



Central Missouri Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

Annual Newsletter 2012-2013

News from the Board of Directors

By Karen Shanteau Davis (Guatemala 1992-1994)

As a nutrition education volunteer in the Western Highlands of Guatemala in the early 1990's, one challenging aspect of my job was the inability to track progress. It was difficult to measure the intangible in the two short years that I served in La Libertad, Huehuetenango, Guatemala. I was well aware that any small effort on my part was only one small link in a chain of cause and effect that would go on for years.

In 1999, my husband and I moved to Columbia, MO. I became involved in the local group for Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. In my thirteen years in Central Missouri, I have been able to experience tangible growth within the Peace Corps community in ways that are far easier to track than the effects of my work in Guatemala.

About ten years ago, a handful of RPCVs met at a local coffee shop to discuss the future of the local Peace Corps scene. At that time, the group was dwindling fast and had two choices: become a thing of the past or reinvent itself in hopes of new growth. Being the optimistic RPCVs that we were, we opted for the later. We began experimenting with different events to see if anyone would show up: discussion groups, book clubs, ethnic meals, potlucks, and film screenings. Group momentum began to build and our organization continued to strengthen by the year.

A recent RPCV visitor said of the Peace Corps scene in Central Missouri that, "There must be something special in the water. The vibe in this group is amazing." I would have to agree. We've come a long way from our humble re-beginning ten years ago in some very tangible and measurable ways.

Currently we are in contact with approximately 200 RPCVs in the Central Missouri area. Last February, 400 RPCVs and guests attended our Third Goal International Film Festival to view films and participate in dialog about issues affecting the developing world. In 2011, we awarded more than \$800 in small grants to currently serving volunteers from the state of Missouri. But the numbers do not have to be big to be im-



Students at Petru Rares School in Soroca, Moldova enjoy library books funded by the Central MO RPCVs.

pressive. Columbia, MO is 4th per capita in the nation in recruitment of new volunteers. We are preparing to host our fifth MU Campus Recruiter starting this fall. Plans are underway for our sixth Third Goal International Film Festival to be held on February 2, 2013. Lastly, there are seven capable members currently serving on the Board for terms of two years each.

Of course, progress in any community is easier to track over longer periods of time. There have been many RPCVs whose impact has been profound, but whose tenure in our group has been short. I'd like to think that their involvement with us is comparable to Peace Corps service: small efforts can produce lasting results within a community – we just don't always get to experience them personally.

It has been my privilege to be involved in the growth of our organization over the last decade. We have built a vibrant group that has impacted the local community as well as communities abroad. I look forward to watching this next year unfold in the life of Central MO RPCVs and invite you to be a part of the action. Thank you for your involvement and continued support.

Central Missouri RPCVs Board Members

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Karen Davis
centralmorpcvs@gmail.com

Vice President

Lindsey Smith

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Frank Yates

Newsletter Editor, Social Chair

Ashley Burden

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Central Missouri Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

is a social, service, and networking group for RPCVs in Central Missouri. The group was formed in 1996 as part of the 35th anniversary of the Peace Corps. It now has contact with more than 175 returned volunteers in Central Missouri.

Our objectives are to provide RPCVs with opportunities to socialize, educate people about the Peace Corps, act as a resource for prospective volunteers, and to promote interactions between RPCVs and the mid-Missouri community.

For more information, email
centralmorpcvs@gmail.com





Local RPCV continues to serve: This time through Peace Corps Response

By Lisa Groshong (Zambia 2008-2010)



Ever since my husband, Trevor, and I served as Peace Corps Volunteers in Zambia, I've known I would pursue short-term assignments through Peace Corps Response as a way to see the world through making small contributions to other countries.

In Zambia, I worked as an education extension worker, a position only marginally related to my experience, so I was excited to spot a Peace Corps Response position in my field of public relations.

The application process was quick—except for the medical clearance, since I had crossed the “over 40” threshold, launching a whole new array of medical hoops.

Preparing to leave home for three months was a piece of cake compared with packing up for two years in Zambia, especially since I was leaving Trevor behind to pay the bills and feed the pets. Also, my boss promised to hold my job, which made the leap less drastic.

Within about six weeks of applying, I boarded a plane for Tbilisi. Instead of landing with an intake of 50+ fellow PCVs for nine weeks of training, I spent three days learning the Georgian alphabet with my two fellow PCRVs.

My assignment was building the capacity of the public relations team of CARE International in the Caucasus. Not surprisingly, my efforts met with mixed results. Some colleagues seemed more interested in letting me

do their work rather than learning anything themselves. Still, I got to travel to some of the organization's remote offices and held some useful training sessions that were well-received by the grateful field staff. These visits gave me a chance to see some breathtakingly remote villages and to interview and photograph some of the Georgians rebuilding their lives after being displaced by violent conflicts with Russia.

My office was a 40-minute walk from my host family's house, itself just around the corner from the PC office in Tbilisi. The capital is seen as too dangerous for ordinary PCVs, but I never felt endangered as I explored the city's many coffee shops, flea markets, Turkish baths and cultural opportunities like the Georgian National Ballet (ticket price: about \$5), a world-famous puppet theater and Georgia's (painful) version of American Idol. I was also lucky enough to meet expats who invited me along on many of their weekend explorations to Georgia's churches, cave dwellings and mountain villages.

Before leaving, I fretted about living with a host family. However, that turned out to be the best part of the experience. Not only did I get to sleep in a bed shaped like a race car, I experienced a full blast of the legendary Georgian hospitality. With my host family's daughter in Indiana on a US-funded exchange program, I benefited from the family's warm fuzzy feelings toward America. My host mom and I huddled around the space heater in the kitchen and forged a friendship through my inadvertently raunchy recitations of Georgian words, baking cupcakes, practicing Zumba moves in the living room, and sampling the family's home-brewed fresh wine.

Although Georgia boasted wifi, potable running water and other material comforts absent in the African bush, I experienced enough day

-to-day frustrations and hardships to consider my months there “real” Peace Corps service. Ironically, the hardest part was missing my husband and suffering the guilt of knowing that he was selflessly shouldering the burden of his responsibilities and mine.

That's why I've decided that when I start looking for my next Peace Corps Response position, I'll make sure to find two-- together.

To see stories and pictures from Lisa's Peace Corps Response service visit >> TravelsWithTrevor.blogspot.com and LisaCarriesOnAgain.blogspot.com.

Peace Corps Response provides qualified professionals the opportunity to serve in rewarding, short-term assignments, in various programs around the world. When you serve as a Peace Corps Response Volunteer, you bring your skills and experience to projects in places where you are needed most.

Peace Corps Response assignments offer qualified Americans the opportunity to obtain considerable career experience, while accomplishing tangible results in a short period of time.

Positions range from six months to one year in length and are designed to address development needs as identified by the host country. Volunteers provide targeted assistance in diverse assignments covering a range of projects, including food security, civil engineering, information systems, library science, and university level teaching.

peacecorps.gov/response/

Purchase your 2013 International Calendar today!

Order your copies of the 2013 PC calendar by emailing us at centralmorpcvs@gmail.com.

(\$12 includes shipping for those who request it)

Fantastic photos and great global information are highlights of this year's Peace Corps calendar. Produced by the RPCVs of Madison, Wisconsin, the calendars are both aesthetically pleasing and a terrific fundraiser for our local RPCV group. They make great holiday gifts for family, friends, neighbors and teachers.

\$12



Calendar sales represent the number one fundraiser for our group throughout the year and help fund the PCV projects that are highlighted in this newsletter.

Central MO RCPV Film Festival: Be a part of the 2013 event

By Mike Burden (Mongolia 2006-2008)

More than 400 RPCVs and community members gathered last Feb. for our annual film festival. We hosted RPCV filmmaker, Cy Kuckenbaker, and Jake Wilson, a RPCV featured in Kuckenbaker's film, "Bush League."

"For an independent filmmaker like me, it's hard to overstate the value of festivals like the Third Goal Film Festival," Kuckenba-

ker said. "My hat is off to Columbia Access Television and the Third Goal FF. It's through events and institutions like theirs that works like mine find the very best audiences."

This event continues to gain momentum in the community due to the volunteer efforts of RPCVs like you and our community partners. There are several opportunities to

contribute, including film selection, promotion and coordinating speakers panels after each film. To get involved, contact Mike Burden at mikeburden77@gmail.com or 815-535-7297.

First film fest meeting is Sept. 5 the [Burden's house](#) (1011 Again St.) at 7 pm. Let us know to expect you!

Turn the page for event photos >>



Holts Summit RPCV wins first place in the 2012 AIDS-Free Generation Photo Contest

In advance of the 2012 International AIDS Conference in Washington, D.C., Peace Corps announced the winning images for the Peace Corps AIDS-Free Generation Photo Contest. Peace Corps volunteers, returned Peace Corps volunteers and Peace Corps staff submitted over 500 photo entries.

“Peace Corps volunteers work tirelessly day in and day out to promote HIV/AIDS prevention techniques and improve access to care,” said Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams (returned Peace Corps volunteer, Dominican Republic, 1967-1970). “These photos portray the inspiring work Peace Corps volunteers do to help toward creating an AIDS free generation.”

Photographs were judged based on creativity and impact in the following categories: education and prevention; treatment, care and support; reducing/eliminating stigma and discrimination; and photographic technical merit.

Alicia Keys, co-founder and global ambassador for Keep a Child Alive, selected the winning photographs from these categories and a fifth “People’s Choice” photo was chosen by the number of ‘likes’ the photo received on social media.

Jeanna Rolsing of Holts Summit, MO won first place in the Photographic Technical Merit category for her photo of Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) in HoHoe, Volta Region, Ghana.

As a Peace Corps Volunteer, Jeanna educated her community about the risks of HIV.

“We {Peace Corps volunteers} provide an outside source for information and discussion, and in my experience, people felt more-

FIRST PLACE — PHOTOGRAPHIC TECHNICAL MERIT



By Jeanna Rolsing of Holts Summit, Missouri
Volunteer in Ghana, 2010–2012

Solving the HIV Puzzle

Participants of Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) work on solving an HIV puzzle. The weeklong camp hosted by Volunteers in February 2012 encouraged leadership for 20 junior high and seven senior high girls from various villages. This photo shows a station in an HIV relay in which the girls solve a nine-piece puzzle to form an HIV awareness ribbon.

comfortable talking to us about sex and HIV than they did to local health care workers and educators.”

She also noticed the threat of myths surrounding the disease. “Most individuals

that I talked to had some basic knowledge of HIV, but they also knew the hard ingrained stigmas and myths that their society had

taught them. This is why Peace Corps HIV outreach is so important. When people are equipped with only partial knowledge, or the knowledge is combined with local lore, education is not complete.”

The top three photos from each category as well as the People’s Choice Award were exhibited at the Carnegie Library in Washing-

A YEAR IN PICTURES: CENTRAL MO RPCVS

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI HOMECOMING PARADE: Organized by the MU Peace Corps Fellows



THIRD GOAL INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL: February 2012



ton, D.C. in July. An additional selection of submissions was also be on display during the 2012 International AIDS Conference in the Global Village at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

All photo submissions have been permanently added to the Peace Corps Digital Library, a

searchable collection of electronic Peace Corps materials from 1961 to the present.

The winning photos will also be highlighted on the Peace Corps websites, featured in the 2013 official Peace Corps HIV/AIDS Awareness Calendar and displayed in the Peace Corps headquarters building in Washington,

D.C. First-place winners will also receive a framed certificate signed by Director Williams and Ambassador Eric Goosby, United States Global AIDS coordinator.

View the winning photos here >> peacecorps.gov/learn/whatlike/photocontest/



Small grants help currently serving PCVs from Central Missouri

By Lindsey Smith (Armenia 2001-2003)

Proceeds from the fundraising done by Central MO RPCVs throughout the year, including t-shirt and beer glass sales and the Peace Corps Calendar sales, go to help fund projects being implemented by Peace Corps Volunteers from Missouri currently serving in the field. This year we funded two projects, one in Moldova and one in Morocco. Both PCVs involved reported successful completion of their projects which would not have happened without the support from Central MO RPCVs!

Books for school library in Soroca, Moldova

With a \$354.00 grant from Central MO RPCVs, Katie Shifley of Centralia, MO, a Small Business Development Volunteer, helped a school in her site in the Eastern European country of Moldova add 50 elementary level books to its library. The following is a translation of the school's thank you note, signed by students and administrators:

Thank you! The administration, librarian, teachers, parents, and students of Petru Rares school are very thankful for the donation of books in the sum of 4540 lei. It was so very necessary for our library and students. Your kind gesture is a wonderful contribution to the education and development of the youth in our country.

Water Project Trainings in southern Morocco

Cara Stuckel, an Environmental Education PCV serving in a rural area of southern Morocco, helped government officials in a five village region organize and conduct a training and wrap-up seminar for a multi-year water improvement project with funds from the Central MO RPCVs grant project. The water project involved building water towers, installing piping, and hooking up running water into each of the five villages, and was financed by Peace Corps Morocco and the villages themselves. The training funded by Central MO RPCVs brought 50 leaders from the five villages together to discuss successes, failures, things that remain to be accomplished and future projects related to the water development. Cara felt very strongly that the meeting would continue to build sustainability and village investment in maintaining the project. From Cara:

The men got a lot of useful information from the event and it is hopefully setting them up for success in the future, once we have left! I was so proud of the men and of their hard work with the water tower construction!

How you continue to support PCVs:

Small grants mean a lot to PCVs in the field. We all remember stretching every resource to help our host communities achieve goals and develop projects. Thank you to every Central MO RPCV who has bought a t-shirt, glass, or calendar over the past year or paid membership dues. You're making a difference for PCV communities around the world!



Students enjoy library books in Moldova thanks to you!

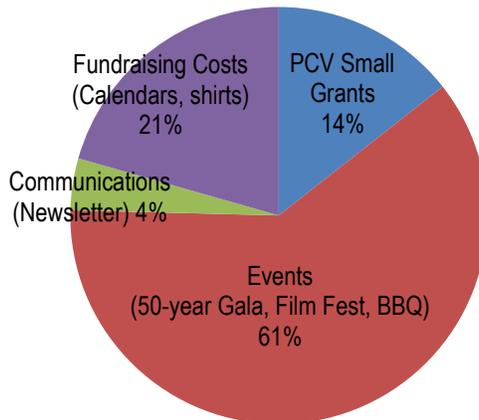
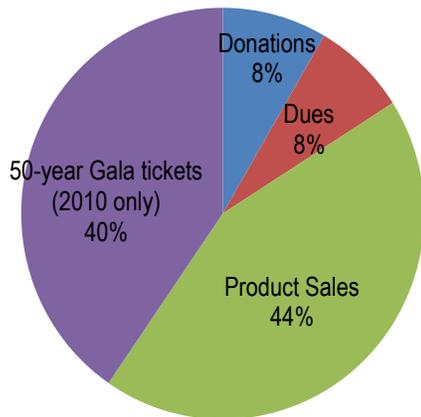


The men at a reception following the project wrap-up event.

Central MO RPCVs Annual Report (2010-2011) *Thank you.*

Incoming — \$5,410

Outgoing — \$5,617



Your gift—whether calendar purchase, membership dues, or donation—supports the events and small grants program of the Central MO RPCVs.

We are a 501(c)3 non-profit.

Membership Dues Fee Schedule

(Members are allowed to run for Board positions)

- New RPCV (<1 year) FREE!
- Couple \$25
- Student \$10
- Single-member \$15

(See newsletter back panel for details)



Clip-n-Post Central MO RPCVs Events Calendar

Saturday August 25, 2012

Beer tasting and new RPCV welcome, 3:00 – 6:00 pm,
[Oakland Park](#) | [Shelter #1](#)

Wednesday, September 5, 2012

Film Fest Meeting at [Burden's house](#), 7:00 pm

Saturday September 29, 2012

Adopt a Spot Clean up and coffee at Uprise, 9:00 am

Saturday October 20, 2012

Adopt a Spot Clean up and coffee at Uprise, 9:00 am

Sunday November 4, 2012

International Dinner, 6:00 pm, location TBA

Saturday February 2, 2013

Third Goal International Film Festival, 12:00 – 8:00,
Chambers Auditorium, MU Campus

Saturday March 9, 2013

Belated Peace Corps Week potluck celebration, 6:00 – 9:00,
location TBA

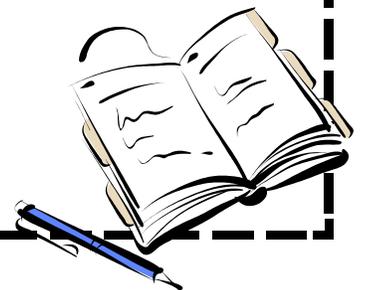
Sunday April 21, 2013

Earth Day Festival, 11:00 am – 6:00 pm, Peace Park

Saturday May 4 OR 25, 2013

Nominations BBQ, 5:00 – 8:00pm,
location TBA

**For information on these events, email us at centralmorpcvs@gmail.com





Central Missouri RPCVs Membership Form

Your dues go to supporting the many wonderful projects of our currently serving Central MO PCVs ~ Thank you!

Renewal

New Member

New Contact Info

Name(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number (H): _____ (W) _____ (M) _____

Email: _____ Peace Corps Country and years of service: _____

Current Occupation & Employer: _____

If you're a student, what & where are you studying? _____

New RPCV (<1 year) FREE!

Couple \$25

Student \$10

Unrestricted donation \$ _____

Single-member \$15

Total Amount \$ _____

Make checks payable to **Central Missouri RPCVs** and send to:

**Frank Yates
152 Sac Rd. Unit 1B
Sunrise Beach, MO 65079-5634**

I am interested in serving on the following committees:

Community Service

Public Relations

Social

Film Festival

Recruiting

Speaker's Bureau



Central MO RPCVs

Karen Davis, President
2645 S. Winding Trail Dr.
Columbia, MO 65201