

ACTION UPDATE

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Holiday Spirit -- An All-Year Feeling

As I approach the end of my first year at ACTION, I am warmed by the discovery that the employees of this agency reflect the spirit of the holiday season -- a spirit of generosity, loving, caring-- throughout the year.

The year past has been an exciting one for me; I hope it has been so for others as well. During this season we can reflect on and learn from our work together as we look forward to a productive and creative New Year.

Appropriation Bill Signed

The second continuing resolution which appropriates funds for the domestic programs of ACTION expired on November 30. However, both Houses agreed to a compromise on the issue of federal funding for abortions on December 7, and the President signed the entire \$61 billion Labor/HEW appropriation for the remainder of fiscal year 1978, which ends September 30, 1978.

ACTION Initiative: Youth Employment Project

ACTION has joined with other federal agencies in finding new ways to solve the youth unemployment problem. To date, Congress has passed a \$1.5 billion youth employment bill, \$100 million of which has been earmarked for a discretionary

fund for experimental and demonstration purposes for the unemployment problem. ACTION will be receiving \$10 million from the discretionary fund to develop a demonstration project. Agreements with the Department of Labor for the funds for the demonstration project should be reached by the end of December.

In addition to developing a \$10 million demonstration project, ACTION is also testing and developing national policies for a national youth service model for the Carter administration. ACTION employees involved in the effort include, among others: Tom Glynn, Dennis Derryck, Bob Currie, Don Eberly, Don Smith and Wayne Clark. The feasibility of such a program is being examined through policy research and analysis looking at, for example, the need for a program based on national, regional and demographic factors, the effect of a national youth service on the youth unemployment problem, on the enrollment of institutions which would provide training for the youths, and on the community and social service industries which would provide employment opportunities for the unemployed persons.

The city of Syracuse, New York is in the process of writing the proposal to receive the ACTION demonstration grant for the model youth project. If the project is in operation by early 1978, 1,700 youths, age 16-21 years who have been unemployed for at least 2 months, will receive training and supervision in a variety of jobs, such as fire inspectors, recreation supervisors and apprentice medical technicians, and will be providing services which it is hoped will have a greater impact on community needs.

In addition to the training and the viable work experience, the project participants will qualify to receive educational benefits upon completion of service.

VISTA Allowance Raised

VISTA volunteers are now receiving more money to meet steadily increasing day-to-day expenses. The food and lodging allowance, unchanged since October, 1976, had ranged from \$184 to \$232 per

month according to region, and was decried as "grossly inadequate" during a recent national VISTA Conference held at headquarters. A 6.2 percent hike, based on a comparative rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), went into effect on Nov. 13, according to VISTA Director Margery Tabankin.

Criminal Justice System: What Role for Volunteers?

To help determine what role, if any, the agency might have in helping improve the criminal justice system, ACTION sponsored a workshop in Oakland, Ca., November 30-December 3, bringing together both street workers and professional experts in criminal justice.

Workshop sessions focused on three major areas: reducing crime, improving the quality of justice, and improving the accountability of the criminal justice system.

Each workshop consisted of equal numbers of experts and street workers, with ACTION staff attending as participants. Both Director Sam Brown and DO Director John Lewis addressed the conference.

The consensus which emerged was that through encouraging and assisting the work of volunteers in criminal justice projects, ACTION could have a positive impact on helping improve a criminal justice system which all the participants agreed was in severe need of reform, if not outright revamping.

Among the guest speakers were Dr. Karl Menninger, Judge David Bazelon and Rep. John Conyers. In order to get workshop participants to see prison conditions and talk directly with prison inmates Sheriff Richard Hongisto arranged for a dinner and tour at San Bruno Jail.

Results and findings from the workshop are still being evaluated. A summary report soon will be produced, and a task force will be created to help ACTION develop ideas and issues into specific ACTION programs.

Right to Read

Senator Harrison A. Williams, Jr., (D-NJ), chairman, Senate Committee on Human Resources and former chairman, Senate Committee on Aging, hosted a special ceremony for a new program providing federal assistance for reading improvement through the use of ACTION's older American volunteers. Senator Williams views this reading improvement volunteer program using older Americans as a model cooperative effort which should be replicated in other areas of the federal government.

At the ceremony held on November 29, 1977 at the Dirksen Office Building, Washington, D.C., more than 75 guests were present including: Anne Wright, Office of the Vice President of the United States; Dr. John Ellis, Executive Deputy Commissioner of Education, U.S. Office of Education (OE); and Dr. Thomas Mentor, Deputy Commissioner for Elementary and Secondary Education, OE. Members from congressional staffs, officials of HEW and ACTION, and representatives from state and local agencies also attended.

The cooperative agreement between OAVP and the Office of Education's Right to Read Program was signed by Dr. Helen Kelley, Director of Older Americans Volunteer Programs, and Dr. Gilbert Shiffman, Director of HEW's Right to Read Program. The agreement will make it easier for Older Americans Volunteer Program participants to assist with reading and literacy programs across the nation.

Honored during the ceremony was a 98-year-old reading student, Mrs. Margaret Crowe of Highland Heights, Ky.

Mrs. Crowe, born in Cartersville, Ga., participates in a learning club's reading activities once a week at a nursing home where she resides. More than half of the students at the home are 70 years old or older.

Mrs. Crowe was unable to attend the ceremony in person. A special plaque of recognition was presented in her behalf to Mrs. Martha Keller, reading academy project director of Northern Kentucky University.

Also honored was Mrs. Mary Zvoch, age 72, a volunteer in the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Orlando, Fla. In September 1976, Mrs. Zvoch enrolled in the Orange County, Florida Reading Academy to learn to read and write English. According to Mrs. Zvoch's instructors, she made extraordinary progress and that year for the first time wrote her own Christmas cards. She also achieved within one year's time gains in reading that would have normally taken two years to acquire.

The Right to Read Program is an organized effort from national, state and local levels to eliminate illiteracy, regardless of a person's age, and to overcome the frustration and despair of 23 million Americans who can't understand the printed word.

Although many RSVP volunteers are already tutoring young children in reading programs, volunteer opportunities in Right to Read programs continue to increase. Last year OAVP distributed to RSVP directors the addresses of reading academies in each state funded by the Right to Read Office of the U.S. Office of Education.

Reorganization: Focusing on New Goals

A Reorganization Unit has been established in the Director's office to assist in the implementation of new agency policy directives resulting from a series of agency-wide reviews and development of a new agency mission and goals statement.

The office, headed by Ken Hill, will facilitate and implement the plans which are being developed by various agency offices and reorganization work groups.

The entire reorganization is attempting to focus on our new agency goals and mission and provide a framework which will facilitate its implementation. This reorganization group was established to minimize the disruption to staff and develop a well-planned proposal for implementation.

One important aspect of the restructuring effort is to communicate with employees as effectively

as possible and to clear up any misconceptions or misinformation which employees may have.

The Reorganization Unit issues regular reports on its progress. Report #6 should be out in early January. If you have not received past progress reports or if the reports do not clarify any of your questions or concerns about restructuring, you should call Ken Hill or one of his staff members at (202) 254-8081 for further information.

Paperwork on the Decrease

Since June 1977, when the Zero Based Paperwork Project was formed to decrease superfluous paperwork in the agency, there has been a 39.5 percent reduction in that paperwork. The number of forms has decreased from 1,375 to 829.

Since June, a number of employees have participated in the project. For example, secretaries at ACTION reported to the project coordinators in October on how their paperwork could be reduced. Also reporting to the project coordinators were a Citizens Review Subgroup, which completed its findings in August, and the Directives System Task Force, headed by Dick Kasdan (GC), whose findings on the reduction of ACTION directives have now been submitted to the field for comment. Additionally, specific recommendations have been set forth for reducing the number of reports and improving the effectiveness of the agency's reporting system.

All final recommendations from the Zero Based Paperwork Project will be submitted to Sam Brown in January 1978, at which time he will decide what actions will be taken in 1978 based on report findings. Project coordinators state that their goal during the next year is to reduce superfluous paper by 500 percent.

The Future of Urban Policy

One of the ways ACTION can help community people develop greater self-sufficiency is through the agency's increased involvement with those organizations currently developing alternative strategies for urban redevelopment and organization.

This was one of the central ideas under discussion at the Urban Policy Conference on October 27-28, 1977 by two dozen urban experts representing universities, state and federal agencies and Congress.

MIT professor Michael Lipsky and Stanford University's John Mollenkopf led discussion on a broad range of urban issues and needs. The focus of the discussion was on ways the urban policy emerging from the Carter administration should be geared to encourage neighborhood growth and development. That will involve, according to conferees, a major shift away from the capital - intensive, central-city focused efforts of recent years and towards labor-intensive programs to strengthen neighborhoods.

Tax and welfare reform, restructured banking and land use policies, and a stronger linkage of energy and urban issues were among the specific items discussed at length.

The federal government, through such programs as urban renewal and highway construction, was itself defined as a major cause of the current urban plight. The group agreed that any future federal actions must recognize such past failures and move beyond them.

A preliminary report, summarizing issues raised at the session has been drafted by Lipsky, who serves as a consultant to ACTION/OPP.

As a followup to the October meeting, another session is now being planned for sometime after the first of the year. This meeting will bring together a group of urban activists to further discuss city needs from the viewpoint of neighborhood organizations.

These meetings and other efforts by ACTION encourage urban policy which directly considers and meets the needs of central city residents. In the process, ACTION is developing a better sense of how its own resources and volunteers can be used to better meet basic needs of people in urban areas.

Civil Service Rules Amended

By an Executive Order issued November 30, 1977, Civil Service rules have been amended to exempt certain federal positions from the competitive service. According to the Order, ACTION's Domestic Regional Director positions will henceforth be listed as "Schedule C" positions. Incumbent Regional Directors (Regions I and X) who were in the competitive service when the Order was issued shall not be affected by this change.

Country Directors: Who's New in Peace Corps

In the past few months, there have been a number of Peace Corps appointments for country directorships in Chili, El Salvador, Fiji, Mali, Thailand, the Gambia, Liberia and Rwanda. Formerly, such appointments required Presidential approval. Now, however, President Carter has decided to leave the final decisions with ACTION.

The Peace Corps Director's talent search committee first screens all applications and then interviews those persons who have the necessary qualifications. Those suggested by the Director's Office are then interviewed by the appropriate regional director or regional panel (which consists of the regional director, desk officer and area officer). After the regional director/panel has interviewed the applicants, another interview may be held with representatives from Carolyn Payton and Sam Brown's offices. Payton then nominates a new country director who is sworn in after Sam Brown's approval is given.

One-half of the appointments made by this new selection committee within recent months have been women and minorities, the Wall Street Journal noted on Dec. 13.

The Gambia

YVONNE JACKSON has been named Peace Corps country director in the Gambia, where 43 Peace Corps

volunteers are working as teachers and consultants in the areas of co-ops and small business, and the country's environmental protection laws. Ms. Jackson has been a teaching fellow for USIA in Colombia, summer intern for the State Department, academic director for the Experiment in International Living, management specialist for OEO and the Labor Department, and a staff member of the Inter-American Foundation.

Rwanda

JERRY STERNIN, a former faculty member of the Harvard Graduate School of Business, has been appointed Peace Corps director in Rwanda in central Africa. Sternin is a former Peace Corps volunteer who served for two years until 1964 in the Philippines. During 1965 and 1966, he worked for the Peace Corps special services staff in Washington, D.C. and from 1966 to 1968 was associate Peace Corps country director in Kathmandu, Nepal. Since 1976, Sternin has worked part-time for the Peace Corps, evaluating the effectiveness of Peace Corps programs in Africa, Latin America, and Asia.

Thailand

ANN MORGAN, a former Peace Corps volunteer and director of international programs at Texas Tech University in Lubbock, has been appointed director of the Peace Corps in Thailand. In 1962, she joined the Peace Corps for a two-year assignment as a teacher at a girls' school in Nigeria, and in 1966 worked as a program training officer for Micronesia at the Peace Corps staff in Washington. In that assignment, she helped develop the first Peace Corps programs for the Pacific island nation. In 1968, she went to Thailand as deputy Peace Corps director, and before leaving in 1971, designed training programs for volunteers who would be working as English teachers. Her last Peace Corps staff assignment was as a trainee development officer in Nepal at the end of 1971. Since September, 1973, she has directed international programs at Texas Tech University.

El Salvador

The appointment of LETITIA DIAZ, 38, as country director in El Salvador has increased to six,

the number of women named this year to head Peace Corps programs abroad.

A former educator, Ms. Diaz held a post as Public Health Senior Fellow at HEW prior to her appointment with the Peace Corps. She was first selected as an HEW Fellow in 1973, serving first as a special assistant to the director of the office of health policy development and planning in Washington, and later as director of organization and management of the Health Insurance Benefits Advisory Council.

"Coming from two successive fellowships with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, it will be challenging to put things into practice," she commented prior to her departure for El Salvador in October. Ms. Diaz is now supervising 135 Peace Corps volunteers working in agriculture, education, small business, fisheries, museum research and hospital maintenance programs in the Central American country.

Fiji

JOHN G. DALESSIO, former director of the Greater Los Angeles Urban Coalition and a partner in the law firm of Clabaugh and Dalessio, moves early next month to Fiji, where he will supervise 216 PCVs and trainees as Peace Corps country director.

"We expect to continue the successful Peace Corps program established in Fiji and to develop model water collection, waste distribution and electrification programs in rural villages and outer islands," Dalessio said recently.

Volunteers in the South Pacific island nation are now serving in education, rural community development, health, fisheries, agricultural and special projects.

Mali

Mali's new Peace Corps director is HENRY N. HOMEYER III, of Cornish Flat, N.H. Homeyer, 31, who assumed his new post this month, is responsible for supervising about 65 volunteers and trainees in education, rural health, and agricultural development programs. Both the new country director and his wife, the former Gretchen Goodale, 29, of Westchester, Pa., were Peace Corps volunteers in Cameroon where they managed a handicraft co-

operative from 1973 to 1976. In November 1976, they became consultants on export marketing of handicrafts for the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) in the Central African Empire.

Chile

GENE DE LA TORRE, one-time Peace Corps volunteer community development specialist in the Dominican Republic, will take over as country director in Chile on January 8. De La Torre, who served as a PCV from 1962 to 1964, will direct the activities of approximately 124 volunteers and trainees in forestry, fisheries, small business, health, sports, rural agricultural development and special education programs in the South American Country. De La Torre's objectives in his new role include the emphasis and expansion of agricultural, health and educational programs in rural areas. Prior to his appointment, he was a conservation program manager for the Federal Energy Administration, now the Department of Energy.

Liberia

For SEYMOUR GREBEN, an appointment as country director in Liberia marked a return to the Peace Corps. Greben, 52, formerly Director of the Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department, first joined Peace Corps in 1963 as deputy director in the Philippines, a post he held until 1966. From 1966 to 1968, he served as country director in Malaysia, an experience he has described as "the most fun of my life."

Commenting upon his decision to rejoin Peace Corps, Greben said that the Peace Corps' "three goals are still vital. They are as conceptually important as when Kennedy and Shriver were talking about them. The only time they are less so is when we let them become less so."

Congressional Staffers Briefed

Several staff members of Congressional committees that have jurisdiction over the Peace Corps received briefings on Peace Corps work overseas prior to their visits to those countries. Connie Freeman of the Senate Foreign Assistance Subcommittee was briefed by country desk officers Bob Taylor and Willie Holmes of Peace Corps on six Sahel countries. Ms. Freeman also spoke to

Mary King about Peace Corps efforts in desertification. Gary Jefferson, staff director of the House International Development Subcommittee, and Kurt Schork, administrative assistant to Congressman Michael Harrington (D-Mass.) chairman of the subcommittee, spoke with CDO Dexter Katzman about Peace Corps' programs in Nicaragua. These two subcommittee staff members also learned about Peace Corps in Thailand and Korea from CDOs Chuck Hobbie and Paula Goddard.

On ACTION's domestic side, John Lewis, Marge Tabankin, Helen Kelley, and Dan Maldonado conducted an extensive briefing for the staff of the Senate Subcommittee on Child and Human Development on the status of all DO programs and plans for the future.

Spreading the Word at Women's Conference

ACTION was well represented at the National Women's Conference in Houston, Texas, Nov. 18-21. Those attending were Mary King, Carolyn Payton, Debbie Harding, Irene Tinker, Jan Peterson, and Wilma Espinoza. Much of their time was spent spreading the word on ACTION's new directions and exchanging information and ideas for programming aimed at meeting the basic needs of women both domestically and internationally.

Tinker was one of the leading women in the federal government invited by Bella Abzug to attend the conference as a distinguished guest and to speak at the Distinguished Lecture Series. She was also a participant in the International Panel on disarmament and Peace Issues. Espinoza and Peterson were both official observers. Espinoza followed closely the progress of the Chicano and minority caucus, a coalition of all the minority representatives at the conference. She also was involved in the activities of the Federal Women's Program. Peterson was a leader in the workshop on family violence and spoke about legislation that would give ACTION primary responsibility for programming in the area. She further helped organize a coalition on the issue.

A much-discussed topic was the issue of women in voluntary activity. Many of the women who attended the conference are volunteers, even though they do not see themselves as such. The number one need that was heard throughout the conference was technical assistance in organizing and fundraising in order to enhance their voluntary efforts. If any one message came out of the Houston conference, it was that women are on the move and are developing hosts of voluntary organizations around the variety of issues that will lead towards the empowerment of women in this country.

A Man to Get Things Moving

Larry Brown, executive director of the Massachusetts Advocacy Center in Boston, has been named assistant director of ACTION, effective early in 1978. A former Peace Corps volunteer in India, Brown, 36, will oversee the agency's Washington and regional offices in informing the public of programs and volunteer recruitment.

"This is the person," Director Sam Brown said, "that I have selected to help get us moving again. We have undertaken exciting new initiatives to address basic human needs in our world, and the director of recruitment and communications is our chief link to the American public to make this happen."

DO Meeting with Field Staff, Project Directors

Twenty ACTION field staff, most of them from the state program offices, met with DO deputy Peter Dybwad to discuss the Domestic Operations field structure and systems. These meetings, which took place November 14-18, 1977, were a key part of the Domestic Operations reorganization work group. Field participants met with Sam Brown to focus on how best to implement Sam's "Let's Get Started" memo issued following the Harpers' Ferry senior staff meeting in August.

At the same time the field staff were in Washington discussing reorganization, regional program operations officers, along with the state directors

attending the Dybwad meeting, met with Marge Tabankin and the VISTA staff for discussion of the draft VISTA program criteria and their implementation, open for comment until December 20, 1977.

Helen Kelley and OAVP staff members met with a group of RSVP project directors and ACTION field staff to discuss the needs of RSVP projects and program direction. OAVP staff also met with program officers to discuss development of the OAVP project narrative, which is sent to all potential grantees who wish to sponsor OAVP programs. The narrative has recently been revised and modified. This group also discussed how to streamline and update the continuation narrative, which is the sponsor's quarterly report, so that the narrative can better relate to changing program needs.

Peace Corps Survey: Relevant Information and a Few Surprises

An in-depth attitudinal study of returned Peace Corps volunteers was recently completed by Dr. E.A. Winslow, a psychologist and former ACTION staff member and currently a consultant to ACTION. The volunteers studied comprised a random selection of 10 percent of all RPCVs who completed their service during the period July 1, 1974 to July 30, 1975. There were three questions in particular that the study wished to answer: (1) how Peace Corps service affected RPCVs' career development, (2) how RPCVs see their experience a year or more later, and (3) how RPCVs were affected by Peace Corps.

Not only does the survey answer these questions, but it also provides a wealth of statistical information relevant and sometimes surprising, about the total Peace Corps experience as seen through the eyes of the returned volunteer. For example, although 6 percent considered helping others a main reason for joining Peace Corps, only 46 percent felt that they had been successful. Also, 92 percent recommended Peace Corps service to interested qualified applicants, and 92 percent stated they did not regret having served as Peace Corps volunteers.

300 copies of the study, printed by request of the Office of Special Services, have all been distributed to various offices in Washington and to host countries. Washington staff members may borrow a copy from the ACTION library, M-407.

*A more detailed account of Winslow's survey will appear in the next issue of ACTION Update.

NSVP: New Manuals; More Training

NSVP's contract for the production of three technical assistance manuals has been awarded to Northwest Regional Educational Labs of Portland, Ore. The manuals are designed for college administrators, professors and students. The technical assistance manuals will show college administrators how to manage volunteer service programs, aid professors in designing curricula with community service components, and help student volunteers better understand community needs as well as learn how to better profit from a community service experience. According to NSVP chief Jeanne Carney, student participation in service programs is the beginning of community involvement leading to students' design of more sophisticated projects to better meet specific community needs.

NSVP will hold five training seminars for high school and college coordinators before the end of this fiscal year. The next seminar, the first high school training conference of the year, is scheduled for February 12-14, 1978 and is for high school coordinators of service learning programs. The meeting will be hosted by Yale University in New Haven, Conn. Following this seminar, a college training seminar for directors of college student volunteer programs is scheduled for February 26 - March 1, 1978 at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Helping Each Other Do a Better Job

Technical assistance is an integral part of ACTION's programs, but its potential use within the agency itself has only just begun to be explored. When New York Service Center Communications Director Ruth Waddington invited Anne Bringsjord, head of ACTION's headquarters photo services, to spend a week at the Service

Center, it became clear that the wealth of technical expertise could be shared and spread throughout the regions.

During her week in New York, Bringsjord, who has been with the agency since 1971, reviewed the service center's photo file for quality and organization. She then worked with the service center staff, helping them to establish a file system and making recommendations about dealing with photo labs, hiring free-lancers and buying new equipment.

Waddington said she had been concerned about the possibility that Area Communication Managers (ACMs) would have to develop skills in photography in the event of future communication staff cuts. In response to that need, Bringsjord not only prepared a syllabus that could be used by the ACMs when they have to negotiate with freelance photographers or do their own photography but also spent time with the ACMs, going over what makes a good photo and giving them some tips on how to produce better pictures.

"She was fantastic," said Waddington. "It was a week well spent. What Anne was able to do was to give us guidance on equipment and the technical information that we needed to know. I hire freelancers all the time, but now I can be much more exact in my instructions and more realistic in my expectations."

Bringsjord said she valued the opportunity to discuss ways in which the photo services section can become better involved with the photo activities going on in the field. But more important is Anne's eagerness in ". . . looking forward to future exchanges with other field offices because I've learned so much from actually working there."

Also of interest: Bringsjord reports that new photos of Peace Corps volunteers in Belize, Costa Rica, Ecuador and Morocco have arrived.

Speakers Wanted

ATTENTION FORMER PCVs. The Peace Corps Partnership Program has established nationwide a small, informal speakers bureau of former Peace Corps volunteers who speak at American schools and

civic groups which fund Partnership projects overseas. These organizations are interested in learning about development issues and the countries in which volunteers have served. If you are a former PCV who would like to share your experiences and perspectives with a Partnership participating group in your area, call: (FTS) (202) 254-5205, or (toll free) (800) 424-8580, ext. 27 or 28; or write to the Speakers Bureau, Peace Corps Partnership Program, Room 1214, 806 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20525.

Practicing for Hearings

A "trial run" for the forthcoming Peace Corps oversight hearings by the House International Development Subcommittee was held on November 22. Sam Brown, Mary King, Carolyn Payton, and John Lewis appeared as witnesses and were interrogated about the future of the Peace Corps by the four "members of the subcommittee" who were in reality ACTION staffers Dan Maldonado, Harry MacLean, Fred Gloss, and Mercedese Miller. The actual hearing will occur when Congress returns for the second session of the 95th Congress, probably the first week of February.

Last Words on First Efforts

This is the first issue of ACTION Update, formerly the Zero Based Paper, the agency's new biweekly staff newsletter, published by the Office of Public Affairs.

In this issue and in subsequent ones, we will attempt not only to include as much information as possible about the agency's new policies and programs, but also to provide a means for employees to respond to this information and to clarify their own roles in the agency's system.

This interchange will offer employees the opportunity to share their ideas, suggestions or general comments with the ACTION Update staff and thus with the rest of the ACTION staff on how the newsletter can better inform employees and better meet their needs.

With that, then, let us open the door with our first issue and ask you to tell us what you want. Feel free to comment on any aspect of the publication: the name, format, editorial style or content of articles. We will be happy to talk to you in person, Room P-310, or by phone, 254-8373.

If we don't meet your highest expectations now, please remember this is our first issue. Rough though it may be, the refinements will come in time with your assistance and guidance. Remember this is your publication. It will only be as good as you demand it to be.