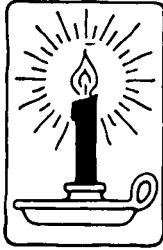


ACTION

December 18, 1980

update...



**FOR SENIOR
VOLUNTEERS,
GIVING IS NOT
SEASONAL**



Older Americans Share Skills Year-Round

Ninety-two-year-old Retired Senior Volunteer Lucy Atkins enters the room and extends her hand to a nervous woman who has just arrived at the Sunny Acres Nursing Home. "Hello, just call me Lucy," she says warmly. "Let me show you around." As the welcome hostess at the home in Chelmsford, "she greets all new patients," says Activities Director Sandra Gaddney. "Introduces them to others, visits them regularly and encourages them to participate in activities."

At the Bynam School, Foster Grandparent Chester Mills, 67, patiently helps a hyperactive child settle down and concentrate on his math assignment. "Sure it takes energy, but why not? These children love to see me. I really think I help them and that makes me feel good," he says. "If you wonder what's my reward, just look at me!" Observes Bynam's principal, Daniel Hogan, "He glows."

In a high-rise apartment for the elderly, Senior Companion Helen Socha, 65, sits knitting with a 76-year-old woman who suffers from a heart ailment, high blood pressure and circulation problems. Mrs. Socha also visits local nursing homes.



"When I'm there, I ask if someone is dying. If so, I ask if I can be with them. Dear God, just to have someone there... Some people say, 'Isn't it depressing?' Not for me! I enjoy everything about this program."

The energetic people described above share a strong bond: they are volunteers with one of ACTION's three older American programs, all sponsored locally by Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI). CTI, in Lowell, Mass., is one of only three organizations in the U.S. to jointly sponsor an RSVP, FGP and SCP program.

"Having all three programs in the community

"Making lonely people happy, that's my reward"

triples the bank," says Leo Desjarlais, executive director of CTI. "There is a positive feeling about the programs here and I love being with the volunteers. It buoys me up in times of overwhelming paperwork."

No one seems to appreciate the programs more than Mary Gagnon, who has been the director of all three at various times. Now the head of the Senior Companion Program, Ms. Gagnon says that the advantage of having three programs under one sponsoring roof is that "if we don't have an opening for someone in the Foster Grandparent or Senior Companion Programs, we can put them in RSVP first. Although volunteers enjoy their RSVP assignments, some really need the stipend that is provided through the other two programs."

For many, the monthly training sessions conducted jointly for Senior Companions and Foster Grandparents are an important educational addition to their lives. They recently have participated in workshops which addressed such crucial areas of concern as death and dying, fixed income counseling and winterization.

But the most important skills the volunteers bring to their assignments are their talents for relating well to people. "Making lonely people happy, that's my reward," notes Senior Companion John McEnaney, 73.

One of his clients, 77-year-old Nelson Brake, is recuperating from a broken hip. "Nelson and I, we like our sports," McEnaney says. "We reminisce



about Ted Williams and all the ballplayers.”

McEnaney knows that helping to keep his client in a positive frame of mind is therapeutic. “He’ll throw away the cane someday,” McEnaney says with confidence. “You need a certain amount of determination to overcome your problems and I try to motivate that in people.”

Foster Grandparents are experts at motivating their young charges to increase their skills -- whether that means mastering the use of a new prosthesis or learning how to hold a pencil.

Foster Grandparent Lena L’Hereux, 72, is assigned to the Parker School in Dracut. “Working with the children makes me feel much younger. I was forced into retirement,” she recalls, “and that hurt at the time. But it was for the best because I found this program.”

Of the Parker School’s 245 children, 45 have special education needs. “When you see a child who can’t even hold a pencil and after six weeks he is printing his name, believe me, that’s rewarding,” Mrs. L’Hereux says proudly.

“We feel the Foster Gandparents are indispensable,” remarks the school’s principal, Connie Desjardins. “They have a fine attitude and we have them assigned to special education children in almost every school. They’re not only an asset to the children but they’re an asset to us, the teachers.”

RSVP volunteers fill a variety of service roles in the community, some quite different from their former occupations. “I never, never thought I’d

be working in a police station,” laughs 79-year-old RSVP volunteer Germaine Sands. Mrs Sands worked as a stitcher in a shoe factory in Boston for many years before retiring and moving to Lowell. Now she and her RSVP colleague, Josephine Sullivan, 84, a retired seamstress, serve three hours a week in the Community Relations Department of the Lowell police station. There, they sort and file permits and registrations that are kept in that office.

For others, volunteer assignments are a continuation of previous careers. Arnold Waterman, 77, was once the assistant chief probation officer in the same building where he now acts as an RSVP volunteer 24 hours a week.

He keeps a running account of the details of each particular case handled by six juvenile court probation officers. “My activities are helpful to the probation officers when they are compiling folders about each case for court presentation,” Waterman explains.

The volunteers’ supervisor, Captain Thomas Kelleher, says, “since the volunteers first came to our office seven years ago, they’ve really taken the burden off us. They’ve probably logged over 3,000 hours and that’s a considerable savings.”

“There is no limit to the usefulness of our RSVP volunteers,” concludes RSVP project director Thelma Brown. “All our people are involved and interested in what they are doing. They give so much of themselves to the Greater Lowell community.”

New Foreign Service Act Includes PC Employees

On October 17, 1980, the President approved the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (P.L.96-465). Although the Act represents a comprehensive revision of Foreign Service personnel legislation, it reconfirms the basic personnel system in use for the U.S. citizen staff of Peace Corps.

The Act provides both overseas and headquarters staff with a single, unified personnel system. The Foreign Service Nationals now designated as Foreign Nationals (FN) are now recognized as members of the Foreign Service, but will continue to be paid in accordance with local personnel compensation systems. (Work is proceeding on standards for FN positions unique to Peace Corps, and it is expected to be completed before the end of the year).

The Foreign Service Act of 1980 authorized the President to set up new salary rates in conformance with both the Act and the Federal Pay Comparability Act of 1970. On October 25, the President signed Executive Order 12249, implementing the new salary rates, effective retroactively to October 5, 1980. Salary increases were effected for most employees.

The remaining provisions of the Act will become effective on February 15, 1981. After that time, an employee's classification in an FSR or FSS class or grade will be converted to the comparable classification in the new Foreign Service Salary Schedule.

The Act requires that the conversion take place within 120 days of the effective date, but new appointments on or after that date will be made to the new salary classes.

The new Schedule consists of nine classes ranging from FS-1, the highest to FS-9, the lowest. Each class will contain 14 steps. The new Schedule accommodates all U.S. citizen employees except those with a rank of FSR-1 or FSR-2. These Peace Corps officials will be assigned to non-career positions in the Senior Foreign Service established by the Act.

The following table illustrates the conversion of Peace Corps employees with classifications at or below the level of FSR-3 or FSS-1.

The Conversion Table for Peace Corps Employees

Before February 15, 1981	Effective as of February 15, 1981
FSR-3 or FSS-1	FS-1
FSR-4 or FSS-2	FS-2
FSR-5 or FSS-3	FS-3
FSR-6 or FSS-4	FS-4
FSR-7 or FSS-5	FS-5
FSR-8 or FSS-6	FS-6
FSS-7	FS-7
FSS-8	FS-8
FSS-9 or FSS-10	FS-9

When this conversion takes place, each employee will be placed in the class comparable to his/her current class and in the step which is the numerical equivalent of his/her current step. Any time served in a grade and step before conversion will be credited to the new class and step.

Employees will be eligible for within class step increase after serving 12 months in a step for each of the first nine steps, and after serving 24 months in each of the next higher four steps. Employees who are presently in the highest step of their grade and who, on February 15, will have served in that step for the required amount of time, will be eligible for a step increase after conversion.

The Act also confirms the five-year limitation for PC U.S. citizen employees promulgated by PC Director Sargent Shirver in 1965. Career FS employees not in PC may retire at age 50 after 20 year if service, at least five of which must be in the Foreign Service. (Other agencies utilizing the provisions of the Foreign Service are the State Department, the Agency for International Development, the International Communication Agency, and to a limited extent, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Commerce.)

Nancy Kingsbury, Director of Peace Corps Office of Resource, Management, says the new act provides PC with an opportunity to re-examine its overall personnel policies and procedures, including those for FN employees. Those employees with questions, ideas or suggestions concerning the act should contact Nancy Kingsbury at 254-7394.

VISTA Film Premieres in Nation's Capital "Carry on Sweet Survivors"



Sam Brown, Marge Tabankin, Rep. Paul Simon and Mary King mingle with guests after viewing the VISTA film.

A film entitled "Carry on Sweet Survivors," which portrays the work of VISTA volunteers, made its premiere Nov. 20 before some 250 people at John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

The 25-minute film, made in commemoration of VISTA's 15th anniversary, will be used nationwide to attract prospective volunteers.

Among those in attendance at the center's American Film Institute were VISTA and ACTION headquarters staff, regional directors and other field staff, and current and former volunteers. In an introductory speech, ACTION Director Sam Brown told the audience that the film "tries to tell the story of how poor people help themselves, not dependent on the federal government, but with a little help, gaining control over their communities and lives."

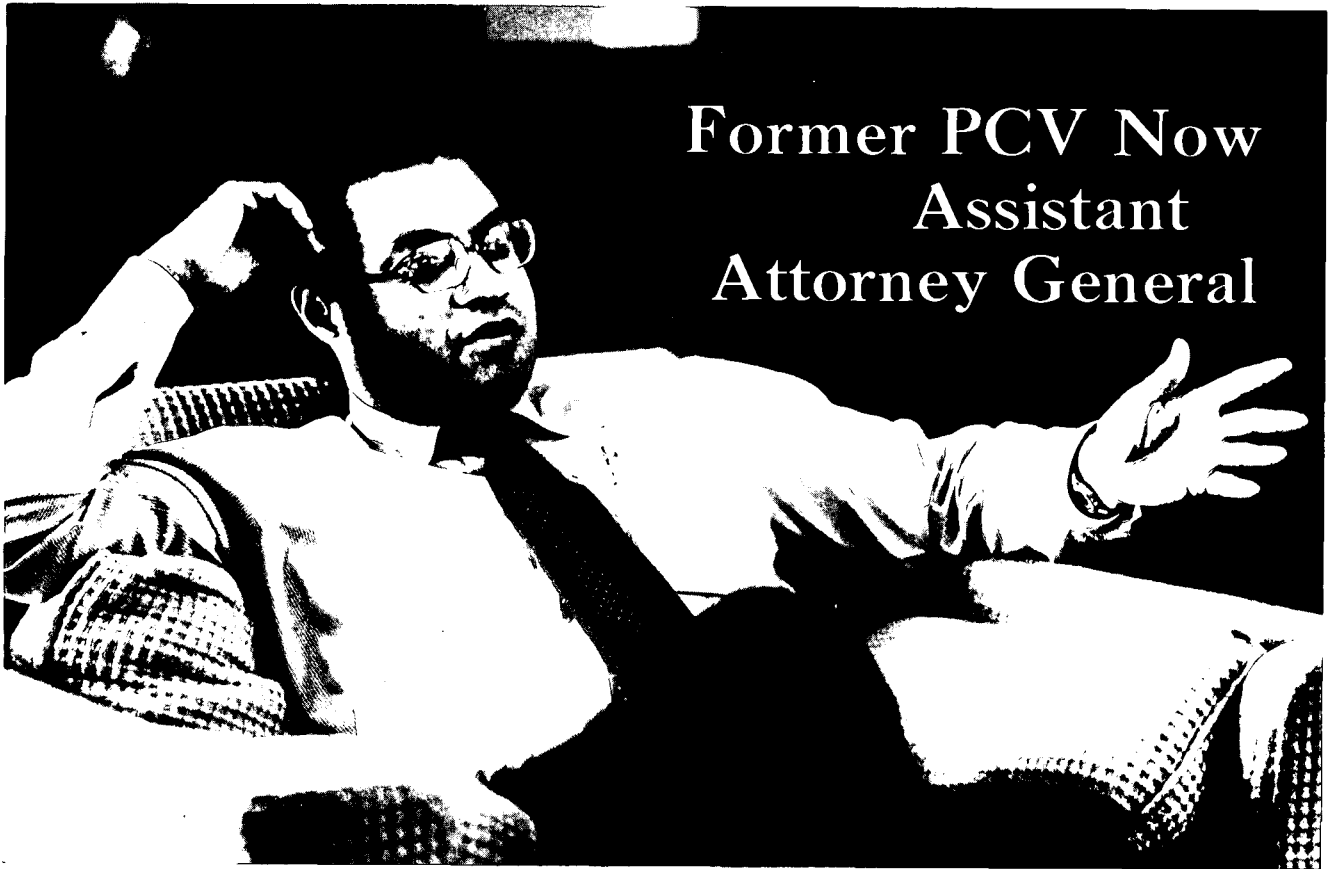
The film showed VISTA volunteers and community residents in several locations - on craft, fishing and farming co-operatives in the South-

eastern U.S., on a New Mexico Solar Energy Association project, and at "Banana Kelly", a housing and neighborhood project in the South Bronx where "people in the community organized to renovate the area to the point where former residents were moving back," according to a VISTA volunteer.

Volunteers and community residents in each film setting spoke of their personal experiences with VISTA. "VISTA saved my life - that's all," said a woman on a craft co-operative in Appalachia, organized by the community with the help of VISTA volunteers. The woman had no occupation before the establishment of the co-op.

A reception in the Kennedy Center Atrium followed the film. Guests listened to a variety of speakers and to entertainers Josh White Jr., and Peter Yarrow and Mary Travers of the singing group, Peter, Paul and Mary. (Yarrow wrote and

(cont. page 8)



Former PCV Now Assistant Attorney General

Not all returned Peace Corps volunteers reach the success of Drew S. Days III, assistant attorney general for Civil Rights. But according to Days, the volunteer experience made a positive difference in his life—personally and professionally.

“Going into the Peace Corps gave me some freedom as to the choices I’ve made since,” says Days. “I had an inclination to be very traditional, and that might have locked me into certain life or career patterns that in retrospect I’m happy I never got into. I feel more open than I did before going to Honduras as a volunteer.”

However, despite what Days calls “a natural affinity for the Peace Corps” and social and human service, he got into PC in a way he never expected.

In the summer of 1966, as a recent graduate of Yale Law School, Days had passed the Illinois bar and was working for a Chicago law firm. The Peace Corps was not in his plans. “But the woman I was seeing at the time was scheduled to go to Brazil as a volunteer. At the end of the summer she was going to Wisconsin for training... Well, to make a long story short,” he says, “we got married, joined the Peace Corps together and were sent to Honduras.”

Days and his wife, Ann Langdon, were assigned to Comayagua, a town of 20,000, some 60 miles from the capital of Tegucigalpa. Langdon worked

in developing a credit union, while Days and ten local farmers began a farm cooperative.

“Before we started, the farmers were really at the mercy of a whole series of middlemen, whether trying to buy seeds or getting their produce to market,” explains Days. “Through the co-op we were able to eliminate a lot of what was keeping the farmers’ profits down.”

With no prior farming or agriculture experience, Days did “a lot of reading, talking with experts, and just meeting with the farmers and seeing what they needed and how they worked.” His legal skills, on the other hand, were there and proved to be very useful he says. “In a way I was acting as a ‘country lawyer,’ negotiating with seed and fertilizer companies or companies that would directly buy the produce from the farmers...”

“It was very heartening, because when we finished our service, there were several co-ops going. And when my wife and I returned to Comayagua a few years later for a visit, the co-ops were operating as if we had never left. The farmers in the community had taken charge, and what had begun years earlier with a few farmers and myself talking around a fire in a small woods, was now a functioning institution.”

As a black, Days feels he fit into the community more easily than some of the white volunteers. "The farmers' would say, 'you're not really a Gringo, you're more like us... white blood, black blood, Indian blood...' Well, I felt it was high time for me to explain to them that I was black, but that blacks, like Hondurans, come in all shades."

The Hondurans' perception of Days made him take another look at himself. "Living overseas made me understand that I was an American—not a black person in America, which is how I had thought of myself—a person facing a lot of obstacles to having a full life in this country." he says. "In many ways I had separated myself from America. I was a hyphenated American as opposed to an American.

"Not that my Peace Corps' experience made me a raving patriot," says Days, "but it was sobering and created a pragmatism in me. If I am a part of America—an American—and they continue to do things that are bad, then I'm also part of doing

things that are bad. I now know that I have to take the responsibility for changing the situation. I can't sit back and satisfy myself with the argument that it's not my fault, it's somebody else's."

When Days returned to the United States, he joined the staff of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund as first assistant counsel in New York City, where he worked until his present appointment in March of 1977. During a two-year leave of absence— July 1973 to June 1975—Days was an associate professor of law at Temple University in Philadelphia.

Looking back, would he do it again, would he become a Peace Corps volunteer? "Absolutely. I think it taught me to stand back and take a look at what's going on in the world and in this country, and what's going on in our lives. I have a better ability to say 'that's good or that's terrible' and when it's terrible to try and do something about it."

Managing Stress

The following excerpt from an article is reprinted with permission of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Occupational Medicine Program and Harry Older, Ph.D.

It is impossible to exist in this present day and age without experiencing some form of stress. Methods of coping with stress are being sought by increasing numbers of the population. Stress does not recognize race, sex, age, religion or occupation, and comes in a variety of symptoms.

- A study of factory workers in Detroit who were laid off revealed a marked increase in hypertension, peptic ulcer, arthritis, and other psychosomatic illnesses.

- A marked increase in serum-cholesterol levels was found among a group of accountants just prior to the April 15 tax return filling deadline.
- Among 2,500 U.S. Navy personnel, those with significant changes in family, personal, job, or financial status had a much higher rate of physical illness in a twelve month period than those with less severe life changes.

These are examples of a growing set of findings indicating that psychological and social factors have a very important bearing on our physical health.

ACTION UPDATE

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Season's Greetings

For many of the poor and underprivileged in our country, these holidays may be brighter because of the work of this agency. In towns, cities, farms, Indian reservations and migrant workers' camps throughout the United States, VISTA volunteers, older American volunteers and a variety of ACTION programs have helped bring about positive changes in low-income communities. This could not have happened without the constant and dedicated support of the ACTION staff. Although this is my last opportunity as ACTION Director to wish you and your families well over the holidays, I leave with an ongoing respect and admiration for the work done by all ACTION employees combating poverty.

During this holiday season, I think it is important to reflect on the mission of the Peace Corps. For nearly 20 years, Peace Corps volunteers have gone all over the world to work with the poor in developing nations in a unique tradition of international cooperation. This cooperation has forged a new global partnership founded on hope, hard work, freedom and peace. I believe we've made the world better. Every Peace Corps employee here and overseas is an integral part of that accomplishment. Our success is the best measure of your commitment and your dedication to the goals of Peace Corps. May you, your families and our volunteers enjoy the blessings of peace in this holiday season, as we rededicate ourselves to the work of peace in the year and years ahead.

FILM PREMIER (from page 5)

sang the film's theme song, "Carry on Sweet Survivors.")

Speakers from ACTION included Sam Brown, Deputy Director Mary King, VISTA Director Margery Tabankin and Region I Director John Torian who helped establish the Locally Recruited Volunteer (LRV) program, in which VISTAs are recruited to work in their own community. Each speaker praised the work of the volunteers and stressed the importance of the continuation - "survival" - of VISTA in the coming decade.

Guest speakers included Rep. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) a longtime friend and advocate of VISTA, and Stuart Eizenstat, advisor to the President on

Domestic Affairs. In addition to congratulating the VISTA staff and volunteers, Simon spoke of the work lying ahead: "Those of us who were survivors of November 4th (election) now have a real challenge of convincing our new friends in Congress that the VISTA program is important for our nation," he said.

Eizenstat told the guests, "You have made government more sensitive, more caring. You are an example of government as good as its people." He said he expected to see the VISTAs work "throughout the decade to make a good place better."