

# 1981 White House Conference on Aging



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## ACTION UPDATE

DECEMBER 1981



*President Reagan addresses Vietnam veterans. With the President are (left to right) Elizabeth Dole, assistant to the President for Public Liaison; Chuck O'Brien, volunteer chairman, Philadelphia VVLP; ACTION Director Tom Pauken; Morton Blackwell, special assistant to the President for Public Liaison; Sam Bartholamew, volunteer chairman, Nashville VVLP; and Jack Wheeler, VVLP national director.*

## Viet Vets Leadership Program Inaugurated at White House Ceremony

### A Time to Honor Veterans, President Says

At a November 10 White House ceremony inaugurating ACTION's Vietnam Veterans' Leadership Program (VVLP), President Reagan said, "It is time to honor a group of people who never received the thanks they deserved" for the energy and commitment they showed in Vietnam.

The President's remarks were directed to several ACTION senior staff members and 20 Vietnam veterans who are working with the VVLP—a program established by ACTION to encourage leaders among Viet vets to act as volunteers in their communities, helping their fellow veterans in need. Projects are underway in Baltimore, Md., Philadelphia, Pa., San Antonio, Texas, Wilmington, Del., and Nashville, Tenn., with additional ones planned in 45 communities by the end of FY 82. (See Aug. 25, 1981 and November 1981 issues of Update.)

(cont. page 4)

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



Providing citizens with opportunities to discuss national concerns and propose resolutions is a tradition of democracy and a basic tenet of the philosophy of citizen involvement in a government for and by the people.

The 1981 White House Conference on Aging's activities including community forums, state conferences and the recent national conference allowed individuals to participate meaningfully in helping resolve issues facing the nation for the 1980s and beyond. How a country involves and treats its citizens is a measure of its greatness and its willingness to recognize the enormous potential value of all persons as contributors to society.

The number of older Americans continues to increase, yet, too often the stereotype persists that old age automatically means putting people out to pasture. ACTION, and its Older American Volunteer Programs (OAVP) in particular, have continually disproven that stereotype. Our programs represent the vigorous spirit of voluntarism and prove that whatever the issue or circumstance, older Americans serving as volunteers are improving the quality of life in any community. OAVP projects also represent the future by demonstrating that community services can be provided in a cost-efficient way.

The 1981 White House Conference on Aging provided an opportunity for the delegates and for all citizens to be even more aware of the experience, skills and abilities of older people. I encourage you to involve yourselves, in every way you can, with the issues of that conference.

Best regards,

Tom Pauken

## White House/ ACTION Sponsor Voluntarism Workshops

Plans for a series of national workshops on voluntarism—designed to bring home the call of President Reagan to bolster the role of volunteers in our society—were recently announced by ACTION Director Tom Pauken.

The first workshop was held Dec. 7-8 in San Francisco.

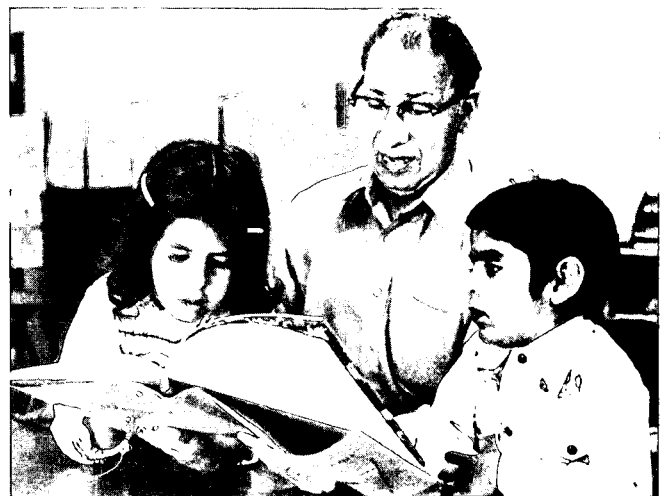
(See story in next issue.) Up to four other workshops are also being planned. Sites being considered include Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, Miami and Dallas.

Co-sponsored by the White House and ACTION to promote voluntarism, the workshops are designed for state and local, elected officials. In a series of "how to" sessions, the workshops will assist these officials in attracting more volunteers to complement state and local government programs in such areas as health, education, social services, youth unemployment, crime prevention, disaster assistance and refugee aid.

"These workshops will help put into practice the very worthwhile goals of better using volunteer services outlined by the President," Pauken said. "The federal agency is prepared to assist local officials with technical advice but does not want to impose federal control. Such volunteer efforts are best left in the hands of local communities."

Some 300 people attended the first workshop at the University of San Francisco's Lone Mountain campus. The ACTION Institute, a part of the agency, provided guidance on techniques of identifying volunteer resources, recruitment and use of volunteers.

## RSVP, FGP Volunteers to Serve in Head Start



*Older Americans are working with pre-schoolers under new interagency agreement.*

More than 600 RSVP and FGP volunteers will soon begin working in Head Start programs in nine areas throughout the country as a result of a recently-signed interagency agreement between ACTION and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

The year-long demonstration program was made possible through a transfer of \$270,000 in Head Start funds from the

*(cont. page 4)*

## FROM THE DIRECTOR



*Editor's Note: At the time this issue was being put together, Peace Corps Director Loret Ruppe was on an official visit to Africa, meeting with volunteers, staff and host country residents on Peace Corps projects. In her absence, Peace Corps Deputy Director Everett Alvarez wrote this column:*

It's a pleasure to have this opportunity to share some thoughts with you on Peace Corps' direction and its opportunities for the '80s as we conclude the first year of this decade.

At the recent International Meeting on Cooperation and Development in Cancun, Mexico, the President said that the U.S. will be designing particular development strategies to address specific needs and potentials of individual countries. He cautioned, however, that this must be accompanied by such countries having their financial and economic houses in order, or no amount of help will produce progress. The President understands, as those of us who are involved in the work of the Peace Corps have understood for many years, that a country can only prosper if it is built on a solid base. For twenty years Peace Corps has been laboring in fields, schoolrooms, cities and villages to assist developing nations in establishing that solid base—people who are trained and educated to provide for their own needs and those of their neighbors.

Peace Corps itself has established a foundation of successful service, and in the next decade we can begin to expand on that base by increased emphasis on institutionalizing our efforts, multiplying the effects of our work and leaving examples for others to follow. It will be our goal, also, to improve marketing processes so efforts in villages and rural areas will not go to waste, and to encourage, where possible, greater income generation as a motivation for agricultural producers.

President Reagan echoed a tenet of the Peace Corps when he said at Cancun, "Individual farmers, laborers, owners, traders and managers . . . are the heart and soul of development." The combined efforts of those individuals can become the bone and sinew of development, and Peace Corps can help. Twelve-hundred Peace Corps volunteers are currently concentrating on agriculture, assisting communities in increasing and improving crop production. Programming assistance will help staff and host country officials design and refocus projects that will increase product marketability. Eighteen volunteers in Tanzania, for example, are currently surveying existing grain storage sites and procedures, assessing losses and their causes, and soon they will be designing and building improved units with local materials and appropriate technology.

Volunteers in the Central African Republic will be assist-

ing a U.S. Agency for International Development pilot project next Spring that will attempt to organize village and regional markets, grouping together small producers and coordinating the selling of beeswax and honey with visits of buyers from the major city.

While the U.S. has provided \$5 billion to developing countries in the last decade, and each year provides more food assistance to developing nationals than all other nations combined, there is more to it than that.

As the President said at Cancun, "The range and breadth of America's commitment extend far beyond concessional assistance. We believe in promoting development by maximizing every asset we have."

The Peace Corps, I'm convinced, is continuing to do its part to qualify as an asset.

Sincerely,

Everett Alvarez, Jr.

## Peace Corps Jamaica Program: A New Opportunity for Youth



*At orientation session are (left to right) Karen Gaskins and Jamaica PC trainees Donald Korst, Barbara Pyne and Donald Loegering.*

Bringing vocational skills and basic education to "street corner boys" in Kingston, Jamaica, is the purpose of a successful, recently expanded Peace Corps program.

Three years ago, Edwin George, then a PCV in Jamaica, saw the need to provide training for local, unemployed youths. Together with the Kingston YMCA, George put together The Street Corner Boys Project—a program which initially included 30 young men who received guidance and counseling, and took classes in math and English.

As George explained it, "What these boys learned, in addition to reading and writing, was a more positive self-image. At first they were skeptical. . . but gradually they became more trustful and friendly. They learned to share and work together." "Mr. George gave me the training to face the world," said one of the youths.

(cont. page 6)

## VVLP (from page 1)

"The recognition and appreciation for all these men went through is long overdue," the President said. "This program is one way of expressing our thanks and commitment, not only to those veterans who fought in Vietnam, but to those Americans who serve everywhere. The nation must be as loyal to them as they are to the nation."

Responding to the President, ACTION Director Tom Pauken thanked him for his support, adding that "Since the war, very little has been written that reflects these men in a positive way. An exception," he said, "is author and Viet vet, Jim Webb, who is here with us today." Webb wrote two best-selling novels based on his experience in Vietnam—Fields of Fire and A Sense of Honor.

Vietnam veteran, Chuck O'Brien, volunteer chairman of the Philadelphia VVLP, expressed the opinion that "The President's comments have renewed our dedication and have given a tremendous boost to this partnership." O'Brien was wounded in the leg during the Vietnam War and was among a group of disabled people who climbed Mt. Ranier last July 4.

ACTION/Peace Corps staffers had the opportunity to meet and talk with the veteran leaders at a reception later that day at ACTION headquarters.



*President Reagan greets John Fales, employee director, Blinded Veterans Association. At Fales' side is Dr. Luis Sanz, an advisor to the VVLP staff.*

## Head Start (from page 2)

Administration for Children, Youth and Families, a unit of HHS' Office of Human Development Services.

Project Director Willard Hoing, deputy director of OAVP, characterized the program as "consistent with the administration's efforts to increase the use of volunteers as a means of solving community problems."

Six-hundred RSVPs will serve as teacher aides in Head Start classrooms, assist staff in providing health, social and nutrition services to children and parents and help with a variety of managerial and secretarial tasks. Existing RSVP projects in Fort Myers, Fla., Joliet, Ill., Fayetteville, Ark., Rapid City, S.D., Rockville, Md. and Boise, Idaho, will recruit 100 volunteers each to work on this program.

A number of handicapped pre-schoolers have been mainstreamed into regular Head Start classrooms, and FGP projects in Soquel, Calif., Madison, Wis. and Atlanta, Ga. will recruit a total of 45 "grandparents" to work with those children.

In announcing the interagency agreement, ACTION Director Tom Pauken, said that "After long years of experience in raising their own families, many older Americans have developed important teaching and child-rearing skills that can be put to use in the classroom and in work with Head Start parents.

"Retired people," Pauken added, "also have a wealth of professional skills in such areas as budgeting and accounting that can be invaluable to local Head Start programs."

## Special Olympics... Triumph Despite Handicap is Theme of TV Film

The problems, struggles and triumphs of one mentally retarded boy are the subjects of a prime-time TV movie to be shown on NBC on January 4.

"The Kid from Nowhere," is the story of a boy named Johnny, his struggle for development and his involvement with the Special Olympics, which opens up a new world for him and his friends. The film stars Susan St. James, Loretta Swit, Beau Bridges and Ricky Wittman, a real-life Special Olympian, as Johnny.

"This film represents just one of millions of success stories of Special Olympians—mentally retarded individuals who have discovered that their handicap doesn't spell defeat," says Carolyn Connors of the Washington, D.C.-based Special Olympics Inc. agency. "We are requesting a variety of public and private organizations to help us publicize this film. ACTION's long history of commitment to and work with the disabled makes it an ideal organization to assist us in getting the word out on this very special movie."

# Special ACTION Council Addresses Refugee Concerns

Over half-a-million refugees have settled in this country during the past several years—fleeing social and political persecution and seeking a better life for themselves and their families. “That figure represents one quarter of one percent of the American population, a population almost equal to that of Washington, D.C.,” says Richard English, deputy director for Planning and Evaluation in the Office of Policy and Planning (OPP). English is chairman of the recently formed ACTION Council on Refugees.

The council serves as a forum for information exchange among ACTION staff for agency programs involving refugees. “The issue of refugees is one that cuts across a number of ACTION programs,” English says. “It is essential that representatives from each of these agency programs meet periodically to discuss developments in refugee resettlement.”

In addition to English, council members include: Tom Lias, director, Office of Voluntary Citizen Participation (OVCP); Chuck Howell, OVCP; Jim Burnley and Larry Williams, director and deputy director, respectively, of VISTA; Betty Brake, director, OAVP; Rey Tejada, OAVP; Connie Horner, OPP deputy director for Policy Development; Connie Heckman, Domestic Operations; and Tony Benedi and Marion Cernanski, special assistants, respectively, to the



*Indochinese refugee (left) receives industrial skill training under California Refugee Resettlement Project.*

director and deputy director of ACTION.

At the first council meeting last month, ACTION Director Tom Pauken stressed the agency's commitment to refugees. Council members then discussed three agency agreements that address the problems of refugee resettlement:

- Refugee Resettlement Project (RRP)—Funded at \$447,000 through an FY 1980 agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services, RRP provides grants to the state offices of voluntary citizen participation in Virginia, Florida, Texas, California and Hawaii. The money is used to train volunteers and to help mutual assistance agencies to assume greater resettlement responsibilities and to coordinate volunteer services.

- The Cuban-Haitian Entrant Program is funded with a transfer of \$500,000 from the Department of State Bureau of Refugee Programs and enables volunteers, including 35 VISTAs, to work with local refugee assistance agencies in Florida, in areas with large Cuban and Haitian refugee populations.

- The Refugee Youth Employment Support Program, the newest agency initiative, funds volunteers who assist Cambodian youth, ages 16-21, on a one-to-one basis in seeking jobs and providing follow-up support once they have found a job. The program operates with \$115,000 remaining from an interagency agreement with the Department of Labor and is administered by mutual assistance agencies in the Washington, D.C. and the Los Angeles-Long Beach, Calif. areas.

English pointed out that in addition to interagency agreements, “Many of the 700 RSVP projects are working with refugees, and nearly 120 VISTAs are now working, full-time on the refugee problem.”

Further developments in refugee initiatives will be featured in future issues of Update. The next council meeting is in mid-December.

## COPE

### Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Employees and family members of employees wishing assistance in resolving personal, family, social, legal, financial, drug and alcohol abuse problems may obtain confidential help by calling :

COPE Counseling Center  
484-7400

## YVA Directors Attend Training Sessions



*Shown at YVA training session are John Wolfe, director, Pocatello, Idaho YVA program, and Debbie Katzman, director, YVA program in Gainesville, Fla.*

Directors of the 12 new Young Volunteers in ACTION (YVA) project grantees, and ACTION senior staff attended a two-day training session at headquarters on Nov. 9-10. Through lectures, discussions and special workshops, they shared ideas and examined various aspects of the new program which will involve volunteers between the ages of 14 and 22 in service to other youth in their community. (See stories in Sept. 10, 1981 and Nov. 1981 issue of *Update*.)

Participants explored the roles of the community volunteer, project director and staff, and ACTION field staff. They also discussed recruitment techniques, volunteer activities, community support and public relations, selection of work assignments and matching volunteers to those work assignments.

A series of special management-oriented sessions focused on training, administration, volunteer recognition and incentives, as well as leadership, personnel techniques, time-management and problem solving.

"It was a productive two days," says Barbara Wyatt, YVA director. "In addition to being introduced to a lot of information in a very short time, participants developed a real spirit of enthusiasm and camaraderie."

The grantees received from \$18,000 to \$60,000 to run their programs over the next year. "As various sectors of and leaders in the community become involved, we hope to be able to do even more with smaller funding," Wyatt says, adding that the number of new programs should grow during this fiscal year, as far as funding permits.

The first YVA program was formally inaugurated on Nov. 25 in Los Angeles (See story in next issue).

## PC Jamaica *(from page 3)*

Now, according to Jamaica PC Associate Country Director Karen Gaskins, "The youths also want to learn trade skills with which they can later find employment." So, the program has been expanded to include vocational skills training, primarily in carpentry and mechanics. "Many participants in the original project said they wanted to be mechanics," Gaskins says.

To fill the enlarged program needs, three Peace Corps trainees with backgrounds in social work, skilled trades and education, are now completing in-country, on-the-job training, following a three-day orientation session at PC headquarters in Washington. Their training in Jamaica includes cross-cultural studies, community development and an introduction to the host agencies involved—the YMCA and the Jamaican Ministry of Youth and Development.

The success of The Street Corner Boys Project is due, in large part, to the fact that the resources of the Peace Corps, the government and the people of Jamaica, joined forces to address the major problem of unemployment among youths. Support for the project has even spread as far as Framingham, Mass., where the local YMCA, with the assistance of Peace Corps recruiters, recently organized a marathon race to raise funds for the program.



*Filming of Peace Corps spots in Dominican Republic*

## New TV Announcements Promote PCV Recruitment

The Peace Corps recently produced one 10-second and two 30-second TV public service announcements designed to increase national awareness and with a focus on recruiting volunteers in the traditionally scarce-skilled areas of agriculture, math and science—those highly sought after and frequently requested skills, often difficult to recruit.

Filmed last September in the Dominican Republic, the spots show Peace Corps volunteers serving in classrooms and on agricultural projects. Because of Peace Corps' successful experience with senior volunteers, and its stepped up effort to recruit older people, two of the spots feature a volunteer couple in their 60s, currently serving in the Dominican Republic on agricultural projects.

Season's Greetings and a Happy New Year!  
From the Staff of ACTION Update

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## Betty Brake Shares Views on White House Conference on Aging

*Editor's Note:* As we mentioned in our last issue, OAVP Director Betty Brake was detailed to the White House Conference on Aging (WHCoA) as executive director until early December. Shortly after her detail began, she shared her views on the conference with ACTION's publications staff. The conference took place Nov. 29-Dec. 3. Details will appear in the next issue of Update.



**Q** What do you see as the significance of the 1981 White House Conference on Aging (WHCOA)?

**A** As our society changes to include an increasing number of older people, the focus of national attention through the 1980s and beyond will be on the older American. The fact that the percentage of elderly is increasing presents us

with a challenge and a real opportunity to utilize the talents, wisdom and experience of this country's seniors in a manner unheard of just a few years ago.

As ACTION's Older American Volunteer Programs so clearly prove, the elderly can be invaluable to our total society. The WHCoA's mission is to formulate a national policy to fit the changing society, a policy that will emphasize the contributions older Americans can make toward enhancing the quality of life for all seniors in the coming decades.

**Q** How will the WHCoA be translated into policy/direction for the 1980s?

**A** The recommendations of the conference will be made to Congress and the administration; the implementation of those recommendations is then up to those two bodies. On the other hand, the Federal Council on Aging, which is a continuously functioning body, shares responsibility for keeping the focus on the recommendations. But most important, the citizenry as a whole has the responsibility for making its views known.

**Q** What issues in particular do you see as emerging from the conference?

**A** That's a difficult question to answer ahead of time. Certainly the economic issues will be of great concern—Social Security, inflation, long-term care. Another issue will probably be how can the skills of the elderly best be utilized. Historically, the elderly played an important role in the building of this country. But in the past few decades, we've lost sight of this fact. I think the conference will point out that since the older population is now demanding just treatment as the first class citizens they are, recognition of seniors will be the wave of the future—just as recognition of youth has been a phenomenon of the recent past.

**Q** Do you think current national focus on Social Security will affect the conference?

**A** The Congress has pretty well settled that. The minimum benefit is back where it was. Older Americans have an understanding of the problems of the Social Security system and are interested in seeing the program put on a solid financial footing for future generations. There certainly will be discussion regarding the safeguarding of the system but it must be done with an understanding of what the Social Security system burden will mean to our children and our children's children.

(cont. following page)

## Brake *(from page 7)*

**Q** National conferences are often viewed as superficial, and it's generally believed that their reports are filed away and forgotten. How will this conference be different?

**A** The possibility of the conference recommendations being made a part of the national policy depends upon how realistic those recommendations are in view of the nation's financial problems as a whole. The problems of aging can't be isolated; they're part of the problems of our entire society.

In recent years, it has become customary to look to federal dollars as the logical solution to many problems. The result has been an improvident spending of taxpayers' dollars and federally dictated solutions which not only often failed to solve the initial problems, but which sometimes created a variety of other problems, such as a complex system of services that frequently did not reach those people it was designed to help. I think these delegates have an appreciation of the intricacies of change and will draft recommendations that can be incorporated into the present system with an eye toward improving it. The conference delegates have had two years of state forums to clarify both the issues and their thinking about those issues. They should be coming to the conference better prepared, with a fuller understanding of how one gets things done than delegates of past conferences. I also hope they come with an open mind so that there can be an informed exchange.

**Q** President Reagan promotes voluntarism as means to improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods and communities. Do you think voluntarism will be recognized at the WHCoA as being vital to many issues being discussed?

**A** I would hope so. One committee is working totally on voluntarism. More than 160 OAVP volunteers, project directors and field staff will serve as delegates. These delegates, with their first-hand knowledge of the contributions of older American volunteers, will have an impact on the conference far beyond their numbers.

Now, if I may wear my other hat for a moment—as director of OAVP—the message we must convey through the conference is the extraordinary value of older Americans. We must carry the message that Older Americans, through dedicated volunteer service, can help find the solution to many, many problems. This conference has a vital responsibility—not only to today's elderly, but to the elderly of tomorrow as well. The direction it sets will have far-reaching effects.

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### ACTION UPDATE

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## FROM THE FIELD...

**NASHUA, N.H.** . . A project run by the local RSVP will afford senior citizens and local businesses an opportunity to participate in a pilot program designed to provide employment for those over age 55. MAPS (Mature American Personnel Service) has been created to serve as a link between businesses seeking part-time and temporary workers, and area seniors wishing to go to work. According to Jocelyn Sharp-Henning, RSVP project director, the idea for MAPS originated with RSVP and Nashua's senior center, which will also serve as the site for the project. Last summer, as a result of a public forum held on employment for the elderly, a bank of more than 40 names of senior citizens interested in working was established.

**DENVER, COLO.** . . To make it easier to obtain information about the Peace Corps and information on how to become a Peace Corps volunteer, the Denver Recruiting Office, the home base for recruitment efforts in Wyoming, Utah, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana and Colorado, has installed a toll-free telephone line. The new number is 800-525-4621. According to Doug Johnston, Denver-based PIO, interested persons can call between 8 A.M. and 5 P.M., Monday through Friday.

**PALO ALTO, CALIF.** . . More than 400 former Peace Corps volunteers now residing in northern California attended an RPCV conference at Stanford University on Nov. 7, 1981. The keynote speaker was Anne Ehrlich, a Stanford research fellow in population biology and a member of the presidential commission which produced "The Global 2,000 Report," projecting problems of population, food supply and land resources in developing countries of the world. Peace Corps Deputy Director Everett Alvarez, Jr. delivered the welcoming address and later chaired a workshop on "Future Directions of the Peace Corps."

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** . . A group of 46 Peace Corps volunteers assigned to Kenya, completed six weeks of training at Howard University. These volunteers will be assigned to teaching posts in science, English and mathematics. Three RPCVs who were volunteers in Kenya, served as course instructors—Mary Jo Yen (formerly of ACTION's Public Information Office of ORC), Winston Richie and David Mied.

**PHILADELPHIA, PA.** . . ACTION Director Tom Pauken recently met with representatives of many of the area's ethnic, social and religious organizations at the offices of the American Jewish Committee. At the National Conference on Voluntarism at the Philadelphia Center Hotel the following day, Pauken joined a panel of representatives of national volunteer agencies, where he reiterated his belief that there must be greater reliance on non-stipended volunteers and more support for and involvement in voluntarism by the private sector.