

Peace Corps TODAY

THE WORLD OF PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

SPRING 1995



Peace Corps Volunteer Andrea Thurman, a business development specialist, shares a meal with friends in Niger, Africa.

Teachers, Health Care Specialists, Engineers, and Environmentalists Needed for Overseas Work!

You could be one of over 4,000 new Peace Corps Volunteers being sent abroad next year! America's international development agency is seeking Volunteers in 60 different specialties ranging from Agriculture Extension to Youth Development to start training this Fall.

Currently, 6,500 Volunteers are working in over 93 countries around the world and the numbers are growing every year. 938 of these are English teachers, 478 are business managers and 600 are Health Nutritionists, but that's just the beginning. There are also environmental educators, foresters, apiculturists, mechanics, public health workers, accountants, special education instructors, architects, nurses, urban planners, library scientists, and workers in other specialties.

Volunteers live in cities, suburbs and rural areas in apartments, straw huts, and western-style houses with families. They spend 12-14 weeks in intensive language and training classes and then report to their assignments for an average total of two years of service. They receive a cost-of-living allowance from the U.S. Government as well as a \$5,400 readjustment allowance when they return stateside.

Business-people Needed!

If you've got a head for business, Peace Corps might have a special project just for you. Our business Volunteers work in more than 47 countries around the world. About half work with small merchant businesses or local government agencies, and the other half help people of these developing countries set up new businesses from scratch. Whether you're fresh out of college or have been working for years, Peace Corps can offer you new challenges. If you've got an MBA or a BA with two years of experience, or any degree with five years of experience in business, you could help communities and individuals with the desire, but not the expertise, start cottage industries or improve operations for an existing business. So if you're looking for a real challenge doing something that matters, check out the Peace Corps. You'll see why we call it the toughest job you'll ever love.

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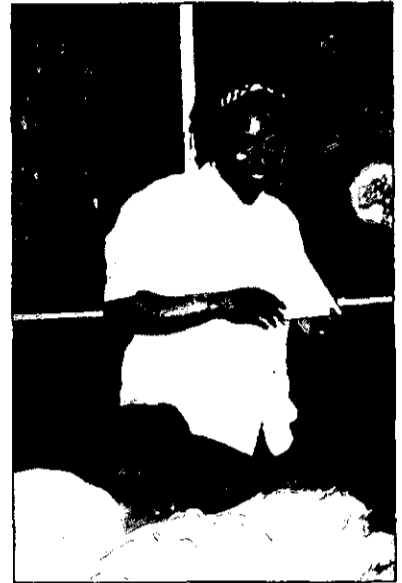
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Peace Corps Volunteers can be found in more than 93 countries around the world, from Africa to Latin America to Asia and the Pacific Islands, to Eastern and Central Europe.

Peace Corps Today is written by Peace Corps Volunteers and staff. Director of Communications: *Celia Fischer*. Editor in Chief: *Sarah Bott*. Managing Editor: *Patricia Cunningham*. Assistants: *Jessica Sandham, Shannon Marshall, Amy Trenkle*. **For more information on Volunteering, call (800) 424-8580.**



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Peace Corps Means Business

By Nancy Lloyd

Peace Corps is often perceived as young people going off to live in mud huts to teach and do community development work in Africa, Asia and Latin America. While this is still true, today the Peace Corps also has business Volunteers carrying briefcases and wearing ties and power suits, in the emerging countries of Eastern Europe and in Africa, Asia and Latin America. Peace Corps Volunteers are helping to change the face of business in many of these countries. Americans with MBA's and sales, marketing and accounting degrees are also finding that service for two years in Peace Corps gives them a giant leap forward in the job market.

"There is a big link between my Peace Corps experience and what I do today," says Phillip D. Wenzell, 33, Export Sales Manager of the Mead Corporation, headquartered in Ohio. "Peace Corps helped get me the job."

From 1985-87, Phil lived and worked in Honduras where he set up the first Junior Achievement Program at the only college level business school. His first class consisted of 12 students. Today, the program, which is run by his former Honduran colleague, has grown to 8,000 nationwide and is in the majority of high schools.

After his two years in Honduras, Phil returned home and managed a computer store while studying for his MBA. When he applied for a job with Mead Corporation his Peace Corps experience was the key element in the interview. "With that, I didn't have to have the MBA. "Now he travels the world for the Fortune 150 consumer products company."

All business volunteers bring the same strong assets to their new occupations on their return home. Their knowledge of the economic situation in a developing economy, as well as their ease with a second language and foreign culture, more often than not prove to be the right combination to get the job they want.

"Don't forget travel," says Julie Balzano-Pizarro, 32, when listing the Peace Corps assets she brings to her job as International Trade Representative for the State of Florida's Department of Commerce in Miami. Julie served in Costa Rica and Chile, 1988-92, and took every opportunity to visit nearby countries. Now she promotes Florida's exports to Latin America and escorts trade groups to meetings throughout the continent. Her familiarity with the territory and her knowledge of the potential transportation problems within individual countries, and language were a plus when she was interviewed for her new job. "I got this job because of everything I experienced through Peace Corps; that is, knowing the language, traveling, and having the cultural understanding from living and working in Latin America."

Rosemary Takacs Koford, 45, entered the Peace Corps as an experienced C.P.A. A single mother, whose daughter was in college, she spent 1988-90 in Paraguay where she was initially assigned to set up small business loans and to teach senior level financial accounting at the Catholic University in the city of Encarnacion.

Later, she assisted in developing accurate book-keeping systems for the agricultural cooperatives in her region. This, in turn, led to a position in the Ministry of Agriculture in the capital, Asuncion. At the Department of Cooperatives, her job was to establish and introduce a uniform accounting system to be used by the co-ops nationwide.

Did Peace Corps help her to resume her career on her return to San Francisco? Absolutely. "I got my job through 'Hotline,'" she says. "Hotline" is the monthly Peace Corps bulletin which lists employment opportunities for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Rosemary was considering two other jobs in her home state of Michigan, when she read about her current position as accountant for the U.S. Mint in San Francisco. The Peace Corps experience, plus the Peace Corps non-competitive eligibility status, got her the job.

Michael Stewart, 38, ran his own paint contracting business in Minnesota before joining Peace Corps. In 1989 he was an advisor to a community based revolving

chosen to be Associate Peace Corps Director for Small Business Development in Kazakhstan.

Peace Corps Volunteer assignments bring a lot of firsts. Judith Neiman, 68, a business woman from Washington, D.C., was in the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers assigned to the Volga Region, CIS. Working with the Economic Council in the Mayor's office of the city of Engels, she established the first Business Resource Center in the region. With one of her clients, a bookseller, she assembled the first business resource library with a bibliography of 50,000 active Russian businesses listed throughout the CIS. She wrote a column for one of the two main newspapers and was interviewed twice monthly by the other. This



In Russia, Volunteer Cheryl Hansley inspects bread coming off the line at a factory where she works as a business advisor. Peace Corps business Volunteers work in more than 47 countries around the world in assignments as varied as advising small merchant businesses and local government agencies, and helping set up new businesses from scratch.

fund for micro loans in rural Dominican Republic. As he finished his service, the Peace Corps programs for economic development assistance in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were just beginning.

"Peace Corps had drawn me into the international development field and I wanted to be one of the first to volunteer in the former Communist states." In 1992, Michael moved north to spend the next two years in Johvi, Estonia. He consulted with owners and managers of medium sized businesses on new product development and with the privatization of state industries. "Peace Corps has proved the greatest test of my abilities. I learned to be innovative, creative, persistent."

When Michael returned to Washington he used the Peace Corps Career Counseling Center to help in his job search. In fact, with his Russian, Estonian and Spanish language skills, MBA, and business experience in two developing economies, Michael has just been

helped to advertise the business center and generate its use by the public. "The free exchange of information and ideas is proving one of the most valuable instruments for facilitating change. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, I was in the right place at the right time to help make that happen."

John Price, 26, auditor for the Marshall and Illsley Corporation in Milwaukee became interested in banking as a result of his two year assignment as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Birkeline, Senegal. "Clearly what was lacking for the people in Senegal was the ability to get credit as the central banking system is inaccessible to most Senegalese." Peace Corps was his first job right out of college and it led right into what he does today. Like many other Volunteers, John says now, "Peace Corps service was absolutely a plus when I was job hunting. It got me this job."

Nancy Lloyd was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Tunisia.

Think You Can't Afford to Volunteer?

Worried that you can't afford to serve as a Volunteer for two years? These Volunteers talk about how they adjusted to the Peace Corps standard of living.

I lived quite comfortably. My site was in a rural area where there was really no way to spend a lot of money. I was even able to save money every month (which I used in travelling my way home at the end of Peace Corps service). In my country, I think Volunteers' ability to live within their living allowances was more or less directly tied to how often they went into the capital. I lived too far away to go in very often. From time to time, I got a craving for Tang breakfast drink mix—which was really strange, considering that I had several varieties of tropical fruit trees growing in my back yard. A lot of people have the mistaken impression that being a Peace Corps Volunteer means having to physically suffer. This impression even extends to a number of Volunteers in service who feel guilty because they're not "suffering." Being a Volunteer means having to adapt. For flexible people, adaptation is not suffering.

—Jan Weisman, Nepal

Although I missed having a phone, chocolate, and round-the-clock electricity and water, I saved enough money to buy a plane ticket home to the U.S. and one to England for a vacation.

—Judy Templeton, Malaysia

The things I really missed were things I could not have bought there anyway. I rather enjoyed the experience of not owning much. It felt lighter and easier. My stress level went way down during my service and I think it's because life is so much simpler without a lot of stuff. I wouldn't trade my two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer for anything in the world.

—Jim Swain, Costa Rica

I suppose it would depend on your standard of living before Peace Corps, but I had just gotten out of college, so I had more disposable income while in Morocco than I ever had before or after PC. Some of the Volunteers in urban areas actually had nicer houses than they will probably ever have in the U.S. just because the rent was so cheap. I felt my allowance was adequate. Surviving on a living allowance is like living on any salary—you have to be careful in managing your money, but unless you feel the need to hang out at the American Club all the time, you should be able to live adequately.

—Alex Zipp, Morocco

I could afford almost everything I wanted. Of course I couldn't go out to dinner every night, but since I lived in a small town, there weren't enough restaurants to allow me to go out every night anyway. I couldn't afford new clothes every week but who says I can now on a salary here in the States? I missed lots of things, like potato chips and pizza, but eventually I learned how to make those things I really missed and got so good at it that when I did get back to the States I preferred my own rather than store bought kinds.

—Linda Vene, Cameroon

My cost of living was \$200 a month and I could get by on \$150 easily. I could get by on \$120 if I pushed it, but I'm not the pushy type. I missed chocolate cake!

The Thais don't do cakes very well. In all honesty, there was nothing I really needed that I had to go without, even though it took me a while to find Q-Tips. Don't worry, though. If you can live a simple life, you'll be fine. The only caveat is to beware of the capital city. I could spend my \$200 there on a weekend if I tried. Save your money by living cheaply at site and then you'll have more to spend when you travel.

—Beth Lewis, Thailand

I could definitely live on my allowance! At first I missed American food like cake and pizza, but I got over it. It's not a problem. In fact you will almost, without exception, be earning much more than the people with whom you will be working.

—Peter Maille, Niger

I lived in an adobe type mud house, in the Southern tip of the Sahara, the most isolated post in the country. I ate rice, goat, camel, and vegetables from the local gardens. I didn't need much. Once a Volunteer develops the living habits of their surroundings, they understand how much more they are making than their neighbors. Your neighbors are not deprived, in many ways they are very rich and as Volunteers we learn a lot from them on everyday living.

—Ava Castanuela, Niger

Peace Corps Volunteers Receive the following benefits

- Living and housing expenses
- Transportation to and from your assignment
- Language, technical, and cross-cultural training
- Medical and dental care
- Vacation time and allowance
- Possible student loan deferral or forgiveness
- \$5400 readjustment allowance after 27 months of training and service
- Opportunities for graduate school scholarships

I most definitely lived comfortably on my allowance. But then I have always been able to save money. It also depends if there is anything to buy, the cost of living in your host country, and the neighboring countries. I really missed ice cold Pepsi. We had Coke, but I have never liked Coke. Pretty petty, huh? And ice cream. Don't worry about it, the Peace Corps living allowance is more than sufficient to live comfortably at a standard above the average person in your host country and possibly at a standard higher than the one you left in the US.

—Joel Fritzler, Botswana

I didn't feel like the living allowance caused me any hardship, my life did not seem hard to me. I had



Peace Corps Volunteers in Hungary tour the site of an environmental project with their supervisors and visitors from the United States. Each Peace Corps country is staffed with medical and training professionals, and project advisors.

a pet cat and could afford to feed him imported cat food (he absolutely refused to eat rice and beans). The living allowance did not cover luxuries like Avon lotions, cosmetics, Nike running shoes, etc.

—Marya Nowakowski, Dominican Republic

The living allowance provided plenty to live on. As long as you weren't extravagant, buying all kinds of imported goods in the capital and what not, Volunteers had plenty in Cameroon. I missed things like milk, cottage cheese, and brown rice, but this had nothing to do with lack of money, but rather lack of availability. If you're always short of money in the U.S., you'll probably always be short of money in the Peace Corps. Just remember, you'll be bringing in more than most of your neighbors.

—Shauna Blanchard, Cameroon

There wasn't much that I really missed, except broccoli and ice cream. But when I think about all that I gained as a result of my experience, two years without broccoli and ice cream isn't that much of a sacrifice!

—Mara Posner, Mali

I lived comfortably on my living allowance in both of my services (Senegal 80-82 and Cameroon 89-90). I tend to be a rather frugal person, but I don't think any of my Peace Corps colleagues were suffering either. Of course, it probably helped that both were rural assignments with the temptations of imported stuff available only in the capital not readily at hand! There was nothing I really, really missed. When people ask me this question ("Can I live comfortably...?"), I tell them I had no problem and that they shouldn't expect any either.

—Charlotte Utting, Senegal and Cameroon

I had no problems making ends meet on a living allowance in Malaysia in 1972-74, even though it was less than the salary that my Malaysian counterparts made. On the contrary, I don't know when in my entire working life I have had to worry less about money. What did I really miss? A washing machine! I used to have fantasies about washing machines. For two years I squatted on the floor of my enormous shower and washed my clothes in a plastic bucket. Then hoped that they would dry on the line before the next downpour.

—Wendy Syer, Malaysia

You'll probably live better as a Volunteer than as a college student. It was the first time I had my own apartment—a luxury in spite of the scorpions.

—Joseph Hernandez, Costa Rica

Commonly-Asked Questions About Peace Corps

WHAT DOES PEACE CORPS LOOK FOR IN ITS VOLUNTEERS?

In addition to technical skills and education, Peace Corps wants Volunteers who are adaptable and can handle themselves in new and sometimes difficult situations. But most importantly, the Peace Corps wants Volunteers who are committed to serving their country. They are looking for people of all ages who want to make a difference in their own lives by helping others. If you are up for an adventure, a challenge, and seeking an opportunity to learn a new language, gain new skills, and make friends with people from other countries, you may be the kind of Volunteer we're looking for.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PEACE CORPS?

The goals of Peace Corps as defined by Congress in 1961 are: (1) to help the people of interested countries and areas in meeting their needs for trained manpower, (2) to help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served, and (3) to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO APPLY?

Ideally, you should apply 9 to 12 months prior to when you might be available to start training.

CAN I GO WHERE I WANT?

The application form allows you to indicate a geographical preference, as well as places where you would not want to go. To be sent to a particular country an applicant must have a skill currently being requested by that country. If an applicant is only willing to serve in one country or area, his or her chances of being accepted are greatly diminished. Personal flexibility is extremely important to help Peace Corps fill the requests of all countries. Your personal preferences are discussed during your interviews with your recruiter.

WHAT KIND OF CLOTHES DO VOLUNTEERS WEAR?

It depends on the assignment and what the Volunteer feels comfortable wearing. A community development Volunteer might feel that wearing traditional clothing of their host country may help them assimilate faster and breakdown some communication barriers. Traditional clothing may be a simple wrap around skirt for women with an easy fitting top, all made from local cloth, and for men sometimes the same style of shirt with very loose fitting, drawstring pants. As a teacher, a Volunteer will probably feel most comfortable in more professional dress, blouse and skirt for women, nice khakis and shirt and tie for men. Volunteers are never expected to wear clothing they feel uncomfortable in, even if it is culturally acceptable in their country of service.

WHAT IS HOUSING LIKE?

Living conditions vary enormously from one country to another and from one program to another. Many Volunteers live in cement, brick, or adobe houses. Some live in modern apartments. Generally, the more rural the program, the more basic the accommodations. In urban areas, there is often running water and electricity. Most Volunteers live comfortably but very modestly.

CAN PEOPLE VISIT ME?

Yes, family and friends can visit you while you're overseas. However, visits must be coordinated with your work and vacation schedule. You are entitled to 48 days of vacation during your two years of Peace Corps service.

WILL I BE ABLE TO GET MY STUDENT LOANS CANCELED/DEFERRED?

Anyone who enters the Peace Corps with an outstanding debt in the Perkins Loan Program (formerly the National Direct Student Loan Program) may qualify for loan cancellation. Stafford Loans (formerly the

Guaranteed Student Loan or GSLs) and Perkins Loans may be deferred during Peace Corps service. Peace Corps has a brochure detailing who is eligible for deferment.

WHAT IF I GET SICK OR INJURED?

Protecting the health and safety of Volunteers is the Peace Corps' highest priority. Peace Corps requires that its applicants have a medical examination, intended to ensure we don't send Volunteers into countries where their health needs cannot be met. The Peace Corps will administer the required vaccinations before and during your service, and medical professionals will brief you about staying healthy and will provide you with a medical kit. The Peace Corps also provides comprehensive medical care to all Volunteers during service. Each Peace Corps country has an emergency plan to be activated in case of a natural disaster or other threat to your well-being.

WILL BEING IN THE PEACE CORPS HELP GET ME A JOB WHEN I RETURN?

The Peace Corps offers the skills and perspectives that many employers are looking for. The maturity, flexibility, resourcefulness and technical expertise of returned Peace Corps Volunteers, not to mention the ability to speak a foreign language, set them apart personally and professionally. Returning Volunteers are offered preferential hiring status within the Federal government for one year after the end of their service. Also, the Peace Corps has a "Hotline" of job listings to an influential network of returned Volunteers and private organizations.

IF THERE'S AN EMERGENCY IN MY FAMILY, CAN I COME HOME?

If a serious medical problem regarding severe risk or death occurs in your immediate family (sibling, parents, spouse), you will be offered leave to travel to the site of the emergency at Peace Corps' expense. (The emergency must meet specific criteria as outlined in Peace Corps' policy.) In most cases, emergency leave is granted for two weeks.

Got a question about Volunteering?
Call (800) 424-8580
for an answer today!

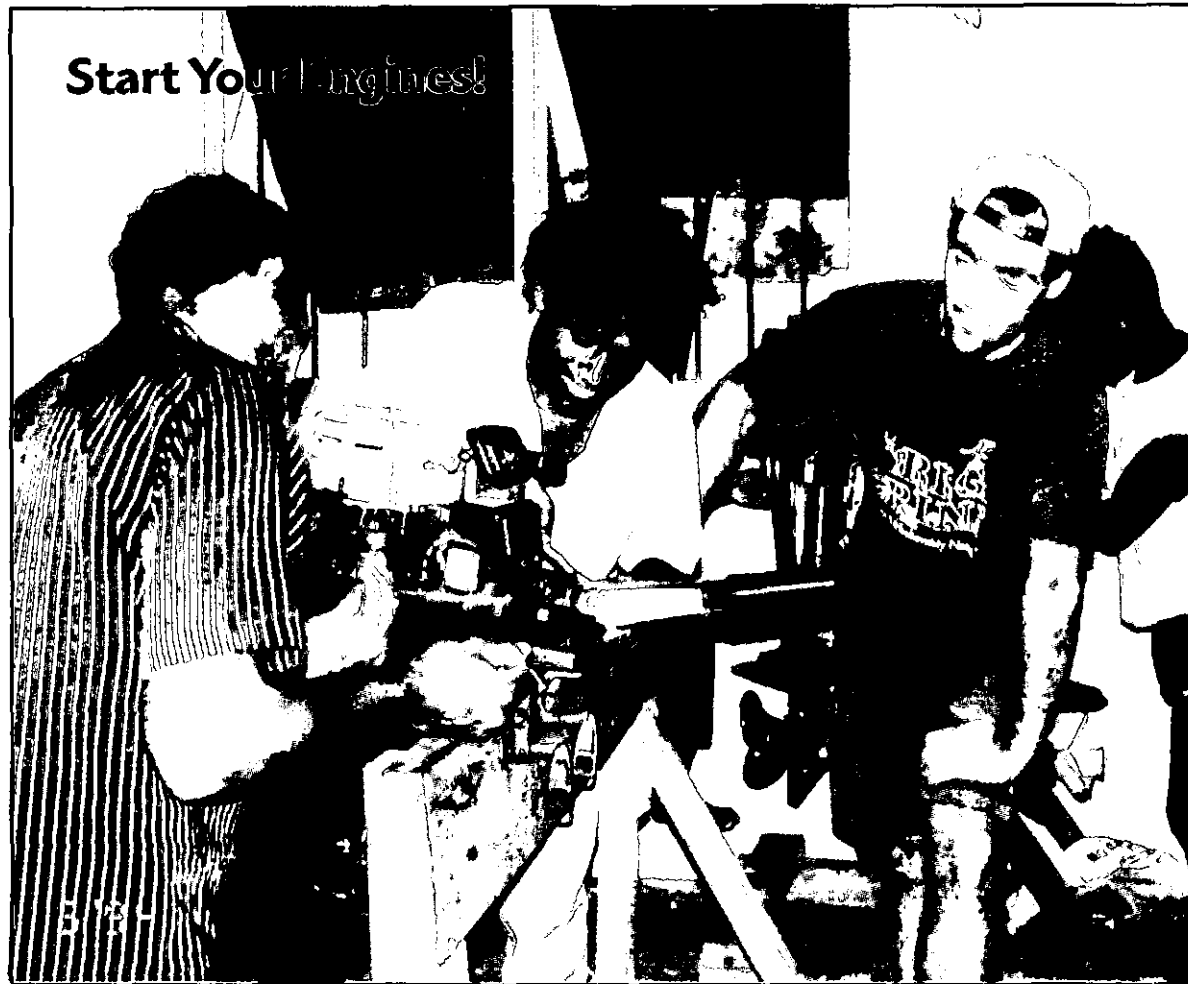
Do You Speak
Wolof?
How about...

Peace Corps provides what many international experts consider the best language training in the world. This is just a partial list of the more than 150 languages spoken by Peace Corps Volunteers.



*Setswana • French • Mandinka
Yapese • Satawalese • Mortlokese
Wolof • Chewa • Tumbuka • Hausa
Krio • Siswati • Kiswahili • Arabic
Rutoro • Shono • Rukonjo Ndebele
Portuguese • Spanish • Igbo
Guarani • Quechua • Creole • Fijian
Romanian • Moldovan • Swahili
Urdu • Uzbek • Russian
Mongolian • Hungarian • Kiswahili
Capiznon • Kyrgyz • Chinese*

What Do Peace Corps Volunteers Do, Anyway?



Start Your Engines!

Volunteer Sam Healey teaches the finer points of engine repair in the Solomon Islands

Inventive Recycling in Paraguay

I like to use every possible resource available and not let things go to waste. As a Volunteer in primary education in rural Paraguay, I've learned and taught not to throw too much away. "We can use this old can as a flower pot, or this old sponge as a painting tool," I explained. Still, some things I felt never got through. The children would stare in bewilderment and nod their heads. I tried showing them how to make games like tic-tac-toe from old buttons and beads or color races with painted bottle caps. I still felt I wasn't getting through the idea to reuse things we would normally throw away. I nearly gave up thinking I wasn't getting anywhere. The kids would giggle and watch me having fun with cardboard cut-outs and silly masks made from old bags and nylons. I tried endlessly to encourage these children to think.

I was long past those initial months when I sat down with a group of kids under a shady mango tree. I was teaching them how to make God's eyes. Some of us might remember these from Girl Scouts when we would cross two popsicle sticks and twist yarn around them to make a colorful diamond or "eye." Here, in the rural hills of southern Paraguay, there are no ice cream sticks or colorful yarn, but there is plenty of natural thread used to crochet. I intended to learn to crochet but gave up the idea and used my thread for projects such as these.

We sat down on a wobbly log and I proceeded to explain the process. It wasn't easy for them nor was searching for two sticks of equal length, but we attempted to make some decent works of art. One girl, Persiliana, got up with a frustrated look and left. I chased after her yelling, "¿Qué te pasa?" (What's wrong?) She told me she was going home and mumbled something about visiting me later. I watched her disappear as she crossed the tall grassy fields.

I soon forgot about Persiliana leaving abruptly and did not remember her during siesta time while I was dozing off in my hammock. I awoke to the faint sounds of small hands clapping three times, as the custom allows upon entering a home. She startled me. I got up and asked why she left so quickly. She stared a blank stare and then smiled. From behind her she pulled out a huge, handmade God's eye. She only used those materials that would normally be thrown away like scraps of material, old shoelaces, thread, bits of string, cotton strips and even some old dry grass.

"¡Qué lindo!" I cried. Indeed it was beautiful. She handed it to me. It was bigger than my hand. I looked at her again and she told me she wanted to make me something with the stuff her mother was sweeping away. I told her she should keep it, but she insisted, saying she had already started collecting to make one for each of her nine brothers and sisters. "Muy bien," I said.

—Sally Duffly

Battling AIDS in Thailand

I'm from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Right now I'm stationed in Thailand, working as an AIDS educator. I first heard of the Peace Corps when I was just a little kid watching Saturday morning cartoons and Peace Corps commercials would come on TV. I always liked the commercials because I saw so many people doing exotic things. The images of people helping other people really appealed to me even as a small child.

I work with the Thai center for Disease Control in their campaign on AIDS. Basically, my role is to act as an educator and as a consultant to help them develop their programs and projects. We do AIDS education for a variety of different groups to meet different needs in the community, so we custom-tailor the education to the group. With children I might play with puppets, whereas with soldiers I might just joke around on their level of thinking. We also try to reach the commercial sex workers in the brothels because they're at such a high risk for infection.

One of the other projects I'm working on right now is to teach Thai villagers how to care for AIDS patients. In a short period of time, there will not be enough hospital beds to care for all the people who are sick with AIDS in Thailand. I've gone out to these villages; I've become good friends with the people who live there. We've started to have fun together, we sing and dance, and they've thrown parties that they've invited me to. We've even celebrated traditional festivals together.

Sometimes I walk away from a group and I think to myself, "Wow I really clicked with those people and maybe now they're thinking about AIDS in a different way." I'd definitely recommend the Peace Corps to a friend. I'd tell them that the Peace Corps teaches you about yourself and life in general. Not only are you learning how to deal effectively with people of another culture and to understand deeply what that culture is about, but I've also found something that I didn't expect: I've learned how to be alive here. Everyday I wake up and there's something new; there's something that I can experience or learn about. I think that's one of the greatest aspects of my job. There's no other place in the world or anything else in the world I'd rather be doing right now.

—Scott Maul

The Peace Corps mailbag is full of letters from Volunteers writing about their latest assignments and adventures overseas. If you want to read more call us today at (800) 424-8580

Finding Hope on the Streets of Kenya

I've been home in the States now for about ten months and people are always asking me what my job in Kenya was. "What did you do?" It isn't always easy to give a simple, straight-forward answer that they can understand and relate to. More often than not, I tell them I was a "water health and sanitation technician," but then I get a blank look. "O.K., I taught how to build water storage tanks, latrines, and hand-dug wells, how to install hand pumps for wells, how to fix and rehabilitate old or broken tanks, and things like that." This most often satisfies the person asking, but I never feel that they truly have an understanding of my "job."

Working as a Peace Corps Volunteer is not easy, and for me not too physically difficult, but rather a mental and emotional challenge. There is always so much to do, to help with and to teach, that it can be overwhelming at times. For me that was the challenge: to decide what could be done in the short time I was there—and how to go about it.

My favorite "job" while I was there was not my original assignment, but rather working with street children who lived in the town at my site. A growing city, mushrooming faster than anyone in Kenya had imagined it could, Eldoret (my site) found itself with the typical problems of an expanding city: garbage, crime, poverty, a weakened infrastructure, congestion, and a lack of social services. The government did not have enough money to support all the needs of the people, and Volunteers were assigned to help in business development, sanitation, water resources, teaching, and city planning. I had the fortunate chance to meet a Kenyan citizen who had done something extraordinary by providing a home for over 75 homeless boys and girls.

For whatever reason—death of their parents, running away from home, getting kicked out of home—these children were in need and this home needed help. It became an important job for me. The home's director asked me if I could help the children, indicating that they really needed to start an organized athletic program for the kids. The house provided shelter for a great number of kids, but it also provided schooling for over 150 children, and they needed time and organization to be kids, that is, to play. We would play hackysack or volleyball in the courtyard of the school. Other times we would go to a local sports ground and play soccer and run track and field.

Some of the street children had given the homeless children food or taken them to lunch once in a while, but knew that they did not attend the school or stay at the shelter. They said they wanted to learn how to ride my Peace Corps mountain bike, so I sat them on the rack and rode them around town for a while. A few of them would later go to the house to meet the other kids and the director had hopes for them to stay longer.

I did not have as much time with the kids as I would have liked because I had to leave at the end of my assignment, but I have never forgotten the smiles and cheers of the field day we had before I left. I write to them often, just to say hello. I am working with a group of people who have indicated that they want to contribute funds to maintain the programs I helped start.

I received a Christmas card from the children this past December, and read how they are doing in their athletic "feats." The house director again thanked me for my help and told me the kids had not forgotten what we did together.

—Jay Womack

Putting Business Skills to Work in Romania

I am a 26 year old married C.P.A. After graduating from college, I survived two years in public accounting and one year in mortgage banking before coming to Romania as a Small Business Development Volunteer. My husband, Andrew, worked as a trainer in a job program before coming to Romania as a teacher of English.

We live and work in Târgoviste, a town of 100,000 that sometimes feels as though it's a quarter of that size. I'm a business consultant for a nonprofit foundation for the promotion of small and medium-sized entrepreneurs. I work alongside two Romanians who were engineers and are now consultants, to promote the private sector.

I love this job because it allows me to utilize my business skills to promote the economic development of a region. I am working very closely with the locals, learning new things every day, meeting fantastic people, and traveling as much as possible.

The job is tough, not because of the living conditions, but because there are underlying differences in mentality that inhibit development. As Americans, we think we can pretty much do whatever we set our minds to. In Romania, things operate at a more subtle level. There is a great fear of risk. As a result, the transition to a market economy has been painfully slow. But we are moving along. We have begun to attract more clients who want help in preparing a business plan and obtaining a loan; we are planning seminars for bankers and business women; and we are writing articles for the local newspapers. I am confident that by this time next year, we will have a business information center for the entire region up and running. In the meantime, I keep pushing.

As a result of my projects here I have learned a lot about myself, about Americans, and about people in general. I have come to appreciate not only the luxuries, but also the freedoms that we, as Americans take for granted. I have also begun to understand the Romanian culture. For all the suffering that they have lived through, the Romanian people are fantastically generous and hospitable, we have made many friends. We have also made some great new American friends—our 35 fellow Volunteers. All in all, my Peace Corps experience has been, well, an *experience*. I'm sure one that will change my life.

—Carol Spahn

Now That's A Good Sign!

Volunteer Linda Ball (with students, back row, second from right) helped produce Mongolia's first sign language dictionary.



An Inner City Teacher Gets Her Start as a Peace Corps Volunteer

By Susan Straight



“The Peace Corps made me more of a universal person. It opened up my mind and my world.”

—Terri Pollard, teaching in Washington, D.C. as a Peace Corps Fellow

Terri Pollard never thought her public relations and communications major would land her a job as a community development worker in West Africa. Neither did she think that living in a straw house in the “bush” teaching villagers to grow soybeans could have prepared her for her present career as a teacher in Washington, D.C.

Lincoln Multicultural Middle School lies within a vibrant and sometimes turbulent neighborhood in Washington, D.C. A high fence surrounds the colorless, narrow-windowed box of a building. Once inside, I see three students hanging out a hall window screaming at someone below. I ask them where the office is. I follow along, understanding nothing of their conversation. It occurs to me that the world of the middle school is somewhat of a foreign culture in itself.

I finally reach Terri’s classroom, which is buzzing with activity. The students are noisily filling in a worksheet when I enter and they seem relatively disinterested by my presence. One student asks, “Are they coming to watch us again?” Since Terri is a new teacher at Lincoln Multicultural Middle School (she started in September, 1994) and a Peace Corps Fellow, she is often evaluated or observed in the classroom as part of her studies.

The Peace Corps Fellows Program provides graduate degree scholarships for returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Terri chose to pursue a master’s degree in Education through George Washington University. Though the programs vary widely across the country, Terri chose this one because of its superior benefits. She received full tuition as well as a \$100 stipend for the first spring and summer semesters. Now, since she is earning a full-time teacher’s salary, she pays 70 percent of the tuition for her night classes. Though she is often

exhausted by both teaching full-time and taking classes at night, Terri says, “While you’re doing your master’s coursework, you’re also in the school system, adding diversity to your teaching preparation program.”

Being a foreigner for two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer has given Terri an understanding of the difficulties many of her students and their families face. “This multicultural school includes Afritans, African-Americans, South and Central Americans, Vietnamese, Cambodians, Japanese—nine different countries are represented in our student body. My job is to teach math, but I am just as concerned with teaching these students respect for their own uniqueness and tolerance for the differences of others.”

When asked how the Peace Corps affected her, Terri responds, “The Peace Corps experience made me more of a universal person. It opened up my mind and my world. When you’ve been in the same environment your whole life there’s nothing to truly test you. When I went into the Peace Corps, I thought, ‘Now what kind of a person am I really?’ The Peace Corps tests your limits. It puts you in total isolation. It puts you in a situation where you’re not always accepted.”

Terri majored in public relations and communications and minored in early childhood education at Georgia State University. “After I graduated,” she recalls, “I was an aquatics and fitness director at the YMCA so I did a lot of teaching and that’s when I realized that the classroom doesn’t have to be a confining place; you can teach and learn in a wide variety of settings.” This experience as well as her work as a preventive drug counselor made her a competitive applicant for Peace Corps. “When I decided to apply for the Peace Corps, I knew I wanted to go to Africa. A position was open in Benin, West Africa for a rural community worker and I had all of the experience. They wanted someone with a diversified working background. I knew there was a lot of freedom in rural community development and that I could do some teaching as well.”

As a Volunteer in Benin, Terri taught English classes to villagers along with managing several other projects, including teaching women to plant and harvest their own soybeans, procuring a grant to build a new school, and starting a chicken farm. One of the hardest lessons to learn, says Terri, was to let the villagers develop their own ideas instead of imposing her projects on them. “I didn’t have any idea of what the villagers wanted when I got there. We had done all this training in South Carolina on how to raise chickens and I knew the village would benefit from having their own source of eggs. So I convinced two villagers to do it. It took me a long time to get these guys to feel like the job was their own. I started feeling bad because it had been my idea and I had asked them if they wanted to do it and then I got mad because they weren’t doing what they were supposed to be doing. All of the chickens almost died.

“I learned an important lesson from that experience,” Terri recalls. “The key for me as a Peace Corps Volunteer was to get the word out about how I could help them and then be patient enough to let them come and tell me what they needed and what they were willing to do. When they asked me to help them request money to build a school, it was because *they* wanted a school.”

Terri’s Peace Corps Fellowship has given her the chance to pursue her dream career. She speaks easily and with a warm passion for her work, even after a long day. “You saw the kids, you know. They’re alive.”

Sometimes, when a day has been especially rough, Terri draws on the strengths of her Peace Corps experience. “No one can prepare you for the shock of being in an environment by yourself where you just have to dig down in yourself and figure out what you have to offer. You stop looking for the differences and you start seeing the similarities—that people are the same wherever you go.”

Are you interested in becoming a Peace Corps Fellow?

The Peace Corps Fellows program is a public-private partnership consisting of Peace Corps, universities, local government, community agencies, and foundations and corporate supporters. The program’s participating universities offer scholarships or reduced-costs tuition to former Volunteers who enroll in a master’s degree program. In return, Fellows make a two-year commitment to work in a challenging setting while in school. Right now 330 Fellows are participating in 26 programs across the United States.

A Parent Gives Peace Corps High Marks

By Bobbi Dean

"You can be proud to have two sons in the Peace Corps—they are an active part of the world community." That is what former President Jimmy Carter said to me at a recent forum in San Mateo, CA. My sons John and Bill Dean have revealed to me through their personal experiences as Peace Corps Volunteers that there is meaning—and lots of rewards—to self-sacrificing service.

After graduating from college, Bill and John were thoroughly evaluated for Peace Corps service before leaving home. For eight to ten months our mailbox was crammed with questionnaires and forms to be filled out. All marked urgent! The screening process for each son went on and on until we thought: *How could there possibly be any more questions?* Then another form would come in the mail! This rigorous screening is an effective way to make sure you and the "Corps" are compatible.

For John and Bill, their Chico State studies helped fortify them with the ability to accept the challenges and changes—lots of them—of being a Peace Corps Volunteer. In his first letter home from Sierra Leone, West Africa, John said after a long week of training, "I'm overwhelmed, scared, intrigued, determined, lonely and thankful."

Careful evaluations at home pre-determined where each son's skills could be best matched in the host country. Once in the host country both sons began immediate in-depth, on-site training for twelve solid weeks. During these first intense weeks, time passed

quickly for both, still inductees, not yet full-fledged Volunteers. (That test would come after training.) For eight hours a day they had to master a new language, learn local customs, mores and laws, and receive basic technical instruction. The goal is total immersion into the new culture while honing technical skills to adapt to local conditions. And as John said after three months of training, "How do I feel about this place? Despite the amount that I learn each day, it just reaffirms the fact that there is so much more to know."

On the way to his site in Honduras for the first time Bill writes, "We started to climb the mountain in a truck—a one hour trip—and as we turned each corner I felt my world becoming smaller and smaller. It started to set in, the fact that I wouldn't see any *gringos*, hear my loud music, eat usual foods, or speak Spanish only when I wanted to. I wouldn't see any buildings or roads or anything remotely close to modern-day conveniences. Then the people greeted me with open arms and smiles. After about ten minutes, I knew everything was going to be fine. I felt I was in the land of the gods."

Peace Corps Volunteers retain the aspect of community developers. Volunteers are in their host country to give an infusion of talent and an exchange of ideas. In the West African town of Moyamba, Sierra Leone, John serves as agricultural coordinator. He works with farmers in a remote part of the country and lives as the villagers do in a thatched-roof "house." Together he and the farmers perfect better ways of

growing rice crops. John says of the people he lives with, "Most everybody is unbelievably friendly. Each night I sit with these four old men and learn their language. We go over simple phrases like, 'How is the body? The body is well. I tell God thank-you.' But it is this small effort which brings us together. I'm growing inside each day."

Developing nations lack many of the amenities we in the United States take for granted. Families live where water, electricity, and medicine are scarce luxuries. Part of the Peace Corps' mission is to help educate village people through hands-on project participation like the ones John and Bill are involved in. Ways to improve people's lives can be as complex as building a sewer system, organizing an artisans' cooperative, or simply demonstrating the importance of soap and water in personal hygiene. The key is communal participation always.

However, all of the Peace Corps life is not just showing someone else a healthier, "better" way of living. A lot of what the Peace Corps does is share the intangibles. Qualities like goodwill, trust, and faith in the spirit of togetherness emerge between cultures. This is a major Peace Corps goal. In Honduras, Bill works as community organizer with the *campesinos* or village farmers and SANA engineers (Honduras sanitation department). They work alongside each other putting in long, back-breaking hours installing gravity water systems. It took eight months to build the water system each villager in the little coffee-growing mountain village of Rio Negro will benefit from. "As far as development is concerned," says Bill, "I believe we all share the same ideals—the good of the fruits of our labor. The people become aware that they themselves can better their own situation and organize to squeeze out a better life." There are no free handouts.

So, as Mr. Carter said to me, "If you have two sons in the Peace Corps you can be very proud." And I am.

Database...

The first Peace Corps Volunteers left for Ghana in August **1961**. Since then, more than **140,000** Peace Corps Volunteers have served in over **125 countries**. ▲ With **6,500 Volunteers** in the field, Peace Corps is at a 15-year high. ▲ Within the Volunteer Corps, over **200 languages and dialects** are known and spoken fluently. ▲ Today, the **average age** of a Peace Corps Volunteer is 30—in 1961, it was 22. ▲ Almost 10% of Peace Corps Volunteers are **over the age of 50** and the oldest Peace Corps Volunteer is 86. ▲ 33% of Peace Corps Volunteers were female in the '60's. Today **54% are female**. ▲ Over 17,000 people filled out applications for Peace Corps service last year. ▲ Over 500 Returned Volunteers are employed at the U.S. Agency for International Development. ▲ Fourteen **U.S. Representatives and Senators** have served as Peace Corps Volunteers or staff. ▲ The Peace Corps is the world's largest volunteer teacher of **English as a second language**. ▲ Over thirty-five percent of Peace Corps Volunteers work in **education**—making it the largest Peace Corps sector. Health is the second largest and **agriculture/aquaculture** is the third largest. ▲ Through the fisheries program, 138,000 people annually are provided with **fish** on a regular basis as a result of Peace Corps efforts. ▲ The number of Volunteers working directly in **natural resources**/environmental projects has quadrupled since 1980 to 700 in 1989—ten percent of all Peace Corps Volunteers. ▲ The Peace Corps has implemented **environmental programs** in 59 countries. The Peace Corps has more Volunteers working on natural resource/environmental projects worldwide than any other organization. ▲ 13 million people now have **clean water** thanks to Peace Corps. ▲ Since 1988, Peace Corps Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteer teams have worked with over 1,800 overseas **farmers**. ▲ More than 4,000 people have benefited from **housing construction** and/or upgrades in Costa Rica alone as a result of Peace Corps efforts. ▲ Five hundred Volunteers now work directly with **small business development**.

Notes from Around the World

A Hand Up

Volunteers in Paraguay are making quite a name for themselves with the Shelter Promotion program, *Nande Roga*, "Our House." The program is designed to help low income families obtain loans from cooperatives for home improvements, such as new bathrooms, kitchens, or the installation of running water and electricity. "During the first three years of the project, 21 cooperatives have participated in *Nande Roga*, thus helping 1,083 families, representing a total number of 5,181 people," said Volunteer Mark Landon. The total amount of loans granted has exceeded 1.5 million dollars and cooperatives report a 100% repayment rate on existing *Nande Roga* loans.

More Than Just a Token

Volunteers in Malawi are on the front lines in the worldwide battle against the AIDS virus, making a stunning effort to save lives. To combat the spread of the disease, Volunteer Thérèse Ann Ryan has focused her attention on raising awareness. Her local program has become a nationwide AIDS awareness campaign in Malawi. The campaign promotes a visual reminder of AIDS—the red ribbon—and encourages open discussion of the virus' effects. More than 12% of the current Malawian population of nine million are HIV positive and the rate of the virus' spread in Malawi is the highest in Africa. "The real success of the campaign was in hearing more people openly discuss AIDS in their immediate community," said Thérèse. "The red ribbon campaign has helped make it more acceptable to publicly acknowledge AIDS."

For Whom The Bell Tolls

Thanks to the treasure-seeking skills of Estonia Volunteer Douglas Wells, the people of Hiiumaa were able to ring in the new year as they had in the years before Soviet occupation—with the bell of the Enmaste Church. Fearful that the bronze bell would be melted down and made into mortar shells, the townspeople buried it underground 50 years ago. Douglas located the bell with the help of a metal detector and in the process endeared himself not only to the people of Hiiumaa, but to the nation of Estonia as well. President Lennart Meri recognized Douglas' good deed, calling the discovery of the bell a miracle. "Let the bell toll peace, faithfulness, and love all over Estonia," said the President.

Teaching Tolerance

Volunteer Dyna Goff extended her service for a third year for the chance to teach English

at a new secondary school for Gypsy children in Pecs, Hungary. The Gandhi Foundation Secondary School provides Gypsy students with a place to study and learn without the pressures and prejudices of the Hungarian school system. Currently 55 students, most of whom are in their teens, live at the school during the week, where they're given special attention for their studies, an environment in which they can concentrate, and lots of encouragement. The local community in Pecs has begun to accept the Gandhi school children, and the local school is seen as a positive example of the Gypsy community to the majority population in Hungary. "If this school is successful in its goals," said Dyna, "discrimination will decrease, they will start seeing educated, responsible young Gypsy people coming out of this school and going on to higher education."

Making Art History

Zimbabwe Volunteer Tom Chambers is making art history. An Art Conservator and Curator for the National Gallery of Zimbabwe, he is currently researching and classifying the National Gallery's permanent collection to produce a catalogue—the first ever since the gallery's inception in 1957. The permanent collection comprises almost six thousand pieces of artwork and artifacts. When word of Tom's work got back to the African Archives and Museums Project in New York City, they decided to help out by funding a computerized database of the museum's collection—which will make Tom's job a whole lot easier.

Expo Earth

Each year in Gracias, Honduras, a large festival, *Dia de Lempira*, honors an Indian chief who died at the hands of the invading conquistadors. The celebration attracts thousands of Hondurans to Gracias to partake of the festivities. Michael Ketover, an industrious agriculture PVC in La Igualá, seized a unique opportunity and organized an agricultural exposition to coincide with the festival. With the help of other Volunteers, he designed demonstrations to show the effects of erosion, burning, insect pests, etc. Farmer leaders served as guides and walked the public through the demonstrations and explained them. More than 500 people took the tour over the three-day festival. For those who could not make it to Gracias, Michael organized a radio talk show so people with agricultural questions could call in. Most contributions were donated locally from citizens and other development organizations.

Eco-Friendly Cooking

Across Guatemala, the majority of families still depend upon the wood fire to cook their daily meals—though it poses serious health risks to users and requires excessive amounts of wood. In response, Volunteer Susana Kaye Lein has introduced to her village the *Chefina Mejorada*, or the Wood-Saving Cook Stove. Developed in the mid-80's, the brick-and-clay stove requires half the firewood of an open fire, and an attached chimney moves smoke away from the user's lungs and eyes.

Read All About It!



If you are considering Peace Corps service, or even if your interest in living and working abroad is yet only a dream, here's some interesting resource material and food for thought. Warning: The following may provoke an irresistible lust to wander.

From the Center of the Earth: Stories Out of the Peace Corps
Geraldine Kennedy. (Clover Park Press, 1991.)
A collection of writings by different Volunteers.

The Village of Waiting
George Packer. (Random House, 1988.) A Volunteer teacher in Togo in the early 1980s.

Living Poor: A Peace Corps Chronicle
Moritz Thomsen. (The University of Washington Press, 1990.) Tracks the life of a Volunteer in Ecuador in the early 1960s. This is one of the classic Peace Corps accounts.

The High Price of Everything
Kathleen Coskran. (New Rivers Press, 1987.) Several stories set in Africa where Kathleen was a Volunteer in the mid-sixties. Beautifully written stories.

Festival for Three Thousand Maidens
Richard Wiley. (E.P. Dutton, 1991.) Wiley taught English in Korea in the late sixties. A novel, but a true account of what it is like to teach overseas.

The Ponds of Kalambayi
Mike Tidwell. (Lyons & Burford, 1990.) A fish culture extension agent in Zaire in the mid-eighties. This recently published book is considered by many to be the best Peace Corps account.

Under the Neem Tree
Susan Lowerre. (University of Washington Press, 1993.) Set in Senegal where Susan was a fish culture extension agent in the mid-eighties. A touching and wonderful story of one woman's life in West Africa.

The Keeper of the Moon: A Memoir
Tim McLaurin. (W.W. Norton, 1991.) A moving memoir of a Tunisian Volunteer's service in the 1970's.

To Touch the World: The Peace Corps Experience
Edited by John Coyne. (USGPO, 1994) Available from any Peace Corps Office. Short essays by Peace Corps Volunteers of what it was like to serve.

The Edge of Paradise: America in Micronesia
P.F. Kluge. (Random House, 1991.) The story of a Volunteer's long association with his country of service.

The Funniest Job You'll Ever Love: An Anthology of Peace Corps Humor
Available from the West Cascade Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. The "real" stories of what it is like in Peace Corps.

Blue Taxis: Stories About Africa
Eileen Drew. (Millweed, 1989.) These short stories are based on Eileen Drew's experiences in Zaire.

The Art of Crossing Cultures
Craig Storti. (Intercultural Press, 1989.) Storti, a Volunteer in Morocco, writes on how to live in another culture.



A group of Volunteers take an afternoon to relax at their mid-service conference. They will also discuss their work, get support from peers, ask questions of staff, and prepare for the rest of their assignment.

Where in the World is Peace Corps?



AFRICA

Benin—1
 Botswana—2
 Burkina Faso—3
 Cameroon—4
 Cape Verde—5
 Central African Rep.—6
 Chad—7
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Picture Yourself in the Peace Corps!



Joy Young, a Volunteer in Lesotho, visits with women in the community where she works as a health Volunteer.

Check out the skills Peace Corps needs most right now:

Agriculturalists—Individuals with agriculture degrees, extensive farm or gardening experience, or agribusiness backgrounds in crop extension, plant protection, agricultural education, agricultural economics, small and large animal husbandry, farm mechanics, apiculture, cooperatives, rural youth development, and research.

Educators—Teachers are needed in many areas, particularly primary education, math, chemistry, physics, and vocational education (also, see English, below). Assignments require a degree and, in some cases, teaching experience or certification. Experienced Volunteer teachers train local teachers and conduct local and regional workshops.

Nurses and other Health Professionals—Volunteers with degrees or certification in health fields work in public health education and train host country co-workers.

Skilled Trades Professionals and Vocational Educators—Experienced carpenters, masons, mechanics, electricians, plumbers, welders, refrigeration specialists, and energy technicians teach and demonstrate these skills. A college degree is not required, but three to five years' experience is.

Natural Resources Workers—Foresters work in nursery development and management, agroforestry, reforestation, research and education, village woodlot development, and social forestry. Other Volunteers work in geographic information

systems, park and wildlife management, soil conservation, and environmental education. Candidates need appropriate degrees or three years' relevant work experience in forestry, wildlife biology, resource management, or related areas.

Engineers—Volunteers work on water, sanitation, and irrigation systems; and construction, repair, and preservation of roads, bridges, and other structures. A relevant degree or three to five years' work experience is required.

Business-people—Volunteers with business degrees or five years' managerial business experience are assigned to assist small businesses and cooperatives with feasibility studies, accounting, inventory, and marketing.

English Teachers—Volunteers with English degrees, experience or certification in teaching English, TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language), or a foreign language, teach in classrooms at the secondary and university levels. More experienced English or foreign language teachers conduct teacher training and prepare curricula and instructional materials.

Fishery Specialists—Volunteers with degrees in fisheries, biology, or with a certain number of science credits help small farmers stock, manage, feed, harvest, and market pond fish.

Other Skills—In addition to these specific skills, Volunteers with other skills and years of experience may qualify for a variety of other assignments in Peace Corps.

Don't wonder if you're qualified to be a Volunteer, call us today!

(800) 424-8580

For local addresses and telephone numbers, look in the U.S. Government pages of your telephone book.

