



Think Global, Act Local: RPCV News

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MPCA Summer Picnic at Lake Park: Thank you to all who attended!



This year on July 26th, MPCA held its annual Summer Picnic at a new location in Lake Park. We were extremely happy with the great picnic site, the delicious food and the great turnout of



many familiar and new faces. As returned volunteers, potential volunteers and family and friends of PCVs, the picnic offered a space for sharing stories and experiences, and for catching up with old friends. Thank you to all who attended, and for bringing your favorite dish to share. We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events!

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

President's Corner	2
Notes and News	3
Namibia: Student Camp	4
Swaziland Grant Recap	5
Calendar Sale	6
Get involved / Events	7
Board Details	8



To see all the photos from the picnic, please visit our website and follow the links to the Photo Gallery. There you might notice just how many photos display our trusty blue Peace Corps banner. For the past year, the MPCA Board has been racking its brains trying to figure out where we had left our banner. Nobody knew where it was, or even when the last time was that we saw it. Since I (Amy, the newslet-



ter editor) had to miss board meetings this past year because of school, I had no idea that the missing banner was such a hot topic among the Board. Once school finished and I was able to attend another meeting, somebody mentioned; "So, no word on that banner yet?" Puzzled, I responded, "I have the banner in my garage." Of course, my comment was followed by a communal "AHHH!" Oops.



President's Corner

by Bethany Neubauer



Operation: Verification

Last night around 8:30 my phone rang. When I looked down at the caller ID, I was surprised to see it was Roberto, my friend and fellow RPCV from Bolivia -34. "Hola, Betania," he said calling me by my Spanish name, and then added, "Happy Anniversary!" Roberto, Liz, Jaime and Gina, all members of my PC training group, had gathered together in the DC area to celebrate the 6 year anniversary of our departure to Bolivia – August 24, 2003. They called to catch up and to reminisce.

My day to day life in the United States has little in common with the one I had as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Bolivia. Even though I returned in 2005, my memories aren't as crisp as they once were. In fact, at times, my entire experience feels as though it was a dream. Occasionally, something in my life here triggers a memory of Bolivia, and I find myself asking – did that really happen?

Talking with my training friends gave me something that sharing stories with people who weren't there can't do, it gave me confirmation that yes it really happened. Yes, I did live in Padilla, Chuquisaca for two years of my life. Verdad - I did eat cui (guinea pig), danced in the Virgin of Merced, and poured a bit of each drink on the ground for the Pachamama (Mother Earth). Verification – it wasn't just a dream – I really was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Bolivia.

If you haven't already, I encourage you to connect with your Peace Corps friends, if for no other reason than to personally verify that your Peace Corps experience was indeed real.

The National Peace Corps Association and the Milwaukee Peace Corps Association both have resources that can help connect you to your Peace Corps friends. Our local group has a copy of last year's Peace Corps Directory and lists those who have served and their contact info. This national directory is available for perusing at MPCA events.

Additionally, NPCA has a new networking site called Peace Corps Connect. This site is similar to Facebook. You do not have to be a paid NPCA member to use the site. To check out the site go to www.peacecorpsconnect.org. To sign up and create your own page, choose "Connected Peace Corps," click on "Sign Up," then follow the instructions.

Congratulations to Katie Decker (Turkmenistan '03-'05) on her new position as MPCA VP!

"We All" International Posters For Sale

MPCA is now selling, in limited quantities, the 2009 "We All" International Poster series published by the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Madison. Each set consists of five vibrant posters with the following themes: we all eat, we all need a home, we all work, we all dress and we all need water. Each set of five costs just \$25.00 and makes a great addition to any classroom or for use in your own Peace Corps presentations. For more info and pictures of the posters please contact Bethany Neubauer – bethanyneubauer@gmail.com.



Congratulations and Bon Voyage to Allegra Troiano!

MPCA's best wishes go out to Allegra, who has been a motivated and dedicated MPCA and NPCA member over the years, on her new adventure in Colombia, South America. Allegra was hired by the State Department to move to Bogotá for an initial period of ten months to work on teacher training for the Ministry of Education and the Fulbright Commission. She left Milwaukee for Bogotá on August 24th, and although we will miss her and everything she has done for MPCA over the years, we know that she will have a great adventure in Colombia working in what she calls her "dream job"! Best of luck, Allegra! Read Allegra's blog at allegratroiano.com

Welcome to MPCA's New Webmaster, RPCV Chris Wilson

My name is Chris Wilson and I was born and raised in Green Bay, and then went to Pomona College, a small liberal arts school near Los Angeles. With graduation nearing, I made the sad realization that there weren't a lot of employers out there looking for history majors like myself. This realization, along with an interest in seeing a bit more of the world, a lack of any idea what I wanted to do with my life and a desire to avoid another winter in Wisconsin led me to the Peace Corps.

Peace Corps assigned me to the Small Enterprise Development program in Burkina Faso, a landlocked francophone country in west Africa, where I worked with a microfinance credit union. I lived in a small town called Kongoussi, which had recently gotten electricity, and the credit union I worked with had just purchased a few computers, hoping to digitize all their record-keeping. Most of the staff, however, had never used a computer before, so I did a lot of basic computer training. I also set up women's savings and credit clubs in my town and some neighboring villages. Just about everyone I met in Kongoussi told me how much they wanted me to teach them English, so I started teaching some evening English classes for adults and worked with an English club in town, comprised mostly of high school students. I also worked with another volunteer in Burkina to create a cybercafe at the high school in his town, which is now bringing in some extra income for the school and is being used for computer classes and a summer computer camp.

I COS'd near the end of 2007, and moved to Milwaukee's east side. Since then, I've been working for a Milwaukee-based company called Executive Director, Inc., where I help manage and develop web sites for about 25 non-profit associations, primarily medical associations. I'll be serving as the new website manager for MPCA. I hope to redesign the MPCA web site and make it an even better resource for MPCA members, returned volunteers, prospective volunteers and parents. I've enjoyed meeting other RPCVs through MPCA and hearing their stories and experiences, and look forward to meeting those of you I haven't met yet!



More Peace Corps! Legislation proposed to improve and expand Peace Corps.

In June of this year, Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) proposed the Peace Corps Improvement and Expansion Act of 2009. Senator Dodd is an RPCV who served in the Dominican Republic. According to the MorePeaceCorps website, the bill "combines a reform and growth strategy for the Peace Corps. The bill increases funding in order to achieve the goal of doubling the size of a reformed, streamlined and more effective Peace Corps. It requires the Peace Corps to engage in a strategic assessment of all aspects of its current operations, from volunteer recruiting, training and management, to the distribution of volunteers throughout the world. Based on this assessment, the Peace Corps is required to create a one-year and five-year strategic plan in order to reform, modernize and grow the agency." Visit the MorePeaceCorps website at www.morepeacecorps.org to read the full article and to learn about what this organization is doing to expand Peace Corps operations.

MPCA Mini-Grants Support Community Development Projects Abroad

This past April, MPCA was able to provide five \$300 grants to community-based development projects at home and abroad. Two of the project support programs in rural Africa, one project supports PCV work in Guatemala, and the last two projects support community programs here in Milwaukee. As the current and returned volunteers who help run or sponsor these projects get their work underway, the Board of Directors wants to share with the MPCA community their news and progress. Read on to learn what current and former volunteers are working on with support from the MPCA community, and how you can continue to help support local and international community development projects.



Aranos, Namibia, Africa

In April of this year, Wisconsin native and current PCV, Katie Brown, was awarded \$300 to continue her work supporting students in rural Namibia through facilitating a week long student camp. Katie took a group of 20 students on a week long educational camping trip to the Namib Desert to learn about environmentally friendly and economically feasible living. Here is her feedback for the MPCA community:



I am a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher in Aranos, Namibia. I teach science to grades 8, 9 and 10. NaDEET (Namib Desert Environmental Education Trust) is an environmental center in the Namib Desert in Namibia. They run week-long environmental camps for groups of Namibian school children. This past week my Peace Corps Volunteer roommate, who is also a teacher, and I took a group of students to NaDEET. For most of these students it was their first field trip. We were assisted with reasonably priced transport by the local Catholic priest. At the center, the students learned

about the biodiversity of the desert, alternative sources of energy, how to cook with a solar oven and a solar cooker, and how to conserve water and other resources. They also had a fun time playing various educational games as well as playing on the dunes. It was a wonderfully educational and fun experience! I have attached several pictures showing some of our activities at the center.



Learning how solar panels work



Thank you so much for the support from the Milwaukee Peace Corps Association. You really helped to make this trip a reality and a success.

Thank you,
Katie Brown



Cooking with solar energy

Piet Retief, South Africa – This April, MPCA gave a \$300 grant to the Swaziland Reformed Church for purchasing care-giving supplies for volunteer workers attending to rural victims of HIV/AIDS and their families. Read on for information on the progress of this project.

The Swaziland Reformed Church website offers more information about the HIV/AIDS work that the organization is carrying out. Here is a brief description of the Home-Based Caring project, which MPCA supported through funds for purchasing medical supplies and backpacks:



Field workers with their medical packs

“In January 2006 our church started with a Home-Based Caring project in the southern, most affected, region of Swaziland. This is also the most neglected part of the country as most organizations tend to get involved in the northern part of Swaziland where the two main cities, Mbabane and Manzini are situated [...] We first started at Dwaleni where a total of 46 caregivers are presently working in the community. These people are all volunteers, without receiving any salary at all for the work that they do. At any given time they are caring for around 180 people, some who are sick, some who are chronically ill and others who are terminally ill. The work which is done includes the basic care of the patients such as washing them and ensuring that they are taking their medication...”

In a brief correspondence to MPCA, Dr. Arnau van Wyngaard, who is working with MPCA's contact, Dan Cooper, and the Swaziland Reformed Church writes:

Dear MPCA,

Wow! Thank you so much for the good news. \$300 converts into 12 medical kits for our home-based caregivers which means that they can do so much more to help the people who are really in need.

We are in the process of supplying each of the 500 volunteer home-based caregivers with a basic medical kit which they can use when they visit their clients. We have already purchased the bags but we are now buying medical supplies as and when funds become available and obviously we need to sustain this, in order to replenish supplies as they are being used. Some time ago my family and a few friends joined us as we sat down with a group of the caregivers to count out tablets which had to be placed into plastic bags as well as ointment and antiseptic fluid which had to be placed into smaller containers. We were then able to hand out the first 38 bags and we hope to give out around 100 more bags towards the end of this month with funds which we had received through Dan.



Kind regards,

Arnau van Wyngaard

Annual Calendar Sale!

Our annual picnic was our kick-off for calendar sales. We have already sold 100, so we still have 300. Last year we generated about \$1300 for various Peace Corps Partnership programs and some local projects with our calendar sales. We want to continue this success again this year. There are several ways you can help:

1. You can purchase calendars for yourself at \$6 for MPCA members.
2. You can sell them to friends, family and colleagues for \$10.
3. You can find a merchant who will buy them from us for \$8 and then sell them to their customers for the suggested price of \$12.95.

They are beautiful, colorful calendars with photos from around the world taken by PCVs. This year we are, especially, proud of them because two of the photos were taken by our own Mary Mueller (Guatemala 1996-98). You can get calendars from Tennie Bickham. She brings them to all MPCA functions including board meetings. This is her contact information:

Tennie Bickham
 700 E. Russell Ave.
 Milwaukee, WI 53207
 414-507-4032; tbick1943@hotmail.com



MPCA Membership/Renewal Form

Name _____

Country and Years of Service _____ Assignment _____

Address _____ City _____ ST _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

_____ I would like the MPCA newsletter sent to me via email at the above address. (This saves the organization on printing and postage costs.)

Milwaukee Peace Corps Association membership is not restricted to RPCVs, but is also open to prospective volunteers, PCV parents or anyone whose goals are the same as those of the Peace Corps. Anyone interested in being added to the mailing list can contact Peter Lee at lee@uwm.edu. Unfortunately, due to production costs, if we do not receive your dues after 3 months, we'll have to remove your name from the mailing list. Paid members will receive an MPCA Directory. If you pay dues to the National Peace Corps Association and list yourself as being affiliated with the Milwaukee group, your dues are paid with your national membership.

All renewals are due on January 1.

- \$15.00 Minimum MPCA Dues (New members \$7.50 after July 1)
- \$22.50 Common Household (New members \$11.25 after July 1)
- \$ _____ Other donations

_____ If you do NOT wish to have your information published in the annual Milwaukee Peace Corps Association (MPCA) Directory, please check here.

_____ MPCA currently shares contact data with the National Peace Corps Association. If you do NOT wish to have your information shared in this way, please check here.

Please fill in this form and send it with a check made out to Milwaukee Peace Corps Association to:
 Milwaukee Peace Corps Association
 P.O. Box 511322
 Milwaukee, WI 53203-0221

Comments?

Here are a few ways you can get involved in MPCA's Community Grant Program:

Submit a Grant Proposal!

If you are interested in suggesting or sponsoring a local community program, or if you are a PCV serving in-country and would like to solicit grant funds, we welcome you to visit the Grant Guidelines and Application link located on our website at www.milwaukeepeacecorps.org. There you can find everything you need to propose a grant project. The next deadline for submission of grant proposals is October 31, 2009.

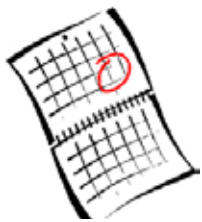
Donate Grant Funds!

If you would like to provide direct financial support to our grant program, we welcome any amount with open arms. A donation to MPCA can be taken as a deduction; all you need to do is mail your donation to MPCA at PO Box 511322, Milw., WI 53203-0221.

Attend a Peace Corps Partnership Dinner!

You can participate in our Peace Corps Partnership Dinners, where you attend a dinner at a local ethnic restaurant and vote for the projects you would like to see funded.

For more details about our grant program and our PCP dinners, and to see a history of funded projects, please see our website at <http://www.milwaukeepeacecorps.org/communitygiving.htm>.



Mark your calendar!

Below is a list of upcoming MPCA events. If you would like to suggest an activity or an event for MPCA, please contact us at milwaukee_rpcvs@yahoo.com

Peace Corps Partnership Dinner
October 10th 6:00pm
Ethiopian Cottage Restaurant
1824 N. Farwell Ave., Milwaukee

MPCA Annual Family and Parent Brunch
November 7, 2009
10:00 am-1:00 pm
Location TBD



Join us in recognizing and celebrating the many contributions that parents and families of Peace Corps volunteers make during their service and beyond. The program will include a panel of families who will share their perspectives and reflections.

MPCA Board Meetings are the third Monday of every month from 6:30 pm - 8:15 pm at the Eastside library across the street from Beans and Barley. All are welcome to attend.

Milwaukee Peace Corps Association
P.O. Box 511322

Milwaukee, WI 53203-0221
Email: Milwaukee_rpcvs@yahoo.com

On the Web at
milwaukeepeacecorps.org

Year Founded: 1968

Paid Members: 70

President:

Bethany Neubauer
(Bolivia '03-'05)

Vice President:

Katie Decker
(Turkmenistan '03-'05)

Treasurer:

Alex Foundos
(Ukraine '04-'06)

Newsletter Editor:

Amy Olen
(Guatemala '02-'04)

Social Events Coordinator:

Beth Haskovec
(Romania '02-'04)

Grants and Giving Coordinator:

John Schroder
(Costa Rica '96-'98)

Membership Coordinator:

Peter Lee
(Thailand '65-'67)

Website Manager:

Chris Wilson
(Burkina Faso '05-'07)

Advocacy Coordinator:

Cheryl Nenn
(Ecuador '95-'97)
(Crisis Corps-Honduras '99)

Calendar Project Coordinator:

Tennie Bickham
(Liberia '66-'68)

MPCA Historian:

Paul Kinsley
(Turkey '65-'67)

Fundraising Consultant:

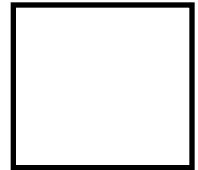
Mike Farmer
(Nepal '63-'65)

Member at large:

Dzidra Benish
(Poland '92-'94)

NPCA Liaison:

Allegra Troiano
(Senegal '80-'82)



MPCA is a community of former and future PC volunteers and families who continue to promote Peace Corps ideals through cultural education and the support of both local and international development organizations. It also provides social activities and emotional support for RPCVs and for those returning from abroad.

If you would like to receive the MPCA newsletter via e-mail, please contact Amy Olen at amytolen@gmail.com. The newsletter would come to your inbox in a pdf format.

