

## **News:** Director of Peace Corps Jody K. Olsen visits Macedonia



In April, Peace Corps Macedonia was very proud to welcome the new Director of Peace Corps Jody K. Olsen to Macedonia! Making her first official overseas visit in her new capacity, Director Olsen opened the Peace Corps Country Directors workshop for programs in the Europe, Asia, and Mediterranean Region, and met with Prime Minister Zoran Zaev. The Conference featured 17 Country Directors from as far away as Morocco and the Philippines.

Over the course of two days, the Peace Corps Director visited with 35 Peace Corps Volunteers living and working in villages and towns throughout the country serving in the Education, Community Development, and Special Needs sectors. She met with and expressed gratitude to local school directors, students, beneficiaries

with special needs, counterparts, host families, and NGOs that work with Volunteers, and was honored by their passion and dedication to the mission of Peace Corps.

With 95 currently serving Volunteers, and approximately 50 who arrive every September to begin their 27-month service, Peace Corps Macedonia represents the single-largest, American workforce in the country

## **News:** Mayors' Forum: Collaborating with Peace Corps Volunteers



In March, Peace Corps Macedonia organized the first Mayors' Forum as part of its promotion and site identification strategy. This event that brought together 48 Mayors from across Macedonia and other local government representatives. During the forum, Peace Corps Macedonia shared its successes from the past period and officially launched the 2018 Call for Applications.

At the Mayors' Forum, the Mayors had an opportunity to meet Volunteers working in municipalities, schools, and institutions in the

area of special needs and hear their stories. They also heard testimonies from Mayors and counterparts who currently work with Volunteers. Country Director Mark Hannafin and Ambassador Jess Baily gave an overview of the Peace Corps legacy in Macedonia up to date.

The Ministry of Local Self-Government, as one of the Peace Corps national partner in Macedonia, gave full support in organizing the Forum. Minister Suhejl Fazliu addressed the participants expressing the Ministry's dedication to partner with the Peace Corps and to be part of the cross-cultural and professional exchange between the two countries, especially at the local level.

## News: Macedonian English Essay Challenge 2018



On April 27th, Peace Corps Macedonia held the Macedonian English Essay Award Ceremony and celebrated the ten essay winners for this year. This year's contest required students to write



on the following topic: "What power do you have inside yourself that you can use to change the world? How specifically can you use that power to change the community around you?" Participants submitted thoughtful reflections on how they could potentially make a positive contribution to the development of their own communities.

Ambassador Baily addressed the winners, Peace Corps staff and Volunteers, and the national partner for this event, the National Examination Centre. He also awarded all winners with books and gave tickets for the 4th of July picnic organized at the Embassy to the three first place award winners. Congratulations to the winners and good luck in their future endeavors!

## **News: Minister Carovska meets Peace Corps Volunteers serving in Macedonia**



On May 4th, twelve Peace Corps Volunteers serving in the field of Special Needs together with Mark Hannafin, the Director of Peace Corps Macedonia, met with the Minister for Labor and Social Policy, Mila Carovska. At the meeting Volunteers shared their successes in

supporting beneficiaries with special needs in the state institutions and daily centers across Macedonia.

Volunteers used this meeting as an opportunity to talk about their collaboration with local staff and the successful implementation of projects and activities that include: trainings for parents, development of new program activities, trainings on life skills, development of teaching resources and vocational skills for people with special needs.

Minister Carovska highlighted the importance of the on-going process of de-institutionalization and thanked Volunteers for their contribution to the efforts for social inclusion of people with special needs.

## **Activity: SPA Project in Kriva Palanka**



Since he arrived in Kriva Palanka in December 2016, PCV Kyle has been leading and developing a public health and after school program for over 200 young people, boys and girls aged 6-17. The "athletes" (as they are called) are members of the Team Kriva Palanka project. The athletes participate in weekly athletic trainings

designed to help them grow as healthy, active citizens and community leaders who are prepared to develop themselves and their community. In sport terms, Team Kriva Palanka prepares young people to win in sports and in life by providing them with the skills and experience to do so.

Team Kriva Palanka earned support from the Peace Corps Macedonia Small Grants Program in January 2018. The project further expanded the ongoing work and aimed at improving physical health of participating athletes by 50% through measurable testing and monitoring of hip mobility, flexibility, stability, strength and explosiveness; as well as at preparing local sports club coaches to take over the entire program by June 1.

All trainings were filmed by sports club coaches, and posted on YouTube and [Facebook](#). Funding was used to purchase basic athletic training and sports equipment and to organize two female development camps led by Macedonian professional athletes in karate and basketball, which included 100 female athletes ages 6-17.

## Volunteers' Haikus

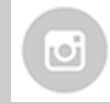
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(Остин Ендруз)

Pranvera erdhi  
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Kur bora gjithë shkoi

(Alyssa Smalley)

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