



PEACE
CORPS

Times

INSIDE ISSUE 3, 2013

EDUCATION &
YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT

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The Quest to Become an Educated Man

As a child in an Ethiopian refugee camp, Nhial Malia (Ghana, 2010–13) attended school under a tree with a mud blackboard. He and the other refugee children would mimic the strange language spoken by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees workers who drove Land Cruisers and role play their visits: “The smart kids always played the important roles. I never got picked to play the important person like the person who rode in the Land Cruiser.”

When Malia asked his mother why some people were important and she wasn’t, she told him it was because she did not go to school and that was why they were in a refugee camp.

It was then that Malia decided he would pursue his education seriously.

“I decided that I wanted to pay the price and make the sacrifices to become an educated man,” Malia said. “I wanted to change the course of my family history for good; I wanted to start something that was never done in my family. From then on, I made my mind up to stop complaining and



PCV Nhial Malia stands outside the PC/Ghana office. Malia returned to Africa for Peace Corps 12 years after he left as a refugee originally from South Sudan.

blaming others for my problems of not being educated.”

Malia came to the United States in July 1998 as a refugee originally from what is now South Sudan. He was 11 years old. His family had fled to refugee

camps in Ethiopia in 1988 and again in 1992. The second time, five of his six siblings died en route. His father was presumed dead; his mother supported him and his brother by selling maize and homemade alcohol.



PCV Malia (left) talks to a Ghanaian counterpart about the history of slavery at the Salaga Slave Market historical site during an HIV/AIDS camp in 2011.

When his uncle and aunt got the opportunity to come to the States, his uncle asked to take Malia—his brother’s oldest surviving son—with him so he could provide for the boy’s well-being. The family settled in Houston, where Malia attended a

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Letter from the Acting Director

Dear Peace Corps Family,

As always, the health, safety, and security of our Volunteers are Peace Corps’ highest priorities. I am personally deeply committed to providing Volunteers with the training, guidance and support you need to remain healthy, safe and productive throughout your service.

The Peace Corps has established significant new policies and practices that reflect our strong commitment to reducing risks for Volunteers and responding effectively and compassionately to those who are victims of sexual assault and other crimes.

On September 1, the Peace Corps formally launched the final stages of our Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response program, which has been developed over the past few years in consultation with post staff and Volunteers worldwide, as well as nationally recognized experts, including recommendations from the Department of Justice; the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN); and the Peace Corps’ newly developed Sexual Assault Advisory Council.

With their help, we have developed a two-pronged approach. The first part is to reduce risks through training for Volunteers, including bystander intervention, risk assessment, and other skill-building sessions during pre- and in-service training; the second part is to ensure that Peace Corps staff responds effectively and compassionately when incidents do occur, through staff training, the new Office of Victim Advocacy, and the appointment of trained sexual assault response liaisons at each post.

This new strategy incorporates more than 30 policy changes, extensive training for Volunteers and staff, and new clearly defined procedures for reducing the risk of sexual assault and responding to Volunteers who are victims of sexual assault. The program exceeds the requirements of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act, signed by President Obama in November 2011, reflecting our ironclad commitment to the physical and emotional well-being of every single Volunteer.

Since Congress passed the Kate Puzey Act, the Peace Corps has

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Peace Corps’ Commitment to Volunteers who are Victims of Sexual Assault

- Compassion
- Safety
- Support
- Respect of Privacy
- Open Communication
- Legal Guidance
- Collaborative Discussions on Continuation of Service

Options and Support Available for Volunteers who are Victims of Sexual Assault

- The option for standard or restricted reporting
- Direct support from a sexual assault response liaison and/or victim advocate
- The provision of emergency health care
- A forensic exam, in accordance with host country laws
- Counseling and psychiatric medication, when requested
- A safety and medical treatment plan
- Evacuation for medical and mental health treatment
- Explanation of law enforcement and prosecutorial options
- Legal representation

PCRVs Giving Colombian Youth a Shot through Soccer

In the Atlantic coastal city of Barranquilla, Colombia, as in many parts of the world, soccer is not just a sport: It's a way of life. While many Peace Corps/Colombia Volunteers develop a love and appreciation for what Colombians call the "world's game" during their service, three Peace Corps Response Volunteers used their soccer experience to help communities in need.

Urban poverty in Barranquilla is staggering. Compounded by unemployment and underemployment, there are few positive growth opportunities for youth. As a result, there is a great need to target vulnerable and at-risk youth aged 5-16 to help develop life skills. In 2012, Peace Corps/Colombia partnered with a local nongovernmental organization, Futbol Con Corazon (FCC, Soccer with Heart), an extracurricular holistic program that focuses on three areas: athletic training using the "soccer for peace" methodology; value-based experiential workshops on gender, conflict resolution, and tolerance; and well-balanced nutrition. One of the key components of FCC is that its youth teams include both boys and girls and emphasize the importance of gender equality. Furthermore, scores are not only kept in goals, but also in terms of how each team used teamwork and sportsmanship during a game.

Peace Corps/Colombia requested the assistance of three Peace Corps



Peace Corps Response Volunteer Andrew Williams and colleagues from Futbol con Corazon take a break during a friendly soccer match.

Response Volunteers (PCRVs) to identify, develop, and support projects for at-risk and vulnerable youth, especially of traditionally underprivileged ethnic groups such as the large Afro-Colombian population of the Caribbean Region. Volunteers Jarrett Carpenter, Eric Siegel, and Andrew Williams all had extensive backgrounds working with youth, as well as many years of experience playing soccer at the college level. With FCC, Carpenter, Siegel, and Williams were able to apply their experiences in a development context.

Once they arrived in Barranquilla, the post placed the PCRVs in three different camps that served about 100 kids at

each site. During their 12-month assignment, they collectively developed the resources of organizations in Barranquilla that work with youth, set up a Facebook page for all Volunteers working with youth worldwide, and collaborated in planning and implementing after school programs and camps. Aside from their collaborative work, each implemented additional projects that aligned with his assigned location.

Carpenter incorporated gender themes into his work to promote gender equity; Siegel worked to improve FCC's monitoring, evaluation, and grant application procedures; and Williams trained staff to implement camps and coaching techniques.

The director of programming and training for Peace Corps/Colombia, Jason Cochran, was inspired watching the three of them put this together and helped facilitate the programs elsewhere. The highlights of their service—the multi-sport youth camps they organized



Peace Corps Response Volunteers Andrea Hayes, Bob Arias, Rob Hamilton, Eric Siegel, Andrew Williams, and Jarrett Carpenter with members of Campo All-Stars take a break during a youth sports camp in Campo de La Cruz, Colombia.

at their sites—were replicated in other PCRV sites. Using the FCC methodology and applying it to different sports, the youth generated more than just a love for sport: They also developed important values that can help them finish school, go to college, and break the cycle of poverty and violence in the neighborhoods where they live. Moreover, the strong partnership between Peace Corps/Colombia and FCC will benefit scores of youth for years to come.

EDUCATED MAN FROM PAGE 1 ■■■■■■■■▶

boarding school. After graduating high school in 2005, Malia earned a track scholarship to college and earned his bachelor's degree in biology in 2009.

The following year, he joined the Peace Corps and went to Kpandai District in Ghana as a water and sanitation Volunteer. In his first two years, he helped two communities become open-defecation free, reaching a total of 3,000 people. In his third year, Malia helped another 12 communities implement community led total sanitation and digging latrines.

Beyond giving back to the Americans who helped him, Malia said he chose to join the Peace Corps to give back to his roots in Africa.

"I believed I could reverse the brain drain problem—on a personal level—that is hurting Africa's development," he said. "I could use my education to help solve the crisis of water and sanitation in Africa."

In Ghana, Malia used himself as an example to encourage empowerment and self-reliance through a business development approach. "I used my life story coming from a refugee camp and living in Houston, Texas, to give people a different perspective—something that I did not just read,

but I had lived and experienced," he said. "I told my communities when I first got to United States, I could not read but through self-determination and desire I became educated. I told my communities they could not wait for the government. An NGO will not solve your problems. They will not develop your communities. They will help you to be alive but will not cure your problems."

When he finishes his Peace Corps service in September, Malia plans to focus on his own story again: to go South Sudan to find his brother, who he hasn't seen in 15 years, and find out how his mother died in April 2013.

"After my quest, I want to come back to the United States to achieve three goals: to obtain an MBA focusing on social entrepreneur business, to find work focusing in renewable energy—especially waste to energy research, and become a consultant."

Malia has covered a lot of distance—literally and figuratively—in his life: from Sudan to Ethiopia to Houston, back to Africa and Ghana; from refugee to college graduate to Peace Corps Volunteer.

"It has been a long journey but I have made headway on this self-discovery and rewritten my family history."

DIRECTOR FROM PAGE 1 ■■■■■■■■▶

worked diligently toward full implementation of the law. The agency has collaborated with internal and external stakeholders over the past few years to design and implement a comprehensive Volunteer-centered sexual assault policy, supported primarily by the Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response program, along with a number of other reforms. Many components of this program have already been in effect for some time, including the Office of Victim Advocacy, new training for staff and Volunteers, and an immunity policy that encourages Volunteers to report sexual assault to the agency.

As of September 1, there are several new resources and support services available to Peace Corps Volunteers. For example, Volunteers have a new option to report incidents, called restricted reporting, which strictly limits access to information about an assault to only those providing support services requested by the Volunteer. Under restricted reporting, Volunteers who might not have come forward due to confidentiality concerns can now access services. Volunteers also now have access to sexual assault response liaisons at each post to accompany them through the in-country response process, should they request their services.

With these final pieces in place, the Peace Corps' comprehensive Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response Program is now in effect, and the Peace Corps nears full implementation of the Kate Puzey Peace Corps Volunteer Protection Act.

Our Sexual Assault Risk Reduction and Response program is critical to the health and safety of our Volunteers and the continued vitality of the Peace Corps. It reflects our commitment to evidence-based best practices in the delivery of services to safeguard Volunteer health, safety and security, and to helping Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted heal and recover with dignity.

We are working hard to make sure each and every Volunteer is familiar with these program changes. As with any new policy, there will be some adjustments, but I strongly believe the steps we have taken will result in better outcomes for our Volunteers. We welcome your feedback, as continual improvement is important to all of us. We will continue to evaluate the impact of this program as it is fully implemented and make adjustments as necessary.

With warmest regards,

— Carrie Hessler-Radelet
Acting Peace Corps Director
RPCV Western Samoa, 1981–83

Third Annual Border 2 Border Educational Hike in Armenia

By DAVID CORSAR | PCV Armenia

Thirteen Volunteers recently partnered with YMCA Armenia to complete the third annual Border 2 Border children's healthy lifestyle and environmental awareness education project. For three weeks in June, two groups of Volunteers together walked the entire length of Armenia and, reaching more communities and participants than in previous years.

Six Volunteers started at the northern border with Georgia and walked south, while the other seven started at the southern border with Iran and walked north. By the time the two groups met in the town of Yeghegnadzor in the Vayots Dzor marz (region), each group had hiked more than 275 kilometers (170.88 miles), with weather ranging from rain and hail to blazing sun.

Along the way, the Volunteers partnered with community members in 22 towns and villages where they delivered interactive seminars to more than 850 children. The lessons covered nutrition, smoking prevention, alcohol avoidance, environment, respect, and hygiene, with the latter two new for this year.

The lessons and hiking route were developed by the Volunteers with input from YMCA Armenia and Youth Bank Armenia. This year's lessons featured fun, interactive teaching methods not usually employed in Armenian classrooms, such as sorting various types of trash according to the best method of disposal, writing acrostic poems about respect, spraying a water bottle to mimic the spread of germs from sneezing, and a "smoking bottle" in which a cigarette attached to the end of a bottle with a tissue inside shows the accumulation of nicotine from just one

cigarette. Additionally, the children brought old plastic bottles and were taught to make self-watering flower planters with them as an example of reusing a common form of trash.

The hiking route passed through five of Armenia's 10 marzes or regions. The northern team—Volunteers Chris Boyle, Jessica Clanton, David Corsar, Elisabeth Espinoza, Adam Housh, and Andrea Yu—struggled with downpour

and hail; the southern team—Volunteers Branwen Gallagher, Jesse Garrison, Kevin Gurtowski, Lauren Leary, Meg McGinty, Meewa Mull, and Carolyn Rodgers—faced blistering heat. However, the natural beauty of Armenia, such as the pine forests of Tavush marz, Sevan National Park, and Shikahogh State Reserve, helped the hikers get through the difficult weather.



Peace Corps Volunteer Jessica Clanton leads a lesson about environmental protection in the town of Vanadzor.

During the hike, Armenian hospital-

ity boosted the Volunteers' spirits. Drivers stopped countless times to offer the hikers rides to their next destinations; families fed and hosted the teams for several nights along the way; shop owners provided coffee, lavash, and cheese from their own pantries; and the caretakers of the famed monastery of Tatev allowed the southern team to camp just outside the ninth century landmark. In addition to delivering the

themes of the lessons strengthened understanding among children about leading a healthy, environmentally, and socially friendly lifestyle and making



Children in the village of Dzoramat, a small Armenian village on the border with Georgia, create self-watering flower pots out of reused plastic bottles.

choices today to improve their health and communities in adulthood. The lessons plan is really useful for 8–14-year-old children, so we utilize it not only during the B2B campaign but for year-round teaching our 3,000 beneficiaries healthy lifestyles. At the end of the event, a good network was made between the Peace Corps Volunteers and Armenians, contributing to a better understanding of intercultural differences and identities."

In the months following the walk, Volunteers provided support and supplies to community members to deliver lessons in additional schools and villages to reach more children.

The two Volunteer teams' adventures were documented online at walkacrossarmenia.wordpress.com.

Career Corner

Taking Your Education Experience Outside the Classroom

As the RPCV Career Center coordinator at the Peace Corps, Jodi Hammer has worked with countless Education sector RPCVs, helping them transition into post-Peace Corps employment. While some are passionate about staying in the education field, others don't want to be teachers and worry that their most recent experience—working as a teacher in the Peace Corps—will pigeon-hole them into an educator role. Some even consider removing their Peace Corps service from their résumé as they don't feel it will be seen as "relevant" when applying for jobs outside of teaching.

What these Volunteers fail to realize is that the variety of skills they demonstrated in order to survive—and thrive—in their teaching assignments are actually the very same skills that

many non-education jobs require.

Hammer recounted the story of one RPCV client who taught in Malawi summed up her work this way: "I had 400 students and a piece of chalk." How's that for painting an image of limited resources? And she didn't let this lack of resources stop her: She utilized her creativity and resourcefulness to broaden the perspectives of her students by incorporating interactive learning techniques and making the most of what they did have—enthusiasm and a desire to learn. She modeled respect and leadership skills in effectively managing four distinct classrooms of adolescents, monitored and reported on their progress, and refined her interpersonal and cross-cultural skills in dealing with the students, parents,

and school officials. She also applied for and received a grant to create educational murals and oversaw all aspects of this collaborative initiative, from budget to design and implementation.

There are so many transferable skills found in this one RPCV's story alone: resourcefulness, determination, grant writing, project management, and budgeting, to name just a few. Articulating these to employers in ways that highlight the relevance of your Peace Corps service will go a long way in proving your competence for the job.

Secondary projects are also a great way to demonstrate relevant skills and experience. Were you chosen to serve on the Volunteer Action Committee, responsible for providing

liaison between Volunteers and staff on important issues and concerns? Or tapped for the grant review team, utilizing your writing skills to review and edit Volunteer grant proposals? Highlighting your accomplishments in other areas can be a powerful and strategic technique when applying to non-teaching jobs.

Whether you are unsure of how to relate your Peace Corps service or want tips on brushing up your résumé, the RPCV Career Center is here to help when you finish your service. Through career events, including national and regional career fairs, online webinars, and personalized résumé reviews, we can help you achieve success in your job search. For a list of upcoming events and online resources, visit peacecorps.gov/events.



Agency News

President Carter, Peace Corps Honor Older Americans with Lillian Carter Award

Former President Jimmy Carter and Peace Corps Chief of Staff Stacy Rhodes presented the 2013 Lillian Carter Award to returned Peace Corps Volunteer Helene Ballmann Dudley of Miami during a ceremony at the Carter Center in Atlanta. Dudley, 67, served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Slovakia from 1997–99 at age 50. She had previously served in Colombia from 1968–70.



Former President Carter presents returned Peace Corps Volunteer Helene Ballmann Dudley with the 2013 Lillian Carter Award.

Since Dudley's return from service in Slovakia, she has continued to promote the values of the Peace Corps by raising awareness of the organization's mission and providing support to communities in the United States and abroad. The Lillian Carter Award was established in 1986 in honor of President Carter's mother, Lillian, who served as a health Volunteer in India in 1966 at age 68. Given out every other year, the award recognizes exceptional Peace Corps Volunteers who served at age 50 or over.

Dudley served as president of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida from 2004–07 and contin-

ues to serve on the board. Dudley worked with fellow Colombia RPCVs to establish The Colombia Project, a micro-credit program that connects Colombians with local grassroots organizations. Since establishing the program, Dudley has made dozens of trips to Colombia to visit program sites and conduct workshops to ensure sustainability.

Carrie Hessler-Radelet Nominated to be Director of the Peace Corps



President Obama has nominated acting Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet to be Director of the Peace Corps.

On July 18, President Obama announced his intent to nominate Peace Corps Deputy Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet to be Director of the Peace Corps.

In announcing her nomination, President Obama said, "As Deputy Director of the Peace Corps, Carrie has been instrumental in recruiting and training thousands of Peace Corps Volunteers who work to promote social and economic development around the world. I'm delighted to nominate her as Director so this program can continue to benefit from her vision and commitment."

Hessler-Radelet was appointed deputy director of the agency in June 2010 under then-Director Aaron S. Williams. Hessler-Radelet, who served as a Volunteer in Western Samoa from 1981–1983, has led the agency since September 2012.

Top Master's International, Coverdell Fellows Graduate Programs Announced

The Peace Corps recently announced the 2013 top Master's International and Paul D. Coverdell Fellows programs for currently serving and returned Peace Corps Volunteers. For the eighth consecutive

year, Michigan Technological University holds the top spot among Master's International programs with 35 students currently serving as Peace Corps Volunteers abroad. The University of Denver Paul D. Coverdell Fellows program ranks first for the second consecutive year with 56 returned Peace Corps Volunteers enrolled as students.

After Michigan Technological University, Tulane University's Master's International program ranked second with 29 students enrolled as of September 2012, followed by Monterey Institute of International Studies with 26, University of Denver with 25, and University of South Florida with 24.

After the University of Denver, the University of Arizona Coverdell Fellows program ranked second with 52, followed by Teachers College, Columbia University with 45, Johns Hopkins University with 42, and Brandeis University with 27.

Peace Corps Remembers RPCV Ambassador Stevens



Ambassador and returned Peace Corps Volunteer J. Christopher Stevens (back row, center) with his training group in 1983.

Peace Corps acting Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet welcomed family and friends of Ambassador J. Christopher Stevens to Peace Corps headquarters in May to commemorate his life and service. Stevens served as a Peace Corps Volunteer from 1983–85 in Morocco, where he taught English. Stevens was killed in an attack on the U.S. embassy in Libya on September 11, 2012.

During the ceremony, Hessler-Radelet and Stevens' father, mother, and sister, along with friends and Peace Corps colleagues, spoke about his commitment to international diplomacy and his career as a public servant.

Stevens was a career member of the Senior Foreign Service and became U.S. Ambassador to Libya in May 2012. Prior to joining the Foreign Service in 1991, he was an international trade lawyer in Washington, D.C.

Peace Corps Accepts Same-Sex Couples

Peace Corps acting Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet announced the agency will accept applications from same-sex couples who want to serve together as Volunteers abroad. Same-sex couples were able to begin the application process starting June 3.

"Service in the Peace Corps is a life-defining leadership experience for Americans who want to make a difference around the world," Hessler-Radelet said. "I am proud that the agency is taking this important step forward to allow same-sex couples to serve overseas together."

The Peace Corps requires formal documentation for all couples who want to serve, and same-sex couples are required to sign an affidavit to verify their relationship before leaving for service.

More information can be found at peacecorps.gov/couplesquestions.

Agency Receives Accounting, 'Best in Class' Award

The Peace Corps received the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting Award for the agency's Performance and Accountability Report for fiscal year 2012. This is the sixth year in a row the agency received the honor, which recognizes top-notch federal accountability reporting.

The AGA acknowledged the Peace Corps' report as a real commitment to accountability and transparency and continuous improvement across the agency. The Peace Corps also received the distinguished Best in Class Award for the most comprehensive and candid presentation of forward-looking information. This is the second year the Peace Corps has received a Best in Class Award.

The Performance and Accountability Report provides financial and performance information and is online at peacecorps.gov/open/documents.

That Was Then ... This is Now

PCVs Use Tech to Bring the World to U.S. Classrooms

Peace Corps Volunteers today have the capability to stay connected with family and friends at home more so than ever before. About 90 percent of Volunteers in the field have cellphones and nearly 65 percent have access to the Internet. This connectivity not only allows Volunteers to keep in touch throughout their service, but also gives family and friends a window another culture.

A great way for Volunteers to utilize the technology now available in the field is through the Peace Corps' newly redesigned Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools website. On the site, Volunteers can sign up for the Correspondence Match program and communicate with classrooms across the States

through emails, phone calls, and even Skype.

"I feel the Correspondence Match program can have a great impact on students to encourage learning outside of their immediate community," said Peace Corps Volunteer and Correspondence Match participant Shadae Paul, who has been living and working in Fiji since 2012. "I've been communicating back and forth with my classroom in the U.S. quite often via email and Skype," Paul said.

Recently returned Peace Corps Volunteer Andy Schetter (2010–13) participated in the Correspondence Match program throughout his service in Moldova. His sister, Laura Schetter, is a teacher in Toledo, Ohio, and the two took advantage of Andy's

technological capabilities in the field through regular Skype calls with Laura's third-grade students.

"Through weekly Skype calls, my students have learned a lot about life in Moldova," Laura said. "These conferences between my third graders and Andy included brief language lessons, Q&A sessions, comparing American and Moldovan cultures, and learning about holiday traditions. Andy has become a celebrity to my students, as they always looked forward to his virtual weekly visit. It really helped my students gain global perspective."

To learn more about Peace Corps World Wise Schools Correspondence Match program, visit WWS.peacecorps.gov.

Blog It Home: 'I Am Not an English Teacher'



By SARA KLINE | PCV Thailand

Last year's pre-service training for the Community-Based Organizational Development trainees touched on a variety of subject areas: early educational development, environmental preservation, health, youth development, economic development, information and technology, and life skills. Since Peace Corps/Thailand's TCCO [Teacher Collaboration and Community Outreach] program deals with teacher collaborations, we CBOD trainees saw teaching English as a responsibility we should not harbor. We are Community Development Volunteers and not English teachers. We should not be teaching English in the schools every day, but instead we should be integrating into all sectors of our site community in order to be an effective CBOD.



Students practice ordering drinks from a menu at an English games club lesson.

From the moment I arrived at site last March, people I met would make the same request for one-on-one "sah-peak Een-lish" lessons with themselves or with their sons/daughters/nieces/nephews/cousins. My education officer requested that I go to all nine early education centers from May until July to teach 2-5-year-olds their ABCs, while every *paw-aw* (principal) in the village wanted me to be their schools' *kruu paa-saa an-grit* [English teacher]. With a smile, I would reply to every request with, "I am not an English teacher," hoping the requests for English lessons would lessen and requests for assistance with HIV/AIDS and economic development projects would soon be on the rise.

Last May, I caved and started an English games club on Sundays at my host family's house. The first two sessions

started off with over a dozen students aged 5-15 years attending for games I had put together the night before: "How Are You?" bingo, red light/green light, food bingo, draw a map of the community, follow directions blindfolded, and even more bingo. Word spread of my English games club, and requests for English lessons returned from the village elders. "I am not an English teacher," I repeated, assuring the community members that I was only playing games with the neighborhood students on the weekends and I would not be teaching English every day. However, having 12+ children greet me with "Good morning, teacher" at 4 p.m. was not helping confirm my status as a CBOD Volunteer.

The English games club group size dwindled from over a dozen to between five and 10 neighborhood kids who became weekly regulars at the Sunday afternoon sessions. Before I knew it, the sessions would extend to two hours, with the children and I discussing my family and hobbies back in the States compared to life in the village. After packing up my materials and heading home, my host sister Get and landlord's nephew (also Get) would bike down the street with me to help make dinner and draw pictures for

my house. Pii Kung, a sixth-grader living across the street from my host family's house, came to my house several times a week to have me check her English homework and constantly asked me to teach English games to her class across the street. "I am not an English teacher," I replied. The look in Pii Kung's eyes looked hopeful, and I eventually gave in to her request adding, "Only once a week!"

It has been nine months since I started facilitating primary school English lessons on Tuesdays, and I must admit: I wish I had caved sooner. In the nine months' worth of Tuesdays I have helped teach English at the Yang Hom Primary School, over 60 fourth, fifth, and sixth graders, their English teacher, and we surprised each other and ourselves with how much we've accomplished, including but not limited to:



PCV Sara Kline and local primary school students bake cupcakes for their first Halloween party.

- Celebrated Halloween and Christmas
- Named the different places to visit throughout the village in English
- Read and wrote letters in English to pen pals in Little Rock, Arkansas
- Received postcards from three different countries
- Learned how to do the hokey pokey and turn ourselves around
- Discussed why water and milk is healthy, while alcohol and soda is not
- Perfected musical chairs in a variety of English vocabulary categories
- Discussed why Valentine's Day can be celebrated with family, friends, and classmates instead of just boy-friends/girlfriends
- Recognized positive English compliments that every student and teacher embodies
- Learned how to hop like a kangaroo, swerve like a snake, and eat like a panda

Six weeks ago, fifth- and sixth-grade students, teachers, and relatives gathered at Yang Hom Primary School for the grade six graduation. My co-teacher Kruu Meeo had me sit amongst the sixth-graders for a prayer from one of the village elders, whose constant mumbling was met with giggles from the students and myself. After prayer came the *bai sii* ceremony, when relatives and teachers bless students with pieces of white string around their wrists to wash away worries and welcome a new era—in this case, the beginning of middle school and the pre-teen years. I wished each of the 21 sixth-graders best of luck in middle school and reminded them to continue studying their English this summer; like the elder's mumbling throughout prayer, this reminder was also met with giggles.

Once the fifth-grade girls performed an end-of-the-year traditional Thai dance, the speeches from the top male and female students of the class commenced. After Nong Pam thanked the staff for their help as he moves on to a

school in another district next term, Pii Kung's speech came to a surprising end as I heard my name being called on the microphone and I saw my co-teacher quickly wave her hand at me to come to the front of the library. Thirteen of the sixth-grade students quickly lined up with red plastic roses in their hands as Pii Kung looked at me to say the following (translated from Thai):

"We want to thank Kruu Sara for teaching us English. My mom says I am shy and need to speak English better. Kruu Sara help me not be shy anymore and now I speak English better. We miss you Kruu Sara when we go to secondary school."

As each of the students presented me with a rose and waied me with a smile, I could feel the tears welling up. Despite my mental protests against giving a speech, Kruu Meeo handed me the microphone in front of 50 pairs of eyes watching me hold in the tears and listening to my voice quiver. "I am not an English teacher," I wanted to say, but instead this is what came out of my mouth:

"The students asked me for several months to teach English, and their moms and dads ask me every day to teach English. I am not an English teacher, but when I teach English to your students every week, it makes me happy. When I am sad at site and when I miss America, your students make me happy when they learn new English words and smile every day. You are all lucky to have smart sons and daughters. I am here for one more year, so do not be sad, students. You are always my students and I am happy that I am your teacher."

Sara Kline is a Community Economic Development Volunteer in Thailand. Her blog, So Little Thai, So Much To Do (klinesc.blogspot.com), was one of four winners in the Blog It Home contest held by the Office of the Third Goal. Information about the contest and the three other winners is at peacecorps.gov/resources/media/press/2270.



NOTES *from the* FIELD

A Brief Look at Posts and Projects

Vanuatu

PCV Hosts Trash-Boat Race

PCV Gaea Dill-D'Ascoli (2010–13) organized a week-long trash cleanup in Vanuatu to increase environmental awareness within her community, and created a competition. The community built boats out of the trash, and then participated in a boat race in the city's central harbor. After the event, the community realized the potential of trash as a resource: something to be recycled, and not thrown in a dump.



Twelve community members pile into a boat during the trash-boat race.

Georgia

Youth Sports League Promotes Health, Gender Equality

PCV Jonathan Brands (2011–13) has established a youth sports league for schools in Georgia to promote physical health and gender equality. Brands prompted four local schools to create a year-long, inter-school coed sports league. Funds were raised through the Peace Corps Partnership Program, and a portion came from within the community to help ensure long-term stability. Students have responded enthusiastically to the league, even practicing outside of school.

Armenia

Nurse Training Held to Fight HIV/AIDS



Peace Corps Armenia staff member Mariam Arzumanyan speaks to workshop participants.

PCVs Lisa Conder (2009–13) and Matt Fogue (2011–13) collaborated to organize a three-day community health training workshop for 15 nurses throughout Armenia focused on ways to reduce HIV/AIDS. This project was made possible by the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The workshop

included sessions on transmission and prevention, testing and counseling, and HIV legislation and migration led by representatives from Armenia's National Center for AIDS Prevention.

Peru

Volunteer Re-Discovers Ancient Burial Ground

After stumbling upon an ancient burial site, PCV Greg Plimpton (2011–13) is working with fellow Volunteers, the Peruvian government, and Stanford University archeologists to orchestrate an archeological dig and build a museum and visitor center adjacent to the site to help preserve Peruvian culture. The project aims to integrate the sustainable preservation of the site with the promotion of tourism and economic development in the region. The 25-acre site, "Cerro de Oro," is filled with historical artifacts, including human remains, pottery, and burial cloths from A.D. 500–1400. Steel gates will soon protect the site, and the Peruvian government said it will educate people on the harmful effects of looting.



PCV Greg Plimpton pauses in front of artifacts from the burial site.

Cameroon

Project Boosts Computing Power

PCV Christian Freymeyer (2011–13) is working with his community in Cameroon to refurbish a high-school computer lab and boost its energy supply so more students can participate in computer lessons. Currently the lab houses 12 computers but only four can operate simultaneously. Freymeyer will work with school administration, teachers, and community representatives to increase the school's electrical energy and install voltage regulators, surge protectors, and new computer desks and chairs. Once the project is complete, the school's 12 computers will be operable at the same time.

Ukraine

English Education Improved Through Technology Access

PCV Lawrence Gipson (2011–13) is working with his Ukrainian community to improve technology access and the quality of English education at a local school by raising money to buy a projector,

projector canvas, five laptops, and 10 sets of headphones for his students.

The school's community has already pledged to purchase another projector and renovate the English classroom, and English teachers and student leaders have pledged to fundraise for additional supplies. He hopes the project will not only increase the quality of English education, but also provide the teachers and students with the motivation and skills to sustain the program in the future.

The Gambia

Book Club for Teachers Encourages Literacy and Reading



PCV Lacy Szuwalski reads with one of the local teachers.

PCV Lacy Szuwalski (2011–13) has started a book club with her Gambian community to encourage her fellow teachers and their students to read.

The teachers first read children's books from the local school library together and, in small groups, Szuwalski led discussions on theme, predicting, using context clues, and other reading skills. They then planned to incorporate the books into student lessons.

In March, the teachers read 87 books together, and are now using the books in the classroom to teach their students. To foster long-term success, Szuwalski encouraged the teachers to continue reading together, analyzing the texts, and planning to use the books with students.

Mozambique

PCV Organizes Ocean Fair for Coastal Conservation

PCV Patrick McGettigan (2011–13) recently organized a three-day Ocean Fair in Mozambique to promote coastal conservation. The "Feira do Oceano" featured both cultural and educational events, including a sand sculpture competition and presentations on fishery management and marine reserves. After the fair, McGettigan noted an increased awareness of the importance of coastal conservation in his community.

Botswana

200 Pit Latrines Combat Disease
PCV Brandon Lawson (2011–13) is working to improve sanitation and health in his community in Botswana

by constructing new facilities for safe, effective waste disposal that will prevent water contamination and disease. Lawson aims to build some 200 pit latrines—one for each home in the community.

Lawson has been collaborating with local government officials and community leaders for more than a year to develop plans to build the facilities in an environmentally friendly manner. Prior to the start of construction, a representative from each household will be required to agree to dig the pit for the latrine and take their family to sanitation and disease prevention classes provided by the District Sanitation Education Office. The District Health Team will travel to the community once the latrines are completed to provide tuberculosis education.

Morocco

Basic Health-Care Workshop Empowers Women

PCV Eve Brecker (2012–14) organized a women's health-care workshop with three Moroccan colleagues to educate women on common health concerns and low-cost preventative health care in areas with limited health services. The two-day workshop was led by PCVs, local nurses, and women's association representatives who taught the women about basic hygiene, menstruation, diabetes, anemia, exercise, and maternal health. Participants also learned teaching techniques so they can educate their communities about basic health care.

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