

Some horseplayers would love such
an average

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ACTION UPDATE

September 10, 1981

New Program Provides Opportunity for Young Volunteers

"Youth need and want to serve their communities, working on **local problems and the problems** of their generation. This is part of growing up and becoming a mature citizen," says Connie Horner, deputy assistant director of ACTION's Office and Policy and Planning (OPP). "The youth have the energy and enthusiasm to address these problems, but in the past there may not have been enough of an opportunity for them to do so."

These beliefs are the basis of a new agency program – tentatively named Young Volunteers in ACTION (YVA) – which will call upon the voluntarism of people between the ages of 14 and 22. OPP is planning and exploring potential sites.

"We are strongly emphasizing attention to drug-abuse and illiteracy, but we encourage young volunteers to address any real local need that they or the community perceive," says Horner. She explains that several pilot projects will be carried out over the next six months, and perhaps thirty more projects will be added over the course of FY 82. "Then, if the program is as successful as we think it will be," Horner says, "it will expand nationwide as far as funds permit."

Modeled after RSVP, this new program will have, as does RSVP, a paid project director, coordinator and part-time assistant. An advisory committee and the volunteers will serve in unpaid positions, with ACTION providing transportation costs to and from the project sites for those who would otherwise be unable to participate.

Similar past efforts involving young volunteers in drug abuse and illiteracy have been quite successful, Horner says. "This peer education – youth working with youth – is often as beneficial to the tutor, who may also improve his or her skills

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RSVP Helps Youth Develop Job Potential

RSVP volunteers are assisting youth (ages 16-21) from disadvantaged backgrounds to become employable, self-sufficient members of the community. That concept was initiated, last year, in several RSVP programs around the country, and today it is operating successfully in 12 programs, in Boston; Newark; New York City; Washington, D.C.; Pittsburgh; Detroit; St. Paul; Kansas City, Mo.; Los Angeles (two programs); Tucson, and Honolulu.

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RSVP volunteers will help youth become more employable.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



The last few weeks have been important ones as ACTION successfully concluded interagency agreements with the International Communication Agency (ICA), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Department of Labor (DOL). These agreements are significant steps toward our goal of truly making ACTION the agency for volunteer services.

Through our agreement with ICA, selected experts will conduct institutes across the country to introduce students to the meaning and to the practice of voluntarism in America. Four sessions are planned, and they will be sponsored by the ACTION Institute, directed by Jim Williams.

Our agreement with HHS will introduce the opportunity for older American volunteers from our Foster Grandparent program and Retired Senior Volunteer program to participate in Headstart. We expect ten to 12 Headstart programs around the country to be involved in this cooperative arrangement.

As I have mentioned in previous issues, providing assistance to refugees is one of our chief goals for ACTION in the coming year. In line with this commitment, our agreement with DOL provides for the use of the Youth Employment Service concept for the training and education of young Cambodian refugees. This program is expected to involve 25 projects throughout the country.

These new inter agency agreements, added to those already in effect with the Department of Energy (the Community Energy Project), HHS (the Refugee Resettlement Project), and the Department of State (The resettlement of Cuban and Haitian refugees in Florida), offer each of us a fresh challenge to carry on the good work of ACTION. Working together, I know we will answer the challenge with great success.

With warmest regards,

Tom Pauken

In Memoriam



ACTION/Peace Corps staffers were saddened by the death of Clarence Johnson, of leukemia, at the age of 42 on August 27. A resident of Takoma Park, Md., Johnson joined Peace Corps in 1961 as a mail clerk, and for the past 10 years, served as chauffeur to the ACTION, and often, the Peace Corps directors.

Upon learning of his death, Director Tom Pauken said, "In the short time I knew Clarence, I came to rely on him - he was a brave, capable and kind person. I will miss him, as will all of us throughout the agency. Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife, Martha, and his son, 'C.C.' "

In Sympathy

We are very sad to learn of the death of Lisa Pepper, 19-year-old daughter of David Pepper, administrative officer in the Dallas Regional Office. Ms. Pepper was fatally injured by a hit-and-run driver on August 21, 1981. Dave's address is 1619 Kings Highway, Dallas, Texas 75208

I.D. Cards Required

All employees in the Maiatico Building are now required to show their ACTION I.D. cards upon entering the building. Details on new security measures will be featured in the next issue of Update.

FROM THE DIRECTOR



I'd like to welcome Lon Randall to the Peace Corps staff. Lon, who holds a Ph.D in education, comes to us from Malone College in Canton, Ohio, where he was president. He will be serving as Peace Corps associate director for Program Operations, a position created specifically to bolster the work of our volunteers in the three regions. Lon has tremendous skill and enthusiasm, and we look forward to integrating his expertise into Peace Corps.

Also, welcome back to Rick Abell, director of the Office of Programming and Training Coordination, who just returned from an extensive field tour. An interview with Rick will appear in the next issue of *Update*, where he will discuss the findings of his trip.

I am pleased to announce that Peace Corps has received more than 4,600 requests from host countries so far this year... a substantial increase over this time last year. Naturally, we are very encouraged by such a high demand for the important work of our volunteers. During this fall's major recruiting effort, heavy emphasis will continue to be placed on college students, minority groups and older Americans.

I will soon be hosting a small reception at the Smithsonian Institution to honor the prize-winning photographs from the 20th Anniversary Photo Contest. The photographs, which were initially on display at the RPCV Conference in June, were moved to the Smithsonian, where they'll be exhibited through September. Several ambassadors and other friends of the Peace Corps will join me in viewing the display.

On September 14, I'll be traveling to Michigan for the final round of official Peace Corps 20th Anniversary celebrations. Events at nearby universities are planned, as well as meetings with RPCV groups and many media engagements... All part of the ongoing effort to bring the Peace Corps story to the American public. I'll report on that visit in a future letter.

As this goes to press, I will be in Swaziland on an official State Department trip. In my next letter I'll tell you about the tour and my on-site visits with our volunteers there.

Sincerely,

Loret Ruppe

Maine RPCVs Attend Conference

Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, was the scene of a successful two-day RPCV conference last month. One of many events held nationwide to commemorate the Peace Corps' 20th Anniversary, it was attended by 150 RPCVs. That number represent one-third of the total RPCVs living in the area. The keynote speaker was Sargent Shriver, the first director of the Peace Corps. Also speaking at the conference was Africa Regional Director Bill Sykes. During the conference, 70 former volunteers met to discuss organizational plans for an RPCV group. On the heels of the conference was a Peace Corps recruitment drive in Portland, Maine, which attracted 90 persons.

Congressional Interns Hear Ruppe Discuss Peace Corps

About 200 Congressional interns, several of them returned Peace Corps volunteers, heard Peace Corps Director Loret Ruppe discuss the relevance of Peace Corps in the 80s. Ruppe met with the interns at the Dirksen Senate Office Building, and, following her speech, participated in a question-and-answer session.

Alvarez Addresses Convention in California



Peace Corps Deputy Director Everett Alvarez, Jr. addressed the World Council of Young Men's Service Clubs convention in Anaheim, Calif. on September 2. His message to the audience of several thousand council members from around the world, centered on the importance of commitment and the many common denominators between Peace Corps and the council. Also addressing the convention were Senator S.I. Hayakawa and Congressman William Dannemeyer, both Republicans from California.

Special Home Provides Refuge Rehabilitation for Runaways



Father Ritter (Photo by Kenneth Siegel)

Drugs, illiteracy, pornography, runaways, physical and mental abuse, are grim realities that make victims of youth. ACTION Director Tom Pauken has announced that among the agency's new initiatives will be programs that focus on these issues.

*Covenant House, a New York City residential crisis center and rehabilitation facility for runaways, works to solve the dilemmas of youth who have no place to go, who may be hooked on drugs and who are, more than likely, victims of sexual exploitation. The following story, based on a longer, in-depth article that will appear in the winter issue of *Synergist*, (the publication of ACTION's National Center for Service Learning), illustrates how Covenant House addresses some of the problems of youth in America today.*

Other examples of how current ACTION programs are working with young people appear on the cover page.

The area around Times Square in Manhattan... "A seamy, 15 blocks containing over 100 strip joints, porno bookstores and movie theaters, transvestite places, gay bars, male and female burlesque houses, peep shows, topless bars and fleabag hotels," says Father Bruce Ritter.

What's a Franciscan priest, former college chaplain and Ph.D. in medieval theology doing in this human sewer? He's providing shelter, rehabilitation and caring for thousands of runaways that flock to

that area every year.

Through Covenant House, an eight-story oasis in the middle of the filth and deprivation, Ritter and his staff receive some 6,000 young people a year. Many have been used as prostitutes by local pimps, are turned on to drugs and alcohol or have been raped, tortured and mistreated. And most have nowhere to go. "They've run away from parents or guardians who abused them, or they're throwaways whose parents kicked them out," explains Ritter.

When youngsters walk into Covenant House, they usually first ask for food and a bed, according to Ritter. If they decide to stay—and a high percentage don't—they are then given a medical examination and immediate counseling. Long-term services are also available: individual and family counseling; social work services; medical care; advocacy; educational and vocational counseling and training; and employment referral.

The Covenant House annual budget has climbed to \$7 million, much of it raised through small, private donations. The staff is made up of more than 200 paid personnel, plus 250 volunteers, 30 of them full-time, while the remaining serve on a part-time basis. Volunteers, after receiving intensive training by professionals, are used in all Covenant House services.

All of this in a program that came out of a challenge to Father Ritter back in 1968. At that time, as college chaplain, Ritter was delivering an admittedly "self-righteous" sermon to his students at Manhattan College in Riverside, N.Y. Afterwards one of the young men stood up and said, "What about you, Father, why don't you practice what you preach?"

Shocked, the Franciscan priest realized it was time to put his concern for the less fortunate into action. He left the college and took an apartment among the drug addicts of the lower east side of New York City.

One winter night, six teenagers, aged 14 to 17, knocked at his door and asked for shelter. They had refused drug addicts' offers to pimp for them, so the would-be pimps burned down the abandoned building in which the teenagers had been living. Giving the young people space to sleep, Ritter began calling social service agencies. Each one had a reason it could not accept the homeless teenagers, so Father Ritter took on the responsibility of sheltering, feeding and protecting them. Soon others were coming to him for help.

It grew from there. For years Father Ritter has fought indifference, bureaucracy, evictions, lack of funds and a multitude of other impediments. But Ritter is a fighter. "I'm stubborn, competitive, proud, vain... and I don't like to lose," he says.

He didn't lose. And neither have the more than 20,000 youngsters who've walked through the doors of Covenant House.

Mini-Grants Give Value at Five-to-One

In the 1980's five thousand dollars is not really a lot of money, but, in the field of voluntarism the "seed" of a \$5,000 mini-grant from ACTION will generally get you a return of about five-to-one. Some horseplayers would love such an average.

Mini-grants are part of the Development Assistance Division within ACTION's Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation (OVCP). Tom Lias, an Iowan by birth and former assistant secretary for Legislation at the then Department of Health Education and Welfare (now Department of Health and Human Services), is ACTION's assistant director for OVCP. He thinks both mini-grants and the Technical Assistance Program (TAP) — formerly the Support Services Assistance Program — will have big roles in the agency's new emphasis on youth, drug abuse and literacy. These are grant mechanisms that are fairly well established," says Lias, "but their flexibility will be very useful as we try to assist volunteer agencies and non-profit groups to pursue their efforts in a variety of areas."

Interest in the mini-grant program has grown by leaps and bounds, according to Wendy Wheat, national manager of that program, who says she received over 700 inquiries on the program in a three-month period early in 1981.

Small wonder. The turnaround time for a mini-grant application averages from two to four weeks, compared to three months for most other ACTION grants. Paper work—very lean and simple; the small amounts of money (\$5,000 maximum for a single program, up to \$10,000 for a statewide or regional program); and grant-making authority at the regional level have all facilitated quick action.

"With a budget request for FY '82 of \$300,000," says Wheat, "our biggest problem will be stretching funds carefully. We don't want to cripple the intent and results of those we do fund by stretching the funds too thinly, but on the other hand, we want to support as many programs as possible. It will be a fine line," says Wheat. Current fiscal year grants totalled 101 to organizations in 44 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

The mini-grant program has had a big impact on volunteer-based refugee assistance projects. Twenty-seven such grants were made to organizations in 21 states, including nine to self-help Indo-chinese mutual assistance associations.

The Iowa Refugee Service Center received a grant to train 600 volunteers to provide English as

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Senior Companion Program Funds New Projects



Many elderly people are able to live more independently with the help of Senior Companions.

SCP will be expanding volunteer opportunities for approximately 300 older persons by September 30, 1981. Plans include funding ten new SCP projects with 60 volunteers each, and placing an additional 100 volunteers in ten existing SCP projects.

These projects and volunteers will focus on serving older adults who need additional help, so that they can remain in their own homes, older persons discharged from acute care hospitals, persons with mental health problems, seniors experiencing drug-related problems and the terminally ill.

In addition, ACTION also plans to fund up to five experimental projects with 20 volunteers each to examine several special policy areas and test certain variations in program models and volunteer activities. Two-year funding will be available to current sponsors and to organizations that are interested in sponsoring Senior Companion projects.

PEOPLE IN PLACE



ANTONIO BENEDI, 26, a youth program director in Arlington, Va., has been appointed special assistant to the director of ACTION. He will assist the director in developing new approaches toward solving problems of runaway youth and of young victims of drug and alcohol abuse.

"I would like to help create a sense of community in kids on the street," says Benedi, who directed the Youth Outreach Program of the Arlington County Department of Community Affairs from 1977 to early 1981. "When kids feel that they belong to a community, they are not likely to try and destroy it.

"Too many teenagers feel like outcasts in society, which leads them into trouble and makes them easy victims of drug and alcohol abuse," he continues. "The most effective way to help these kids develop a positive sense of belonging is for established community organizations, churches and the private sector to extend them a helping hand and show them they care. Voluntary action is what it's all about, and that's why I'm here."

Benedi, who at the age of five, fled with his family from Cuba, also is helping the ACTION director develop assistance programs for Cuban and other Hispanic refugees to the United States.

While attending George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., and majoring in clinical and social psychology, Benedi was a recreation leader for the Arlington County Recreation Department, at the Thomas Jefferson Community Center from 1973 to 1977. He then developed the Youth Outreach Program, which offers counseling and referral services to youngsters with problems.

The son of Dr. and Mrs. Claudio F. Benedi of Arlington, Benedi is a member of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly of Virginia.

TOM LIAS of Akron, Iowa, has been named assistant director of ACTION for voluntary citizen participation. In this position he heads the agency's Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation with voluntary programs in the private sector

"There is a renewed interest in voluntarism being generated by this administration," Lias says, adding, "We'll be looking at what the private sector can do and how we can encourage and stimulate the private sector to take a greater role in volunteer activities."

A veteran of the Reagan-Bush campaign, Lias was in charge of liaison with professional organizations. He also served as assistant secretary of Health Education and Welfare (now Health and Human Services) for legislation during the Ford administration, and was administrative assistant to George Bush when he served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, and later as chairman of the Republican party. Before that, Lias served as deputy special assistant to former President Nixon.

Born September 27, 1934, Lias spent most of his early years in Akron and graduated from Akron High School. He received his bachelor of arts degree from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, in 1956.

Lias, his wife, the former Sharon Garrison of Cherokee, Okla., and their daughter, Lisa, now reside in the Capitol Hill section of Washington, where he is involved in neighborhood volunteer activities.

RSVP *(from page 1)*

Each RSVP program is co-administered with local chapters of Joint Action in Community Service (JACS), a not-for-profit volunteer organization that helps Job Corps youth make the transition from Job Corps training to employment and responsible citizenship.

As Detroit RSVP Director Genevieve Rakocy explains, "The role of the RSVP volunteers is not to develop or to find a job for persons in need, but to facilitate their employment by helping them resolve personal and social problems and to set realistic goals and to take responsibility for themselves."

Volunteers receive ongoing training in counseling, communication and interviewing skills. A 20-hour, in-service training session allows them a one-to-one relationship with a client under the supervision of a staff person.

According to RSVP Program Specialist Rey Tejada, in some cities the program has been expanded to include volunteer training in such areas as information and referral process and identifying other support systems.

STAFF EXCHANGE

Tim Ryan's (Office of the ACTION Director) three hits and six RBIs sparked ACTION/Peace Corps' 14-12 come-from-behind victory recently over the Office of Congressman Jim Leach (R-Iowa), bringing the agency's team record to ten wins, five losses. Trailing 12-11 at the top of the seventh inning, Ryan drove in the tying and winning runs with a triple down the left field. Fran Zipoli (A&F/PM) later added a final insurance run...



WATS Line staff, from left to right, are Bridget Higgins, Joan Mayer, Linette Sanders, Mary Jo Yen and Liz Gazzo, chief.

Kudos again, to the folks running the WATS Line, which on August 24 broke the all time fiscal year record for incoming calls. As of the close of that day, a total of 50,844 calls had been received for FY 1980, topping the old FY 79 record of 50,759 calls. Liz Gazzo, who head the WATS Line, attributes this increase to stepped-up radio and TV advertising for Peace Corps and the Older American Volunteer Programs, "particularly the Foster Grandparent spots featuring First Lady Nancy Reagan."

Hurray! Our Staff Exchange "Ernestine," who has been away on vacation the past two weeks, has returned, sporting a punk-rock (Republican-close-clip?) haircut - or so say staffers in the "P" Building...

ACTION staff raved about the very elegant, outdoor, candlelight dinner (complete with crystal) recently served at Barbara Busch's (ORC Management) home in Washington. ORC's Marlene Wozniak created a splendid dish of ham and cold pasta

for the event - all this in addition to putting in a full day's work at the office, or so we heard...

SCP to Host National Conference

The Senior Companion Program (SCP) is hosting a national conference on September 13-16. The conference, which will be held in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, represents the first time in three years that SCP project directors have met as a national group.

Since most SCP directors operate in states that have only one project, a national conference is an important opportunity for directors and ACTION staff to exchange information and ideas, gain awareness of national trends in long-term care and learn about agency goals and objectives.

A conference planning-committee, made-up of project directors, ACTION state and regional office staff and headquarters staff, met in August to establish the conference agenda, which includes exploring new initiatives for the agency, analyzing special populations touched by SCP demonstration projects and exploring the idea of volunteer project management.

A report on conference activities will be featured in a future issue of Update.

Mini-Grants (from page 5)

a Second Language (ESL) tutoring in 78 countries.

Those volunteers have spent more than 21,000 volunteer hours tutoring some 1,000 refugees.

In Phoenix, Ariz., the Tumbleweed Center for Youth Resources and its "Youth as Volunteers Program" received a mini-grant to establish a peer counseling program of volunteers - aged 14 through 17 - to assist runaways and status offenders during their stay at the Tumbleweed Youth Center. Some 300 volunteers provided close to 1,900 volunteer hours of service.

The payoff on most social programs is not always easy to measure, much less compute to dollars and cents. The project director of the Tumbleweed Center put it this way: "It costs a minimum of \$60 a day to keep a youngster in jail, whereas the center provides support at a cost of \$30 a day for shelter and services."

Not bad in an era when we'd all like to find Rumpelstiltskin's formula.



Youth will serve other youth in ACTION's new program.

YVA (from page 1)

dramatically." Horner suggests that this may be due, in part, to the fact that the tutor's enhanced self-esteem paves the way for a better learning situation.

"In addition," she says, "the teenager who doesn't take drugs provides a wholesome model for the pre-teen. And in that role, the older person's self-perception of not being a drug user actually diminishes his or her chances of becoming one."

"Studies indicate a real desire among youth to be of service," she continues. "So we strongly believe we're on the right track. But in about a year, we'll know for sure. The first hurdle is getting the project off the ground. If we can increase the number of those who serve, then we'll increase the number of those who'll serve as models for others."

Further developments in the program will be featured in future issues of Update.

Editor's Note: OPP staff is considering alternative names for the YVA Program and would welcome suggestions from ACTION/Peace Corps staff. Contact Leslie Miller at FTS 254-8420.



Connie Horner

FROM THE FIELD...

FRAMINGHAM, MASS...The Boston Recruiting Office held its first Peace Corps road race recently with nearly 400 runners participating. The race, which covered 5.5 miles, was held to raise money for a Peace Corps Partnership/YMCA project in Jamaica that serves delinquent boys. "We raised about \$800 in pledges," says recruiter Ken Itzkowitz, who along with recruiter Ted McClellan, staged the event. "The entire Boston staff and N.Y. Service Center staffers Wayne Judkins and Linda Borst, worked very hard, and their efforts paid off handsomely."

MONTGOMERY, ALA...ACTION Director Tom Pauken was here on August 24 to attend a retirement party for Earl James, state program officer in Alabama. James was mayor of Montgomery during the 1960s. Also visiting Montgomery, during the week of Aug. 17, was Domestic Operations head, Lawrence Davenport, who attended a reception honoring the 10th anniversary of RSVP. Also at that reception was Congressman Claude Pepper (D-Fla), a longtime champion of legislation affecting older persons.

PALO ALTO, CALIF...ACTION Director Tom Pauken was the keynote speaker for the Region IX RSVP conference at Stanford University, Aug. 25-26. He talked about the new directions and initiatives for RSVP, which include work in illiteracy, drug abuse and with Vietnam veterans.

FAIRLEE, VT...Lake Maury was the site of Region I's conference of FGP and SCP directors and sponsors on August 4-6. The objective of the conference was to discuss viable work alternatives for older Americans to supplement their incomes.

ROCHESTER and SYRACUSE, N.Y....More races!! A bicycle race was held in Rochester on August 29, and a footrace took place in Syracuse the following day. Both events raised money for the Peace Corps Partnership program. Each event consisted of a short race for families and a longer one for active joggers and/or cyclists.

ACTION UPDATE

Editor Judy Kusheloff
 Editorial Assistant Eileen Gwynn
 Graphics Designer William Johnson