

KHOTSO

March 2011



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Message from the Country Director



Volunteers, staff and friends at a Classical Music Concert at the Convention Center on Feb 5th

Dear Volunteers,

It's hard to believe that it's been 1 year since Michael and I arrived in Lesotho. Sadly, last year will be forever marked by Tom Maresco's death, the 6 month anniversary of which we observe on March 3. I know that Tom and his family continue to remain in our thoughts and prayers.

On the positive side I'm pleased to say that I've visited Volunteers in every district, including more than half of the currently serving Volunteers (and hope to see the rest of you at your sites before the CHED 11 group swears in). Seeing you in action, learning more about what you're doing at your site and hearing from your counterparts is certainly one of the most rewarding aspects of my job. Working with the Peace Corps Lesotho staff also has been a real pleasure. I think being a Peace Corps staff member is one of the toughest jobs there is, but all our staff believe in the mission of Peace Corps and work hard to support the Volunteers.

We recently completed our annual strategic planning process and held an all day staff meeting in early February to assess progress over the past year. Although as a post we didn't achieve everything we set out to, we're proud of accomplishments such as more regular Volunteer site visits (more site visits were conducted between March and August of 2010 than in the previous 3 years), introduction of the Training Design and Management process, which aims to improve the continuum of Volunteer training, and enhancing site identification and assignment procedures. One of the big areas in which we did not make as much progress as we would have liked is staff development. Many of the local staff have been in their jobs for a quite a while but infrequently if ever receive refresher training. Addressing this in the

coming year will be a priority. Of course, we'll also try to continue to improve Volunteer training and support.

The 50th anniversary committee is busily planning events for this celebration. The series of district meetings that we're holding in February and March are serving as a prelude to the actual kick off, which will be on March 29th. We'll be holding a press conference at the National University of Lesotho (think JFK's speech announcing the PC at the Univ of Wisconsin in 1960), followed by a traveling photo gallery of Peace Corps Lesotho images throughout the years. Your VAC member will give you more information about other events in your district particularly around July 4th. We're also planning a large event tentatively to coincide with the swearing in of the CHED 11s to which all Volunteers will be invited. Again, stay tuned for more details.

The first district meeting was held in Maseru on February 3 and was attended by more than 60 people. Although given short notice, Jackie Tipword, Eric Pierce and Zach Rosen gave excellent presentations on their work, and we got a lot of great information about priorities in the district and areas where Peace Corps Volunteers could assist. We look forward to seeing all of you, your counterparts and supervisors and other district stakeholders at the remaining meetings.

In February, I conducted a few Goal 3 activities of my own by taking friends and family visiting Michael and me on site visits to see Joey Lehnhard, Eric Pierce and Rusty Delucia (ED 10) and Amy Jo Carson and Juliana Fulton (CHED 10). Our guests were totally impressed with the Volunteers' living and working conditions and activities that they're doing. Thanks to those Volunteers for being on display!

Have a great month!

Khotso Pula Nala
Kathy

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Administration – Victoria Mofolo

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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.

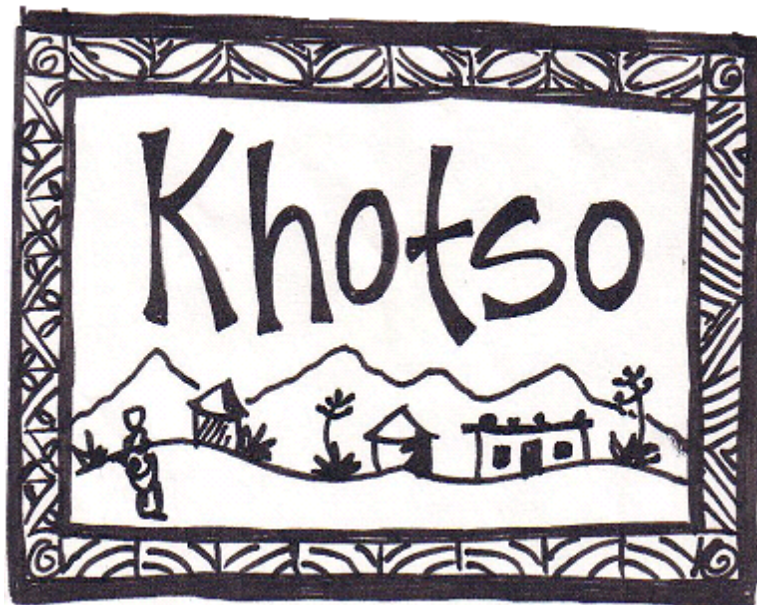
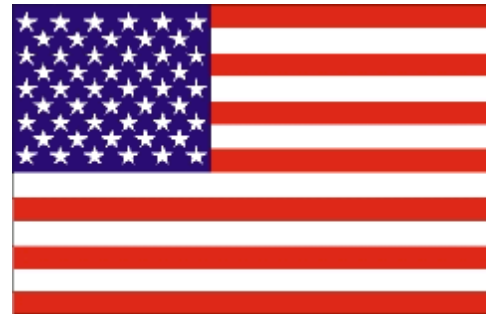
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you as to whether the information contained in this newsletter met your needs.

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.

**March**

Mahylis, Jocelyn	March 15
Anderson, Kelly	March 24
Green, Sara	March 25

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
Griffin, Carol	May 30

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Full name: Malitaba Hlabana

Job title: Program Assistant/Education

Background: Malitaba Hlabana was born in Lesotho and attended her high school in the same country. She got her BAED in 1995 from The National University of Lesotho. She started teaching English and Geography at Hlotse High school in 1996.

She was recruited by Peace Corps Lesotho as a Language Trainer in 1991 teaching new volunteers Sesotho Language while continuing her studies at NUL. Due to her hard work and dedication to her job as Language trainer she was promoted to Cross-culture coordinator position during Pre-Service training at Peace Corps, the main task was to help New American Peace Corps Volunteers to adjust well into a new culture and new work environment using Participatory Analysis. She partici-

pated in the writing of Language manuals for US Peace Corps and wrote language training sessions and reports, Mid PST reports and end of PST reports.

Malitaba got her Honors degree in Ge-



ography at University of Free State in South Africa in 2001 and her MA in Geography as well. She worked at Peace Corps office as Program Secretary and now she is working as Program Assistant for Education.

She likes volleyball, soccer and cricket. She enjoys working with Peace Corps as she is gaining new experiences each and every time she meets with new volunteers from America. She enjoys most working with volunteers at their sites.

Job prior to PC: She taught at Hlotse High School for five years. Before moving to Hlotse High I taught at Khethisa High School in 1995 immediately after writing her final year examination at NUL.

Family status (married? kids?): I am not married but I have two sons Thabo and Katleho. The old son is doing his C.O.S.C at Methodist High School. The young one is 1 year and 7 days.

Least favorite part of your job: Long meetings.

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

Advice for PCVs in Lesotho: Enjoy your stay in Lesotho and have your own experience.

PCV News Corner



Staff Birthdays



March

Bernard Letsella March 15

April

Tsatsi Sefefo April 19

May

Majara Ralintoane May 2

Makhauta Mokone May 26

Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays

March

March 11— Moshoeshoe Day (LS Holiday)*

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.

Admin Corner By Jim McCormick, AO

I cannot believe that in March I will be entering my fourth month in Lesotho. I guess the old adage "time flies when you are having fun" truly applies in my case. I AM having fun and a lot of it is having had the chance to meet almost all of you PCVs and by trying to help the Administrative Unit support you the best we can. Keep in mind that we are always open to suggestions and constructive criticism.

At this point I have either handed to you, e-mailed to you or sent via messenger to you your 2010 IRS W-2 form. Even

though by living outside the U.S. you have until June 15, 2011 to file your federal taxes, your state might require that you file by the April 18th date. Please be aware of your state requirements and if you need help with your federal taxes you can find it on the Peace Corps web site or by sending an e-mail to tax-help@peacecorps.gov.

At the risk of sounding like a broken record we would encourage you to try and find the time to complete the 2011 Living Allowance Survey. Last year we were successful in

obtaining an increase to the living allowance but unless we get at least 75% response we cannot ask for any adjustment.

As of March 28th 'M'e Victoria will officially be on maternity leave. We have started an office "baby pool" for April. The calendar is on the board in the reception area of the office. There are still some dates available. It is 10R per date selected, winner take all (300R)! Well...do you feel lucky!!!! Please stay safe everybody!



*Staff Corner,
Admin Corner &
Education Corner*

Education Corner By Malitaba Hlabana, ED PA

Great news! It looks like the portfolio review (incorporating both ED and CHED project review) is to go ahead in April. More detailed information will be communicated in due course but most likely the team will take a few days to visit some of the sites to familiarize themselves with the work that you are doing. We are very excited about this and we hope it will shed more light in the direction in which our program as a whole should take in addressing the needs of Basotho.

It's that time again when we wear our boots and get out and visit Volunteers at their sites. To kick start this, we will visit the seven Volunteers, in Quthing, Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka and Ryan in Leribe during the week beginning March 21, 2011. Here are the specific days and times:

March 21 - Kimiko @ 10am
March 21 - Ariel @ 2pm
March 22 - Erica @ 10am
March 23 - Sara @ 12pm
March 24 - Parker @ 9am
March 24 - Tam @ 2pm
March 25 - Ryan @ 9am

During these visits we would like to meet with your supervisors, counterparts, colleagues and in some instances visit your classes. We ask that you be prepared to take us through your routine and please do not change your schedule to fit us in we would like to follow you 'around'.

The rest of the site visits will be communicated to you in due course.

We are looking forward to see you at your sites.

Spotlight on Global Education for Young Learners

Today's classrooms are filled with a rainbow mix of diverse students from nearly every continent, making learning environments rich with experience, culture, language and history. Children are curious about the world around them and how they relate to it. In order to better understand themselves and others, an exploration of cultures encourages cooperation and relationships. Celebrating both similarities and differences, children appreciate what each person has to contribute, viewing themselves as empowered, global citizens.

With Building Bridges for Young Learners, Coverdell World Wise Schools offers a wonderful new resource for educators teaching pre-kindergarten to fourth grade students about the diversity of our world and how we are



more alike than different. Building Bridges for Young Learners consists of a series of five lessons and accompanying e-books, complete with audio narration and gorgeous photos from Peace Corps countries. They can be implemented as a whole unit or as stand-alone, standards-based lessons. Additionally, most e-books contain short, adaptable teaching suggestions that build cross-cultural awareness, respect, and communication in the classroom.

Enhance cultural understanding and appreciation through the Speakers Match and Correspondence Match programs. By connecting students directly with Volunteers who have served or are currently serving in one of 139 Peace Corps countries, they can listen to first-hand accounts of service, view photos of faraway places and hear a foreign language being spoken. This experience immediately brings

cultures alive and offers new global perspectives to young learners.

Using other Coverdell World Wise Schools e-books, continue the exploration of the world's countries and cultures: visit Jordan with Bountiful Harvest, the latest addition to the electronic library. Young learners can also visit Namibia with Go to School for a Day and Lesotho in Playing Together with Kids.

Message From Blain Cerney, International Development Fellow, CRS Lesotho

I wanted to share with you some of the work that has been accomplished with your PCVs.

In Leribe, Haley has continued to help gather information related to ECCD programming and important contact information. Most recently, she helped to coordinate a visit by

a CRS Consultant to the Leribe district to conduct a needs assessment in four villages. She has been a valuable asset to the Assessment process.

Locally, I have met with Tam and she is helping me to develop an ECCD Kit, similar to the one that was created by MOET for both Science and Math. I have shared with her a variety of information regarding international development standards for children under 5, as well as local standards. We are currently synthesizing this information to match it to the MOET ECCD Curriculum. Tomorrow morning at 830 we will be meeting with Longman, a producer of ECCD Kits, to learn more about packages and appropriate content. This meeting should help guide our own kit development.

Thank you very much for making your volunteers available to work with us and supporting their efforts.

CHED Corner By Charles Miller—APCD CHED, Selloane Pitikoe—CHED PA

Hi CHEDers. Thanks to all of you for submitting your trimester reports, and for the six who still have not submitted, we know who you are and where to find you! Please submit your report soonest so we don't have to send out our own Special Forces to collect! We're enjoying reading your reports and are working on providing feedback to all of you. Overall, we've been VERY impressed with the breadth and depth of your activities, as well as your successes with community integration. Keep up the great work, everyone!

CHED 10 PDM and HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshops:

The dates for the CHED 10 PDM and HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshops for Volunteers and counterparts are taking place in Mohale's Hoek from March 1 - 4, 2011 at Mount Maluti Hotel; and at Likeleng Lodge in Botha Bothe from March 7 through 10, 2011..

CHED 09 COS Conference:

The CHED 09 COS Conference will take place May 3 - 5,

2011 at the Maluti Mountain Lodge in Clarens. We will be sending out formal invitation letters toward the end of March, with arrival and departure logistics. Stay tuned.

Project Plan Review:

The Project Plan review has been pushed to April. 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 are interested in being considered for participation in this process, please text Charles and 'M'e Selloane. Unfortunately we'll only be able to accommodate a limited number of participants, but would like to make our selections from those interested in helping to review and revise our project plan.

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 iden-

tifying sites. Contact 'M'e Selloane or Charles if you have sites in mind. We're especially interested increasing CHED Volunteer preference in Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Mochale's Hoek, and Mafeteng Districts, while maintaining Volunteer numbers in Leribe, Botha Bothe, Berea and Maseru Districts. We will not be placing new Volunteers in Maseru City. Please do help!

CHED 11 PST:

In March we will send a letter to all of you soliciting interest in helping with training the CHED 11s. Just as we did last year, CHED and Education Volunteers will be considered based on training needs, as well as your experience and the added value you bring to training. If you are interested in assisting with any aspect of training, it is important that you write a compelling argument to assist with training.

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 you are interested in hosting a CHED Volunteer for HVV, please let us know. We will also be sending a solicitation of interest letter regarding HVV.

Stay tuned for both of these Solicitation Letters.

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:

- ◇ Evan Anderman-Hahn turned a challenge into an opportunity, and now works with a local radio station to plan and produce public service announcements.
- ◇ Kelly Anderson showed coworkers how to access correct information on HIV and AIDS by using the internet through their cell phones.
- ◇ Amy Jo Carson did such a great job teaching colleagues how to plan and write a grant proposal for Pabalong's "Home is Where the Heart Is" Campaign, that her colleagues later wrote a grant themselves which was successfully funded.
- ◇ In addition to teaching the Qogolosing students, Kevin Casimer is teaching his fellow teachers how to use the computer for securing the schools records.
- ◇ After several unsuccessful attempts, Grant Comstock and Sebetia Clinic held three HIV testing events with local schools, and with assistance from Chante Liggins and her host organization, LESEDI, taught Life Skills to the youth. The events opened the door for continued Life Skills education, and the success of the project reinforced teamwork among Clinic staff.
- ◇ Kate Glanville held a Climate Change Awareness Day where participants were taught about soil amendments and the effects of climate change. Additionally Kate is mentoring secondary schools girls and teaching them about the biology of HIV and AIDS.
- ◇ Carol Griffin taught youth of an HIV Positive Support Group proper oral and physical hygiene, and distributed donated hygiene kits of soap, a toothbrush and tooth paste.
- ◇ Mike Kerr is training the staff of Khohlo-Ntso Primary School on library management, after the 2008 departure of a previous RPCV who worked with the school to construct the library. Mike's training will help ensure the hard work of the previous PCV is not lost.
- ◇ Chante Liggins helped her organization organize and hold a 7.2 km fun walk around Teyateyaneng, promoting the Leseli Youth Sports Programme, raising awareness about HIV and AIDS.
- ◇ The multi-talented Sarah Marlow assisted the Matelile Tajane Community Development Trust's Agriculture Centre in vaccinating 18 piglets with multivitamins.
- ◇ Kelsey Marsh and her colleagues developed an American nursery rhyme book for the Early Childhood Care and Development teacher to implement in the classroom.
- ◇ Danielle Sanni worked with fellow teachers at her school to hold "Funny Day" to raise awareness about OVC's and the importance of supporting HIV positive community members. The school raised over 320 Rand for OVCs. In addition to strengthening her Sesotho through a local tutor, Danielle takes the opportunity to learn more about the Basotho culture through her tutor.
- ◇ Zach Rosen worked with MCC in partnership with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the US Embassy to promote the free screening of the film "Human Trafficking" to raise awareness about the problem of human trafficking in Lesotho. Zach also worked with a local poet to draft a trafficking-themed poem which was performed at the film screening. Additionally, Zach continued to work with the poet to have her poem recorded professionally in English and Sesotho to be played on the radio.
- ◇ In addition to the breadth of activities with MCA-L, Jesse Schofield has convinced a local entrepreneur to serve root beer floats, at least to him. Not only is this a Goal 2 activity, but if the shop owner agrees to add this to the "menu", Jesse's idea could result in more business for the shopkeeper.

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



CHED Corner



Health Corner By Dr. Victor

OBESITY

Obesity means accumulation of excess fat in the body. It is an epidemic in the United States and in other developed countries. It has many serious long-term consequences for your health, and it is the second leading cause of preventable deaths in the United States.

More than half of Americans are overweight, including at least 1 in 5 children. Obesity is on the rise in our society because food is abundant and physical activity is minimal.

Obesity is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) of greater than 30. The BMI is a measure of your weight relative to your height. The BMI is defined as weight in kilograms divided by height in meters squared (kg/m^2). It can also be calculated for weight in pounds and height in inches by following these steps:

- Multiply your weight in pounds by 705
- Then divide by your height in inches
- Divide this by your height in inches again

What does BMI tell you? The value of the BMI helps you determine whether you are at a healthy weight, overweight, or obese. It also helps you determine the degree to which you may be obese. A BMI value between 18.5 and 24.9 is considered healthy weight; from 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight, while a BMI greater than 30 is considered obese.

Causes of obesity

Weight gain occurs when you eat more calories than your body uses up. If the food you eat provides more calories than your body needs, the excess is converted to fat and stored in your body. Initially, fat cells increase in size. When they can no longer expand, they increase in number. If you lose weight, the size of the fat cells decreases, but the number of cells does not.

The reasons for the imbalance between calorie intake and consumption vary by individual. Obesity is generally the result of a combination of fac-

tors – environmental & behavioral, genetic, emotional, etc. Although genetic factors are now known to play a significant role in the development of obesity, the tendency towards overweight and obesity is highly fostered by environmental and behavioral factors: - lack of physical activity combined with unhealthy eating patterns.

- Environmental factors: The most important environmental factor is lifestyle. Your eating habits and activity level are partly learned from the people around you. Overeating and sedentary habits (inactivity) are the most important risk factors for obesity.

- Genes: Obesity tends to run in families. This is caused both by genes and by shared diet and lifestyle habits. Having obese relatives does not guarantee that you will be obese.

- Emotions: Some people overeat because of depression, hopelessness, anger, boredom, and many other reasons that have nothing to do with hunger. This doesn't mean that overweight and obese people have more emotional problems than other people. It just means that their feelings influence their eating habits, causing them to overeat. In some unusual cases, obesity may be used as a defense mechanism because of the perceived social pressures related to being more physically desirable, particularly in young girls. In these cases, as with the other emotional causes, psychological intervention may be helpful.

Certain medical conditions and medications can also cause or promote obesity, although these are much less common causes of obesity than overeating and inactivity.

Effects of obesity

The effects of obesity in terms of death, disability and morbidity are devastating. It is the second leading cause of premature death (second only to smoking). Both overweight and obesity are associated with an increased risk of hypertension, heart disease, diabetes,

stroke, certain types of cancer, arthritis, gallbladder disease, breathing problems, and psychological disorders such as depression.

Obesity is unhealthy because excess weight puts a strain on your heart. It can raise your blood pressure and blood cholesterol and make diabetes more likely to develop. Losing excessive weight and staying at a healthy weight is one of the best ways to reduce your risk of heart problems and other diseases if you are overweight or obese. It's not easy but it's possible.

Obesity Treatment

Effective weight management involves behavior modification which is a lifelong commitment and includes at least two components:

- Healthful eating, emphasizing a reduction in total calories, a lowered fat consumption, and an increase in vegetables, fruits and whole grains.

- Frequent and regular physical activity. Moderate physical activity or exercise on most days of the week of at least 30 minutes per day for adults and 60 minutes per day for children is recommended. Physical activity contributes to weight loss by helping to burn off excess calories. It also helps to maintain weight loss. For most people who are overweight or obese, the safest and most effective way to lose weight is to eat less and exercise more. If you eat less and exercise more, you will lose weight. It is as simple as that. There are no magic pills. Medical treatment of obesity focuses on lifestyle changes such as eating less and increasing activity level.

By decreasing daily calorie intake by 500 calories or expending an extra 500 calories during exercise each day, you will lose about 1 pound per week. Regular exercise also helps your heart and lungs and lowers triglyceride levels that can cause heart disease. It also increases the HDL ("good cholesterol") levels. Even sim-



Health Corner

ple measures such as taking the stairs (instead of using the elevator) and short walks eventually add up to a lot of calories burned.

There are medications that can promote weight loss, but they work only in conjunction with eating less and exercising more. Some weight-loss products are known to be dangerous. The safety of others is in question. This includes certain prescription and over-the-counter drugs and herbal supplements. Avoid them!

Prevention

Implementing prevention programs is important to controlling the obesity epidemic. Adopting a lifestyle that includes a healthy diet and exercise can prevent obesity. Healthy weight, overweight and obese individuals can all benefit from using obesity prevention strategies. If you are at a healthy weight, you can prevent weight gain by continuing your healthy habits and adopting new healthy habits. If you are overweight or obese, preventing further weight gain is the first part of treatment, and you can do so by making healthy changes. It is important to assess your behavior and environment. As already indicated, the amount and types of foods you eat, and your physical activity habits are important factors in controlling your weight. The environment in which you live may also contribute or cue you to adopt poor eating or exercise habits. This is especially true in today's society which is dominated by speed and convenience. For example, use of escalators, elevators, etc make us less physically active.

Reversing obesity and its health risks requires changing the habits of a lifetime. Eating less over the long-term means learning to think about your eating habits and patterns. What makes you overeat? Coffee break at work? Going out with friends? Watching TV? Late afternoon energy lag? Late night sweet tooth? Are you the one who finishes the last serving of dinner just so there won't be any leftovers? Do you eat high-calorie fast

foods or snacks because you don't have time or energy to cook? Having some insight into your overeating habits helps you to avoid your problem situations and reach your weight goal.

Likewise, increasing your activity level is largely a matter of changing your attitude. You don't have to be a marathon runner. Look for ways to increase your activity level doing things you enjoy.

Do you have a health care concern?

Email:

QualityNurse@peacecorps.gov

At Peace Corps we believe in creating a culture that embraces quality, patient safety, and service satisfaction. In order to ensure that we continue to provide quality care, we offer the Volunteer the opportunity to express concerns and if necessary, file a complaint if the Volunteer is dissatisfied with care received.

The Quality Improvement (QI) department receives and processes Volunteer concerns regarding Peace Corps health care delivery systems; including but not limited to Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs), consultants, contracted facilities and Volunteer Support.

All posts are required to post the name, title, location, and telephone number of the individual at post responsible for receiving concerns and conducting investigations. In addition, there is available at headquarters, a QI email mailbox address and instructions on how to file a concern.

Volunteers are encouraged to follow the process outlined below to file a concern regarding their health care:

1. If you are comfortable, inform the PCMO that you are dissatisfied with the care you are receiving or
2. Follow the post policy for reporting concerns or
3. File an email concern with the QI department at headquarters

In your email include:

- Your Name
- Your location
- PCMO (or other health care provider) involved
- Detailed description of your concern

The Volunteer can expect a response from headquarters within five (5) business days.

Anonymity will not be guaranteed, we may need to disclose the Volunteer's name to research the concern.

The Volunteer should note that email is not a secure method of communication. If the Volunteer chooses to communicate via email, Peace Corps will ask the Volunteer to sign a waiver acknowledging the risk of communicating via email (Attachment A).

The Volunteer is guaranteed there will be no repercussions from Peace Corps staff in relation to the concern. This forum (email) is open to Volunteers only.

This is not a method for reporting emergency or urgent issues. Contact the Field Support Nurse at the 24 hour emergency telephone number (301.790.4749) if you have an urgent or emergent issue that has not been resolved at the local level (post).

If a Volunteer has any questions about this process, they are encouraged to contact the Quality Improvement Nurse at 202.692.1571.

All questions or concerns are taken seriously and will be investigated

STAFF SCHEDULE

Feb 22 – Mar 3 – Kathy on leave
 Mar 1 to 3 – PDM and HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshop – Southern PCVs and Counterparts at Mhaleshoek
 Mar 7 to 10 – PDM and HIV/AIDS Capacity Building Workshop – Northern PCVs and Counterparts
 Mar 14 to 18 – Clement, 'Masechaba, 'Makhauta, 'Malisema, Nthoalo on Regional Meetings
 Mar 15 – Charles, 'M'e Mamokola, Nt. Tsatsi at Mohale's Hoek District Meeting
 Mar 15 – 'M'e Masechaba, Ntate Lephoto, 'M'e Makhauta at Mokhotlong District Meeting
 Mar 17 – Charles, 'M'e Mamokola, 'M'e Malitaba, Ntate Mohale at Botha Bothe District Meeting
 Mar 17 – 'M'e Masechaba, Ntate Lephoto, 'M'e Makhauta at Thaba Tseka District Meeting
 Mar 21 to 25 – Clement on Site Visits at Quthing, QNek, Mokhotlong & TTseka
 Mar 22 – Charles, Ntate Mohale, 'M'e Jimi, Ntate Nthoalo at Berea District Meeting
 Mar 22 – Masechaba, Kathy, 'M'e Selloane, Ntate Bernard at Mafeteng District Meeting
 Mar 24 – 'M'e Malitaba, Ntate Mohale, 'M'e Jimi at Leribe District Meeting
 Mar 28 to Jul 6 – Victoria on maternity leave
 Mar 29 – 50th Anniversary Launch at National University of Lesotho
 Mar 30 – 'Malitaba on site visit at Leribe
 April 11-22—Portfolio Review (CHED and ED project reviews)

District Meetings:

Most District Meetings have now been scheduled and confirmed, and we have sent invitation letters out to each of you. If you have not yet received information on the District Meeting, or if you still have questions, please contact us and we'll clarify any questions you have. Again, District Meetings involve Volunteers, Counterparts, and Supervisors from both the ED and CHED projects, as well as other community stakeholders, and provide an opportunity to educate others about Peace Corps and our projects, and to strengthen collaboration.

Duty Officer Schedule

Mar 7 - Mar 13, 2011	HIV Coordinator	Apr 4 - Apr 10, 2011	ITS
Mar 14 - Mar 20, 2011	PA ED	Apr 11 - Apr 17, 2011	AO
Mar 21 - Mar 27, 2011	PA CHED	Apr 18 - Apr 24, 2011	GSO
Mar 28 - Apr 3, 2011	SSC	Apr 25 - May 1, 2011	CD

PCV Life

**Have You Checked Your KIP-o-meter Lately.....?**

By Amy Jo Carson, CHED 10



Keeping It Positive (KIP), "yep," that is the name of the game. I recently had to do my own KIP tune-up and thought that I would share a few tips that I discovered along my journey toward KIP. First and foremost, if you want to feel positive, it pays to decrease the downers in your life. With practice, you can resist worrisome or negative thoughts and, perhaps, even transform your internal critic into more of a "cheering" squad. ("Yes", I was a Texas High School cheerleader!)

1.) Avoid dwelling on downers – Focusing on negatives isn't just unpleasant, it can also make you less effective in tackling tasks you face.

- Ask yourself if the issue is really worth your energy. Will this issue matter in a year, for example?
- Tell yourself that you will only worry about it at a specific time later. Chances are you will feel better by the appointed time.
- Instead of just spinning your worry wheels, try a concrete problem-solving exercise.
- Distract yourself: Watch an episode of "Glee", pump up some music, have a play date with my ntja - Nako Joe, find something fun to do.

2.) Change unhealthy self-talk –You may have been running negative messages in your head for a long time. But research shows that you can learn to shift your thoughts and that, over time, you can literally change your brain. Consider trying some techniques from cognitive-behavioral therapy, which works in part by looking at how changing your thoughts can change your life.

- Ask yourself if your negative thought is really true. Are you really a terrible PCV if one of your projects did not go so well?
- Remember any achievements that disprove your insecurity. (Remember times when you were outgoing and confident!)
- Imagine what you would tell a friend if he or she was worrying in ways that you are. You would likely convince him or her to wait a bit before assuming the worst.
 - Beware of all or nothing thinking. Disappointing a friend does not mean you are doomed to disappoint your friend all the time and vice-versa.
 - Consider alternative explanations. If your supervisor has not responded to

your idea for an IGA or a proposal, it could be because he's busy and not because he does not like the idea.

Remember, too, that thinking negatively can not only drag down our moods and our actions, it can even affect our health. Again, the experts say that it is worthwhile and possible to learn how to think more positively. Research also suggests through studies of patients with life-threatening disease such as AIDS, that those who remain optimistic show symptoms later and survive longer than patients who confront reality more objectively. According to these authors, the positive effects of optimism are mediated mainly at a cognitive level.

Inevitably, there are times when we must go through negative situations. Maybe people say something negative about us, or they show rejection or even resentment against us. In such situations, it may be difficult to stay positive. We may be inclined to react negatively to them. That will not do us any good; however doing so will just make the situation worse. People may behave even more negatively to us. Our day would be filled with anger and disappointment. At the end, nobody wins.

Though it is not easy, it is important to stay positive in negative situations. Beat the negative situations by staying positive. Here are some tips that I gathered during my KIP journey that might work for you:

- 1.) Never respond when you are not calm. If you are not sure that you are not calm, don't respond. Take time to calm yourself down first.
- 2.) Take a deep breath as a first step to calm you down.
- 3.) Speak in a gentle tone to reduce the tension of the situation,
- 4.) Realize that you can find opportunities in negative situations. Albert Einstein said: "In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity."
- 5.) Look at the content of what people say to you for something positive that you can act upon to improve yourself. Don't just reject the whole message.
- 6.) For the rest of the message which is negative, simply ignore it.
- 7.) Maintain a positive view of the person or people. Maybe you do not like their messages or behavior, but it does not mean that you can hate them personally.
- 8.) Realize that having negative feelings will just hurt you, not them. So there is no reason for you to have any negative feelings.
- 9.) If you make mistakes, be open to admit it.
- 10.) If you make mistakes, remember this quote by George Bernard Shaw: "A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing."
- 11.) Listen to anything motivational to feed positive thoughts into your mind.
- 12.) Talk to a positive friend who can encourage you or reach out to someone from the PC Peer Support Network (PSN).
- 13.) Remember your favorite quotes to give you inspiration and motivation. Post them anywhere you can. This is also one reason to have a quote for the day. Here is one of my favorites (I collect them!): "Wherever you go, no matter what the weather, always bring your own sunshine." – Anthony J. D'Angelo (That is SUNSHINE, not moonshine!)
- 14.) Look at negative situations as your training sessions for real life. The higher you climb in life, the worse the negative situations can be, so you'd better be prepared for them.
- 15.) Realize that you can't please everyone. In fact nobody can. Sometimes you need to just let some people go. Realizing this will relieve you from a lot of unnecessary burden so that you can focus on the people whom you interact with positively.

So on that final note, check your KIP radar today, and maybe give some of that positive psychology a try. It can't hurt and just think whom else you might be helping at the same time you are helping yourself. Beware, KIP is contagious!

From the Tech Committee **By Nathan Birhanu, ED 10**



Hello everyone,

Do you remember those embassy computers that were donated to Peace Corps a while back? Well, we still have them. There are roughly ten of them currently and they are all sitting in the Peace Corps office. The main issue with them is that they are missing hard drives which can be costly. I have spoken with Deepak and we want to get the computers distributed out to volunteers. Here are some of the conditions we are looking to fit:

1. Your school or organization can greatly benefit from a computer being brought in by volunteer. This means that your site has no computers there and, if so, the one they



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do possess is inadequate to perform practical tasks.

2. The location where the computer will be kept will offer adequate protection for the computers and will provide electricity to power the computer. This power may come from a generator or solar panels.

3. Your organization or school will provide the R500 to buy the required hard drive for the computer.

4. Your organization or school will arrange transportation for the computer to be picked up from Maseru and delivered to your site. The volunteer may also coordinate with the Peace Corps GSO to drop it off near his or her location if GSO is headed your way.

Some other issues to state is that these computers will be running Linux instead of Windows. You can't run Microsoft office on the computers but there are adequate word processing programs such as OpenOffice which is free and works just as fine. We also want to stress that the site should have a need for a computer instead of a volunteers simply wishing to bring a computer to his or her site. So, volunteers with rural sites are encouraged to apply. Schools with adequate, functional computer labs should not apply since an addition of one more computer will have little impact. Please forward me any questions you may have. Thanks.

News from Around the Peace Corps World

Anniversary Events Take Place across United States and Overseas throughout 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C., March 1, 2011 – The Peace Corps commemorates 50 years of service that began with the signing of President John F. Kennedy's executive order establishing the federal agency on March 1, 1961. Broadcast quality audio and video of the historic event is available on the Peace Corps website.

Several events will occur in March and throughout 2011. President Obama and several states across the country are issuing proclamations in honor of Peace Corps, recognizing the achievements of the agency and honoring its volunteers, past and present.

"Throughout our history, the Peace Corps has adapted and responded to the issues of the times. In an ever-changing world, volunteers meet challenges with innovation and compassion," said Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams. "As we move to the future, I envision a Peace Corps that remains vibrant for another 50 years, one that grows, adapts, and continues to carry the torch of President Kennedy's revolutionary idea and responds to President Obama's call to service."

To mark the milestone, Peace Corps staff and returned volunteers are commemorating the anniversary through local service projects both in the United States and in Peace Corps host countries. Peace Corps staff in the United States will partake in community-service projects, such as cleaning a community park, sorting donations at a food bank, serving lunch to veterans, and tutoring students in afterschool programs. Peace Corps staff overseas will work with volunteers on a variety of projects, including agriculture, business and information technology, education, environment, and health and HIV/AIDS.

President Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship through three goals: helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women; helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served; and helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

Since 1961, more than 200,000 Americans have served in the Peace Corps in 139 countries. Today, there are more than 8,650 Peace Corps volunteers serving in 77 countries. Volunteers are assisting communities in a variety of ways, including teaching English as a second language, working with HIV/AIDS prevention and care programs, and providing advice and instruction on nutrition and food availability issues to mitigate the adverse consequences of the food security crisis. Americans can make a difference in communities around the world—from green mountain valleys in Central America, villages at the edge of the desert in Africa, to remote towns in Asia.

Events taking place across the country include:

- New York, N.Y., on March 1: The Empire State Building will be illuminated in red, white, and brown in honor of the Peace Corps.
- Los Angeles, Calif., on March 2-4: A panel presentation with Director Williams and Chris Matthews will be among 50th anniversary events at the University of California, Los Angeles.
- Houston, Texas on March 3: The 50th Anniversary World Fair and Reception will feature photos

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and artifacts, and showcase traditional dance performances from current and former Peace Corps countries.

- Boston, Mass., on March 5: The Kennedy Service Awards Ceremony and Commemoration will be held at the JFK Library and Museum. Caroline Kennedy will attend.
- Madison, Wisc., on March 25-26: The University of Wisconsin-Madison African Studies Program will host a discussion titled the Peace Corps and Africa, Honoring 50 Years.
- Portland, Ore., on April 3: The Peace Corps and the National Peace Corps Association will host a 50th Anniversary World Expo at Portland State University, showcasing the work of volunteers.
- San Francisco, Calif., on April 15-16: Stanford University, ranked in the top 20 for producing the most Peace Corps volunteers since 1961, will host a reception and symposium to mark the 50th anniversary.
- Atlanta, Ga., on May 18: The Lillian Carter Awards Ceremony will recognize an outstanding senior returned Peace Corps volunteer at The Carter Center.
- Washington, D.C. June 30 – July 11: The Peace Corps will be a featured program at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall. The festival is open to the public and historically draws more than 1 million visitors.

There will also be 50th anniversary commemoration events taking place overseas, particularly in countries that have hosted Peace Corps volunteers since 1961. To learn more about official Peace Corps commemorative events, visit www.peacecorps.gov/50.

March 1, 2011

TO: Peace Corps Global
FROM: Aaron S. Williams, Director
SUBJECT: Women's History Month

I am pleased to announce March 2011 as Women's History Month at the Peace Corps.

This year's theme, "Our History is Our Strength," recognizes the immense contributions of women throughout American history. The impetus for establishing Women's History Month dates back to March 8, 1857, when women from New York City factories staged a protest over working conditions. However, it was not until 1981 that Congress officially established National Women's History Week and then expanded the week to a month in 1987.

The courage and resolve of those women in the factories of New York City and that of millions of other American women across the country have helped define our nation. From the first woman to receive a medical degree in 1849, Elizabeth Blackwell, to Alice Paul's fight for the Equal Rights Amendment, to the first female U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Antonia Novella, in 1990, women have shown their strength, have altered our history, and have been role models for the generations that have followed.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we recognize and applaud the many women who have served as Peace Corps Volunteers. We also are grateful for the Peace Corps Volunteers, both female and male, who have worked, and continue to work, to empower women and girls in local communities around the world through Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) and other Women in Development (WID) projects.

In addition to the month-long observance, International Women's Day will be celebrated globally on Tuesday, March 8. Peace Corps Volunteers are planning activities and celebrations at many of our 77 posts to commemorate the day.

I encourage all Peace Corps employees to participate in the activities at the Peace Corps and in your communities that recognize the contributions women have made both in America and around the world.

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