

Celebrating 45 years of service
back page

Peace Corps Times

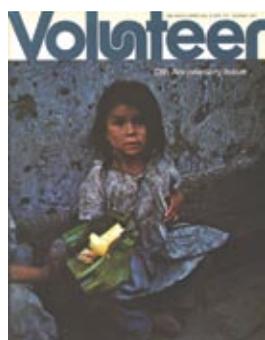
spring 2006

1960s



THE TASKS WILL BE ARDUOUS, SOMETIMES HAZARDOUS AND FREQUENTLY FRUSTRATING. (JUNE 1961)

1970s



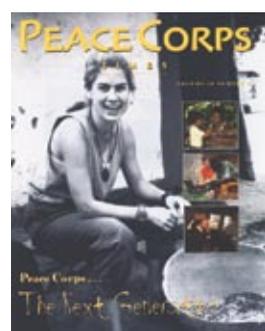
THE GENERALIST CONTINUES TO PLAY A MAJOR ROLE, BUT JOINING THE RANKS HAVE BEEN THOSE WITH SPECIALIZED SKILLS. (SUMMER 1971)

1980s



YOU HAVE ANSWERED THAT CALL TO MAKE THE WORLD A BRIGHTER DAY. (MAY 1985)

1990s



AS THE WORLD VILLAGE BECOMES MORE COMPACT, IT IS VITAL THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THEIR GLOBAL NEIGHBORS. (FALL 1990)

The Changing Peace Corps Experience

To commemorate the 45th anniversary, the Peace Corps Times staff would like to showcase Volunteer projects from the past and present—providing snapshots of how Volunteer life has changed over time, while recognizing the similarities.

To capture the experience of Volunteers of yore, we scoured old issues of Peace Corps publications to look for unique, yet typical, projects and then compared them to projects of current Volunteers.

Education

“In my case it certainly differs since instead of teaching English, I am teaching computers and technology,” current Tonga Volunteer JoAnn Matray says. “The children are learning with up-to-date software like Windows XP.”

Although teaching English is still the largest program area, Peace Corps Volunteers across the globe are being asked to supplement traditional subjects with technology classes or to integrate technology into classrooms. Thus, Volunteers like JoAnn have developed viable computer labs in their villages and are teaching computer and technology education classes to local community members and students. Yet, beyond the technology, the struggles of being a teacher in a new culture remain relatively the same.

Wrote Blair Butterworth from Ghana in 1963: “The problem is that these kids have had so few experiences in their childhood. Maybe that is cultural, but bicycles, camping, all the subjects of most

textbooks, just do not fit over here. But if you keep to their limited experiences, you cannot prepare them for the Certificate or expand their vocabulary. So, the teacher becomes a guide through life. One tries and fails, but bit by bit they pick it up, and as they know it is all so important for them, they work hard.”

Business Development

“By producing these fish, the women are tapping into an underdeveloped market that the community has a need for, which will result into large profits in the future,” says current Benin Volunteer Eva Lewis.

In the small business development sector, current Volunteers like Eva are using marketing and accounting principles to launch businesses. With global economic opportunities emerging, Volunteers have helped businesses reach markets unheard of decades ago. Yet, for most Volunteers, business development still includes thinking locally. In most cases, Volunteers are helping to increase production or marketing in new ways, as Eva has done with the five women’s groups who produce and sell agricultural products like tomatoes, peppers, palm oil and even fish.

Wrote Tom Scanlon from Chile in 1963: “From the very beginning we had explained to our people that the project was an experiment. Now came the crucial moment in the whole experience: was it possible to compete on the local markets with the large producers in Santiago?

We sold cheaply—three heads of lettuce for 100 pesos. At this price we not only made a substantial profit, but we also made vegetables available to people for whom they are too expensive at the usual market prices.”

Youth/Sports

“Every day we have practice I try to teach my kids something that they can use in every day life, outside of our practice field,” says current Honduras Volunteer Erin Wehage.

Sports have always been a popular secondary and primary project for Volunteers to develop in their host countries. Current Volunteers like Erin have formed baseball teams and are working to build parks to play in. Today, Volunteers can draw resources from family and friends, and on grants from the NBA or MLB, both of which have donated sporting equipment to Volunteer projects. Global shipping has made getting equipment easier. Yet, the fundamental idea of bringing new experiences to people continues to be the passion for most Volunteers.

Wrote Nelson Black from Chile in 1963: “The Chileans play our game with a spirit of brotherly love which would have driven the competitive Ty Cobb to distraction. Instead of the umpire-baiting professionals we are familiar with in the U.S., here the players have warm embraces for everyone on both sides before and during the game.”

Continued on page 3

THE LEGACY OF THE LEGACY

As the Peace Corps celebrates 45 years of service, the call to volunteer has begun to span through the generations. Those who were inspired by President Kennedy’s original message have brought their own experiences into their homes, creating Peace Corps legacy families, many of whom will be featured on the Peace Corps Web site throughout the year.

“People join the Peace Corps today for the same reasons we did in 1977—to find meaning in their lives, to be useful and to give back,” says Pat Goggin, who served in Colombia with her husband. Their experience shaped their family’s values,

and inspired their two children, Max and Molly, who currently serve in Honduras, to follow in their footsteps.

Children of returned Volunteers who decide to join find a unique family support system that most others do not have.

“It’s definitely nice to be able to talk to my sister and my parents to share frustrations, successes, or ask for advice,” says Lauren Head, a Volunteer in Nicaragua whose sister Connie Head is currently serving in Honduras, and whose parents, aunt and uncle also served. “They really know what I’m talking about.”

“One major advantage we have is that they understand why being a Volunteer is so important and what motivates a person to leave their family and friends in the U.S. and take off to a developing country for two years,” says Connie.



At left: Pat Goggin sits with three children at her site in Colombia in the late 1970s.



At right: Steve and Pat visit their two children, Max and Molly, who currently serve in Honduras.

OPSI: Helping Communities to Help Themselves

Whether it is a library or youth camp, where an idea exists, there is almost always a need for funding.

Only a few years after the creation of the Peace Corps, returned Volunteer feedback continually mentioned the need for project funding assistance. From this suggestion the Office of Private Sector Initiatives (OPSI) was born, creating the School to School program.

Now into its forty-second year, OPSI, headed by Nanci Brannan, has changed its scope and program name, but not the fundamental focus. Peace Corps Partnership program, previously called School to School, facilitates partnerships between Volunteers that request funding for their local projects and donors who want to fund these projects.

Anytime Volunteers want to develop a project in their community, they should start with OPSI, said Elena Coleman, who is an OPSI program specialist. OPSI will then help Volunteers find organizations and individuals that can donate money or supplies to make the project a reality.

Last year, over \$1.25 million was raised to fund Volunteer projects, both big and small. The majority of contributions come from unique donors—those who donate one time only to a specific project or Volunteer. OPSI receives gifts including books, clothes, and money from over 5,000 donors of this type each year.

While these unique donors are an important part of project funding, OPSI has many long-term relationships with organizations and individuals that will fund projects year after year, including the Oak Park Council on International Affairs in Oak Park, Ill., and two schools in Syracuse, N.Y., that have raised \$100,000 over the past 22 years.

Other long-term partnerships have been established with churches, rotary clubs and returned Volunteer groups across the U.S. As an example, the Returned Volunteers of Wisconsin-Madison annually produce and sell calendars, donating the profits to Partnership projects. In south Florida, returned Volunteers hold dinners to raise funds.

Currently, OPSI has listed on its Web site over 100 Volunteer projects requesting funds. The majority of these projects fall in the few hundred dollars to \$5,000 range, which increases the likelihood of their being funded.



After a primary school in her Ugandan village was damaged in a storm, Megan Chandler completed a Partnership grant. The rebuilding is now almost complete.

“Donors want to make an impact, not a drop in the bucket,” said Coleman, who recommends setting goals that will not overwhelm donors.

Once listed on the Web site, projects in this price range take, on average, three months to be fully funded. To receive funding through Partnership Program, a community must make a 25 percent contribution to the total project, which can be in the form of materials. This helps ensure a greater chance of long-term sustainability, and ultimately, success.

OPSI encourages Volunteers who receive funding to communicate with their donors while the project is being carried out, and after it is completed. Donors enjoy this communication with Volunteers, Coleman said, because they see how their contribution is helping the people in the Volunteers’ communities. And as these partnerships between Volunteers and donors in the U.S. grow, so does the Peace Corps mission.

For more information visit www.peacecorps.gov/contribute

DIRECTOR'S FORUM

Nearly 45 years ago, while addressing the first Peace Corps Volunteers to go abroad, President John F. Kennedy had these words to share, “So I hope you realize—I know you do—that the future of the Peace Corps really rests with you. If you do well, then the Peace Corps will be developed and more and more Americans will go abroad and will find a greater and greater response to this idea of serving our country.”

By June 1962, a total of 1,051 individuals were selected, and for most, it was the first time they had set foot on another continent. I have tremendous admiration for those first Volunteers who served as Peace Corps’ pioneers. The unknown did not stop them from realizing their visions. They paved the way for all future Volunteers, creating a legacy of hard work, commitment and benevolence that awaited you and all future Volunteers. New Volunteers are welcomed into communities today—from the smallest villages in Africa to the largest cities in Eastern Europe—as a result of the reputation of generations

of Volunteers. While being a Volunteer certainly has moments of frustration, you should be proud that communities are requesting Peace Corps Volunteers in record numbers because Volunteers prove themselves time and time again.

I see many similarities between the initial Peace Corps Volunteers and those of you serving today. While you may not be the first American to serve in your host country, you are a trailblazer nonetheless. In a post 9-11 world, you have the opportunity to build the cross-cultural understanding needed to ensure a future where global peace, friendship and prosperity can thrive. As globalization continues and new technologies make the people of Africa, the Pacific, and the world our neighbors, the mark you leave on the communities you serve will have an importance never before seen. The student you assist with English or computer skills today may become your colleague or business associate tomorrow.

In carrying out the Peace Corps mission, the concept of bringing your experience home has never



Director Vasquez and the first Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver recently honored those who have shaped the world through Peace Corps service.

been more obtainable. The technology bridge has not only allowed you to share your experience with friends and family, but has given Partnership donors the ability to see your projects firsthand, has provided schoolchildren with the opportunity to talk to you while looking at digital photos, and has given those interested in joining a clearer picture of what the next few years of their life will be like.

So, take advantage of the fact that you are serving at this historical time. Your service in the Peace Corps will come to an end, but the connections you make will last a lifetime. You may be surprised how years from now a connection to the past could shape your destiny.

Notes

ALBANIA

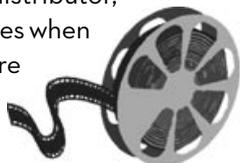
In 2004, Volunteer Gary Wimberly founded the Bunker Trail in Butrint National Park. Tour guides now promote the trail as a premier excursion that highlights Albania's beauty, and it has been featured in tourism publications across the world.

ARMENIA

In 1998, a Volunteer helped his community obtain a \$50,000 U.S. Department of Agriculture loan to start the first plastic bottle manufacturing enterprise in Armenia.

BULGARIA

Volunteer Suzanne Pazandak's work with a group of 15 youth opened the only youth-run movie theater in Bulgaria. Today, the youth continue to be responsible for everything from selling tickets to maintaining contact with the movie distributor, to ordering supplies when needed. Profits are put into a fund for activities.

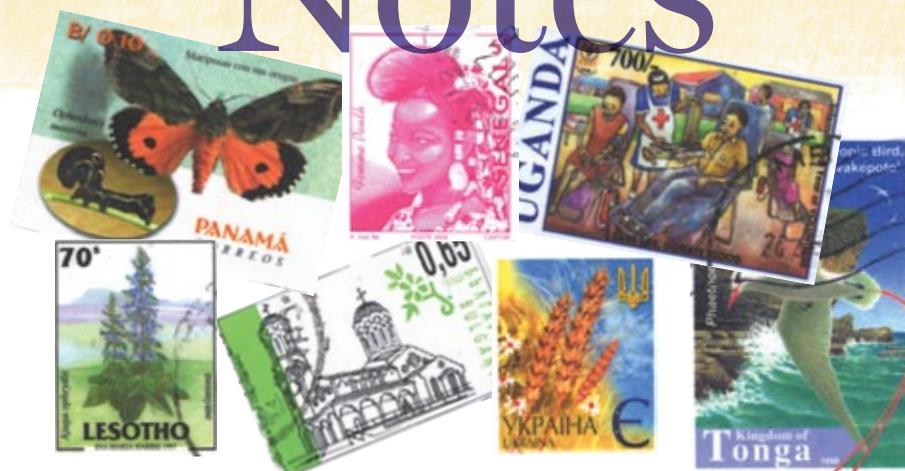


BURKINA FASO

Developed in 1998, "SIDA Stop" (Stop AIDS) is a grass-roots effort with a strong level of commitment. Through training and ongoing day-to-day assistance, community groups have established and trained everyone from nurses to community leaders about the dangers of HIV/AIDS. The training has been a proven way for the Ministry of Health to implement programs at regional and local levels.

CAMEROON

Volunteers and local farmers requested the right to establish an agroforestry training center from the village chief. The chief gave them some of the most infertile land on a hillside. After six years of implementing agroforestry techniques on the land through the



Peace Corps Legacies From A-to-Z A Look at some of the greatest achievements

RIBA Young Agroforestry Farmers Center, the plot became an oasis in the middle of a desert.

Farmers now come to the center to learn agroforestry techniques.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Peace Corps Volunteers have helped build more than 90 gravity flow aqueducts during the past 12 years. Nearly 90 percent continue to work, and 80 percent of the community water committees are also still functioning.

EASTERN CARIBBEAN

The Coal Pot project started as a youth skills training program through the Dominica Youth Division, headed by two Peace Corps Volunteers, and has since grown into a respected business that produces a variety of handmade herbal body products sold around the world.



YOUTH DIVISION, headed by two Peace Corps Volunteers, and has since grown into a respected business that produces a variety of handmade herbal body products sold around the world.

EL SALVADOR

In 1971, a Volunteer in El Salvador helped design and establish the Department of Forestry.

KENYA

In response to the Kenyan Ministry of Education's focus on education for children with special needs, the Peace Corps reintroduced deaf education in primary schools and integrated deaf education into other aspects of its education project. In addition to teaching, Volunteers continue to conduct community outreach to educate parents and the community about deafness.

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

In 2002, Kyrgyz President Askar Akaev honored Volunteer Todd Drummond for his work with the government to produce the National Scholarship Test for entrance into college. He is the first foreigner to be honored with such an award in the field of education.

MONGOLIA

As project coordinator in developing the teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL) Mongolia curriculum plan, Volunteer Layton Croft developed a comprehensive TEFL curriculum that covers four years and 500 classroom hours of study. Layton's curriculum also combines TEFL methodological theory with practical classroom ideas.

PERU

President Alejandro Toledo, a strong advocate for the Peace Corps, first encountered Volunteers as a youth. They lived with his family, taught him English, and later helped him gain admission to a college in the U.S. President Toledo later earned his graduate degree at Stanford University. After being elected president in 2001, he invited the Peace Corps to return to Peru after a 27-year absence.

ROMANIA

Volunteer Stephanie Paul co-authored a grant to prevent trafficking in women. The project created the first Romanian organization coalition specifically addressing the trafficking in human persons issue in-country. Stephanie also coordinated the first annual national anti-domestic violence campaign to encourage the development of partnerships among local border police, courts, and the media.

SWAZILAND

Volunteer Richard Romero appears on a Swaziland postage stamp commemorating 25 years of Peace Corps service in-country.

TURKMENISTAN

In December 2003, Jane and Jack Bardon developed a medical dictionary in three languages (Turkmen-English-Russian). It is currently used in all regions of Turkmenistan.

ZAMBIA

One of the ongoing education projects builds on the success of "Learning at Taonga Market." This interactive radio program, started by Volunteers, is produced by the Zambian Ministry of Education, and broadcast over the national radio station, covering the primary school curriculum in a fun, engaging way.



Then & Now Cont'd.

The Volunteer Experience

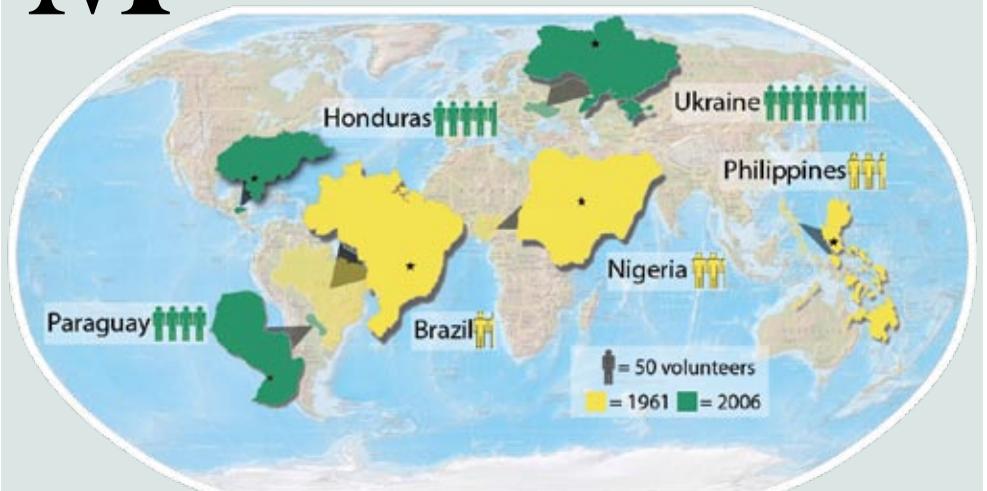
Volunteers throughout the Peace Corps' history have taken initiative with a multitude of projects and had a legacy of success by doing so. While the overall Volunteer experience has more similarities than differences, the one aspect that has changed is communication. Writing a letter, while not yet a novelty, has certainly become less the standard.

As Eva points out, "Communication has greatly improved—the flow of information has been aided by the use of the Internet and cell phones. Having these lines of communication makes it easier on the Volunteer to communicate with other Volunteers, administration, and work partners

concerning work-related issues. Also, it allows Volunteers to stay in touch with family and friends in the U.S., which is always a plus."

Advances in technology have changed the Peace Corps experience in other ways as well. While many host country residents 45 years ago had never seen a foreigner, let alone an American, until a Peace Corps Volunteer arrived in their village, current Volunteers are often compared to television characters and tourists. "They still stare, but it's not a novelty anymore," says Volunteer Erin. "Many people here have TV, and after watching programs from the states, they have a certain kind of 'image' of what someone from the U.S. is like. When we don't fit that mold, it can make things pretty interesting."

MAPPING 45 YEARS OF SERVICE: PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE GLOBE



TOP PEACE CORPS COUNTRIES THEN AND NOW

Partnership at Work: Kosrae Art Project

By Nathan Fitch, Micronesia Volunteer

I arrived in Kosrae, a small volcanic island five degrees north of the equator in the Federated States of Micronesia, in September as the construction was beginning. As is customary in Kosrae with foreigners, I had my identity as Colorado transplant and skateboard fanatic replaced with the local name Paliknoa and found myself in an environment very different from the previous panorama of tall buildings and snow clad mountains. Therefore, it was comforting to find in the Kosrae Art Establishment (KAE) a project on which I could assist, using my recently realized graphic art degree. It was something familiar in a new world where I felt exceedingly awkward at such household tasks as coconut husking or stacking rocks for the local ovens.

Vita Skilling first conceived of the creation of the Kosrae Art Establishment in the summer of 2001, though it would take years to realize her dream. As the mother of Hans, a young Kosraean who showed a ready aptitude and enjoyment for art, she saw a vacuum in the community. Aside from the lack of any classes in art instruction at the schools, there was no place for local youth to share artistic training. Vita communicated her idea to create a place for young artists from around the island.

After witnessing strong community support for the project and meeting with the potential members of KAE, a former Volunteer, Molly Hunt, wrote and received a Peace Corps Partnership grant for the sum of \$5,591, partnered by the UPS Corporation. Unfortunately,

Molly left Kosrae before the project began, leaving fellow Volunteer Megan Luczko to manage the project. The Peace Corps Partnership funds covered the costs of constructing a small local building and stocking it with supplies.

First, Megan and I researched and ordered a stock of supplies for KAE, so that once construction was finished, there would be materials for the artists to begin working. Next, the members of the art center and I planned and painted bright murals of island life onto the exterior walls of the Art center, using oil paints available on the island.

The KAE is now up and running, thanks to assistance from the local visitor's bureau, local artists, community contributions and the efforts of various Peace Corps Volunteers. Since opening its brightly decorated doors, projects have been plentiful, limited only by the busy schedules of the local artists. I have carried out several informal workshops on the use of materials and techniques that were new to the local artists, including acrylic paints, print making with banana stems and computer programs. Members have also expressed interest in digital art and photography.

KAE's recent projects include the design and sale

of bookmarks to a visiting cruise ship, a banner for a community gathering, a billboard commission for an environmental agency in Tofol, and a large-scale mural on the exterior of the Kosrae Historic Museum. It is my sincere hope that the interest and abilities which have been reinforced by this project will encourage creativity and amplify the artistic tendencies of the people of Kosrae.



Peace Corps Turns 45

Celebrating "a legacy of service at home and abroad," the 45th anniversary festivities began with a tribute to the past and the present.

In March, Director Vasquez present the first-ever John F. Kennedy Service Awards in Boston to six recipients who have demonstrated exemplary service and leadership in fulfilling the Peace Corps' mission.

Awards went to current Peace Corps Volunteers Scott Overdyke, serving in Panama, and Barbara Schlieper, serving in Ukraine; Peace Corps staff William Bull, country director in Madagascar, and Munkhjin Tsogt, program manager in Mongolia; and returned Volunteers Tony Gasbarro, who served in the Dominican Republic and El Salvador and Roland Foulkes, who served in Ghana.

Overdyke is playing an integral role implementing an indigenous coffee program in one of the most impoverished communities of Panama. Schlieper has had a genuine impact on the development of the Teaching English as a Foreign Language project for Peace Corps/Ukraine.

In addition, Director Vasquez highlighted the work of Joe Kennedy III, the first member of the Kennedy family to fulfill the mission established by President Kennedy. Joe is serving in the Dominican Republic.

On March 1, an event on Capitol Hill recognized the five current members of the U.S. House of Representatives and one senator who served in the Peace Corps, in addition to others who have supported the Peace Corps mission. Special guests included first Peace Corps Director Sargent Shriver and Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts. For more information please visit www.peacecorps.gov/45

Even Greater Adventures

A new version of "The Great Adventure" book that is read by almost everyone considering service was released on March 1, now titled "A Life Inspired: Tales of Peace Corps Service."

Cambodia Program Begins

Cambodia will become the 139th country to partner with the Peace Corps when Volunteers begin serving early next year.

"Cambodia, with its growing economy, is an ideal partner as the Peace Corps looks to expand into new countries where volunteers have never had the opportunity to serve before," said Director Gaddi H. Vasquez.

Dedication to Volunteers Earns Award

NAME: Munkhjin Tsogt
TITLE: Assistant Program Manager, Peace Corps/Mongolia

AWARD: Kennedy Service Award winner for outstanding staff

LEGACY: Munkhjin assisted in the design of Peace Corps/Mongolia's first ever youth development program.

She also organized



Director Vasquez presents a Kennedy Award to Munkhjin Tsogt.

a networking fair for Volunteers to increase their visibility with development agencies and co-founded the "Safe Migration" educational program, which helps Volunteers in all sectors take preventive measures in their communities against the growing problem of human trafficking.

VOLUNTEERS SAY: "Munkhjin goes out of her way to make sure Volunteers are comfortable and well integrated into their community. She has amazing energy and cares deeply about both the people of Mongolia and about Volunteers.

"Munkhjin very successfully acts as a bridge between both cultures and is able to clarify and explain differences to both Mongolians and Americans. Above all, she's

always interested in learning more."
-Volunteer Action Committee of Mongolia

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