

KHOTSO

January 2012

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Message from the Country Director



The newest Education group swearing-in as PCVs.

Dear Volunteers,

I hope you all had a wonderful holiday season and wish you the best in 2012!

I'd like to take this opportunity to express how thankful I am for 2011. It turned out to be a great year during which Peace Corps Lesotho accomplished a lot, including:

- ◆ the successful completion of service by 30 CHED 09, ED 10 and Peace Corps Response Volunteers
- ◆ the commencement of service of 43 new CHED 11, ED 12 and Peace Corps Response Volunteers
- ◆ 10 district meetings leading to an overhaul of the CHED and ED projects
- ◆ several great 50th anniversary events
- ◆ a reduction in crime incidents involving Volunteers from 10 in FY09 and 11 in FY10 to 5 in FY11
- ◆ the hiring and training of 7 new staff members
- ◆ the identification of a new office into which we hope to move by July 2012

◆ surviving an audit and, most importantly, the daily work of the Volunteers to achieve the 3 goals of the Peace Corps.

It is only with the dedication, hard work and team spirit of the Volunteers and staff that we were able to achieve so much. For this we should all be proud. I am confident that 2012 will be equally successful!

For those interested, Michael and I saw tons of lemurs on our recent trip to Madagascar, which I highly recommend as a travel destination!

Khotso,
Kathy



Michael and his lemur friend.

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor – Kathy Jacquart Dill, Country Director

Editor – Deepak Pullanikkatil, IT Specialist

Staff Contributors:

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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.

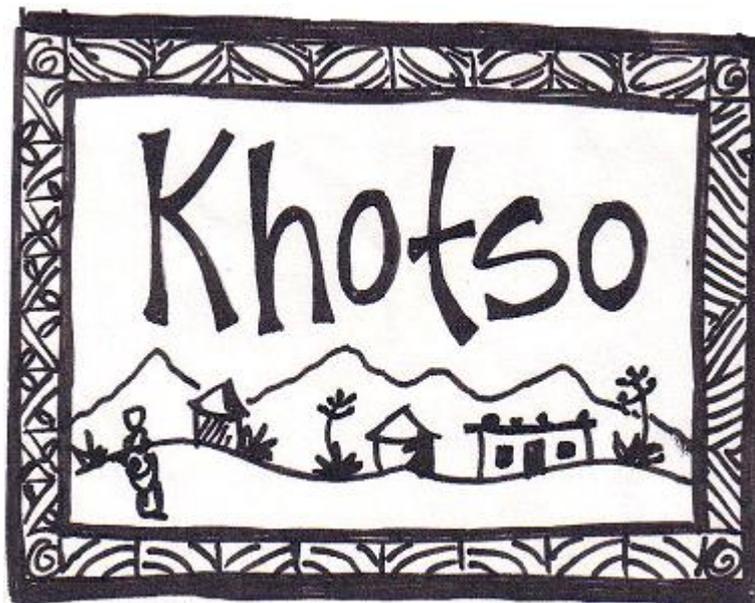
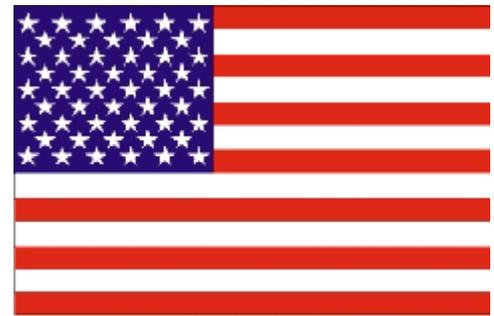
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you.

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 & Staff Birthdays

Birthday greetings go out to the following Volunteers and staff!

January

Lawrence, Amanda – 4
 Bryant, Parker – 7
 Brunk, Katie – 10
 Glanville, Kate – 11
 Nelson, Sadie – 22
 Pullanikkatil, Deepak (IT Specialist) – 22
 Putsoa, Maggie (Cashier) – 23
 Magobet, Tab – 30
 Marsh, Kelsey – 30

February

Holmen, Andrea – 1
 Bruno, Maria – 2
 Birhanu, Nathan – 9
 Niang, Lee – 9
 Taylor, Tahira – 10
 Kerr, Mike – 12
 Nthoalo, Masiphole (SSC) – 12
 Helm, Wes – 13
 Parks, Lauren – 14
 McFarland, Shane – 19
 Landrum, Nathan – 21

Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays (Office closed these days)

January

New Year's Day (LS and US Holiday) – 1
 New Year's Day observed (US Holiday) – 2
 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (US Holiday) – 16

February

President's Day (US Holiday) – 20

Calendar of Events and Staff Travel

Dec 27 – Jan 6	Ntate Clement, 'M'e Jimi, 'M'e Selloane, Ntate Nthoalo on leave
Dec 23 – Jan 18	Dr. Victor on leave
Jan 1-13	'M'e Malisema on leave
Jan 9-20	Charles on leave
Jan 12-17	Kathy on leave
Jan 23-27	Language Tester Training (several staff will participate)
Feb 6-10	CHED11 PDM & capacity building workshop (South)
Feb 13-17	CHED11 PDM & capacity building workshop (North)
Mar 16 – Apr 14	Charles on leave

Duty Officer Schedule

Jan 2 – 8	CD	Feb 20 – 26	PA CHED
Jan 9 – 15	DMO	Feb 27 - Mar 4	SSC
Jan 16 – 22	APCD ED	Mar 5 – 11	ITS
Jan 23 – 29	APCD CHED	Mar 12 – 18	FA
Feb 6 – 12	HIV Coord.	Mar 19 – 25	GSO
Feb 13 – 19	PA ED	Mar 25 – April 1	CD

STAFF OF THE MONTH



In the absence of the training manager, **Language, Cross Culture and Homestay Coordinator 'm'e Mamokola Matlanyane** took on many responsibilities related to managing the ED 12 PST. In addition, she worked tirelessly to organize host families and language training for the CHED 11 Phase III workshop and oversaw the ED 12 swearing-in ceremony, which included challenging negotiations with the host villages.

ADMIN CORNER by Jim

HAPPY NEW YEAR! Many thanks to all of you for your contributions to a safe and happy holiday season in Lesotho.

Voting Information

New absentee voting laws are in effect for the 2012 elections. You will no longer automatically receive ballots based on a previous absentee ballot request. All U.S. citizens outside the United States who want to vote by absentee ballot in the 2012 primary and general elections must complete a new Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) every year if they wish to vote from abroad. States are now required to send out ballots 45 days before an election. No matter what state you vote in, you can now ask your local election officials to provide your blank ballots to you electronically (by email, internet download, or fax, depending on your state). You can now also confirm your registration and ballot delivery on-line. Be sure to include your email address on the form to take advantage of the electronic ballot delivery option. This is the fastest and most reliable way to receive your ballot on time, and we strongly recommend every overseas voter take advantage of it. Learn more at the Federal Voting Assistance Program's (FVAP) website www.FVAP.gov. If you would like the Embassy to return your postcard registration for you, postage free, you can drop it off with the guards at the main gate of U.S. Embassy Maseru (or get it to me and I will take care of it).

VRC

The VRC survived the COSing of the ED10 PCVs, but as expected there were several items left there with no apparent intended "home." We will be going through all of them and disposing of anything that does not have a designated PCV labeled on it. Things like books will be donated to a local library.

I'll keep this brief since it is the first missive of the New Year. Have a wonderful start to 2012 and as always, please stay safe...!

EDUCATION CORNER by Nt. Clement & M'e Malitaba

As we begin to settle back into the New Year, we once again wish you all a very successful and productive time at your assignment posts. We would like to first welcome ED 10 Nathan Birhanu as our temporary PCVL. Nathan has already worked on a few projects since the end of 2011 and he will be focusing not only of Volunteer support issues but also helping us to analyze the impact of the Peace Corps work in selected areas in Lesotho. Nathan will also be engaged in some assignments with his host school at Thuto Ke Leseli High School at Ha 'Majane near Morija.

You should be getting the education programming team schedule for the months of January thru April 2012 soon. Please take

note of the days we will be visiting your site. During the site visits we look forward to meeting with you, seeing you 'in action', meeting with your supervisors, ILs and host families where relevant. The site visits provide staff an opportunity to observe your work and in addition to endorse your work and liaise with your host school and community partners.

World Wise Schools

From ending poverty and hunger, to promoting worldwide environmental sustainability, to ensuring universal education, investigating global issues can inspire today's students to start changing their world for the better, right now.

Global issues are a recurrent theme for those tasked with helping students grow into "globally ready" citizens. They transcend content areas and grade levels, they are inherently complex, and their inclusion in the taught curriculum is typically not easy in an era when national content standards guide what gets taught and tested.

In response to these realities, Coverdell World Wise Schools is excited to announce its newest online feature: Global Issues in Focus.

This rich resource offers teachers a convenient starting place to help students engage in inquiry about global issues while building interdisciplinary research, analysis, and problem solving skills. Global Issues in Focus provides an introduction to nine critical global issues and their domestic and global significance. For each issue, we offer a problem-based WebQuest to guide student investigation and an array of cross-disciplinary teaching suggestions to promote further inquiry.

For over 20 years, Coverdell World Wise Schools has been utilizing the experiences of Peace Corps Volunteers to create programs and resources that help teachers introduce global issues to their students. By incorporating authentic stories about the ways Peace Corps Volunteers are working with communities to address critical concerns, Global Issues in Focus continues World Wise Schools' tradition of inspiring students and empowering them as change agents in their communities and their world.

Enroll in the Correspondence Match program today and tell friends and families who are teachers back home to sign up!
<http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/>

CHED CORNER by Charles & M'e Selloane

Hi CHEDers. Happy new year to all of you.

Thanks to all of you for making 2011 such an eventful year. We saw the CHED 09s depart, the CHED 11s bring a breath of fresh air to post, and the CHED 10s provide valuable input into the CHED 11 PST. We also drafted a new project plan, which is undergoing initial review in Washington. As we look ahead at 2012, we'll welcome the arrival of CHED 12s in late May/early June, and will watch as the CHED 10s ride off into the sunset.

Site Visits

'M'e Selloane and I will be in touch in the next few weeks to start lining up site visits for the next several months. At the top of the list are a few CHED 11s and the CHED 10s who haven't been visited in the last few months. We look forward to seeing all of you in action.

Phase III Training

Thanks to the CHED 11s for your active participation in Phase III Training. Your input into the schedule via your Phase II assignments helped us to ensure the training addressed your needs. A

special thanks also to the CHED 10 Volunteers who assisted in co-facilitating sessions for the CHED 11 Phase III Training, including Adam, Amy Jo, Ariana, Chanté, Lauren, and Wes.

Project Advisory Committee (PAC)

On December 14 and 15, we held a meeting of the Project Advisory Committee during which we drafted a new project framework, focusing on youth development. The new framework has been submitted to Washington for an initial review. For the next 4 weeks, we'll be finessing the new framework and the project plan. Stay tuned for more information on the new framework. A big thank you goes out to Volunteers Lauren, Brandi, Chante', Tara and Tommy who helped in drafting the new framework.

Project Design Management / HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshops

The Project Design Management / HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshops are scheduled as follows:

February 6 - 10, 2012 for Volunteers in South

February 13 - 17, 2012 for Volunteers in North

Arrival and departure information and invitation letters for participants will go out by mid January.

Gold Star Activities

Thanks to all Volunteers for your hard work. Below are a few "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!



CHED 11 Jenny Cain and Supervisor at WAD event in Ha Machesetsa.

World AIDS Day Events

Wes and Brandi Helm - The Southern Mountain Association for Rural Transformation and Development (SMARTD), in cooperation with Peace Corps Volunteers and community members, hosted a movie screening to celebrate World AIDS Day in Ha Sekake, Lesotho. Fifty-five local youth were shown "Dreams of a Good Life" and MTV's "Shuga" series, films related to HIV and the struggles faced by young people growing up in Africa. After each film, peer educators and SMARTD staff hosted small-group discussion about the topics addressed in the films.

Jenny Cain - Jenny, her counterparts and supervisors organized a day long World AIDS Day event in Ha Machesetsa. It was attended by representatives from the district administration and

included AIDS-related dramas by community members of all ages, songs, dances, HIV counseling and testing and horseback riding stunts! After a somewhat slow start, turnout was fantastic in this remote village in Quthing.

Aerobics – Tara Hughes In addition to her duties teaching business skills, Tara Hughes responded to her students' request for an exercise and aerobics club. The class meets weekly and includes basketball, volleyball, walking and aerobics activities.

Internet Training for Nursing Students – Barbara Meyer Barbara Meyer added taught students how to use the internet to research medical literature as part of a nursing course that she co-taught.

IT CORNER by Deepak

External SharePoint from anywhere

The external SharePoint site can now be accessed from any computer that is connected to the Internet. All you need to do is go to <https://ls.peacecorps.gov/external>

You will be asked for your Peace Corps log on credentials (please see screenshot below). Enter your username and password and you will have access to all the resources available on our SharePoint site. You can also change your password from the website. Please let us know if there are any more resources you want on the site. You or any staff member can add work related files to the external SharePoint website.

PCV CORNER

Peace Corps Volunteer Leader

We are currently soliciting interest among CHED 10 Volunteers in the Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL) position. This is a

3rd year position, which will be based outside of Maseru. In addition to the PCVL responsibilities, the PCVL has a part-time “regular” Peace Corps assignment to be determined with the selected Volunteer. Although the PCVL will support primarily their assigned project (i.e., CHED), they may be asked to assist the Education project if needed. **If interested, please send an email to APCD Charles Miller expressing why you think you would be a good candidate for the position. Expressions of interest are due by March 1.**

Supervision: The PCVL will be directly supervised by the respective APCD or the Program Assistant in the absence of the APCD.

Work Schedule: The PCVL will be expected to work an average of 20 hours per week and on evenings and weekends as necessary, during conferences and trainings, including PST.

Duties:

1. Assist with planning, implementing and evaluating Volunteer training, including Phase III and Project Design Management Trainings, Mid-Service Conference, COS Conference: Assist with needs assessment preparation, conference design, session preparation (including gathering materials, assisting with identifying volunteer or organizational resources as facilitators), coordinating tabletop resource fair (IRC resources), preparing conference materials (binders, training materials, CDs/flashdrives, etc.), assist in coordinating organization/counterpart ideas fair, and other duties as assigned, as listed in the conference planning checklist.

2. Assist in planning, implementing and evaluating Pre-Service Training: (1-2 per year)

Assist with: pre-arrival interviews of trainees; host family selection and preparation (including HF Orientation); resource volunteer solicitation, selection, and preparation; Training Design Evaluation (TDE) process and the development of the PST calendar; identifying organizational resources as facilitators; coordinating resource volunteer briefings/debriefings; Trainee interviews and check-ins; identification and preparation of PST materials (e.g., binders, training materials, CDs/flashdrives, etc.); host Volunteer visit preparation; and other duties as assigned, as listed in the conference planning checklist.

Also assist in co-facilitating training sessions, including but not limited to:

- Country and Project Overviews
- Project Plans
- Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation
- Bridge to Service
- Crossing Cultures (Challenges/Opportunities of living as a PCV in Lesotho)

3. Assist in Identification and Selection of PC Volunteer Sites.

Work with APCD and PA in identifying and visiting possible volunteer sites; complete site identification, host family, and/or housing checklists potential sites; review volunteer request and agency checklist forms to ensure accuracy; assist in compiling site packets for proposed sites; and perform other duties as assigned.

4. Support Volunteers. Be available as needed to speak with Volunteers about any questions pertaining to work, site or cultural adjustment, or personal matters. Act as a positive role model, mentor and resource for Volunteers.

5. Conduct Volunteer Site Visits – Helps to make at least one visit to Volunteers in their site to better understand and support their work. The PCVL can conduct individual site visits to Volunteers in the absence of the APCD or PA if needed and pre-

arranged.

6. Assist in Review and Drafting of Reports. Manuals, and official Project-Related Documents Provide input into the review and revision of various Peace Corps Lesotho documents, including but not limited to the Volunteer Welcome Book, Volunteer Assignment Descriptions, the *Khotso*, Project Plans, Annual Project Status Reports, and training materials.

7. Participate in Staff, VAC and PSN meetings as requested.

8. Attend meetings, conferences, and workshops as requested on behalf of Peace Corps as requested.

9. Other duties as assigned.

A New Device For Non-Surgical Male Circumcision



By Delia Helie (CHED 10), DAR Member

(Please note that Peace Corps takes no official position on Lesotho's male circumcision policy, and PCVs should not actively promote MC on a wide scale.)

Recently the idea of male circumcision as a tool to reduce the risk of HIV transmission has been widely spread. Even as PCVs in Lesotho we have all heard about the efforts to promote male circumcision as a means of lowering HIV transmission between partners in Lesotho. Male circumcision is so widely promoted because, as the WHO stated, removal of the foreskin reduces the ability of HIV to penetrate the skin of the penis. Men with a foreskin are more prone to have some infections, including sexually transmitted infections, which can enhance HIV transmission. The World Health Organization states that male circumcision can reduce the risk of heterosexually acquiring HIV by 60%. But what are the statistics on Lesotho? What efforts are being made in Lesotho to promote and ensure safe and correct male circumcision? Even more importantly, are men listening?

The statistics in Lesotho look something like this: Approximately 48% of Basotho men have been circumcised. An estimated 15,000 circumcisions occur every year in Lesotho. Approximately 1/3 of the male circumcisions are done at health facilities. The other 2/3 of male circumcision is preformed in the traditional initiation process of 'lebollo'. Lastly, the majority of men are circumcised in their late adolescents (16 - 20 years) as part of the traditional initiation process. Traditionally in Lesotho men are circumcised at the culmination of the initiation school in their late teens or early 20's (WHO 2008).

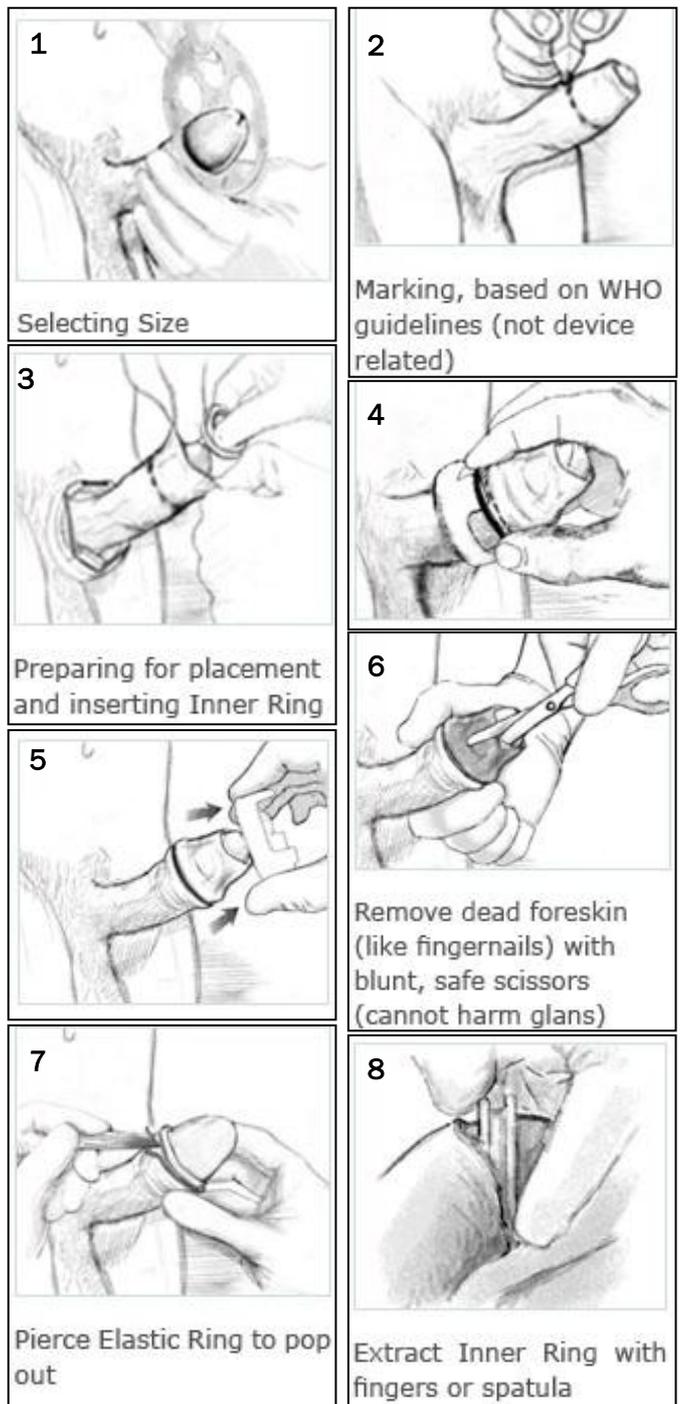
And although male circumcision is happening in Lesotho it is happening at a rate that cannot catch up with the HIV infection rate. According to calculations carried out by USAID (2007), 52.5% coverage is needed to have a significant effect upon reduced HIV infection. According to the 2008 Ministry of Health and Social Welfare Lesotho report, the provision of male circumcision needs to be scaled-up by a factor of 7 times to begin to have an effect on reducing the HIV infection rate in Lesotho.

Another factor staring Lesotho straight in the face is that currently only medical doctors are authorized to perform male circumcisions in Lesotho. The availability of MC is confined to district hospitals, filter clinics and private surgeries where doctors operate. For many in the rural highlands, access to district hospitals is limited, involving several hours travel at a cost many low income groups can seldom afford.

But recently an article was released about male circumcision

that presented possible implications for Lesotho in the future. The efforts in Rwanda to utilize a new, non-surgical circumcision device has been showing signs of making the process of circumcision cleaner and cheaper in Rwanda. This new device, the PrePex, is an alternative to the surgically invasive procedure of traditional male circumcision. The steps for the use of PrePex are below:

1. The penis is sized for the appropriate fitting PrePex
2. An inner ring is placed between the penis and the foreskin
3. Place a second ring over the foreskin to reduce circulation to the foreskin
4. Place a plastic piece over the outer ring and lock into place
5. The PrePex device must be in place for seven days
6. After seven day the now dead foreskin must be cut off
7. Once the inner plastic loop and inner ring is removed and the procedure is complete



The PrePex has been proven safe and easy to use. The current trials in Rwanda are underway and the results and information from that study are limited. However the website for PrePex advocates that many of the positive benefits include:

Clean: There is no blood loss with this procedure

Short Heal Time: After the device is removed the man can resume normal activities where as the traditional surgical options recommends a man abstain from strenuous activities (like sex) for 6 weeks.

No Infection: There are no open wounds diminishing the chance of getting an infection whereas the surgical option leaves an open wound allowing a higher possibility of infection.

Nurses can perform: The PrePex device requires training, but it is easy enough that nurses can use it. The surgical method requires a doctor's surgical skill and surgical nurse's assistance.

Cheaper: It requires no anesthesia, no sterile instruments and no sutures, lowering the cost of a procedure.

The few drawbacks to the PrePex seem to be pretty obvious and maybe some of them are easily answered by people who are trained to use the PrePex device:

Must keep on for 7 days... This could be a major deterrent for men. Seven days may be a long time to have a device strapped to your genitals.

How does the device function in everyday situations – for example how is the urination process, or an erection?

Once the trials in Rwanda are finished and if the trials are proven successful PrePex may gain more exposure. If knowledge about the PrePex spreads this could be a major player, coming into Lesotho and changing traditional methods of circumcision.

Would something like this be successful in Lesotho? It is difficult to know, but with the information about the product it seems like a new and innovative way to go about male circumcision. If anything the problems facing PrePex success in Lesotho may only be culture. Perhaps as PCVs who frequently discuss HIV, STD's and other matters regarding sexual health and hygiene could bring this to people in our communities; counterparts, friends, colleagues see what they have to see and gauge their reactions to an idea like PrePex. By bringing this new idea to them it may also open the door for new discussions and information sharing. Think About That!

For additional information about PrePex or statistics in Lesotho see the links below!

PrePex: <http://www.prepex.com/Default.aspx>

Lesotho Statistics focusing on male circumcision:

http://www.nas.org.ls/documents/MALE_CIRCUMCISION_REPO_RT-FINAL.pdf

Male circumcision information:

<http://www.who.int/hiv/topics/malecircumcision/en/>

Some findings from the Rwanda trials:

http://journals.lww.com/jaids/Fulltext/2011/12150/Safety_and_Efficacy_of_the_PrePex_Device_for_Rapid.16.aspx

Students Help Start Library in Africa

By Erin Kourkounis, *Pensacola New Journal*, www.pnj.com

Gulf Breeze High School's National English Honor Society is sponsoring a book drive to collect 1,000 books to start a school library in Lesotho, Africa, as part of the African Library Project.

The students are trying to collect the books and \$500 to ship them by Friday.

Students in Africa, many from families who live on \$1 or less per day, must learn English to go on to high school and college. In many African countries, the illiteracy rate exceeds 50 percent.

The Gulf Breeze book drive was inspired by the work of former Gulf Breeze resident **Ryan McClaine** [ED10], who is serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Lesotho.

The African Library Project, a California-based volunteer organization, has mobilized volunteers from across the United States to start more than 700 libraries in nine countries over the past five years.

Public Works Assistant Director Maintains Connections to Peace Corps Post

By Sarah Small, *Lombard Spectator*

Lombard, IL – The Kingdom of Lesotho is a small country surrounded by South Africa. Most of the 1.9 million inhabitants live in rural communities and villages.

The country – specifically the village, Seforong, meaning “the place of gorge” – holds a special place in the heart of Dave Gorman, assistant director of Lombard's Public Works Department. From 1989 to 1992, Gorman served in the Peace Corps in Lesotho.

“I had graduated from Marquette University in civil engineering and had a job lined up,” he said. “It would have been a great job, but I saw a window of opportunity to do something before I had other commitments. Looking back, it was a good choice for me.”

While serving in Lesotho, he lived in Seforong and focused his work on several villages concentrated in a valley region of the country. Alongside other Peace Corps volunteers, Gorman worked with people who lived in the villages, determined what they wanted and needed in their communities and found a way to make those things happen.

“For hundreds and hundreds of years they've lived with little change, and you help them improve their own lives in the way they wanted,” Gorman said.

During his tenure, Gorman helped build water systems, a bridge, latrines, school buildings, a chicken coop and more.

Funding for the projects came from the Unitarian Service Committee of Canada, which was concerned with funding sustainable projects, those that would be maintained for many years to come. When a new structure was completed, two people in the village would be designated responsible for the maintenance of new developments, and were given the tools necessary to oversee the maintenance.

When Gorman visited Lesotho in 1996 on his honeymoon, and again last January with his wife and children, the projects he helped develop were still functioning so many years later.

It's a long journey from Downers Grove, where Gorman lives with his family, and it's relatively uncommon for Peace Corps volunteers to return to the places where they served out their service commitments, but the friendships he made have lasted over the years.

“I got a lot of pride out of being the representative of the United States,” Gorman said. “I went from people being curious and sometimes afraid of me to being a welcomed presence.” Gorman's already thinking about another trip, probably in about

seven years, before his daughters graduate from high school. He's active with the Northeastern Illinois Returned Peace Corps Volunteers organization.

The Peace Corps is built on the foundation of three goals: Provide Americans to help in developing countries, help people better understand Americans in the areas served and educate fellow Americans about the countries where volunteers serve. Gorman said this third goal is one he takes very seriously.

He's spoken to schools and community groups throughout Lombard and the surrounding areas about the Kingdom of Lesotho and his experiences there.

"Putting the Kingdom of Lesotho on the map for Americans is important to me," Gorman said. "Helping people to be aware of that little country and aware that there are others like it."

NEWS FROM AROUND THE PEACE CORPS WORLD **Equal Employment Opportunity and Harassment Policy Statements**

By Aaron S. Williams, Peace Corps Director

As Director of the Peace Corps, I would like to remind everyone of the importance of Peace Corps' policies on equal employment opportunity (EEO) and harassment, including sexual harassment. I recently signed the updated policies, which now include prohibition of discrimination and harassment based on parental status, gender identity, and genetic information.

To view the agency's EEO policy, please click [here](#) and to view the agency's harassment policy, please click [here](#). I ask that you join me in adhering closely to these policies throughout your tenure at the Peace Corps.

Should you have any questions regarding the content of either policy statement, please contact Grace Ross, American Diversity Program manager.

Peace Corps Reviews Operations in Honduras

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 21, 2011 – The Peace Corps is conducting an ongoing review of the security environment in Honduras, and has cancelled its next volunteer training class while this review is being conducted.

All 158 currently serving volunteers are safe and accounted for and will participate in a conference in January before returning to the United States on administrative leave. Peace Corps will review the safety and security climate in Honduras before continuing with volunteer operations.

"The safety and security of all Peace Corps volunteers is the agency's highest priority," said Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams. "During this time, we are going to conduct a full review of the program. We thank the people of Honduras for their strong support of Peace Corps over the years."

Peace Corps has operated in Honduras since 1963. More than 5,500 Americans have served in Honduras since the program was established, working with communities on projects focused on health and HIV/AIDS prevention, water sanitation and youth development.

Peace Corps Reviews Operations in El Salvador and Guatemala

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 21, 2011 – The Peace Corps has cancelled its January 2012 volunteer training classes for El Salvador and Guatemala. Due to ongoing security concerns, the

agency is enhancing operational support to currently serving volunteers in these countries.

All currently serving volunteers in El Salvador and Guatemala are safe and accounted for. The Peace Corps will continue to closely monitor and assess the safety and security climate and enhance volunteer support in these countries.

The Peace Corps operated in El Salvador between 1962 and 1979, and returned in 1993. Over 2,000 Americans have served in El Salvador since the program was established, working with communities on projects focused on community, economic, and youth development. There are 113 volunteers currently serving in El Salvador.

The Peace Corps has operated in Guatemala since 1963. Over 4,800 Americans have served in Guatemala since the program was established, working with communities on projects focused on health, youth development, environment and agriculture. There are 222 volunteers currently serving in Guatemala.



"Michelle and I extend our warmest wishes for the holiday season to Peace Corps Volunteers serving around the world.

As ambassadors of hope and goodwill, Peace Corps Volunteers embody the American spirit of compassion and generosity. During the holidays and throughout the year, you carry forward our country's proud tradition of service, encouraging progress and fostering mutual respect and understanding across the globe. All Americans can draw strength from your example, and as a Nation, we are grateful for the inspiring work you do each day.

I wish you all the best for a joyous holiday season, and for continued blessings in the year ahead."