



United States Peace Corps
PO Box 554
5 Bowker Road
Maseru 100, Lesotho
Southern Africa
Phone: +266 22313871
Fax: +266 22310287

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News from around the Peace Corps World

Message from the Country Director



PCV Nathan Birhanu with school students and Kick4Life staff ready to play soccer.

Dear Volunteers,

Thanks to all Volunteers and staff for the district meetings we held in February and March. We're quite pleased with the level of participation and feel that we achieved the goals set for these meetings. The information gathered will be extremely useful for the upcoming portfolio review, and it's safe to say that folks at the district level have a much better idea of the great work you do! A special thank you to Volunteers who made presentations during these meetings.

Last week Nathan Birhanu (ED 10) invited me to an event he helped organize at his school. Despite the really crummy weather that day, it was a huge success. Nathan had arranged for Kick-4-Life and New Start to organize a football tournament (co-ed teams!), HIV education activities and HIV testing and counseling for students from Nathan's school and three other schools in the area. I brought with me the PEPFAR Coordi-

nator from the Embassy. (Both Kick-4-Life and New Start are PEPFAR-funded.) She and I were both impressed by the turn out and enthusiasm of everyone involved. Great job, Nathan!

We were saddened to hear about the recent untimely death of an RPCV from Lesotho. Theresa Bongert was a CHED 06 Volunteer who focused on permaculture and nutrition. She also started a soil erosion control project where she and community members planted more than 500 trees, worked with community groups on candles making, and initiated a movement to start a tourism industry in the Tsereokane area. Please keep Theresa's family in your thoughts.

Khotso,
Kathy

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor – Kathy Jacquart

Editor – Deepak Pullanikkatil

Staff Contributors:

Administration – Victoria Mofolo

Program and Training:

Education – Clement Lephoto & Malitaba Hlabana

Community Health And Economic Development - Charles Miller & Selloane Pitikoe

Training – Masechaba Mapena

Safety & Security – Deepak Pullanikkatil

Distribution – Lebohang Ranooe

All other staff and PCVs who contribute

From the Editor's Desk

Articles must be received by the 4th Monday of the month to be included in the following month's edition of the Khotso. **When submitting articles, please provide the name of the person making the submission and a contact person for follow-up questions.** The Newsletter will be emailed and a hardcopy made available in the office on or about the 1st of each month. Please make sure that your email address is on file with Peace Corps.

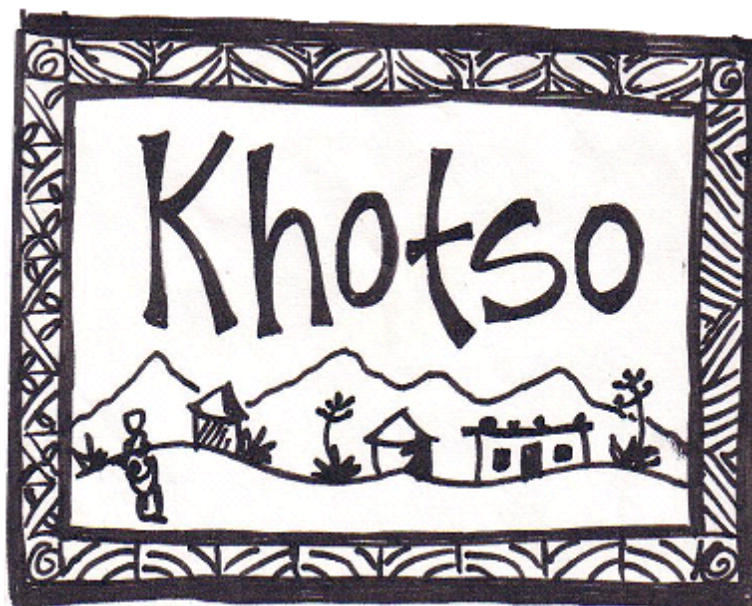
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you as to whether the information contained in this newsletter met your needs.

By submitting articles, you are providing Peace Corps Lesotho with the right to reprint your article in full or part in any publication.

Deepak Pullanikkatil
Editor



Editorial



PCV Birthdays

Birthday greetings go out to the following PCVs. The Peace Corps Lesotho staff sends you greeting and hope that you have a very prosperous year.

Happy Birthday PCVs**April**

| | |
|------------------|----------|
| De Lucia, Rusty | April 7 |
| Deakin, Lauren | April 7 |
| Fulton, Juliana | April 23 |
| Griffin, Ed | April 25 |
| Davies, Benjamin | May 2 |

May

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| Morin, Tim | May 14 |
| Santos, Adam | May 15 |
| Waggoner, Haley | May 17 |
| Lobrow, Karolina | May 18 |
| Viola, Greg | May 20 |
| Delise, Brandon | May 28 |

Staff Birthdays**Happy Birthday Staff****April**

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| Tsatsi Sefefo | April 19 |
|---------------|----------|

May

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| Majara Ralintoane | May 2 |
| Makhauta Mokone | May 26 |

Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays**April**

April 22— Good Friday (LS Holiday)*
April 25— Easter Monday (LS Holiday)*

May

May 1— Worker's Day (LS Holiday)*
May 25— Africa Heroes' Day (LS Holiday)*

*PC Lesotho remains closed on this day.

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Full name: Peter Selete

Job title: Driver

Background: Originally from Maseru. Have lived in Maseru all my life.

Job prior to PC: Several different jobs working with two international organizations namely WFP and DorcasAID International doing logistics.



Family status (married? kids?): I am married with one daughter.

Most favorite part of your job: Short site visits and involvement in logistics during PST season.

Least favorite part of your job: Prolonged site visits because I have to stay away from family.

What do you do in your free time?: Whenever I get a chance, I play soccer.

If you could meet anyone, who would that be?: President Obama and his wife

Advice for PCVs in Lesotho: Take care of yourself well and always watch your back and stay safe. And continue the great work and keep smiling.

ADMIN CORNER – By Jim McCormick, AO

Khotso everyone! March 25th was 'M'e Victoria's last day in the office as she began her maternity leave on Monday, March 28th. Her cheerfulness and "can do" attitude will really be missed for the next few months. Even money says that the baby comes in early April and we still have a few squares left for the "baby pool" (on the board by the reception area) if you feel lucky. Pick the right day of the birth in April and you win! It is M10 per day selected, winner take all.

Starting with your April living allowance through your September one you will see an additional M85 heating allowance added. Having not been through a Lesotho winter yet I don't quite know what to expect but understand an occasional snow ball fight is within the realm of possibility. If so, you may not want to choose me for your team. Even my 9 year old daughter has a better throwing arm than I do these days.

I want to apologize that I haven't been better support regarding filing your 2010 Federal and State Income Taxes. At the end of this issue of Khotso is attached a copy of the 2010 Overview of Peace Corps Volunteer Taxes. Just to recap a few important points from that document.

If your only income in 2010 was from your Peace Corps service, you DO NOT need to file a federal tax return. HOWEVER, every state makes its own rules for who must file so make sure you check your state's website for more information.

If you are living overseas on April 18th you have until June 15th to file your FEDERAL tax return. Again, your state might require filing by April 18th.

Your Peace Corps W-2 does not contain all the information you need to file your return. You must go to the Peace Corps website and on the Peace Corps home page access the 2010 Taxable Income Calculator. It is pretty user friendly but I have played with it enough to be able to assist you if you find yourself in the office (or let me know when you will be in town and I will make myself available). Help is also available through tax-help@peacecorps.gov.

I will be in "hot water" with 'M'e Victoria if I don't send out another reminder about submitting your living allowance survey. Thanks to those who have already turned it in. We are "inching" closer to the 75% required to get PC HQ's attention.

Finally, a short comment about DSR cell phone usage. Please, please remember that if you have agreed to take on the responsibility of a DSR the cell phone you are issued is not intended for personal use. If circumstances require that you use it in a personal capacity, be prepared to pay for that use. We are not intentionally being unreasonable about this. With the current budget environment in Washington right now things are being scrutinized under a microscope so please remember this policy going forward so there is no confusion. I (we) greatly appreciate your understanding on this.

That's all for now everyone, please stay safe...

EDUCATION CORNER – By Ntate Clement Lephoto, ED APCD and 'Me Malitaba Hlabana, ED PA

With autumn well underway, we are all bracing ourselves for the already dropping temperatures! In addition to the district meetings where all of you were in attendance, we managed to squeeze in one week of site visits. Our focus was on Quthing, Mokhotlong and Thaba Tseka districts. We would like to applaud Kimiko, Ariel, Erica, Sara, Parker and Tam for the contributions that each one of them is making within their communities.

It was great to meet your colleagues and supervisors and hear how well you have been doing. Please take a look at some of the pictures captured during these visits! We will continue with the site visit program in May and here is our schedule, please mark your calendars.

| Name | Date | Time | Name | Date | Time |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Leeza | May 3 | 9:00am | Joey | May 12 | 9:00am |
| Rusty | May 5 | 9:00am | Nathan | May 12 | 2:00pm |
| Rory | May 9 | 9:00am | Ryan | May 16 | 11:00am |
| Sonny | May 9 | 2:00pm | Andrea | May 17 | 9:00am |
| Haley | May 10 | 9:00am | Adam | May 17 | 2:00pm |
| Shanthi | May 10 | 2:00pm | Nate | May 18 | 10:00am |
| Eric | May 11 | 9:00am | Dustin | May 23 | 9:00am |
| Katie | May 11 | 2:00pm | Kali | May 24 | 2:00pm |



Std. 7 class under a watchful eye of PCV Erica Rossi and counterpart at Mphaki Primary School, Quthing.



PCV Kimiko Ebata and English Department colleagues at Holy Trinity HS, Quthing.



PCV Sara Green with her little angels at Mokhotlong LEC Primary School with M'e' Mabokang (left).



Art work at Moyeni High School. A result of PCV Ariel Simons' hard work with her students.



PCV Parker Bryant relaxing in the company of his supervisor (left) and host mother.



Busy day for PCV Tamara Weiss' at the resource centre in Mashai.

CHED CORNER – By Charles Miller, CHED APCD and 'Me Selloane Pitikoe, CHED PA

Hi CHEDers. A huge *Thank You* to all of you for submitting VRFs – we've enjoyed reading them and providing feedback to all of

you.

Remember to copy both 'M'e Selloane and Charles on any CHED work-related emails. This helps to ensure we can provide a timely response in case one of us is out of the office.

Project Plan Review:

The Project Plan review is scheduled for April 11- 22. We will be asking a handful of you to participate in that process, representing the different facets of the current CHED project, including youth, agriculture, health, HIV/AIDS and small business development. If you have not already done so, please submit the completed surveys from you and your respective counterparts and supervisors so that we may consider this input during the PPR.

CHED 11 Site Identification:

The Peace Corps Placement Office in Washington continues to invite Trainees for CHED 11, who will arrive in early June. We still need your help in identifying sites. Contact 'M'e Selloane or Charles if you have sites in mind. We're especially interested increasing CHED Volunteer presence in Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Mochale's Hoek, and Mafeteng Districts, while maintaining Volunteer numbers in Leribe, Butha Buthe, Berea and Maseru Districts. We will not be placing new Volunteers in Maseru City. Please do help!

CHED 11 PST:

The letter soliciting interest in helping with training the CHED 11s is included in this edition of The Khotso. If you would like to assist with any aspect of training, be sure to submit your (compelling) letter of interest by April 22.

We are also planning the Host Volunteer Visit, and as we did last year. Priority will be given to CHED Volunteers in all Districts for hosting, however if you are an Education Volunteer and are interested in hosting a CHED Volunteer for the HVV, please let us know. We will also be sending a solicitation of interest letter regarding HVV, which is currently scheduled for June 23 – 28.

CHED 10 PDM and HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshops:

The CHED 10 PDM and HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshops were successful thanks in large part to the full participation of our CHED 10s and their Counterparts.

CHED 09 COS Conference:

The CHED 09 COS Conference will take place May 3 – 5, 2011 at the Maluti Mountain Lodge in Clarens. Details on logistics will be going out in the next week. Stay tuned.

Trimester Report Feedback:

Thanks again to all of you for submitting your reports. We've enjoyed reading your reports and providing feedback. We wanted to share with you some of the "GOLD STAR" activities that many of you have included in your reports.

Gold Star Activities:

- Brandon Delise has started a weightlifting club for boys in the village, combining a personal passion with youth development.
- Brandi Helm worked with her host agency to design educational murals and had them painted on the sides of buildings as a way of promoting positive, healthy messages. Murals depicted instructions for hand washing, and positive messages for youth, including "I have goals for my life," "I have confidence," "I know my status," "I respect myself," and "I respect others."
- Lauren Deakin held a skills transfer workshop on healthy living with the community councilors with whom she works. The overall theme for the workshop was the special nutrition and

hygiene needs of children and those with HIV/AIDS.

- Ed Griffin transferred his technology skills to his fellow teachers in order to manually realign a TV satellite dish. Since the realignment learners at Ed's school are now exposed to "HIV and AIDS" related messages on TV on Saturdays. Ed is also teaching teachers computer skills both in group and through one-on-one sessions.
- Wes Helm participated in seed fairs "to encourage attending farmers to work with SMARTD and to adopt sustainable food production and storage practices".
- Kristine Movalli went beyond the taboo boundaries associated with reproductive health and conducted a Sexual Reproductive Health Workshop in Khotsang and St Martins Secondary Schools covering the following topics: puberty, male and female anatomy, condom demonstration, STIs, and basic HIV education.
- To ensure peer support, a crucial part of the Teen Club with which she works at Baylor, Lee Niang and two Teen Club Staff Members identified and trained teens with good ARV adherence to take on leadership roles in the club.

Thanks again for your hard work. Stay tuned for more "Gold Star" activities in the next edition of The Khotso!

HEALTH CORNER – By Dr. Victor, PCMO

The medical office wishes to commend our volunteers for adhering to the policy regarding contacting the medical office. We appreciate the fact that the majority of volunteers have adhered to this policy. As a reminder, please note the following:

Office hours: 7:30am-1pm & 2pm-5pm Mon – Thu.
(Except US & Lesotho holidays)
7:30am to 1:30pm Fri.
(Except US and Lesotho holidays)

Medical duty phone: 62851003 (only during office hours for non-emergencies but 24/7 for emergencies).

To schedule appointments, contact the medical secretary on 62866050

To order supplies & medications, contact the medical secretary on 62866050.

Seasonal Influenza

What is influenza (also called flu)?

The flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.

Symptoms of flu

People who have the flu often feel some or all of these symptoms:

- ◇ Fever or feeling feverish/chills
- ◇ cough
- ◇ sore throat
- ◇ runny or stuffy nose
- ◇ muscle or body aches
- ◇ headaches
- ◇ fatigue (very tired)
- ◇ Some people may have vomiting and diarrhea, though this is more common in children than adults.

How flu spreads

Flu viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with flu cough, sneeze or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get flu by touching a surface or object that has flu virus on it and then touching their own mouth, eyes or nose. Influenza tends to spread rapidly in seasonal epidemics.

How serious is the flu?

Flu is unpredictable and how severe it is can vary widely from one season to the next depending on many things, including:

- ◇ what flu viruses are spreading,
- ◇ how much flu vaccine is available
- ◇ when vaccine is available
- ◇ how many people get vaccinated, and
- ◇ how well the flu vaccine is matched to flu viruses that are causing illness.

Certain people are at greater risk for serious complications if they get the flu. This includes older people, young children, pregnant women and people with [certain health conditions](#) (such as asthma, diabetes, or heart disease).

Flu seasons are unpredictable and can be severe. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated deaths range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people.

During 2009-2010, a new and very different flu virus (called [2009 H1N1](#)) spread worldwide causing the first flu pandemic in more than 40 years. It is estimated that the 2009 H1N1 pandemic resulted in more than 12,000 flu-related deaths in the U.S. In contrast to seasonal flu, nearly 90 percent of the deaths occurred among people younger than 65 years of age. During the 2010-2011 flu season, the 2009 H1N1 virus is expected to cause illness again along with other influenza viruses.

Complications of flu

Complications of flu can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, such as congestive heart failure, asthma, or diabetes.

Flu Season

Flu season is a regularly recurring time period characterized by the prevalence of outbreaks of [influenza](#) (flu). The season occurs during the cold half of the year in each [hemisphere](#). In the northern hemisphere, influenza season runs from October to March, while in the Southern hemisphere, the season covers the remaining months, April to September. Lesotho is situated in the Southern hemisphere.

Flu vaccine

The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu **vaccine** each year. The flu vaccine is recommended for all PCVs annually.

The flu vaccine is updated every year to combat the flu viruses that research indicates are most likely to cause illness during the upcoming season. The 2010-2011 flu vaccine is being made in the same way as seasonal vaccines have been made for decades. It will protect against the 2009 H1N1 virus that caused so much illness last season, and two other influenza viruses (an H3N2 virus and an influenza B virus). About 2 weeks after vaccination, antibodies that provide protection against influenza virus infection develop in the body.

Even people that got vaccinated with the 2009 H1N1 vaccine or last year's seasonal vaccine need to be vaccinated with the flu seasonal vaccine this year. This season's vaccine provides protection against other influenza strains that were not in either the seasonal or the 2009 H1N1 vaccine last season and besides, immunity from a vaccine gotten last year may decline over time.

The medical unit will inform you of the vaccination arrangement as soon as we receive this year's vaccines which are due to arrive shortly.

50th ANNIVERSARY CORNER

On Wednesday, March 30th, we held a successful press conference at the NUL to kick off our 50th anniversary celebrations. Ambassador Bond, the Minister of Natural Resources, the new (American) Vice Chancellor of NUL, other high level Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education officials, and our very own Melissa Hill spoke at the event, which was attended by NUL faculty and students, PC staff, some of the CHED 09 Volunteers and the media (see photos).

The next item on the 50th anniversary schedule is the photo gallery, which will be displayed at Pioneer Mall from April 1-14 and then at the National Library from April 16-23. We're asking Volunteers to suggest locations in your districts where they could be displayed for a week or two sometime this year.

If you haven't already, please also starting thinking about the district 50th anniversary event that your district would like to hold on July 4th. This should be something that all the Volunteers in the district decide upon and conduct together. We're leaving it to you to decide how you want to celebrate, but it could be a fun walk, a community service event, a rock mural painting, or anything you think would help raise awareness about Peace Corps, commemorate the 50 years of the Peace Corps and the 44 years in Lesotho and be fun. If you have an idea and think you might need a small amount of money to make it happen, let us know. Contact 'me Malisema to find out proposed expenses would be allowable: mmakhele@ls.peacecorps.gov.

The date and location for the big event in September have not been determined as we are waiting to hear about the availability of the King, but we want to start planning this event, which will include all Volunteers. More information is forthcoming.



PC staff, PCVs and Ambassador Bond.



RPCV Lois Sebatane, CHED 09 PCVs and Minister of Natural Resources



Peace Corps Lesotho staff.

POLICY REMINDERS

Out-of-Site Notification

Staff would like to thank Volunteers who are adhering to the new Peace Corps policies and rules (outlined in an email from Kathy on 1/6/2011), particularly those regarding leave, out-of-site and Maseru. We have noticed that some people still, however, wait until the last minute to contact the Whereabouts Phone (6288-5598) when going to be out of site overnight. Please be reminded that we need this notification 3 business days in advance so that we can record it in the system and to inform you in case there's any reason why you shouldn't travel. In the last month several Volunteers mentioned to staff that they were traveling that day or the next day but had not yet contacted the Whereabouts Phone. You must also wait for a reply from the Whereabouts Phone before traveling and should contact it or another staff member. If you're going to be gone more than two nights, you must also notify your APCD. We appreciate your cooperation.

Leave on Lesotho Holidays

As you may know, Peace Corps Washington has access to VIDA, which is the database of Volunteer information including dates of leave. We had a glitch in our VIDA system that sometimes counted Lesotho holidays when a Volunteer took leave on those days and sometimes not. The glitch has been found and "corrected." Per Peace Corps worldwide policy and the policy sent in the 1/6/11 email, all Lesotho and US holidays are counted as leave if the Volunteer is traveling out of Lesotho. We will not be making any retroactive changes to approved leave.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND STAFF TRAVEL

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Mar 28 - Jul 7 | Victoria on maternity leave |
| Apr 9 - Apr 25 | Deepak on annual leave |
| Apr 11 - 22 | Portfolio Review |
| Apr 27 - 29 | Kathy at country director conference |
| Apr 30 - May 14 | Kathy on annual leave |
| May 3 - 5 | CHED '09 COS Conference |

DUTY OFFICER SCHEDULE

| | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| Apr 4 - 10 | ITS |
| Apr 11 - 17 | AO |
| Apr 18 24 | CD |
| Apr 25 - May 1 | GSO |
| May 2 - 8 | AO |
| May 9 - 15 | APCD ED |
| May 16 - 22 | APCD CHED |
| May 23 - 29 | TD |
| May 30 - June 5 | HIV Coordinator |

GIVING AWAY – contact Kathy if interested

- ◇ 2 small unopened bottles of Simply Organic Chili Powder (from the US)
- ◇ 1 120 ml unopened bottle of Bausch & Lomb Boston Multi-Action Contact Solution (for hard lenses but can be used with soft contacts)

WAY TO GO, JIM'S DAUGHTER!!!!!!**Amherst wins first national title**

March 20, 2011 – www.ncaa.com

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Amherst knocked off the defending national champions and won its first national championship in school history Saturday night, as the Lord Jeffs defeated Washington at St. Louis 64-55 in the 2011 NCAA Division III Women's Basketball Championship at the Shirk Center.

Amherst's Caroline Stedman led all scorers with 19 points, while teammate Kim Fiorentino scored 10 points. Jaci Daigneault and Fiorentino each grabbed eight boards for the Jeffs. Washington's Dani Hoover made 13 points, while Brianne Monahan added 12. The Bears' Kathryn Berger recorded a double-double with 11 points and 10 rebounds. Amherst brought down 46 rebounds, including 18 offensive boards, while Washington (25-6) had 36 rebounds.

After a defensive battle through the first five minutes of the championship game, Amherst (32-1) went on a 9-0 run and held Washington scoreless for more than six minutes to grab a 14-5 advantage with 9:09 left in the first half. The run was fueled by Jackie Renner, who made four of the Lord Jeffs' nine points. Amherst continued its offensive surge and took its largest lead of the half at 17-7 with a 3-pointer by **Lem Atanga McCormick** with 6:18 remaining in the half.

Washington went on a 7-0 run to cut Amherst's lead to three, 17-14, with three minutes left before the break. The Lord Jeffs answered back by scoring five consecutive points, including a fastbreak layup by Stedman to increase their lead to 22-14. The Bears (25-6) finished the half on a 5-0 run that ended with a shot from behind the arc by Monahan with 25 seconds left before intermission. Amherst was not able to score on its final possession and headed into the locker room with a four-point advantage at 24-20 entering the half. Amherst's Stedman led all scorers at the half with seven points, while the Jeffs' Daigneault and **McCormick** each grabbed three boards in the first half. Berger had six points and eight rebounds for the Bears.

At the start of the second half, Washington was able to maintain its momentum from the first half and went on a 5-0 run to take its first lead of the game 25-24. Amherst regained its lead and went on an 8-3 run that gave the Jeffs a six-point advantage, 35-29, forcing Washington to take a timeout with 11:16 left to play. After Washington tied the game 39-39, Amherst went on a 10-1 run that included back-to-back 3-pointers to give the Lord Jeffs the lead 49-40 with 5:49 remaining. Amherst took its largest lead of the game at 57-44 with 3:28 left to play after **McCormick** sank a jumper while being fouled and successfully completed the three-point play at the free throw line.

Department of Social Welfare Quarterly Report

If you're interested in the full report, contact ntate Mohale. (lmohale@ls.peacecorps.gov)

This is a quarterly report [October – December 2010] providing an update on major activities implemented by DSW with support from partners.

The main activities during this period include: provision of materials (e.g. school uniforms, gardening tools) and finances in form of cash assistance to OVC, dissemination of information relating to care and support for OVC and assisting in building capacity to monitor and evaluate OVC interventions.

One of the major activities conducted during this reporting period was to establish the numbers of OVC stakeholders from whom data is required regularly in order to provide a near true picture on service provision for OVC. This was in relation to organizations listed in the OVC directory.

During this quarter, 4 656 new OVC were provided with services compared to 3 215 last quarter. This was attributable to a donation of shoes from one partner, and this performance is not from regularly implemented program activities. It must be noted that "new cases" can only be captured from DSW data and not data from partners who normally have a cohort of clients established at commencement of their programs which number does not change over time and if it does, only insignificantly. Number of new cases however, provides an idea on the uptake of services provided to OVC.

Challenges:

The same number of partners submitted reports this quarter as last quarter (38% of those expected to share reports), so data sharing remains low. What is more, some of the partners that reported this quarter are not the same ones that reported last quarter, meaning that there is inconsistency in reporting.

Reporting within the DSW itself was inconsistent this quarter, with 70% of districts submitting reports late. This was probably due to reshuffling of DSW staff.

This report recommends the following:

- Strengthen reporting by DSW district offices and partners.
- Continue awareness of importance of data to immediate data generators.
- Strengthen support to districts for improved implementation of program activities.

PSN News**By Adam Santos, ED 10**

Are the donkeys braying too loudly? Do you miss your family and friends at home? Did your host organization invite you to an event, then cancel the event and forget to tell you? Are you having an issue with a friend? Was the hotel in your camp town out of pizza again? No, this is not the story of my life, but these are just a few of the frustrations we face here in Peace Corps Lesotho. For some, talking out frustrations can be very helpful. This is a reminder that the Peer Support Network is there for volunteers.

You can buzz or text (they will call you back) any peer support network member (Elissa, Ed, Karolina, Ryan, Adam, Shanthi, Rusty, Amy Jo, or Lauren) if you want to talk CONFIDENTIALLY. Confidentially means that the members of PSN are not allowed to discuss any PSN conversation with anyone else except for cases where the PCMO needs to be involved (these cases are when a PSN member feels the volunteer is putting himself, herself, or others in danger). I have heard from some that volun-

teers don't want to contact PSN with "minor" issues. The same issues may affect different volunteers differently. If you feel frustrated or sad or down, then those feelings are legitimate, no matter what the cause. We want to encourage you to utilize PSN if you feel that talking to someone would help you feel better. And if all else fails, channel the words of the Hold Steady, "You gotta stay positive!"

African Youth Dialog on Higher Education From Lee Niang's (CHED 10) Mom



The Office of Global Learning at Fairleigh Dickinson University has an initiative for which I am responsible that is focused on the quality of higher education in Africa. The purpose of this initiative is:

- 1) to engage African students in sharing their perspective and experience regarding higher education in Africa, compared with their experience with graduate studies abroad; and
- 2) to highlight positive changes that may be integrated into regional transformation of the higher educational system that will not only improve the quality of education, but also hopefully contribute to decreasing brain drain in Africa.

A primary objective is to gather input via a basic questionnaire from **African Youth from all regions of the continent who have done undergraduate study in Africa, even one year.** If they have continued their studies abroad after that, this also provides a basis of comparison for their input, but it is not a requirement; however, it is critical that all participants in this study have experienced higher education in Africa.

If you know of African youth [maximum 35 years] who fit this criterion and are potentially interested in contributing to this research, please have them respond directly to the african-youth-dialog-higher-education@googlegroups.com.

We are committed to enabling the voice of African youth to be heard by those who are in a position to make the necessary improvements in their educational systems. The role of FDU/OGL and myself is that of facilitator. The real work is being done by young African leaders, currently graduate students of exceptional quality, who are paving the way for a brighter future for current and future generations of African youth.

We desire to ensure that the voices of youth from all regions of Africa are represented: South, North, West, East and Central Africa. Your assistance with identifying appropriate candidates for the survey who genuinely meet the necessary criteria would be highly appreciated.

Very best regards,
Jo Anne Murphy, Ph.D.
Director of Programs with Intergovernmental and Nongovernmental Organizations
Office of Global Learning
Fairleigh Dickinson University

News From Around the Peace Corps World

President Obama Meets with Peace Corps Volunteers, El Salvador

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 25, 2011—President Barack Obama and Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams met with a group of Peace Corps volunteers at the U.S. Ambassador to El Salvador's residence in San Salvador on March 23, 2011.

About Peace Corps/El Salvador: Over 2,132 Peace Corps volunteers have served in El Salvador since the program was established in 1962. Volunteers in this Central American nation work in the areas of community organization and economic development, rural health and sanitation, sustainable agriculture, agroforestry and environmental education, and youth development. Many volunteers working on HIV/AIDS prevention and care receive support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) program.

Currently, 151 Americans are serving as Peace Corps volunteers in El Salvador. Volunteers are trained and work in Spanish.

Peace Corps/Costa Rica Volunteers Commemorate International Women's Day with Photo Exhibit and Forum with Students

Washington, D.C., March 29, 2011 - In honor of the 100th Anniversary of International Women's Day on March 8th, Peace Corps volunteers in Costa Rica organized a community photo exhibit and held an interactive forum with students to celebrate the contributions of Costa Rican women, spur dialogue about gender roles, and encourage self-esteem in young girls. Throughout the year, Peace Corps volunteers in Costa Rica also help run after-school clubs for girls, promote women-owned small businesses, and organize education and public health programs.

Community Photo Exhibit

Peace Corps volunteer Rebecca Stumpf of Longmont, Colo. organized a month-long exhibit at her local bakery titled, "What does being a woman mean to you?" The exhibit featured original photographs and accompanying explanations from nine women.

"For the community, the exhibit was significant because it was a time to come together and share an important day with friends while bringing awareness to important issues," said Stumpf.

Interactive Forum with Students

Peace Corps volunteers Meredith Burgess of Brandon, Miss. and Hannah Evans of Twin Falls, Idaho showed a film to a class of seventh and tenth grade English students that spurred a discussion on the role of women and the definition of beauty.

"I think it's important for us to reflect upon the struggles that women went through to give us the opportunities we have now," said Burgess. "We also wanted the students to challenge the standard definition of what makes a woman beautiful. The idea that beauty cannot be classified by a dress size, eye color, or nationality was a new concept to many of them."

About Peace Corps/Costa Rica: More than 3,310 Peace Corps volunteers have served in Costa Rica since the program was established in 1963. Volunteers in this Central American nation work in the areas of child, family, and youth development, community economic development, rural community development, and teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL). Currently, 105 volunteers and trainees are serving in Costa Rica. Volunteers are trained and work in Spanish.



January 14, 2011

Dear Peace Corps Volunteer or Privacy Act Waiver Designee,

Enclosed is your W-2 or the W-2 of the Peace Corps Volunteer who designated you to receive a duplicate of his/her W-2.

After January 31, 2011, you will find our complete tax guide, FAQ, and all the tools you will need to prepare Volunteer tax returns at: www.peacecorps.gov/docs under the heading "Tax Information for Trainees, Volunteers, and Former Volunteers".

2010 Overview of Peace Corps Volunteer Taxes

- If your **only income** in 2010 was from your Peace Corps service, you **do not** need to file a federal tax return as you will not meet the IRS threshold for filing a return. Every state makes its own rules for who must file. Check your state's website for more information.
- You may choose to file a federal return to claim the "Making Work Pay Tax Credit". It is part of the current economic stimulus plan. The credit is equal to 6.2% of your wages. For a typical full-year Volunteer, the value of the credit is approximately \$250. The maximum credit is \$400.
- You should file your return by April 15, 2011. If you are living overseas on April 15, 2011, you have until June 15, 2011 to file and pay your taxes, but you must include a statement that you live outside the US and your primary place of business or post of duty is outside the US. If you are receiving a refund, you have three years to file your return and claim your refund. Late filing and late payment penalties only apply to those who owe taxes.
- The 2010 W-2 shows only the readjustment allowance earned monthly from December 1, 2009 – November 30, 2010. This is what is reported on the tax return, not the actual payment of this allowance after a Volunteer's close of service.
- Your Peace Corps W-2 does not contain all the information you need to file your return. In addition to the W-2 amounts, you will need to calculate your total taxable living and leave allowances. On the website, you will find a taxable allowances calculator spreadsheet to help you with this. Once you have calculated your total taxable Peace Corps income, follow the instructions in the calculator to complete the substitute W-2 form and use that to file your return on paper. The substitute W-2 replaces the W-2 you received from Peace Corps. Do not attach both to your return. If you are using tax software, the program should include this form. If you are using TurboTax, there are special instructions. You can find a link to these instructions in the Peace Corps Tax Guide.
- If your name or Social Security number is incorrect on your Peace Corps W-2, cross out the error and write in the correction. You can still submit the W-2 with a marked correction to the IRS; you do not need a new W-2 issued by Peace Corps. You may not correct any dollar amounts on the W-2.
- You can file on paper or use tax software. You may use the 1040EZ, 1040A, or 1040 to complete your return. Go to www.irs.gov to get tax forms and instructions. The IRS has a Free File program that you may want to use. You can get to the program from the main IRS website.
- Do not send your paper tax forms to Peace Corps. Send them directly to the IRS.

If you have questions and cannot find the answers in the FAQ, please email taxhelp@peacecorps.gov for assistance. Thank you.