

KHOTSO August 2011

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

In this issue

Page 3

- PCV & Staff Birthdays
- Holidays
- Calendar of events,
- Monthly Staff Award

Page 4-10

- Staff Corners

Page 11-14

- PCV Corner

Page 14

- News from around the Peace Corps World

Message from the Country Director



Chris Jones (CHED 09) at the waterfall 5 minutes from his house

July 29, 2011

Dear Volunteers:

After a string of warm-ish days, we thought winter was nearing an end. And then this week the mountains got slammed with more snow and ice and Maseru became chilly again. Perhaps the Basotho equivalent of Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow and winter will continue. Hope you all are staying warm!

As you've probably heard, the CHED 11 trainees learned their site placements (see CHED corner) and seem to be happy. They're in the home stretch of PST, which ends on August 7th, followed by supervisor/counterpart workshops on August 9th and 10th. We look forward to welcoming this newest group of Peace Corps Lesotho Volunteers!

After ill-fated trips due to road conditions in January and February, I finally made it to Chris Jones' site this month. As one of the more remote Volunteers with one of the least defined jobs, he definitely made an impact during his 2 years. He seemed particularly pleased with his decision to teach life skills at a local primary school during his second year, which he said wasn't something he thought he would like but wound up finding a fair amount of satisfaction in it. A bonus of my visit was getting a beginners class in

chess from Chris and one of his chess club members. As I was about to leave, a few young guys walked by and asked anxiously if Chris was leaving too. He assured them he was around for a couple more weeks and they seemed noticeably relieved. He will be missed!

This week I had a conference call with the Director of the Peace Corps and

other senior Peace Corps/W staff to update them on implementation of the recommendations made by the assessment team that was here last October. Progress made includes identifying a new office (in the approval process in Washington); closing the training center and finding other accommodations for Volunteers in Maseru for official reasons; updating the out-of-site, whereabouts and leave policies; reducing time spent in Maseru by Volunteers (we will provide data next month); and increasing language and cross cultural training in PST to promote more effective community integration. When the Director asked about adherence to the new policies, I told him that we believe Volunteers have made a great effort to adhere to them but that occasionally some do not and administrative action is necessary. Director Williams commended Volunteers and staff for all the progress and asked me to remind Volunteers that the program can only be effective with their cooperation. So again, thank you for your continued cooperation, hard work and dedication to the people of Lesotho.

Khotso,
Kathy

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor – Kathy Jacquart Dill, Country Director

Editor – Deepak Pullanikkatil, IT Specialist

Staff Contributors:

Administration – Jim McCormick, Admin Officer & Victoria Mofolo, Financial Assistant

Program and Training:

Education – Clement Lephoto—Associate Peace Corps Director & Malitaba Hlabana—Program Assistant

Community Health & Economic Development - Charles Miller— Associate Peace Corps Director & Selloane Pitikoe—Program Assistant

Training – Masechaba Mapena—Training Manager, Mamokola Matlanyane—Language, Cross Culture and Homestay Coordinator
Letsatsi Mohale—Programming and Training Secretary

Safety & Security – Nthoalo Masiphole

Medical—Dr. Victor Inegbedion

Distribution – Lebohang Ranooe

All other staff and PCVs who contribute

From the Editor

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. Remember that it is your responsibility to read the Khotso Newsletter for updates from Peace Corps Lesotho.

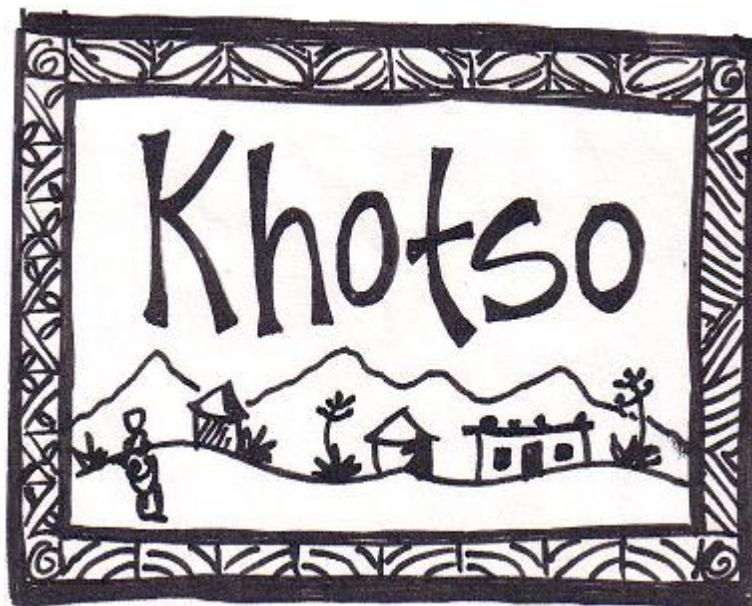
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you.

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.

August

Wilhelm, Jess	August 2
Day, Margaret	August 4
Smith, Jasmine	August 4
Berdini, Ariana	August 12
Ebata, Kimiko	August 13
Marlow, Sarah	August 20
Peel, Adam	August 27
Deakin, Matt	August 29

September

McClaine, Ryan	September 1
Jones, Chris	September 9
Biron, Cassie	September 29
Schofield, Jesse	September 30

Staff Birthdays

August

No birthdays this month.

September

Majimisi Machai	September 14
James McCormick	September 30

Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays*

August

No holidays this month.

September

September 5— Labor Day (US Holiday)*

*PC Lesotho remains closed on this day.

Calendar of Events and Staff Travel

August 12	End of CHED 11 PST
August 19-20	ED COS conference
Aug-Sept	ED Site development

Duty Officer Schedule

August 1 - 7,	APCD (ED)
August 8 - 14	APCD (CHED)
August 15 - 21	TD
August 22 - 28	HIV Coordinator
Aug. 29 - Sept. 4	PA ED
September 5 - 11	PA CHED
September 12 - 18	SSC
September 19 - 25	ITS
September 26 - October 2	FA

Monthly Staff Award

As the backbone of post operations, Peace Corps staff assist in the arrival and departure of groups of Volunteers several times a year; liaise with host country agencies, vendors and partners; and provide day-to-day support to Volunteers in their Peace Corps service.

In February of this year, we instituted a peer-nominated monthly staff award to recognize staff members who have gone above and beyond the call of duty in pursuing Peace Corps' mission in Lesotho during the previous month. The award is given at the last staff meeting of the month. We welcome nominations from the Volunteer community. Following are the winners since the inception of the award.

February – Mohale Letsatsi, Programming and Training Secretary



Ntate Mohale has done exceptionally well juggling many tasks from many people, managing the whereabouts phone with no complaints from Volunteers about unanswered calls, and playing a pivotal role in planning and staging of P & T events.

March – Charles Miller, CHED APCD



Charles worked tirelessly on the 10 successful district meetings held in February and March and supported other staff by taking the lead to keep preparations and meeting follow up on track.

April – Malisema Makhele, PEPFAR AA



'M'e Malisema assumed the duties of Financial Assistant while continuing in her position as PEPFAR Administrative Assistant, followed up on the financial aspects of 10 district meetings, revised the PEPFAR budget to fund additional Volunteers and helped manage the day-to-day financial operations of the Administrative Unit in the absence of the Financial Assistant.

May – Masechaba Mapena, Training Manager and Mamokola Matlanyane, Language, Cross Culture and Homestay Coordinator



'M'e Masechaba and 'm'e Mamokola are recognized for their hard work in preparing for the CHED 11 PST. They recruited and trained 20 new LCFs and 2 technical trainers, designed and implemented a Language Training of Trainers, implemented a general TOT, which led to significant changes in the PST, and identified and developed 3 new training vil-

lages.

June – Maggie Putsoa, Cashier



'M'e Maggie recently created a template to request a temporary cashier increase for the CHED 11 PST. The Financial Management Officer in the Office of Global Accounts Payable in Peace Corps/ Washington commented that he liked the format of her request so much he would encourage other posts to follow it.



July – Selloane Pitikoe, CHED Program Assistant

'M'e Selloane was instrumental in identifying sites for the CHED 11s (in spite of getting snowed in twice) and completing the preliminary site packets. Her in-depth knowledge of the "players" in each community helped to effectively match trainees with host agencies. During the month, she also provided excellent

and timely feedback on Volunteers' reports and helped support PST.

ADMIN CORNER – By Jim

Monday July 11th marked 'M'e Victoria's return from her maternity leave. I can honestly say that I'm sure the only person unhappy about her coming back was her baby, Makori. (I hope over time Makori will learn to forgive me).

By the time you are reading this almost all of the CHED 09s will have COS'd. I so enjoyed getting to know them. It was also great hearing about their "post" PCV plans be it a world tour, graduate school or just enjoying their favorite thing to do back home whatever that might be. They were an outstanding group of PCVs and we wish them all well in whatever paths they choose.

On the subject of COSing, it seems like the VRC has become sort of a "dumping ground" for exiting PCVs. A quick look in the VRC will reveal all sorts of discarded clothes, shoes, games, books and whatever else a COSing PCV decides either they can't fit in their bags or they don't want to drag home. On September 1st we will be going through the VRC and clearing out any "non-essential" items we find there. Since the ED 09s are the next group set to COS I wanted to suggest that they all do their best to donate whatever items they don't want to take home before they leave their site. It will still be several months before we move to a new office so the less "cluttered" the VRC is, the better for everyone that uses it. Kea leboha!

Kathy has mentioned this previously but I want to emphasize that the VRC is for PCVs only. If you need to meet with someone in the office you are free to use the conference room or employee lounge. It is also strictly forbidden to log on to a computer in the VRC so that a non PCV (relative or counterpart) can use it. Believe me policies like this are set up to protect all of us from computer (virus and legal) related issues.

In closing I am sharing with you the message below regarding your ability to purchase Savings Bonds as PCVs. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out to Brett Kuhnert or myself and as always, please stay safe...!

We are pleased to announce the return of the savings bonds purchase program. Volunteers may now elect to have a monthly allotment deducted from their readjustment allowance and sent to a TreasuryDirect account for the purchase of savings bonds. All savings bonds are now electronic, so no paper bonds are physically sent. The maximum monthly allotment for savings bonds is \$150 and counts toward the allotment maximum of \$206.25 – for example, if a Volunteer has a student loan allotment payment for \$100, then the maximum bond allotment they could have is \$106.25. Prior to filling out and submitting the attached form, Volunteers will need to set-up a TreasuryDirect account. This will be more challenging for current Volunteers as it requires a passcode sent to a US address in order to fully set up the account. This information is also included in the Invitation Kit sent out to Stagers, so they will be able to set up the account prior to leaving for service.

The Savings Bond website is very good and easy to understand

– see information under "Payroll Savings Options" (http://www.savingsbonds.gov/indiv/products/prod_tdpayrollinfo.htm). The Peace Corps Savings Bond Deduction form (PC-712) is located on the Forms page at (http://inside.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?viewDocument&document_id=31534&filetype=pdf).

If you have additional questions that are not answered on the website, please feel free to contact Brett Kuhnert.

Brett Kuhnert
Financial Management Officer
Phone: (202) 692-2836
Fax: (202) 692-1422
E-mail: bkuhnert@peacecorps.gov

EDUCATION CORNER – By Ntate Clement & 'M'e Malitaba

Lumelang Baithaopi,

It seems like winter is ending but not so sure. With the schools closed and almost all PCVs on vacation, it's been a little quiet here at HQ. We would like to make a few reminders and announcements though:

1. If you haven't submitted your trimester report please do so, we have already looking through these reports and analyzing them for our annual Project Status Reporting and we responded to those who had submitted. Please Start working on the last trimester June- September.
2. We would like to thank those ED10 who helped at PST for CHED11. This is a well done job.
3. August and September travelling schedules for sites development for new Ed group has been send out and if you have anything related to sites development let 'Me Malitaba know.

Close of Service for ED10s

Time flies! It's time for you to be planning your "Close of Service". The official COS date for ED 10 is January 7, 2012. Kathy has the authority to advance/delay your COS date by 30-days. Dates beyond these will need to be approved by PC/HQ. Post can process about 4 COSes a day. Therefore, we will need your group to have your COS dates spread out. We will have a COS Date Calendar at the COS conference to sign up on. Unless you get an exception your COS date should be on Wednesday, Thursday or before 1:30 a.m. on Friday. Normally, you will come to the office on Monday and immediately begin your medical clearance, which will take two days due to the TB test check. You should not plan to arrive in Maseru over the weekend prior to your COS date or have a Peace Corps driver pick you up on the weekend since that's overtime, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

Remember, the time to say goodbye to your friends is at the COS conference, not when you're actually COSing. We expect you to have your COS or extension plans at the COS conference. Because the lead times are considerable, delays in getting this date will affect the time when you receive your Cash-in-Lieu and 1/3 Readjustment Allowance payments. A checklist you may begin reviewing will be sent to the COSing Volunteers. Should you have any questions, feel free to contact Clement or Jim (Admin Director).

The COS conference for ED10s will be held at Tsehlanyane on August 19-21, 2011. Please refer to the information given to you earlier regarding COS.

If you have any question regarding the COS conference, please call 'm'e 'Masechaba or ntate Clement.

Mohoma temeng Baithaopi ba batle.

CHED CORNER By— Charles & 'M'e Selloane

Hi CHEDers. August signals the end of winter in Lesotho, the beginning of a second year of service for the CHED 10s and the beginning of a new job for the CHED 11s. And, for the CHED 09s it's the beginning (at least for some) of their long journeys back to the USA.

CHED 10 Reconnect:

Thanks to all of you who shared with us your needs for training. We received input from thirteen of you and will be holding a mid-service training in mid-September, where attendance will be optional. Specific dates and venue for the workshop will be sent to you in the next few weeks with a draft agenda to follow shortly thereafter.

CHED 11 PST:

As CHED 11 PST wraps up the eight week of training we wanted to thank all of the Volunteers who hosted during the host volunteer visit, co-facilitated training sessions, helped identify sites, and sent good vibes to our new Trainees. CHED 11 Trainees received their site assignments on Saturday, July 23 surrounded by jovial training staff and the beautiful mountains of T'sehlan-yane National Park. Site assignments include:

Thaba Tseka:

Tara Hughes	Technical Training Institute
Courtney Lane	Khoro Li Majoe
Amanda Lawrence	Bethesda Primary School

Butha Buthe:

Anne Brewer	Millenium Challenge Account - Lesotho
Maggie Day	Maliba Lodge

Leribe:

Lyndsey Chaillé	Pitseng Farmers Support Group
Jessalynne Howard	Qoqolosing High School
Ashley Wilson	Rachel's Children's Home

Berea:

Tab Magobet	Center for Equal Health Access Lesotho
Barbara Meyer	Maluti Adventist Hospital
Terry Ellard	Young Matsekha Against AIDS
Cassie Biron	Lesotho Durham Link
Jasmine Smith	St. Cecilia's Orphanage

Mafeteng:

Lewis Simmons	Monna Ka Khomo
Jess Wilhelm	Kopano Ke Matla

Quthing:

Jenny Cain	Boikhollo Bofumeng
------------	--------------------

Qacha's Nek:

Tommy Good	Ministry of Agriculture
Carol McFarland	Farmers Training Center
Shane McFarland	Lesotho Snake Park

Gold Star Activities:

Thanks to all Volunteers for your hard work. Below are a couple of "Gold Star" activities we've pulled from the VRFs over the last few weeks which helps to illustrate the importance of persistence, patience, and creativity. Stay tuned for more "Gold Star" activities in the next edition of The Khotso!

Lauren Deakin has taken the time to get to know the youth groups in her area and it is starting to pay off. Not only have they formed strong bonds with each other, but the youth are growing

in basic organizational capacities and skills. They have written constitutions and are awaiting registration with the government; they have formalized duties and roles; and they have attended various workshops on HIV, organizational capacity building, and animal husbandry. Some groups have even begun IGAs and are learning valuable lessons through their endeavors.

Brandon Delise worked with the Ministry of Agriculture in TY and his community's resource center for four months to hold a workshop teaching interested herd boys and farmers about growing mushrooms. Fifteen people attended the 2-day workshop, followed by a 1-day cooking demonstration. How did it go? His village is preparing to construct 3 huts to grow mushrooms after realizing how much fried mushrooms taste like fried chicken from KFC. In addition, Brandon's supervisor is now eating mushrooms twice a week, and neighboring communities want to hold "mushroom workshops".

Mohale's Musings....reminders from Ntate Mohale: 1) PCVs travelling outside the country should get SIM cards of the country they're visiting and send the number to the Whereabouts Phone. **2)** Be specific with your dates and location when texting the Whereabouts Phone. "Spending the weekend Thaba Tseka" is not acceptable. "I will be at Mary Smith's house in Mashai on July 30 and 31" is better (assuming you are leaving your site on July 30 and returning to your site on July 31).

HIV & AIDS CORNER By—'M'e Jimi

2011 WORLD AIDS DAY RESOURCES AND IDEAS

The Peace Corps Office of AIDS Relief is in the process of developing dynamic materials and events for PCVs worldwide to help facilitate activities with local communities. If you have any questions, please contact, 'me Jimi.

1. A revised World AIDS Day resource booklet that will provide PCVs with technical guidance and tips in how to engage their communities in HIV response activities regardless of their programmatic focus (To be distributed to Posts by early November).
2. A 2012 HIV Calendar. Each month will highlight important dates and programmatic ideas.
3. Digital Library collection. We welcome submission of compelling photos for Peace Corps Digital Library. Compelling photos will be featured on the front page of Peace Corps' website.
4. In early 2012, we will be publishing a special edition of Peace Corps Times that commemorates the history of the Peace Corps' response to the HIV epidemic. Please let 'me Jimi know if you have story ideas or photo submissions for the commemorative edition. We also plan to feature success stories from World AIDS Day 2011.

MEDICAL CORNER By—Dr. Victor & 'M'e Itumeleng

CHED 10s Mid Service Medical Appointments: If you haven't already done so, please contact the Medical Unit to schedule a mid-service medical evaluation, which includes a dental visit. The mid-service medical evaluation should be scheduled when you are already scheduled to come into Maseru and should be scheduled in advance to ensure that the PCMO is available. Remember that the mid-service medical evaluation differs from one Volunteer to the next, as determined by the PCMO dependent on the Volunteer's particular medical history.

Food Poisoning

The incidence of food is on the increase within the country and as well within the volunteer community. A number of factors can be postulated for this increase, environmental hygiene factors, and people traveling for vacation or returning from one. The

important thing about food poisoning however, is that it is treatable. Therefore we shall dedicate this edition of the Newsletter to food poisoning.

What is food poisoning?

Food poisoning is an illness that you may get after eating food contaminated by some types of bacteria, parasites, and viruses.

How does it occur?

Bacteria: Bacteria are all around you—on your hands, countertops, floor—everywhere. Eating a few bacteria usually will not hurt you. However, some types of bacteria in contaminated food can make you sick. Examples of bacteria that cause food poisoning are *E. coli*, *Clostridium perfringens*, *Bacillus cereus*, *Staphylococcus*, and *Salmonella*.

Many types of bacteria grow best in a warm, moist place. Food can be a great place for bacteria to grow if it is not properly cooled, stored, or heated. However, even if you cook and eat your food promptly, you can still get food poisoning. For example, bacteria can get into your cooked food if the cooked food touches an unwashed utensil or countertop that was used to prepare uncooked meat. That is why it is important to wash your hands, utensils, and countertops before and after you handle raw meat.

Food, especially beef, can be contaminated as it is prepared for sale to grocery stores. For example, a harmful type of *E. coli* bacteria might get into the food at the slaughterhouse or the butcher.

Salmonella food poisoning is common. It is caused most often by eating food containing raw eggs or undercooked chicken or turkey.

Botulism is a type of food poisoning caused by *Clostridium botulinum*. These bacteria may grow in places with no oxygen, such as sealed cans and vacuum-packed foods.

Viruses: The viruses that commonly cause food poisoning are found in water that has been contaminated with human bowel movements. The viruses get into foods such as oysters, clams, and other shellfish. If you drink the water or eat the seafood raw or partially cooked, you may become ill. This is applicable around the coastal area during travels in South Africa. Hence you need to be watchful.

Parasites: Parasites can also cause food poisoning. The most common type of parasitic food poisoning is called trichinosis. Trichinosis is caused by roundworms in pork.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of food poisoning include: nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, stomach pain, fever (in some cases). If you have botulism, you probably will not have a fever and the symptoms may also include: blurred vision, fatigue, dry mouth and throat.

Depending on the cause, you may start having symptoms **hours to months after you** eat contaminated food. The most common types of food poisoning cause symptoms in 30 minutes to 2 days. Some types of food poisoning by shellfish may take only a few minutes to cause symptoms.

How is it treated?

Treatment depends on how sick you are and what is causing the illness. Generally we will recommend rest, a special diet, and lots of fluids. We may sometimes prescribe medicine to stop vomiting and stomach cramping. Antibiotics may be helpful for some types of food poisoning. If you have botulism, we may pre-

scribe a medicine called an antitoxin and you will probably need to stay at the hospital, however, botulism has not occurred in any volunteer here in Lesotho. It is rare to find botulism in Lesotho.

How long will the effects last?

It is important to give your self time to recover following food poisoning. It usually takes about 1 to 5 days to recover fully from food poisoning.

How can I take care of myself?

Be cautious about taking nonprescription anti-diarrheal medicines such as loperamide (Kaopectate or Imodium) or the prescription medicine Lomotil. These medicines can actually make you sicker, especially if the diarrhea is bloody.

If you have a fever over 100°F (37.8°C), rest as much as you can. Ask as your PCMO if you can take aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen to control your fever after your temperature falls below 100°F, you may increase your activity, but don't do more than is comfortable for you.

If you have cramps or stomach pain, it may help to put a hot water bottle. Cover the hot water bottle with a towel to prevent burns.

If you have diarrhea or nausea, you may want to let your bowel rest for a few hours by drinking only clear liquids. Examples of clear liquids are water, weak tea, bouillon, apple juice, or sports drinks and other oral rehydrating solutions.

It is OK to keep eating as long as it does not seem to worsen diarrhea or stomach cramps. Foods that are easiest to digest are soft foods, such as bananas, cooked cereal, rice, plain noodles, gelatin, eggs, toast or bread with jelly, and applesauce. Avoid milk products and caffeine for a few days. Return to your normal diet after 2 or 3 days, but for several more days avoid fresh fruit (other than bananas), alcohol, greasy or fatty foods such as cheeseburgers or bacon, highly seasoned or spicy foods, and most fresh vegetables. Cooked carrots, potatoes, and squash are OK. If eating seems to worsen the diarrhea, let your bowel rest for a few hours by drinking just clear liquids.

Call the Health unit right away if:

- Your symptoms are getting worse instead of better.
- You have nervous system symptoms, such as tingling, weakness, or headache.
- You have a high fever as well as other symptoms.

What can I do to prevent food poisoning?

Follow these guidelines to prevent food poisoning:

- Make sure the dairy products you eat and drink have been pasteurized.
- Throw away any cans that are bulging or leaking. Do not taste any foods that look or smell suspicious after you open the container. Remember also that contaminated foods can seem normal in appearance and smell.
- Wash your hands before you prepare, cook, or serve food and after you go to the bathroom or touch animals. Cover any sore or cut on your hands before preparing food. Use rubber gloves or cover the sore with a clean bandage.
- Rinse fresh vegetables and fruits before you eat or cook them.
- Wash cutting boards or any utensils used with raw meat before you use them with other foods. (It's best to have two cutting boards: one for meat and one for other foods.) Keep kitchen

counters and other food preparation surfaces clean. Replace used dishcloths and kitchen towels with clean ones often.

- Thaw frozen poultry completely before you cook it. Do not let it stand at room temperature. Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, and leftovers. Pork should be heated to an internal temperature of at least 160°F (71°C). For whole chickens and turkeys a temperature of 180°F (82°C) is recommended for thigh meat and 170°F (77°C) for breast meat. **Never partially cook meat or poultry and then finish cooking it later.**

If you have food poisoning, you can help prevent spreading it to other people

- By avoiding unnecessary contact with others until your symptoms are gone. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and very warm water after you use the restroom. Do not prepare food for other people. If you must prepare or serve food, wash your hands thoroughly before you cook or serve food and before you eat. Wearing gloves during food preparation and serving will help reduce the risk of spreading infection.

IT CORNER By Deepak

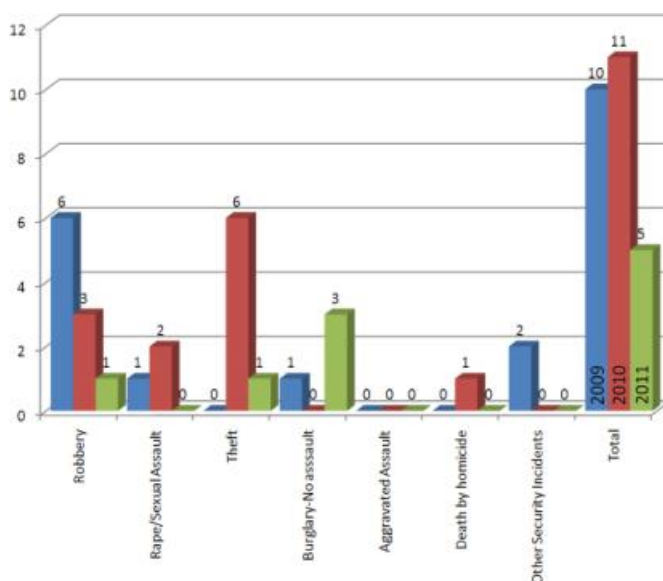
How to Protect Yourself When Your Stuff is Stolen

Mr. X had registered with Apple's free Find my iPhone service at <http://www.apple.com/iphone/find-my-iphone-setup/> which allowed him to remotely lock his device and send a text message that said, "Do not purchase this device. It has been stolen," and to eventually do a complete wipe of the entire system. There may be other ways to protect other electronic devices you have that connect to a network. Go to the manufacturer's website to find out if something like the above can be done for the devices you have. The three major credit reporting agencies will allow you to instigate a 90-day fraud alert on your credit profile... http://blogs.houstonpress.com/hairballs/2011/07/car_burglary.php

SAFETY AND SECURITY CORNER – By Ntate Nthoalo

Below is a graph of crimes incidents reported by Volunteers in Peace Corps Lesotho for FY 2009, FY 2010 and FY 2011 to date. We are happy to report that the trend is moving downward in 2011, due large part to your efforts to avoid Maseru.

"Other security incidents" is any situation where the Volunteer's



continued security is in question, but in which the Volunteer has not been a victim of crime. This includes any serious incidents occurring in or near the Volunteer's site that cause the Volunteer to have concerns for his or her own security, even though the volunteer was not directly involved.

Although Volunteers are becoming victims of crimes less frequently, it's always good to remind ourselves of the Peace Corps Philosophy on Safety and Security, which you learned in PST:

All Volunteers Must Do It Every Day

All = Awareness (be aware of your surroundings and how others perceive you; know your limitations; do in Rome as the Romans do)

Volunteers = Vigilance (stay alert every time you are in a new place or wherever you are, keep vigil and look for warnings")

Must = Mitigation (Make plans to avoid bad encounters as the proverb says: "chance favors the prepared mind)

Do it = Diffusion (Diffuse the situation, greet them in their own language, beat them at their games or SURRENDER the wallet; your life is precious than anything else)

Every = Escape (Remove yourself from dangerous situation, go to safety, enter the shop or run away)

Day = Defense (Defend yourself verbally or psychologically, say 'NO' strongly; or give a bad look into the eyes but don't engage into a physical fight)

Peace Corps Lesotho Staff Roles

Who does what in the PC Office?

Got a question? Not sure whom to ask? Following is a brief overview of how staff can help you. Of course, most staff members wear multiple hats and can answer other questions. This just gives you an idea of the people primarily responsible for various types of support.

Management Unit:

- Country Director – issues concerning the overall program, transfer/extensions, policy questions, allegations against staff or other Volunteer
- Executive Secretary – visas, ICE and other resources from the VRC
- Information Technology Specialist (ITS) – IT systems and technical support for completing your Volunteer Report Forms, VRC (Maseru and remote) management

Administration and Finance Unit:

- Administrative Officer – student loan deferments, withdrawals from Readjustment Allowance for payments you may owe, safekeeping of your valuables, answers to questions you have dealing with PC/Washington
- Admin/Finance Assistant – living and other allowances, PCPP budgets
- Cashier – reimbursements
- PEPFAR Admin Assistant – VAST grant budgets, other PEPFAR-funded financial matters (e.g., PEPFAR-funded camps)
- Receptionist – mail, packages, staff whereabouts
- General Services Officer and General Services Assistant – PC-furnished equipment or furniture,

Programming and Training Unit:

- APCDs – job-related questions/issues (e.g., regarding counterparts, supervisors, job description), technical advice,

leave requests, secondary project ideas, VAST and PCPP project ideas, training needs/ideas

- ◇ Program Assistants – any of the above in the absence of the APCD, partner organization contact information, housing issues, site identification
- ◇ HIV/AIDS Coordinator – technical advice on HIV-related activities, PEPFAR contact info, HIV training material
- ◇ Training Manager – info about PSTs and ISTs (when they are, how you can help)
- ◇ Language, Culture and Homestay Coordinator – advice about hiring a tutor, Sesotho language materials, cross cultural questions
- ◇ Program and Training Secretary – whereabouts, leave balance

Health Unit

- ◇ PCMOs – medical care/questions, ordering prescriptions
- ◇ Medical Secretary – making appointments to see the PCMO, ordering and picking up supplies (non-prescription)

Safety and Security Unit:

- ◇ Safety and Security Coordinator – crime incidents against Volunteers, serious crime incidents in the Volunteer’s community, follow up to crime incidents (e.g., going to court), road .
- ◇ Duty Officer – emergencies after business hours and on weekends

50th Anniversary Corner

Thanks to everyone who organized and participated in the district 50th anniversary events. See photos and summaries of the



The Adams bob for apples

events below.

- ◇ In collaboration with the PEPFAR team and the US Embassy Public Affairs Office, Volunteers in the **Maseru** District sponsored the HIV-themed film “Shuga” at a local movie theater. It was attended by many Basotho, the US Ambassador and PC staff. After the showing of the movie, the Volunteers facilitated a discussion about the content of the film and HIV in Lesotho, which lasted well over an hour.



Rory and kids tie dye in Ha Lajone



Dustin and kids in Mafeteng



Group shot with kids and tie dye results



Amb Bond, PCVs and friends sketch map in Mafeteng



Melissa, kids and the finished map

- Volunteers in the **Leribe** District sponsored a typical “American barbeque” at the site of one of the Volunteers. The event, which was attended by staff and local community members, featured a pig roast, tie dye shirt contest,



Ambassador Bond, Amy Jo Carson and women’s group in Berea



PCVs, HCN and guest - 50th anniversary event in Berea



PCVs and guests at the 50th anniversary event in Berea

bobbing for apples and teaching local kids how to throw a Frisbee. A brief tribute to Tom Maresco was also observed. The event concluded with all the Americans in attendance singing “America the Beautiful.”

- Volunteers in the **Mafeteng** District organized a mural painting at a home for orphans and vulnerable children. The mural included a world map and several Basotho scenes drawn by some of the Basotho youth. The Volunteers were joined in the drawing and painting by volunteers from Germany and Ireland, as well as the American Ambassador, PC Staff, and a host of Basotho youth of all ages.
- Volunteers in the **Berea** District organized a hike to view historic rock paintings, a friendly football match and a *braai*, which included typical American dishes. The Volunteers were joined by 20 trainees, PC staff and trainers, the



50th Anniversary mural in Butha Buthe



Painting the mural in BB



American Ambassador and other US Embassy Maseru staff, and a large contingent of Basotho from the area. Before the football match, one of the local women's groups sold soup and locally-made aloe products, while Volunteers and trainees handed out bags of popcorn during the football match. Many Basotho youth took advantage of the face painting to doll themselves in colors of the American and Basotho flags.

- ◇ Volunteers in the **Butha Buthe** District arranged with one of the local merchants to paint a 50th anniversary mural on the side of his building. As soon as the Volunteers starting painting, random "volunteers" off the street offered to help. While the painting was taking place, the Volunteers organized a game, which offered an opportunity to explain to passersby why they were painting the mural and to provide a little HIV prevention information. For several hours the Volunteers entertained and educated several curious Basotho and created a lasting memorial to Peace Corps' presence in Lesotho.
- ◇ Apparently events also took place in **Mohales Hoek and Qachas Nek**, but we haven't received any reports or photos.

Mark your calendar for the final shin-dig on our 50th anniversary calendar. A feast, which will include the ceremonial swearing in of the CHED 11s, is planned for September 15th immediately followed by the All-Vol on September 16. We are finalizing the venues, but the event on the 15th will likely take place at the Morija Museum and the All-Vol at the Mazonod Conference Center. Details are forthcoming.

PCV Corner

A Message from the VAC

Hello all. As you know, we are here to serve you, the Volunteers. After our most recent meeting, we at VAC have decided to clean house a bit. By that we mean it's time to re-establish, clearly and definitively, what VAC is, what it does, and how it operates, and when you should/should not contact VAC. Without further ado:

What is VAC? VAC is the Volunteer Advocacy Council.

What does VAC do? As the name implies, we are your advocates. We represent PCVs' interests, and work to promote a healthy, effective relationship with PC Staff. We gather PCVs' ideas for: (a) fixing current problems and (b) furthering PC Lesotho as a whole. We bring them to PC Staff, and pursue *practical solutions* with all parties. At times we will also address PC Staff's concerns regarding PCVs. We also invite PCVs' praise for staff who have done exceptional work.

Some recent VAC accomplishments:

Obtained a statement from Kathy on what PCVs can expect when corresponding with PC Staff. Questions such as "How long should we wait for PC Staff to respond to an SMS or email before resending?" were answered. All answers were disseminated to PCVs at district meetings.

Consolidated glitches that PCVs encountered with most recent VRF. Sent a list of glitches to Deepak, who is now working to resolve them.

How does VAC operate? Henceforth each training class will have two VAC members, elected by the PCVs of that class. VAC elects two of its Reps as Co-chairs, and one as Secretary. VAC operates on a rough 4 month cycle. (see by-laws)

NOTE, there are no longer district VAC members (replaced from now on by two members from each class), and there are no longer district meetings (replaced by email correspondence).

Inputs by PCVs to VAC can be made on a rolling basis, by any mode of communication.

When should you contact VAC? In short, contact VAC to propose improvements and acknowledge!

To share ideas for improving PC Lesotho as a whole (e.g., developing a new database, streamlining communication, defining role of PCVls).

To share personal experiences that provide insight into PC Lesotho issues (e.g., "My APCD and I had different records of my vacation balance. This suggests that all vacation approvals should be accompanied by an e-mailed report of the remaining balance.)

When should you NOT contact VAC? To share other isolated, anecdotal experiences (e.g., a member of PC Staff didn't do their job properly). These issues should be sent directly to CD or APCD, as needed.

Please also see the attached VAC Mission Statement, By-laws and Policies for more information. Thanks!

VAC

Volunteer Advocacy Council (VAC) Mission Statement, Bylaws, and Operating Policies

Mission

To facilitate proactive communication and understanding between PC Lesotho Volunteers and Staff, to enrich the PCV experience and impact in Lesotho.

General Purposes of VAC

- To give PCVs a voice for communicating with PC Staff
- To represent PCV interests and concerns to PC Staff
- To represent PC Staff concerns to PCVs (especially in terms of policies and their underlying rationales)
- To provide input and support to PC Staff on behalf of PCVs, for any PC Lesotho issues

To focus on large-scale issues (as opposed to isolated concerns), to rectify current problems and further development of PC Lesotho as a whole

Additional Roles of VAC Members

- ◇ To disseminate information from VAC meetings to PCVs
- ◇ To act as role models to other PCVs
- ◇ To strive to understand CD/Staff thinking/rationales behind decisions/policies, and to convey this information to PCVs
- ◇ To provide quality assistance to CD/Staff based on accurate information and firm knowledge of PCV interests

Additional Roles of CD and Staff with Respect to VAC

- ◇ Present policies and their rationales before sharing with PCV community (when possible)
- ◇ Open, honest, non-defensive communication
- ◇ To remain flexible when listening to PCV ideas presented by VAC
- ◇ Look to VAC for advice
- ◇ Issue progress report to VAC 4-6 weeks following VAC meetings

Council Membership

VAC will be composed of two representatives from each training class, leading to a capacity of 8 members given the current input of two training classes per year. In the case that a member vacates their position, VAC members will nominate (and subsequently appoint) a replacement from the same training class. The committee will have three Officers: two Co-Chairs and a Secretary.

Guidelines

Elections

VAC membership elections will take place at each training class' Phase III training. The APCD will ensure that time is allotted at Phase III. Interested PCVs should give a short speech explaining their candidacy, and their training class will vote. The elections will be conducted by the APCD, and, if possible, one or both VAC Co-Chairs.

Elections for new VAC Officers will be held at the last VAC meeting before the officer vacates their position.

Roles of Officers

Co-Chairs: Responsible for communication between other VAC members and CD. Work with CD to organize quarterly VAC meetings. Discuss points for agenda with CD before meeting. Lead VAC meeting. Following member-only meeting, finalize agenda for the VAC meeting with CD.

Secretary: Records and organizes the minutes of each meeting. Following VAC meeting, e-mails minutes to other members and CD.

Meetings and Reporting

- VAC members will meet quarterly with the CD and AO. Attendance is mandatory.
- CD and Co-Chairs will discuss, in advance, any non-routine topics for upcoming meeting agenda.
- Meetings take place over a Saturday and Sunday. On Saturday, VAC meets in the absence of PC Staff to discuss PCV inputs and other agenda items, in preparation for Sunday. On Sunday, VAC meets with CD and AO.
- Following the meeting, CD will address developments with PC Staff. 4-6 weeks later, CD will issue Progress Report to VAC members, describing how those developments have been incorporated. VAC will discuss Progress Report as necessary, then Co-Chairs will e-mail minutes from meeting and the Progress Report to PCVs.

VAC Cycle Overview

1. VAC meeting, Saturday (VAC members only)
2. VAC meeting, Sunday (VAC members, CD, and AO)
3. (Next week) Co-Chairs follow up on any time-sensitive issues with PCVs and/or PC Staff.
4. (4-6 weeks later) CD sends Progress Report to VAC members.
(6-8 weeks later) Co-chair e-mails minutes from last meeting, plus Progress Report, to all PCVs.
 - ◊ Inputs by PCVs to VAC can be made on a rolling basis, by any mode of communication.

Termination of Membership

There are several reasons for a VAC member to be deselected (by decision of the CD and/or by a vote of over two-thirds of the council):



Eric Pierce (Co-Chair)



Ariana Berdini (Co-Chair)



Adam Santos (Secretary)



Grant Comstock



Kelsey Marsh



Joey Noelle Lehnhard



Rory Pulvino

- Non-attendance of meetings – If a VAC member does not attend two consecutive, or three total, meetings.
- Not acting as a role model for other PCVs – If a VAC member egregiously disobeys PC policies in a punishable (by something less than administrative separation) way.
- Misrepresenting VAC or the Peace Corps – If a VAC member deliberately or continually misrepresents VAC or PC Staff.
- Non-Confidentiality – If a VAC member repeatedly breaches the confidentiality of any involved parties – PCVs, VAC members, or PC Staff.

After 30 years, the AIDS war still rages

Submitted by Brandi Helm, CHED 10

June 5, 2011 marked 30 years since the discovery of AIDS. The following is an excerpt from an article showing where we have come from and where we are going in the fight against the epidemic. The article has a lot of interesting information, and if you have the opportunity, you should read it in its entirety at <http://www.latimes.com/health/la-he-aids-at-30-20110605,0,2300265.story?track=rss>.

By Melissa Healy and Thomas H. Maugh II, Los Angeles Times
June 5, 2011

Thirty years ago Sunday, a brief report in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report described cases of a rare form of pneumonia called *Pneumocystis carinii* in five young Los Angeles men, "all active homosexuals." The cases were noteworthy because the men had previously been healthy, though their particular pneumonia had only been seen in people with severely depressed immune systems. Within a month, a second report had identified 54 young gay men with a rare cancer known as Kaposi's sarcoma, another disease that had been almost unknown in young men. And by the following summer, the mysterious disease underlying these reports had a name: acquired immune deficiency syndrome, or AIDS.

...In the 30 years since its first recognition, AIDS has killed nearly 30 million people worldwide, including more than 615,000 in the United States. Today, an additional 34 million people – including nearly 1.2 million in the U.S. – are living with the virus that causes the disease, human immunodeficiency virus, or HIV. This year, 1.8 million of them will die, including about 17,000 in this country....

Significant strides have been made in prevention, however, especially in the last two years. Campaigns aimed at curbing risky sexual behavior, promoting HIV testing for those at risk and discouraging IV drug users from sharing needles all have made progress – albeit fitfully.

According to a United Nations report issued Thursday, the global rate of new HIV infections fell by 25% from 2001 through 2009. In India and South Africa, the countries with the largest number of people living with HIV, new infections fell by 50% and 35% respectively.

Medications will soon play a major role in prevention. Many studies over the years have shown that giving anti-AIDS drugs to pregnant HIV-positive women is extremely effective in preventing transmission to their infants. In the United States, the incidence of infection in newborns is approaching zero.

A 2006 study among more than 8,000 men in Kenya and Uganda showed that circumcision can reduce transmission of the virus from their HIV-positive female partners by 56%. A study

last year in nearly 900 women in South Africa showed that faithful use of a vaginal gel containing the antiretroviral drug tenofovir reduced the women's risk of contracting the virus by 54%.

Researchers also have great hopes for a relatively new concept known as pre-exposure prophylaxis, in which uninfected people take antiretroviral drugs in hopes of blocking new infections. A November 2010 study of nearly 2,500 high-risk gay men, mostly in Africa, showed that taking a pill called Truvada containing two antiretroviral drugs could block new infections by an average of 44%, and by more than 70% if the men took the drugs according to a strict regimen.

And just last month, a trial of nearly 1,800 heterosexual couples in Africa and Asia showed that giving antiretroviral drugs to the HIV-positive member could reduce transmission to the uninfected partner by as much as 96%.

...In places like sub-Saharan Africa, where two-thirds of the world's AIDS patients live, and in disadvantaged corners of the United States, where infection rates have remained stubbornly high, any "cure" is likely to be prohibitively costly and painfully slow to arrive. For the foreseeable future, the front lines of the fight against AIDS will remain behavior change to stem the spread of infection.

HIV/AIDS Student Poem and Art

Submitted by DAR Member, Nathan Birhanu, ED 10

Below are a poem and two art drawings submitted by students at Mantoetse Secondary School for an HIV/AIDS awareness poetry and art contest. Enjoy!

Poem

By: Selloane Mosenya (Form C Student at Mantoetse Sec. School)

Be Aware and Watch Out for AIDS

Oh AIDS!

The principal of the all diseases
The most killer on the Earth
Why did you choose to come to me?

You took all my attractions
Then you left me empty
Like Adam with no water

I heard that you are living in the blood system
Then, I tried to cut my wrists, so that when the blood comes out
You will also go out of my body
But my plan failed

Why can't you stay in my eyes?
So that when I cry, you will fall as tears?
Now, the grave is opened for me, what's left?
Is it my time to go?

You have increased the number of my enemies
Here and there, people are laughing at me
They are also running away from me

I would be asked to choose
One between life and death
I would choose life out of death

You AIDS!

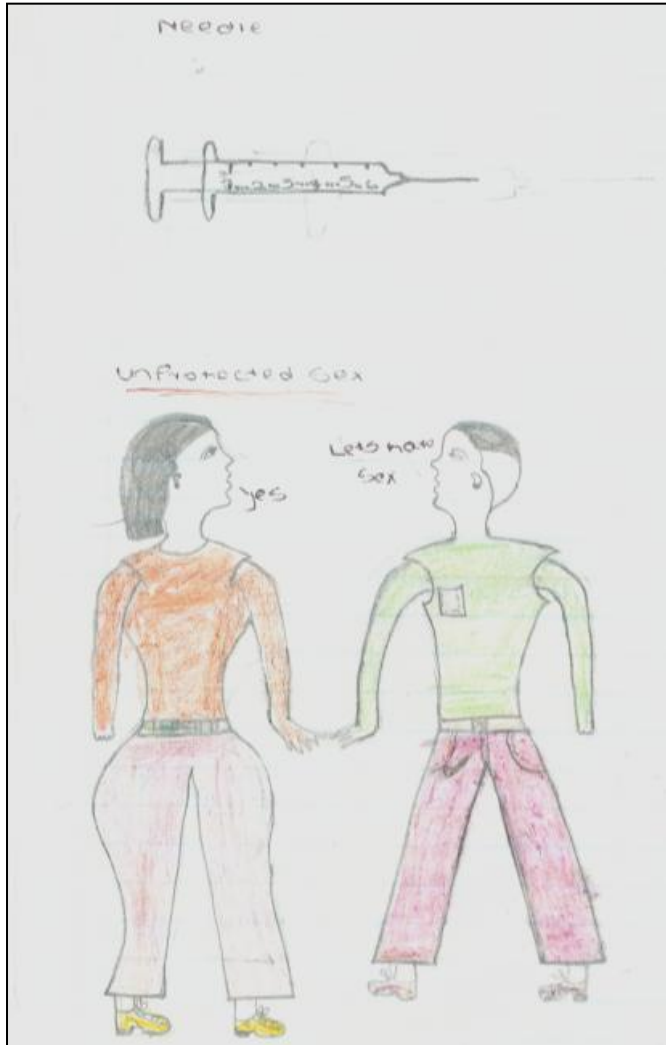
I hate you, and you think that you are the winner of the match
 But you are not!
 Next time we will hit you!
 The way that you will even forgot who you are

Art

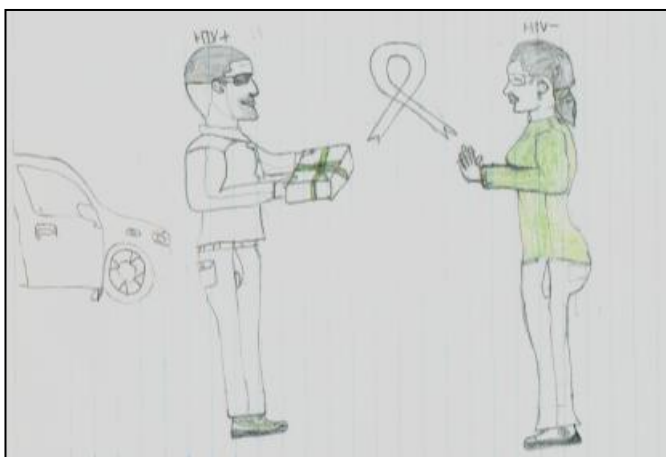
By: Kekeletso Mokutle (Form B Student at Mantoetse Sec. School)

Modes of Transmission for HIV

By: Lehlohonolo Matlotlo (Form B Student at Mantoetse SS)



WARNING: Sugar Daddy



NEWS FROM AROUND THE PEACE CORPS WORLD

Increase Peace

Do you know someone who would make a great Peace Corps Volunteer? Your recommendation is of great value to future Volunteers. The testimonial of former Volunteers is a major inspiration for others to apply to Peace Corps. Find out how you can Increase Peace and recruit the next generation of Peace Corps Volunteers.

Video Postcards

The Peace Corps is considering cooperating with the National Peace Corps Association and a team of independent filmmakers on a film project. The filmmaker wishes to produce a series of "video post cards," which will be 2 - 3 minute vignettes featuring volunteers. They are looking for stories from all over the world.

The filmmakers have asked that the Peace Corps identify Volunteers and their stories that they can consider. **Please submit your ideas to your APCD ASAP.** Right now we are just collecting ideas. If your idea is selected, we will provide more information. **Here is what the filmmakers are looking for:**

- ◊ Stories that will inspire... engage... touch... and even surprise viewers who may not know much about the Peace Corps.
- ◊ And for those who are already part of the Peace Corps network - stories that will encourage them to share their own experiences... and connect (or reconnect) with the Peace Corps community.
- ◊ The filmmakers want viewers to come away with a greater understanding of why the Peace Corps is more relevant and important than ever in helping to foster cross cultural understanding and build bridges of peace.
- ◊ The filmmakers also want to show the interconnectedness of volunteers with their communities - working together on projects, forging friendships.
- ◊ These stories don't have to be "big stories" - small stories are very effective in conveying larger stories and can be more personal.
- ◊ Stories can be of a special friendship the volunteer has made, or a project the volunteer, together with the community, is working on.... or about a sports team or other activity the volunteer has started with the local children.
- ◊ It can be about a special place the volunteer has discovered.... or a volunteer who has learned to cook traditional foods or learned a dance for a local celebration.
- ◊ It can be about the greatest challenge or obstacle the volunteer has successfully overcome.

Peace Corps Call for Photos!

The Peace Corps Office of Communications is proud to announce the Peace Corps Digital Library 50th Anniversary Photo Contest! Submit photos that best capture your Peace Corps experience to the official Peace Corps photo contest. The contest is open to Volunteers, RPCVs, and staff. Send your photos to Deepak: dpullanikkatil@ls.peacecorps.gov. The deadline for submission is September 8, 2011.

First-place winners will receive a framed official Peace Corps certificate. All winning photos will be:

- ◊ Exhibited September 21-24, 2011 in Peace Corps headquarters during the Peace Corps reunion weekend in Washington, D.C.
- ◊ Featured throughout the Peace Corps website, social media sites, and a Peace Corps press release
- ◊ Added to the official Peace Corps 50th Anniversary

Timeline

- ◇ Black and white and color photos accepted

Judging Categories: Entries will be evaluated based on creativity and impact in the following categories:

- ◇ Providing technical assistance
- ◇ Sharing American culture overseas
- ◇ Sharing overseas culture with America
- ◇ Photographic technical merit