Happy Belated Fourth of July. Of course, this year felt different than last, as we were likely able to see friends and family, enjoy the occasional firework, and chow down on classic Americana cuisine - respective of what we all individually define as Americana cuisine. I guess that’s something I found to be fairly profound during my service. Viewing the 4th of July from an outsider looking in. Witnessing the significant pride but diversity in how friends and colleagues would celebrate the 4th and what they celebrated with - or if they chose not to celebrate. It all seemed far more appealing to observe than to spend the day trumpeting America’s independence. Plus, I’m pretty sure Namibia has very strict firework laws. I digress.

To move forward, a big shake up here at the Board of Directors. As you all know, Andy Smith is stepping down from Chair and there needs to be a replacement to fill those monumental shoes. It just so happens to be that I have humbly and somewhat clumsily stepped into those shoes. Yes, I will be taking reins as the Chair of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Buffalo & WNY Group. However, I will still be curating and publishing the newsletter. This transition will take a few months - just so you are all aware, and Andy will still be involved in the group, just not as Chair.

Mark down August 11th in your calendar as a Beach Day with the Peace House. We will need volunteers with vehicles! Details in the newsletter. Additionally, PC gets a pay raise, Friends of Afghanistan needs your help, and still in touch with your counterpart? Make a video telling a story of the work you accomplished for Peace Corps Connect in September.

Any happenings, updates, social events, recipes or items of interest can be sent to buffalorpcv@yahoo.com to be included in the newsletter. Thank you for reading and hope to see you soon.

- Brett Claydon
Hey, Buffalo RPCVS: Renew your membership!

Another newsletter, another reminder.

$25. [Online](#) (fastest and easiest!) or via the membership form found at the end of this newsletter. Payments can be made via check, Venmo, or PayPal.

Venmo: @Buffalo-RPCV

PayPal: buffalorpcv@yahoo.com

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Upcoming Events & Save the Dates

May 1st - July 31st: [Hike for Haiti](#)

July 13th: [RPCV4EA: Getting Elected Officials to Act](#)

July 16th: [Give 716 Day](#)

July 17th: [East Side Garden Walk](#)

July 22nd: Daemen College: [Shaping Culture as an Empowered Creative Panel Discussion](#)

July 30th: PATH: [Community Awareness Event for World Day Against Trafficking In Persons](#)

Aug 11th: Buffalo Peace House Beach Day (Details Below)

Sept 23-25th: [60th Anniversary Peace Corps Connect Conference](#)

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**August 11th Buffalo Peace House Beach Day Information**

Time: 9 AM - 4 PM
Location: Old Lake Shore Road, Past Evangola State Park (Directions from Lillis McLean)

Families of the Peace Houses will have the opportunity to spend the day swimming, walking, having lunch, and enjoying a summer day at the beach. Let's help them get there!

Volunteers are needed to transport asylum seekers from two locations, the Peace House in Hamburg (156 Buffalo Road, Hamburg) and the one at St. Francis. Those with a car and are willing to help out, please contact Lillis McLean. She can be reached at 716-873-7467 (Home) or 716-472-6276 (Cell). She will provide more information and details when you call her. If you are going please RSVP to Lillis! **Calls only.**
Thanks to the work by many of you, the Peace Corps is one step closer to getting the first meaningful funding increase in seven years.

Here’s some good news that came from Capitol Hill last week: On Thursday, July 1, the Appropriations Committee in the House of Representatives approved a fiscal year 2022 funding package that includes $430.5 million for the Peace Corps. That marks a $20 million increase in funding for the agency for the fiscal year that begins October 1, 2021.

That financial support is particularly important at this critical time, as the Peace Corps prepares to send Volunteers back into the field. It underscores the importance of providing the agency with funding that will allow for many improvements and reforms that will build a stronger program for the next generation of Volunteers.

Last week also brought some good news about Volunteers returning to the field: Plans are moving forward for Volunteers to return to Belize. COVID-19 has disrupted education systems throughout the world. At the request of the government of Belize, Volunteers will engage in literacy work to help local schools recover. In the meantime, scores of Response Volunteers continue to serve with community vaccination centers across the United States, and the virtual volunteering program has expanded dramatically to countries around the world.

Regarding Peace Corps funding, the most recent development in the House of Representatives was bolstered by the annual Peace Corps funding Dear Colleague letter, a bipartisan action issued earlier this year by RPCV Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) and Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA). And it gets the Peace Corps closer to funding recommendations made by the Peace Corps Reauthorization Act of 2021 (H.R. 1456) introduced in the House in March.

As we look toward celebrating the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps at the Peace Corps Connect conference in September, it’s encouraging to see that our work on Capitol Hill is paying off. But this is a long-term endeavor. We welcome your support in the weeks ahead. Let us know if you’re willing to set up a meeting with your representatives in Congress in August or September. And bolster advocacy efforts with a donation to help carry this work forward.

In service,

Glenn Blumhorst
NPCA President & CEO
Please join Friends of Afghanistan and the Peace Corps Community for Refugees in urging President Biden and members of Congress to protect the thousands of Afghan allies who risked their lives working alongside Americans during the war. If left behind after the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan, they face an extremely dangerous future. You can help get them safely resettled in the U.S. Make your voice heard here.

Congratulations to Lillian Carter Award Winner Carole Anne “Aziza” Reid

Carole Anne “Aziza” Reid was serving as a youth education Volunteer in Eswatini when COVID-19 forced the evacuation of all Volunteers. It was her second tour with Peace Corps; she was in Moldova 2016–18 working in community organizational development. She organized community programs to empower women and youth through African dance classes and social justice activities.

When she joined the Peace Corps at age 53, she brought years of experience in the arts — including as founder of Def Dance Jam Workshop (DDJW), an intergenerational performing arts troupe and academic program serving deaf, hearing impaired, and physically and developmentally disabled youths and their families. In her career as a dancer, she toured with Stevie Wonder and rap artists KRS 1 and Boogie Down Productions. On Broadway, Reid worked as assistant choreographer on “Rent” and “Mulebone. Brought home by the pandemic, Reid, who is an ordained interfaith minister, formed a nationwide collective called Ministers of Color Sacred Circle, which aims to address racial disparities facing people of color. On June 24, she was presented with the Lillian Carter Award, recognizing the contributions of outstanding Returned Peace Corps Volunteers who served at age 50 or older. Read more about Aziza Reid, the award, and other stellar nominees here.
Peace Corps Connect 2021: Tell your story. Guide a discussion. Shape this special 60th anniversary conference.

Here’s an invitation for affiliate groups and individual members of NPCA to take an active role in Peace Corps Connect 2021, taking place September 23–25. **Counterparts in the Community:** We’re welcoming video stories from returned Volunteers and their partners highlighting the work they have done together.

**Evacuated Volunteers: Tell Your Story** — and be a part of a panel with fellow evacuated Volunteers. We’ll host a session titled **From Peace Corps to Black Lives Matter: Striving for Allyship at Home and Abroad.** And as we tackle tough topics of racism, unconscious bias, and allyship — as those relate to experiences both during and after Peace Corps service — conference organizers are seeking Volunteers to act as small group facilitators during the session.

**Service Projects: Stories of Impact** — an opportunity for affiliate groups to highlight how service projects have shaped individuals and communities worldwide. [Read details and find links to sign up here.](#)
PEACE CORPS TAKES STEPS TO RETURN TO SERVICE OVERSEAS

Agency will resume inviting volunteers to serve in countries that have met rigorous health, security and safety standards

June 30th, 2021

Today, the Peace Corps announced that it is a step closer to returning volunteers to overseas service. The agency will resume inviting volunteers to serve at posts that have met a comprehensive set of health, safety and security criteria.

“Following 15 months of global isolation, tireless work by our staff around the world and incredible patience from our applicants and host country partners, the Peace Corps is moving forward in the process of returning to our overseas posts,” said Acting Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn. “The Peace Corps is advancing with an abundance of caution, flexibility and pragmatism, but also with so much hope about all the important work that is ahead of us.”

While the COVID-19 pandemic remains a dynamic challenge, the agency has developed a comprehensive process to safely return volunteers to service abroad. These preparations include ensuring that every post meet a comprehensive list of internal and external factors including updating Emergency Action Plans, ensuring availability of reliable transportation routes in and out of the country, confirming the local medical care capacity, and identifying medical evacuation locations.

Consistent with this comprehensive return to service process, the Peace Corps is implementing plans to move forward with re-opening its program in Belize. At the request of the government of Belize, volunteers will engage in literacy work to help local schools recover following disruptions to the education system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agency is continuously reviewing and evaluating its reentry criteria to ensure that the timing of return is safe, respectful of culture and on-the-ground conditions, supportive of host country’s urgent needs, and compliant with local laws, regulations, and protocols. The agency anticipates additional country-specific invitations in the upcoming weeks and months.

In March 2020, the Peace Corps temporarily suspended its global operations and evacuated nearly 7,000 volunteers from 62 countries due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The event marked the first time in the agency’s 60 year history that volunteers were evacuated from all global posts. However, the Peace Corps has continued to further its mission of world peace and friendship through several virtual service engagements with overseas partners and a second-ever domestic deployment to assist the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) with its COVID-19 vaccine distribution efforts.
Peace Corps Achievements: July 2021

News and updates from the Peace Corps community — across the country, around the world, and spanning generations of returned Volunteers and staff

By Peter Deekle (Iran 1968–70)


DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO


HONDURAS

Jennifer Fitzgerald (2001–03) is the co-founder and CEO of Policygenius Inc. It is a leading online commercial insurance marketplace in the United States. She was recently featured on the NPR program “How I Built This” with host Guy Raz.

KENYA

Grover Jackson (1967–69) and his two co-authors have produced “Back to Kenya,” a presentation described as “a multimedia tale of American Black history told by those who lived it.” The presentation includes written background details and personal stories from Jackson and his Kenya traveling companions related to his transformative journey to the African country as a Peace Corps volunteer.

PEACE CORPS HEADQUARTERS

Helen Lowman gave the commencement address at Austin College (Texas) in June 2021. From 2010 to 2015, she served as Regional Director — Europe, Middle East, and Asia, Peace Corps’ largest geographic region. She has been president and CEO of Keep America Beautiful since 2017, offering leadership in areas of international diplomacy and development, youth engagement, environmental education, and more.
More than 700 Undergraduates Earn Certificates from Peace Corps Prep Program

WASHINGTON – The Peace Corps announced today that more than 700 undergraduate students completed the Peace Corps Prep program in the 2020-2021 academic year.

July 6th, 2021

“The graduates of Peace Corps Prep are committed to the unifying power of service and have a passion for intercultural understanding, which is critically needed as we look to help communities around the world overcome and heal from the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Peace Corps Acting Director Carol Spahn. “These students took a historically challenging academic year and used it as an opportunity to focus on what they can give to others. And this program is just the beginning of their service journey – one that is not limited to students, but that we should all consider to give back to our communities.”

Peace Corps Prep is a certificate program provided by the agency, in cooperation with more than 140 partner universities, to empower undergraduate students in four core competencies vital to the fieldwork and success of a Peace Corps volunteer. These competencies include critical sector-specific skills, foreign language proficiency, intercultural competence and professional leadership skills.

“Through our partner universities, students of diverse backgrounds are made aware of the Peace Corps’ service opportunity,” said Office of University Programs Director La'Teashia Sykes. “I want to offer my sincere congratulations to the students who have earned their Peace Corps Prep certificate and to our partners who continue to inspire hundreds of students to foster their love of service.”

Get Your Summer Peace Corps Gear Here.

The NPCA Store is your one stop shop for Peace Corps gear: classic Peace Corps T-shirts, ball caps, water canteens, and more.

Your purchases help bolster programs to support work by and for the Peace Corps community.
Vintage Peace Corps Poster of the Month

Now that you have a degree, get an education.

Talk it over with the Peace Corps.
Do you have an announcement or item of interest to RPCVs?

All area RPCVs, Peace Corps supporters or interested persons are invited to submit event announcements, news items or other items which may be of interest to the Western New York RPCV community.

You may request for the information to be placed in the newsletter or as a separate email. Items submitted may be subject to editing and/or editorial discretion.

Submit to: buffalorpcv@yahoo.com

RPCV Buffalo Board of Directors

Brett Claydon (Namibia), Chairperson
Jeri Titus (Morocco), Treasurer
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Visit Our Website!
RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS OF
BUFFALO, NEW YORK
2021 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

RPCV/Buffalo membership is open to all returned Peace Corps Volunteers, active and friends of Peace Corps. Please complete the following and return with your membership dues (25.00 annually) payable to RPCV/Buffalo:

RPCV/Buffalo
c/o Jeri Titus
P.O.Box 650
Buffalo, NY 14205

Please check

Renewing Member _____ New Member _____

Are you a member of the National Peace Corps Association? Yes _____ No _____

I. Personal Information:

Name: (first) ____________________________ (last) ____________________________
Address: _________________________________________________________(apt)
City:_____________________________________________________________________
State: __________________________________________    Zip: ____________________
Telephone: ___________________________ Cell: ____________________________
E-Mail: ______________________________

I. Peace Corps Service Information (if applicable):

Country(ies) of Service:

Dates of Service:

Primary Service Role: