

ACTION UPDATE

JANUARY 25, 1979

FEBRUARY DESIGNATED PEACE CORPS/VISTA MONTH

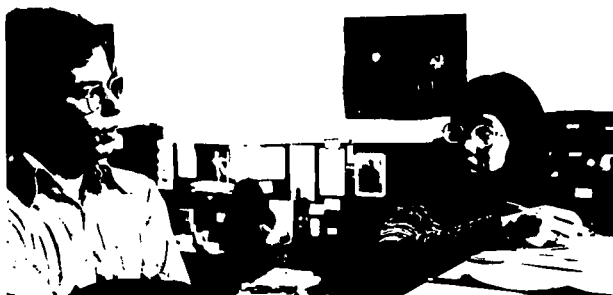


During the month of February, ACTION is mounting an intensive recruitment campaign to increase public awareness of the goals and achievements of nearly 7,000 Peace Corps volunteers overseas and 4,300 VISTA volunteers here at home.

The campaign is part of a major recruitment drive designated as Peace Corps/VISTA Month. Throughout the month, ACTION will focus upon recruiting volunteers for both of these programs.

ACTION Director Sam Brown says that during February, "We will show how the Peace Corps and VISTA volunteers strive to restore a sense of hope and strengthen a sense of purpose in low-income communities at home and in villages around the world.

"Our emphasis will be to recruit Peace Corps



volunteers with a broad background and a strong commitment to help people meet their basic needs for decent health care, education, food, water, shelter, job training and economic security," Brown explains.

"We want the public to know that our relationship with host countries overseas is one of partnership, and that Peace Corps volunteers play a vital role in promoting mutual understanding between Americans and the peoples of Third World countries."



Marge Tabankin, director of VISTA, adds, "It's not easy to be a volunteer. We in VISTA are looking for people who are serious, who have sensitivity and compassion -- people with a sense of commitment."

Tabankin points out that "VISTA is not going to alleviate poverty in the national picture. But in terms of the local neighborhood, the local block club, a local elderly transportation system in a rural area, putting together a crafts co-op in Appalachia -- those efforts are as much needed now as they were ten years ago."

As part of the concentrated national media and recruitment campaign to highlight the unique identities of these ACTION programs, recruiters are currently involved in stepped-up recruitment and public awareness efforts in cities and campuses throughout the country. These efforts will also emphasize minority participation in Peace Corps and VISTA.

ACTION headquarters senior staff will travel

throughout the country during February to discuss Peace Corps and VISTA programs and assist in recruitment efforts by speaking on campuses, at major conferences, at special urban and rural events and through interviews with the print and broadcast media.

Key regional and state office staff also will be involved with public and media appearances in order to reach a broad cross-section of the American public.

VISTA reports that 1,300 volunteers are being sought to begin training in the spring and summer, including 110 lawyers to serve in legal rights and legal services projects and 920 persons with general backgrounds for community development projects.

Nearly 2,000 Peace Corps volunteers will be recruited to serve in Latin America, Africa, Asia and the Pacific. The greatest numbers are being sought in agriculture, forestry/fisheries, education and health. Training begins this spring and summer.

Housing Assistance Council Awarded VISTA Grant

VISTA volunteers are involved in an innovative housing and community development program in cooperation with a group of small town governments in a multi-state area. The Housing Assistance Council (HAC), a national nonprofit corporation which provides housing rehabilitation, new housing, and economic and community development assistance to low-income people, has been awarded a national VISTA grant for \$150,000 for that purpose.

In announcing the grant, ACTION Director Sam Brown stated, "The joint VISTA -HAC project is reflective of the agency's overall purpose of providing individuals and communities with a means to achieve self-sufficiency in the most critical area of community needs."

In the middle of December, 19 low-income, locally recruited volunteers began serving through HAC in eight small southern towns: Greenville, Ga; Uniontown, Ala.; Tallulah, La.; Madison, Ark.; Bolton and Jonestown, Miss.; and Greenevers and Princeville, N.C. Each town

has a population of under 3,000, with the exception of Tallulah which has a population of 11,000. In addition, each town is below the poverty level, is predominantly black and has a black mayor.

The volunteers, under supervision of the appropriate mayor, are working in the fields of housing and community development.

Domestic Operations Director John Lewis emphasized that rural communities haven't been equal beneficiaries of state and local programs to improve housing. He said that more than twice as much federal housing money goes to urban than to rural residents.

"The problems of our rural poor are just as pressing as those in our big cities," Lewis said. "The HAC-VISTA project can serve as a model for showing residents of rural communities that in banding together they can compete effectively for federal and state housing resources."



Jamari Salleh head of the San Juan office, Sam Brown and Region II Director Nestor Llamas

NEW RECRUITMENT OFFICE OPENS IN PUERTO RICO

ACTION Director Sam Brown and Nestor Llamas, Region II Director, were the featured speakers at the official opening of the Peace Corps/ VISTA Recruitment Office in San Juan, Puerto Rico on December 11.

In his address, Brown stressed the importance of volunteers who are native Spanish speakers from cultures similar to those of Latin America.

"In the intervening years since the Peace Corps was created and became part of ACTION, we have made some effort to insure that all Americans, regardless of their age, education, race, or cultural background, can volunteer," he said. "But we can do more. This is why this office is being opened today."

Llamas welcomed the establishment of the new

office as representative of the continuing relationship between the United States mainland and Puerto Rico. "The new office symbolizes the genuine interest of this agency in the recruitment of Hispanic Americans in Peace Corps and VISTA," he said.

Llamas said that Puerto Rican volunteers are an important link between the United States and Central and South America, because of their common Spanish culture.

Jamari Salleh, the recruitment representative in Puerto Rico, will head the new office located in the Federal Building in Old San Juan. Prior to her current assignment she was a recruiter in the New York area office. She was a Peace Corps volunteer in Malaysia from 1970 to 1972.

ACTION HELPS CHAIR CONSUMER CO-OP BANK MEETINGS

Public participation in open meetings scheduled in 13 cities across the country during December was critical for the future success of the new National Consumer Cooperative Bank, according to ACTION Director Sam Brown.

"Creation of the bank is a great achievement on the part of the cooperative movement, and it reflects bi-partisan Congressional and public support for the concept of community self-reliance," said Brown.

He noted that ACTION is one of seven federal agencies which chaired public meetings in cities around the country. ACTION served as the lead agency for meetings held in Denver on Dec. 4, and in Boston on Dec. 11.

"The National Consumer Cooperative Bank holds tremendous potential for helping existing cooperatives to expand and for encouraging community groups to form cooperatives as a means for providing basic services in their neighborhoods," said Brown.

"Creation of the bank is a great achievement on the part of the cooperative movement..."

"ACTION is particularly concerned with involving in the development of the bank's policies and regulations low-income groups, state and local officials, union officials, churches and others who represent people who are interested in the benefits a cooperative can give to their communities," he continued.

"More than one-third of the bank's resources are aimed at cooperatives serving low-income members," he added, noting that both VISTA and Peace Corps volunteers have been actively involved in working with cooperatives over the years.

ACTION is one of 12 federal agencies serving on an interagency task force to develop recommendations for policies and procedures for the new bank. The bank is designed to provide loans and technical assistance to non-profit consumer co-ops and, to a limited extent, to producer co-ops.

Under the National Consumer Cooperative Bank Act, which was signed into law on Aug. 20, 1978 the federal government is authorized

"More than one-third of the bank's resources are aimed at cooperatives serving low-income members..."

to purchase up to \$300 million in preferred stock over a five-year period to finance the bank's leading activities.

The act also established the Office of Self-Help Development and Technical Assistance within the bank and authorized the appropriation of \$75 million over three years for capital investment loans to low-income cooperatives and other co-ops whose need for capital exceeds that which can be obtained from other sources. An additional \$2 million was authorized for technical assistance and administration of the office in fiscal 1979.

According to Brown, the bank, which will begin operations as soon as funds are appropriated by Congress, will be established as a mixed ownership government corporation administered by a 13-member board of directors. Six of the members will come from the general public and the others will be appointed from federal agencies. Eventually, the bank will be wholly owned by its member cooperatives and will operate independently of the federal government.

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REGIONAL CONFERENCES DISCUSS NEW DIRECTIONS FOR PEACE CORPS

Minority recruitment, programming, FY '79 budgets, stateside training, basic human needs, and the changing role of the volunteer in developing countries--these were the major issues discussed at the Peace Corps regional conference held in November and December 1978.

The NANEAP, Africa, and Latin American conferences each presented the opportunity to explore Peace Corps trends and progress toward meeting basic human needs (BHN) criteria. Participants at each conference discussed ways of reinforcing and continuing BHN programming in light of current budgetary constraints. Panel discussions also were held at each conference on the need for a working partnership between the Peace Corps and host country voluntary groups and development agencies.

The NANEAP conference, held in Mohammedia, Morocco, Oct. 30-Nov. 5, focused on field progress on BHN program development. With the goal of a regional operating plan for FY '79 in mind, Peace Corps staff from countries with similar programs and interests held individual meetings to share ideas and information on program development, implementation and training strategy, and successes within the BHN context.

Issues addressed were use of skill-trained volunteers, minority recruitment, exit-entry decisions, and the zero-based budget process. Participants also developed an overview of the NANEAP region and formulated regional plans for responding to agency initiatives.

In addition, directors discussed ideas for effecting agency cost savings based on current budget limitations. As a result of the conference, a task

force is currently exploring the most feasible ideas for agency savings.

Participants at the Africa regional conference, held in Nairobi, Kenya, from Nov. 6-11, discussed Peace Corps efforts and progress in making formal education in Third World countries more relevant to the needs of poor rural communities. The need for increased informal education efforts in the field of health and agriculture was emphasized. Participants discussed upcoming programs in that region which reflect BHN criteria. Two such programs, scheduled to begin next month, include a fisheries program in the Gambia and a rural development program in Cameroon.

Host country representatives discussed in depth with ACTION staff Peace Corps' changing role in Third World countries. Each host country director expressed the hope that Peace Corps programming would give greater attention to the needs of individual countries so that programmers and volunteers would work in partnership with the host country.

The trend toward Peace Corps/host country partnerships also was discussed at the Latin America /Caribbean regional conference held Dec. 3-8 in Coolfont, W. Va. Country directors emphasized the need for their increased involvement in policies and plans affecting their host countries and for greater cooperation between the volunteers and the host country. In addition to training, administrative, personnel and budgetary issues, participants discussed matters pertinent to the LA/Caribbean region, such as the continuing political crisis in Nicaragua and its potential effect on Peace Corps operations. They also discussed the status of emergency planning as it relates to the national and civil disorders in that area.



ACTION Staff Cele



THE TWELVE LAYERS OF ACTION

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 12 ACTING DIRECTORS | AND 1 GRASS-ROOTS, |
| 11 SPECIAL ASSISTANTS | SKILL-TRAINED, |
| 10 ACTING DEPUTIES | GENERALIST, CELIBATE, |
| 9 ASSOCIATE DIRECTORS | ANTI-VEHICULAR, CULTURALLY |
| 8 DEPUTY ASSISTANTS | SENSITIVE, FEMALE, |
| 7 ASSISTANT DIRECTORS | MINORITY, OLDER AMERICAN, |
| 6 AREA MANAGERS | UNDER PAID, |
| 5 REGIONAL DIRECTORS | RARELY VISITED, UNSUPPORTED, POORLY |
| 4 PROGRAM OFFICERS | PROGRAMED, QUICKLY TRAINED, FULLY |
| 3 COUNTRY DIRECTORS | COMMITTED, SUPER FLEXIBLE, |
| 2 LOCAL SPONSORS | BRILLIANTLY SUCCESSFUL, BASIC HUMAN NEEDS |
| | VOLUNTEER |

brates the Holidays

Photos by Emma Rivera



CO-OP BANK *from pg. 4*

Brown said the meetings provided general information about the bank and its legislative mandate and sought public comments on specific issues concerning internal procedures, eligibility and priorities, finance and lending policies, the operations of the Self-Help Development Fund, technical assistance and public participation.

Each of the issues reflects the focus of a working subcommittee of the interagency task force. ACTION is chairing the subcommittee on the Self-Help Development Fund and co-chairing the subcommittee on public participation with the Community Services Administration.

Among the questions discussed at the public meetings about the Self-Help Development Fund were the appropriate definition of a co-op serving low-income members and how a system of ongoing public participation should be designed.

According to Shanti Fry, an ACTION consultant and co-op specialist who attended some of the hearings, "About half of the people who came were not from the co-op movement, and this was very positive. They included state and local officials and representatives of low-income, consumer and energy conservation groups. So it was a chance for them to learn about co-ops.

"Basically, we got a lot of useful information from the hearings," said Ms. Fry. "Certainly, the hearings are big step in the right direction." Additional public meetings held January 9-11 in Washington, D.C. gave the public an opportunity to discuss bank policy and procedures with specific subcommittees.

Brown said the task force hopes to have its recommendations ready by Jan. 31 for presentation to the bank board.

For information, contact Ms. Fry at 254-5101 or 254-3327.

Sharing, Caring Emphasized at Older Americans' Conference

"What you do helps broaden community understanding that older Americans can help solve the problems of society, can be less dependent, less fearful and less isolated," agency Director Sam Brown recently told 78 SCP and FGP directors. "You are beginning to create a more positive sharing, caring attitude in this society."

The idea of sharing and caring, the basic thrust of the Senior Companion and Foster Grandparent programs, was explored during a recent four-day national conference in Washington, D.C. for directors of SCP and FGP projects in 45 states. Twenty of the directors supervise newly-funded projects in the areas of health, child abuse, youth crime, and deinstitutionalization.

The Older American Volunteer Programs have "unique meaning," Brown said. "They can provide models for society, composed of independent,

strong, not dependent older people." He emphasized that the elderly are not a problem to be solved, but a "repository of skills, wisdom and compassion which allows people to be part of the solution."

Mary King, ACTION Deputy Director, told conference participants that "so many people look at their golden years as an opportunity to reap the rewards they have worked so hard for these many years. The Older American volunteers are proving that the reward is the opportunity to continue to be useful, to help others and to participate in the mainstream of life."

The conference featured workshops on how Foster Grandparents and Senior Companions can help prevent institutional confinement of older persons, help the elderly to leave nursing homes and hospitals sooner, work with abused

children and young offenders, and help carry out health care plans for the infirm elderly.

Although many SCP and FGP projects already are working in these areas, 20 of the 70 projects represented at the conference will emphasize



Jack Sandoval, FGP director talks to Sam Brown

these tasks. Five new Senior Companion projects are beginning in states which previously had no SCP volunteers. (See December 2, 1978 issue of ACTION Update.) Volunteers in these new

Presidential Hiring

As part of his efforts to restrain inflation, President Carter imposed, in late October, an indefinite limitation on the hiring of federal civilian workers. Under this order, government agencies may fill no more than 50 percent of new vacancies until further notice.

Shortly after the President declared a hiring limitation, ACTION imposed a freeze on all hiring for the entire month of November. During that time office managers assessed their situations to determine where hiring needs were greatest.

On December 6, office heads provided the Deputy Director of Administration and Finance with lists of vacancies that occurred after October 24, 1978, which they considered essential to fill. The A & F Director has been determining, on a monthly basis, positions which may be filled.

The hiring limitation does not affect any per-

projects will provide health care services and ensure that clients receive all social services they should, explained SCP Chief Suzanne Fahy. The volunteers will serve Pueblo Indians in New Mexico; the Filipino, Chinese and Japanese communities in Honolulu and older people in rural areas in Maine, Idaho and South Dakota.

Fourteen Foster Grandparent projects will undertake experimental efforts in the areas of child abuse, youth crime and deinstitutionalization. The projects in 13 states recently received ACTION funds for 10 additional volunteers each to work in these "pressing human needs areas," said FGP Chief Jack Kenyon. "If experimental efforts prove successful, they will be put to work on a much broader basis throughout the program."

Referring to rumors of government reorganization plans for ACTION's Older American Programs, Brown told conferees that "we at ACTION like the Older American Programs. They are appropriately housed where they are. Any attempt to move them will bring considerable opposition from me."

Limitation in Effect

sonnel action within the agency. A clerk-typist in ACTION, for example, may be reassigned or promoted into another position in the agency, or a recruiter who is under consideration as an area recruitment manager would not be denied that position because of the President's order. The other major exceptions to the hiring limitation are:

- Hiring in accordance with firm written commitments made prior to the issuing of the President's memorandum.
- Executive level appointments.
- Shifting of an employee from one agency to another because of a transfer of function resulting from Presidential reorganization.

In compliance with a directive from the Office of Management and Budget, Sam Brown also has asked office heads to carefully review requests for temporary employees before hiring them.

ACTION/CSA Explore Joint Programming Possibilities

ACTION and the Community Services Administration have been meeting since last April to explore ways of cooperating with one another to improve the delivery of services and programs to the poor. Both federal agencies, currently charged with working to alleviate poverty in the United States, are working along with the President's Reorganization Project to streamline government programs.

ACTION Director Sam Brown and CSA Director Graciela Olivarez initiated a series of discussions dealing with a wide range of cooperative options, including a merger of the two agencies, the formation of a new agency akin to the old Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), and the possibility of joint programming.

The comprehensive meetings continued throughout the summer, and on July 31, seven community organizers who work with ACTION programs in the field, seven representatives of CSA field operations and members of the President's Reorganization Project met in Washington to discuss further programming capabilities and tactics.

As a result of these discussions, and in view of the fact that neither ACTION nor CSA budgets would be substantially increased, nor would new legislation be submitted, both agencies are now pursuing joint programming and coordination efforts.

A meeting was held in Washington on October 25, with ACTION's regional and state directors and CSA regional directors attending. Discussions focused on existing programs in which ACTION and CSA are cooperating, possible areas of future joint programming, and ways in which the agencies can combine their efforts to create joint program opportunities with other federal agencies.

The meeting resulted in a final document which

was submitted to PRP on November 16. PRP is currently considering the report recommendations for inclusion into the President's reorganization plan.

The document delineated a framework for cooperation and targeted areas of joint programming. It stated, "ACTION and CSA view joint programming as more than the simple sponsorship of each other's projects... It is seen as a dynamic collaborative process which produces something more than project sponsorship." It said that the combined efforts of the two agencies could better meet the needs of the poor and that jointly they could better "leverage additional resources from other agencies, thereby accomplishing objectives which would otherwise be beyond the reach of the combined resources of ACTION and CSA."

ACTION and CSA currently work together in numerous projects. Approximately 780 Senior Companions are now serving under CSA sponsors. They provide personal supportive and advocacy services to functionally impaired older persons to help them achieve and maintain their highest level of independent living. For example, one of the original Senior Companion Programs is sponsored by the CSA-funded WAGES Inc. of Goldsboro, N.C. WAGES Inc. also sponsors FGP and RSVP projects and nutrition, Head Start and job development programs.

In Louisiana, seven low-income VISTA volunteers are in their second year of service on a CSA-sponsored project in which they spend their time on home weatherization, locating eligible homeowners and assisting them in procuring needed services and home repairs.

In the report, the agencies agreed to "direct their efforts and resources to strengthen the capacity of the poor and their neighborhood community groups to advocate and affect human services policies and programs."

Regional Director's Spotlight: John Torian



Quiet, observant, low-key, the man in the back of the room. Not exactly the description of a campaign stumper, but certainly the description of an organizer, a “people” oriented person, an implementor and facilitator rather than a shaker and shouter. It’s a description of John Frederick Torian, ACTION’s Region I Director since July, 1976, on his second tour of duty in Boston.

Torian came back to New England because, “people seem caught up in helping themselves, each other and being neighborly. New Englanders have an attitude and a way of life that coincides with ACTION’s philosophy and intent. The town meeting still exists here, and with it the healthy participation of citizens shaping their own lives. That’s what we, as an agency, encourage.”

Torian learned early about grass roots organizing. After serving three years in the U.S. Marines from California to Japan and the Philippines and back, he became a Midwest organizer for CORE, the Congress for Racial Equality, in Indianapolis, Indiana. From 1959 to

1965 he worked with community and civil rights groups during a period of time when tensions and tempers were high.

“We were so serious in those times. We worked day and night, sometimes going without sleep for several days, and only then sleeping in the back room of a shop, the basement of a church or on someone’s sofa. With the Indianapolis Social Action Council we worked non-stop registering 63,000 voters in a 90-day period – people who had never voted before.”

As an organizer he also worked with and volunteered for the Indiana Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the League of Women Voters. Union work was an essential element, and Torian was alternate union steward for the Teamsters in 1960-61, and in 1963 he held the same job for the United Auto Workers at the Ford plant.

“We couldn’t have done what we did in those poor conservative urban and rural areas without the commitment and involvement of community leaders. Ministers helped us, and merchants

gave food and sometimes a bed, people donated, anonymously sometimes, but they donated. Together we accomplished something, a spirit, a feeling that people could take charge of and control their lives. That was the soul of the 'movement.'”

In 1965 Torian began working with the Neighborhood Community Action Agency, then funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO). In 1966, he was asked to direct the ten multi-service centers in Indianapolis.

By 1967 he was in Washington, D.C. with Capitol Headstart, organizing and coordinating parent participation programs.

In 1968, again the with the OEO, he developed experimental VISTA volunteer training programs in New York, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Later that year, he moved to Boston as the VISTA regional administrator, and by 1971, the year ACTION was formed, he was appointed Deputy Director, Region I.

In 1975, Torian was appointed Africa Regional

Director for Peace Corps. Reflected Torian, “The overseas experience gave me a new awareness that there are very strong similarities between developing nations and developing communities. That’s not a revolutionary or new idea, but it’s a powerful one to remember when you’re working here at home.”

“Programming is exciting, whether it’s VISTA or OAVP. I’m convinced there is some such thing as a ‘collective wisdom’ in communities. I can’t prove it, it’s intuitive, but you know when something is right. Feds ought to stay a respectable distance from the community. Our work ought to be on the front end – 90 percent of our work ought to be front end – giving good, sound technical assistance, helping to articulate solutions and avenues to those solutions, and when it’s ready, we ought to back off, let the grant work for itself. We ought to trust the ‘collective wisdom’ of the community.”

“I have the perfect job. It melds exactly with my own philosophy. And I have the finest staff in the agency. Not many people are lucky enough to say that.”

personnel

Assistant General Counsel Joins Legal Staff

Louise Maillet has been named as an assistant general counsel in the Office of the General Counsel. In her new position she will be handling agency legal matters for several domestic and international regions of ACTION.

Ms. Maillet is a 1978 graduate of the University of Maine Law School in Portland, where she was active in the Womens’ Law Association and the International Law Organization. She received

her undergraduate degree from Assumption College in Worcester, Mass., where she studied English, political science and economics.

New Secretary in Director’s Office

Vickie Winpisinger has been named confidential secretary to the Director. In this position she will help plan itineraries and perform advance work for the Director’s public appearances. Before coming to ACTION Ms. Winpisinger served for six years as office manager for Congressman Sidney Yates (D-III.)

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Sarah Weddington, White House advisor on women’s issues, will be the keynote speaker at 10 a.m., February 12 for Women’s Awareness Week, a week-long program of events highlighting women’s issues presented by ACTION’s Federal Women’s Program Advisory Committee, February 12 - 16. Liberal leave policies granted for ACTION employees.