fever is a mosquito-borne viral infection that causes flu-like illness that can develop into a potentially deadly complication.



Volunteer Roger Brubaker demonstrates how to make an ovitrap.

Ukraine

Greenhouses Benefit Community Members

Volunteer Jessica Jackman (2010-2012) is working with her Ukrainian community to build two greenhouses equipped with solar-powered heating and irrigation systems. The systems will pump water to plants and provide heat and electricity for the greenhouses during the winter. Fruits and vegetables grown in the greenhouses will be sold to community members at a below-market price, and will be used in lunches at the local school. Additionally, Jackman helped community members apply for and administer grants to modernize the water system and provide potable drinking water.



Shown are a few students who will benefit from produce grown in solar-powered greenhouses being built with the help of Volunteer Jessica Jackman.

Costa Rica

Bike Ride Promotes Healthy Lifestyle Choices

Volunteers Marissa Strniste (2011-2013) and Julia Lockamy (2010-2012) organized a 375-kilometer (233-mile) bike ride across Costa Rica, going from the border of Nicaragua to the border of Panama. Community members, fellow Volunteers, and staff members accompanied Strniste and Lockamy throughout various legs of the ride and helped lead community discussions on healthy lifestyle choices along the way.

Discussion topics included healthy eating habits, exercise, and the impact lifestyle choices can have on families and communities. Throughout the trip, local participants were asked questions about their daily life choices and given educational materials on the benefits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.



Costa Rica Volunteers (from left) Julia Lockamy, Kristen Lucas, Nicole Budziou, and Marissa Strniste celebrate at the Panamanian border after completing a 233-mile bike ride.

Paraguay

Business Development Skills Taught to Youth

The first “Young Entrepreneurs of Paraguay” workshop was recently held in Asunción. Volunteers Lindsay Fay (2010-2012), Mario Leiva (2010-2012), Brett Michaelson (2010-2012), Maureen Stickel (2010-2012), and Casey Weston (2010-2012) coordinated the event, with 39 youth in attendance. They enjoyed sessions on topics relevant to business development and entrepreneurship, including marketing and career planning.

Several organizations donated resources to the workshop and five young Paraguayan entrepreneurs shared personal success stories during guest speaking sessions. On the final day of the workshop, participants worked in small groups to create successful business plans that were then presented to a panel of judges.