

KHOTSO

November 2013

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

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Message from the Country Director

Dear Volunteers,

This month we focus much of the information in the Khotso on HIV/Aids prevention. As we approach December 1st, World Aids Day, the ideas and resources here may help you to see how you and your community can mark this. We received PEPFAR and Peace Corps HQ visitors this month who observed the good work of Volunteers in Lesotho. They also analyzed the unique characteristics of the epidemic in Lesotho and shared some fresh perspectives on how we can take this on. Their findings will be shared with everyone working in this field, and we can add their reports to all that DAR knows, what PCVs see in their sites, elements of our project frameworks, and your creativity!



What can be done to overcome the stigma surrounding HIV/Aids that remains here, despite the astoundingly high numbers of people infected? Can PCVs, with their unique ability to reach out to youth, create new ways to encourage people to know their status- and the status of their partners? Should ABC become CAB or CBA, or something else? I encourage you all to talk to each other about this- and stay tuned for the upcoming call for participants in a PCV focus group that will come together to think outside of the box about how to bring down the HIV incidence rate in Lesotho.

On another topic, please use this month to complete the online training course "Sexual Assault Services and Support." Making sure all Volunteers are aware of recent policy changes, Peace Corps has added new information to the PST training sessions. For those of you already serving in the field when the support services have expanded and been clarified, this online course will bring you fully up to date. To the first Volunteers here who have completed the training- I thank you very much! And I thank the PCVs who are persevering in order to identify when and where they can schedule this task- and those who are waiting for answers from tech support. I know that completing this course online has not been easy in many cases, for a variety of reasons. Your time, attention, and courage in addressing this are noted and appreciated.

Sala hantle,

Wendy

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor – Wendy Van Damme

Editor – Lebohang Ranooe

Contributors:

Eric Goldman

Clement Lephoto

Malitaba Hlabana

Selloane Pitikoe

Mamakhetha Moranye

Majimisi Machai

Jacqueline Muhammad

Anri Tanabe

Amanda Frye

Mary Beth Bird

Wendy Stein

Christian Perry

Kyle Oney

Michael Solano

Janelle Leza

Richard Rowan



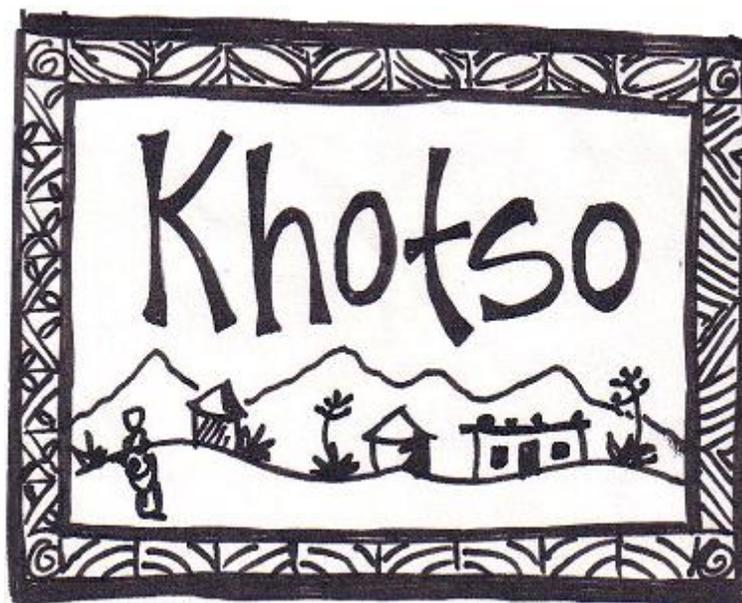
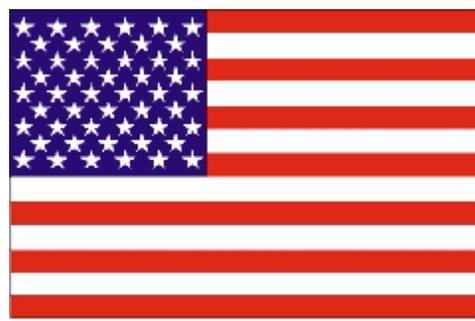
From the Editor

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 e-mailed and a hardcopy made available in the office on or about the 1st of each month. Please make sure that your correct 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.

Distribution – Lebohang Ranooe



PCV & STAFF BIRTHDAYS**November**

November	3	James Kruger
November	3	Eunicia Nkoro- Training Centre Manager
November	10	Amy Mycoff
November	14	Bonnie Lawrence
November	15	Randi Helgesen
November	16	Wendy Van Damme- Country Director
November	18	Trina Wagnac
November	20	Lebohang Ranooe- Receptionist
November	22	Priyanka Vedarthan
November	22	Dr.Clement Lephoto- APCD ED
November	23	Carol Hayes
November	26	Sarah Reno

December

December	4	Morgan Nees Van Baalen
December	6	Chelsea Kelleher
December	8	Delia Helie
December	14	Ezekiel Landes
December	15	Aparna Jayaraman
December	23	Peter Selete- PST Logistician/ Driver
December	26	Mishelle Eysallenne
December	30	Maliabo Ramaliehe- Office Janitor

PEACE CORPS LESOTHO HOLIDAYS (Office closed these days)

November	11	Veterans' Day	(US Holiday)
November	28	Thanksgiving Day	(US Holiday)

STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH – Ntate Bernard Letsella/Gardener

Ntate Bernard Lets'ella has done exceptionally well in keeping the Peace Corps office and Training Centre surroundings appealing. The brightness and good smell of the flowers at the office entrance welcome staff and visitors, providing motivation from the door steps, even before staff arrive at their desks. Ntate Bernard is not only passionate about his gardening work but is also available and willing to take on extra or additional duties. Recently these actions

have included supporting the installation of burglar bars with a vendor, traveling to assist in site preparation, and being available to drive staff to various places as and when deemed necessary. Ntate Bernard is a staff member who is always careful of PCV and staff safety and security, vehicle maintenance, and prompt follow up. His positive and observant nature has helped many of us. Peace Corps is grateful to him for his dedication to work and his excellent performance.

ED CORNER by Ntate Clement and 'M'e 'Malitaba**Education News!**

First of all we wish to thank all the Volunteers who hosted the trainees from October 22nd through 25th. This was an extremely useful exercise for the trainees, adding to the reality of Peace Corps service from a Volunteer's perspective. Rea leboha.

Ed13 Mid Service

We are aiming for the weekend of January 31st, 2014 since the schools are once again opening earlier than we anticipated. Please plan to arrive on Friday, January 31st and return back to site on February 2nd. We will communicate specific logistical arrangements in due course. In the meantime, if you think of any particular themes you would like covered at the workshop please let us know.

Trimester #1 reporting

The new VRF is soon to be introduced and as soon as that happens we will export from this end as usual. In the meantime please make some notes on your activities and items to report elsewhere. The little we have seen of the new VRF is that its user friendly!

Gold Star Activities**Nick Mast ED 2012**

This September we culminated our work on the first Sekonyela High School Magazine. The project has been going since early last year. Several teachers in the English department approached me with the idea to have a student-made magazine to encourage English composition and computer skills. They were very enthusiastic and helped to select the students and keep them motivated.

All the content of the magazine was solicited from the student population at large. Then, we picked about 20 students in all, some to be editors and others to do the typing and publishing of the magazine. Each group had a mix of students from different grade levels and of different abilities, the idea being that next year; the younger students will have some experience and will take over as leaders for the next edition. The editors collected scripts from students and marked them. They worked in conjunction with one of the English teachers to select the best scripts and make sure they were free of errors. I then worked with the publishers to type and compile all the scripts and pictures into a single document. This work was supposed to finish in June, but took longer than expected when revision and exams started. Eventually though, we managed to complete the project.

The staff and administration were very pleased with this project and consider it a great accomplishment for our students. They set aside a Friday for us to have a "Magazine Launch Party", complete with songs, dances, dramas, and ribbon cutting ceremony. The magazine was sold for M5 each, and through these sales, the Magazine managed to raise about M400, which they want to put towards the purchase of a color printer. Many of the students who I worked with gained a lot of knowledge about how to operate computers, specifically word-processing. Several are very enthusiastic and, since the magazine work is over for this year, have been returning to practice typing their own compositions and teaching other students how to do so. We all consider this first edition a great success. I am very happy with it, but am very anxious to see if, now that we have worked out a good system, the students and staff will work together to produce a second edition in the coming school year.

Sadie Nelson ED 2012

During this reporting session I organized an HIV Awareness workshop for my Form C life skills class with the assistance of World Vision. I was in charge of organizing the sessions and the facilitators for each session over a three day workshop and World Vision had promised to provide food in bulk for the workshop participants. They did deliver the food, but not until halfway through the workshop.

By the end of the workshop we were only halfway through the food items that were provided late to the workshop. Instead of dividing the remaining food goods among the staff at the school which was the first suggestion, we came up with the idea of having the participants of the workshop use their newly acquired knowledge to facilitate another, shorter workshop for the primary school children.

In this capacity, the participants of the first workshop were able to cement their understanding of the life skills topics they had learned as well as become positive role models for the younger, impressionable primary students. There were only 7 primary students in attendance when there should have been 20; however, I believe this was a successful event in that the Form C students were willing and eager to help spread their knowledge. It warmed my heart to see.

[CHED and HY CORNER by M'e Selloane & M'e Mamakhetha](#)

Likhomo le manemane a tsona baithaopil The summer season is here-unfortunately it is very hot, dry and dusty.

HY 13 Site Visits

We wish to acknowledge the warm welcome that we received during the first site visits to some of the HY 13 PCVs! While we acknowledge that progress is at different levels in terms of PCVs' engagement in the activities as a result of various factors such as funding and or end of the FY year activities of course. We would like to reiterate that Phase II is mainly about; **community integration, understanding your host organization and completing your Phase II assignments and submitting them on time.** Some of you are already eager to know whether they were expected to submit the VRFs on October 7...save that energy and complete your Phase II assignments while the honeymoon lasts. Like we mentioned in the last article, the process is pretty slow regarding the receipt of the Phase II assignments. Lets us have those on your priority lists as well.

Disasters

Let us keep our thoughts on Mohale's Hoek High school; two learners and the principal passed away – our deepest condolences to those LENAFUC members. Another tragedy has struck again during the recent storm, blowing away the roofs of their library and staff room. Let us keep them in our prayers. This was not a good time for them indeed.

Gold Star Activities

Thanks to all Volunteers for your hard work and perseverance to ensure your projects succeed. Your efforts do not go unnoticed and unappreciated. Below are a few "Gold Star" activities we pulled from your VRFs. They clearly indicate that you are shining stars in the high mountains of the Mountain Kingdom. You bring light and hope to the rural communities of Lesotho. Rea leboha ruri (We thank you indeed).

Wendy Stein CHED 12



There seems to be a lot of HIV/AIDS activities going on in Seforong community as Wendy has reported below. These range from education to nutrition.

"I discussed with the nurses and the clinic manager ways to address this "captive audience." We decided on making posters that addressed the clinic's top concerns, such as when to get tested for TB, the importance of staying on ARVs, how to prepare food for infants, childhood malnutrition, and family planning myths. I purchased some paper in Bloemfontein, and M'e Selloane dropped it off to my site on Sept. 25th. I am working with my Sesotho tutor to translate the messages into Sesotho".

On the nutrition part "I learned when the leader of the Village Health Worker group was having a meeting, and showed up with a thermos of "congee" I cooked, which is a Chinese dish I prescribed to patients living with HIV/AIDS while working in the USA. M'e Makheta tasted this dish, and then introduced me to 141 village health workers as "the expert nutritionist from the USA who is going to discuss nutrition." On the spot, with the help of a translator, I gave instructions on the value of congee, who it's for, how to cook it, where to find ingredients, and variations. I returned the following month with the handwritten recipe, translated into Sesotho, (which is in the DAR column).

Carlaine Reynolds CHED 12



She is very proud of the Chesa-Line Coloring group. It has gone from being an unorganized group of a few children to twenty-three children meeting once a week. The group provides a safe space for the children to come and color. It has been very satisfying to see their coloring skills and creativity improve. They are learning cooperation and good use of materials. The most heartwarming event that has

taken place is that two herd boys now come on a regular basis. They get to play and be children for an hour. This is something that they don't have much in their lives because of their responsibilities. The other positive change is that they have been accepted by the other children in the group, and are not considered as outsiders.

Alyssa Abruzzo CHED 12



"I think that the biggest success story I have for this period was the Women empowerment workshop that I put on with my supervisor. I was really impressed with the turnout and it was great to see how involved everyone was. Sesotho Media came out and showed two films and then led a discussion on how to find your voice. It was great to see the community open up and be willing to talk about problems that they have had and look for advice on how to overcome them. After the workshop a few days later I had one

woman who came up to me and told me that she finally asked her husband to use a condom and when he said no she told him then they were not going to have sex. I have never been so proud of someone. To see how she lit up when she told me that she said no touched my heart".

Shana Thoreson CHED 12



"The CIL has continued this activity from its project last year; we provide our female teenage beneficiaries with health talks/life skills talks and a full healthy meal once a month in our two ED's (Mashaleng and Mpharane- Thaba Mokhele). This year, we have also collaborated with Kick 4 Life, and they come down and teach the lesson every other month (CIL staff lead the other lessons). Topics range from confidence and self-esteem, HIV/AIDS, overall health, child rights,

human trafficking, to leadership and making goals. Most recently, Kick 4 Life led a session on vulnerability and issues those girls face, it was very disturbing to hear how many of the OVCs were used and abused at home. We will follow that session soon with a lesson on what they can do, who they can talk to, and where they can find help in such situations. We invite 75 girls in each ED (150 total), lessons are conducted in Sesotho".

[DPT UPDATE by Ntate Eric](#)

Thanks to all of you for completing and submitting your VRFs. Your information over the course of the year is being compiled and will be sent to Peace Corps HQ as a synthesis of what we are doing in Lesotho. You make us proud.

ED 14 PST is going very well. Like the groups before them, they are a wonderful group of people and soon-to-be Lesotho Volunteers.

PSN and support – We hope that should the need arise, you take advantage of the support that PSN, other Volunteers, and the staff have available for you.

[HIV/AIDS RESOURCES by 'M'e Majimisi](#)

The PC office has HIV/AIDS and Life Skills resources for you!!

Life skills Manuals:

Life skills for Sexual and Reproductive Health (Purple Life skills) (Peace Corps ICE M0061)

This manual expands the emphasis on HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention and adolescent reproductive health issues. The manual identifies important life skills and how to apply them generally across sectors for PCVs



working with Youth.

Life Skills and Leadership for Youth Development Manual:

This manual is designed to be used by PCVs and their counterparts who work with youth to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The life skills and leadership topics relate to all aspects of life, including succeeding in the work place, fostering healthy living and engaging with communities.

The manual has 4 units covering broader areas on

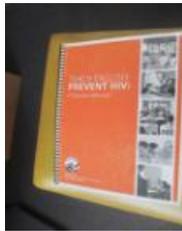
- Personal Development
- Interpersonal Development
- Goal Setting and Action Planning
- Teamwork and Leadership



How to access these manuals: The manual is bulky. You can make a request from your APCD/PTS. The manual may be given to you as a soft or hard copy depending on your choice.

Teach English Prevent HIV (Peace Corps ICE M0090)

Teacher's manual which consists of 14 lessons to be taught in classroom setting. A number of PCVs have recommended this manual for teaching HIV/AIDS and life skills at primary schools.



Lesson Topics are:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Setting Goals | Steps in decision making |
| Resistance | Negotiation skills |
| Relationships, | Basics of HIV/AIDS |
| Risky behaviors | Teaching friends and family. |

HIV/AIDS Library Books

In 2010, several Education Volunteers created an HIV/AIDS and life skills training for teachers and community members using books written by African writers and published in Africa to complement the Ministry of Education and PC life skills curricula. The books are of different levels, user friendly and simple and can be used in school or community libraries. Some of them are translated into Sesotho.

After piloting the training curriculum, the Volunteers trained a number of primary teachers in the Butha- Buthe district on how to use the books. Using PEPFAR funds, Peace Corps Lesotho has since procured several sets of these HIV/AIDS and life skills-related books and makes them and the training curriculum available to interested Volunteers and their communities.

How to access the books:

Volunteer and community partners assess the need for books in schools and community libraries and mobilize teachers and members of the community who may be interested in using the books. Contact 'M'e Jimi to request the application which will be filled out by the PCV and community counterpart.

If you wish to be sent a sample of the curriculum which was used for similar trainings, and also a list of books please indicate by sending 'M'e Jimi an email/sms/letter and indicate if you would like a hard copy or soft copy.

Send application with the above information to 'M'e Jimi (mmachai@peacecorps.gov). Cc your APCD and PA. 'M'e Jimi will review your submitted application with APCD/PTS

If the application needs some clarification, 'M'e Jimi will send a message to PCV. If no additional information is needed, books will be sent to PCV before her/his scheduled training.

Note: PC does not provide any financial support for conducting the work-

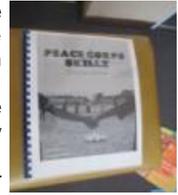
shops; you need to be creative in organizing these trainings.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Grassroot Soccer (GRS)

Program which uses the power of soccer to generate interest in HIV/AIDS prevention and life skills. Peace Corps Volunteers provide a link between this program and their community, while also playing an integral role in supporting members as they introduce the life skills based HIV prevention curriculum to community youth.

'M'e Jimi and PCV Joe Downes can be contacted for planning a GRS activity.



HIV/AIDS Resource Kit

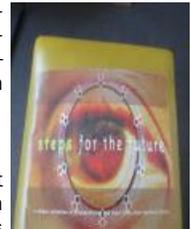
HIV/AIDS reference kit which provides comprehensive session plans, fact sheets and other resources which help tailor all HIV/AIDS trainings. It has eight modules.



Other Resources:

Sesotho Media – Contacts 22321446 email sesothomedia@gmail.com or sesothomedia@ecoweb.co.ls

Sesotho Media (SM) is one of PC partnering organization which utilizes entertainment media as a vehicle for health promotion & social change. The organization reaches people with local films through stories, dialogue & debate.



Examples of films they have:

Untold Stories- These are unique series of short films, written and produced by local writers and film makers from Southern Africa. These are love stories from 19 different countries that look at love and desire in a time of HIV/AIDS. These films are part of one "love" which is a cross border campaign that tackles multiple and concurrent partners (MCP). The films have been broadcasted on television in Lesotho. Each film weaves social message into an entertaining story. These films aim to support discussion and debate about the films.

How to use the films:

They can be used:

- ◆ As part of the community dialogues to trigger discussion and debate.
- ◆ In a life skills program for in/out of school youth.
- ◆ To watch and talk about with family and friends and raise HIV/AIDS awareness.

A number of PCVs have engaged with Sesotho Media to show films in their communities. The service is mostly free- one just needs to plan ahead and have discussion with Sesotho Media. In any case if there is no response, you are free to contact 'M'e Jimi – mmachai@peacecorps.gov cell: 6201-4141

Population Services International (PSI)

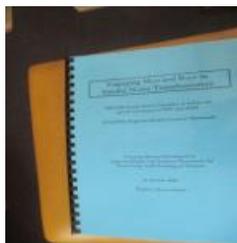
PSI through New Start provides HIV/AIDS Testing and Counseling. New start can come to your community being a school or community to provide testing and counseling services.

Steps: Plan your event with your counterparts. If the event is planned to be at the school, make sure that teachers and Principal are involved, propose a few tentative dates which you can be flexible about, in case New Start has a rather full schedule.

Contact: 'Me Nthathi Lebona nlebona@psi.co.ls

Men As Partners (MAP) Male Engagement Curriculum

The overall goals of the Men as Partners (MAP) program is to provide a forum to foster discussions regarding social issues within a gender framework and to encourage and motivate men to become involved in the development process, specifically regarding HIV prevention and care; gender equality and reducing gender based violence; and sexual



health and decision making. Encouraging men to assist in development promotes equality among the sexes by challenging culturally determined gender roles. Since these practices are so rigidly set and accepted, there is a critical need to foster discourse regarding this inequity and to challenge stereotypes as an entry point to improving mutual respect among the sexes and welcoming various viewpoints when attempting to affect change in the community.



There is a critical need to foster discourse regarding this inequity and to challenge stereotypes as an entry point to improving mutual respect among the sexes and welcoming various viewpoints when attempting to affect change in the community.

Lineo's World Puppet Show:

HIV/AIDS Prevention Puppet show which can help you teach young people about HIV/AIDS. It was developed by PCVs in 2005 and is written in both Sesotho and English.

The show has 5 scenarios and 8 characters which are teachers/facilitators, and a guiding manual.

It can be used to integrate HIV/AIDS into teaching.

It links people working towards a common goal to fight against HIV/AIDS.

Strengthens relationship with counterparts to learn other ways of teaching HIV/AIDS to young people.

Engages presenters and empowers youth.

It can be used for primary schools.

Strengthens skills in sewing puppets, which can be an income generating activity.

BIZAIDS

A curriculum designed to help informal and micro enterprises, which receive little attention through other programs. Basic Business Management; HIV/AIDS Prevention Information and access to local resources (including direct and indirect access to voluntary counseling and testing, VCT); and Legal Information (including on issues such as inheritance).

Village Savings and Loans (VS&L)

Income generating activities methodology for targeting low income communities which can complement micro finance institutions. Serves poor communities whose income is less reliable, but offers useful services for them to be economically secure.

World AIDS Day (WAD)

Resource pamphlet designed by Peace Corps for activities PCVs can do for World AIDS Day

IF YOU ARE PLANNING WAD ACTIVITY, PLEASE LET 'M'E JIMI KNOW!

VOLUNTEER VOICES

Peer Support Network (PSN)

YOUR PSN SUPPORTERS:

Jacqueline Muhammad CHED 2012

PSN Chair



Greetings! I am Jacqueline Muhammad from Pearland, TX by way of Austin and Houston. I am an accounting graduate of Texas Southern University. My sector is CHED 12 which is now HY! I currently reside in Mohale's Hoek where I work for Trust for Africa (TFA), a temporary shelter for lost, abandoned, and abused children. (TFA) is a subsidiary of The Faith Foundation of Central Florida, USA!

Some of my favorite things are

(not in the order that they appear):

- Tennis (I'm Serena's #1 fan)
- Any movie with Goldie Hawn or Kate Hudson
- Puzzles
- Crochet
- Non-Fiction/Historical Fiction

I am honored to serve as a Peer Supporter and will never betray your trust. Give me a buzz at 57373716, a BBM at PIN 275C5431, a text on WHATSAPP, or an email at

jmuhammadhda@gmail.com

Amanda Frye ED13

PSN Co-Chair



Khotso! My name is Amanda and I'm very excited to be your co-chair for PSN. I want to give a warm welcome to all of you who recently arrived and look forward to getting to know you. I am a graduate of FSU, but spent my six years after graduating on the west coast between California, Alaska, and Washington State. I'm a primary education volunteer working in the Leribe district, and love hiking, reading, cooking and exchanging recipes with my fellow volunteers. If you ever need a confidential ear to call on, or a shoulder to lean on, I'm always here. My email is hensa23@gmail.com and my number is +266 5775 9313.

Anne Schultz CHED12



Anne Schultz lives in Thoteng, Qachas Nek. Her host organization is the Kopanang Basotho Support1 Group.

10 Fun Facts about Anne!

1. Hometown: Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, part of the 2nd highest apple producing county in the U.S., yum!

2. Favorite cure-all comfort food: Apples and cheddar cheese, sliced and combined for a mouthful of home goodness!

3. Favorite cures for managing stress: Running, "Dancing it out", or lip-synching Glee routines with Peggy Kang

4. Hidden Talent: Playing the piano upside down!

5. Person she'd most like to have dinner with: Mick Jagger

6. Hardest thing to give up from the U.S.: Chai Lattes

7. Favorite movie to watch for a mood boost: Elf

8. Guilty pleasures: Country music, eating PB out of the jar, and singing in the shower...or bucket?

9. What she wants to be when she grows up: A Nurse Practitioner with "Doctors Without Borders"

10. Favorite thing about being a PCV in Lesotho: Living with twelve amazing kids who inspire her every day!

Phone 63083022, e-mail anne.j.schultz@gmail.com

Arti Patel CHED12



Hi y'all! My name is Arti, and I was born and raised in South Carolina. I'm currently living in the great ole camptown Hlotse and working with the Leribe District Health Management Team. I love to cook/bake, exercise, and read. Chai, dark chocolate, and kids will make my day. I'm extremely corny and love putting my nerd station on. Silly dance moves, good jokes, and spontaneous adventures are totally up my alley. Yoga, spa days, and scented candles keep me in tune. I can't forget the beach...it's my second home! I love to travel and am

obsessed with seeing sunrises, sunsets, and stars all over the world. :) You're more than welcome and don't ever hesitate to contact me on my cellular: 57373686, BBM: 29D30675, or Email: artiben.patel@gmail.com. I'm all ears!

Beth Pagan CHED12



Lumela! My name is Beth and I am a CHED 12 volunteer in Berea. My host organization is the Lekokoaneng Multipurpose Cooperative Society. I help them with grant research and writing, project design and management and organizational capacity building. My favorite coping strategies for serving in Lesotho are dancing, reading, running, Skype dates, baking, playing with kids, good cheese and visiting other PCVs.

I joined the PSN team in April 2013! I really love serving on PSN. Please feel free to reach out to me whenever you need emotional support. I am here to actively listen to you! Everything we talk about is confidential. My number is [+26657373687](tel:+26657373687). You can also reach me on BBM: 29D3047F or Whatsapp. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Brendan Rosen CHED12



I was born in La Verne, California, and I went to university at the University of California, Irvine. I studied abroad my third year at the University of Ghana. I am currently a Community Health and Education volunteer in Butha Buthe, where I work with a farmer's association. I love music (both listening and playing), reading, travelling, and hanging out with friends. I have been on PSN for almost a year, and I am always happy to support any of my fellow PCV's.

Phone: 57373694, e-mail brendan.rosen27@gmail.com

Carol Hayes ED13



My name is Carol Hayes. I am an ED12. Before Peace Corps I had been retired from a career as a School Psychologist in Orange County, California. I have always enjoyed traveling.

My PC site is in Morija. I consult at a large pre-school/day care.

My only son has lived in Bali the past 10 years and works in fashion design and as a DJ. He and I went on a fun road trip in July through Kruger Park and Mozambique. We took mostly public transportation. I have a goal to go over Sani Pass to Durban.

Phone: 57734352, e-mail: Cmhayes39@gmail.com

Laura Johnson ED13



I grew up in Yankton, South Dakota. (Hometown of former news anchor Tom Brokaw... just a fun fact.) I attended University of Oregon, where I studied Journalism and Art. I'm a Primary English teacher up in the mountains of BB in the village of Motete, which looks remarkably like the Shire from LOTR. I've found my year so far in Lesotho to be challenging, yet extremely rewarding. I'd like to leave my fellow volunteers with some wisdom by the poet Rumi. "If you are bothered by every rub, how will you ever be polished?" Email: lauraj89@gmail.com phone: +26657642077

Narin Ratanavade ED13



Hello! My name is Narin from Chicago (go Bears and Sox!) who's currently living in Ha Thaba Bosiu in Mohale's Hoek. I have a bachelor's in physics and a minor in mathematics from Northeastern Illinois University. I'm part of ED'12 and the Diversity Committee, and teach math and science at Matsie High School. I even teach French on the side for fun! I'm a huge geek who loves sci-fi, astronomy (worked at a planetarium for 6 years!), games, the arts, running, traveling, live music, adventures, pleasing my culinary palate and hanging out with friends. I thrive on challenges and doing things I

once thought were difficult, scary or impossible.

I'm very pleased to be serving as peer support. I know firsthand how difficult it can be feeling alone in a different environment where it seems that what you once knew is turned completely upside down. I dislike being judgmental and will always tend to look out for the good side in everything. If you need an open ear, support, or even to just say hi; you can contact me via phone, text and WhatsApp at [+266 5775-4828](tel:+26657754828), BBM at 29e9ec8e or email at: NRatanavade@gmail.com.

DIVERSITY

Anri Tanabe CHED 2013



The other day, my Mosotho friend who I have known since January, asked me, "What is the difference between China and Japan"? Immediately, I took that opportunity to search online for a map of Asia and sent it to her with an explanation that despite the people's similar physical features, China and Japan are two very different countries with different languages and cultures. For the most part, Basotho strangers assume that I am Chinese. Even after I explain that I am a Japanese-American, some will insist that I am Chinese or at least can speak the

language; so I am always happy for an opportunity when people are willing to listen, understand, and accept that people who look alike are not all the same.

But the same concept can hold true the other way around.

When I took my recent vacation to Japan, my friends and relatives were in awe by the fact that I use a smart phone "in AFRICA" or that students are taught in English, or even that the locals dress in modern clothing like skinny jeans and heels. If a Mosotho were to go to Japan or America, it is unlikely that they would be recognized as Mosotho. Most strangers might just say that he/she is "from Africa" -the entire continent which is home to multiple countries, people, languages, and cultures.

My friend's question really touched me though, not because I was able to explain to her exactly where my parents are from, but because she was interested in knowing more about me as an individual. The fact that I am not what people assume me to be is less important, I feel, than the fact that she was genuinely interested in where I am from and who I am as a result of my experiences. As Peace Corps volunteers, we experience being judged almost every day by our outward appearance. If we are light-skinned or carry around large hiking backpacks, we are assumed to be rich people from a perfect land where "there are no problems". No matter how much we try to explain that not everyone in America is rich or happy, it can be difficult to get that message across. My friend reminded me of how comforting it is not to be classified into one category, when it is so easy and natural to do so. Whether we are Americans, Basotho, or any other ethnicity, each of us is a unique individual that deserves to be recognized for who he/she is, not for what others assume him/her to be.

GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

A proposal to re-activate and organize a PCV committee to focus on gender issues

by Amanda Frye & Mary Beth Bird

Amanda ED13:



When I arrived in Lesotho last year, I heard a lot about herd boys and the projects aimed at helping them. Because of my work in the states in empowering young women and wanting to continue that here, this cause was not one that I thought I would get involved in. I pushed any feelings I had about it aside. However, after serving for almost a full year as a Primary School English Teacher my views have changed. This year, I have watched boy after boy leave school and never return, often with little explanation why. Many of these boys have been good students and showing great improvement in school, making their leaving all the more heart-breaking. I've complained to my principals, teachers and chief about it, but I continue to hear the same thing: the parents have to get involved. Until the parents understand why their sons need education, and begin to see that education is more important than pulling the boys out for herding, we won't be able to change anything. And until these boys see that they have a voice, and have a potential greater than working in the

fields the rest of their lives, we can't reach them. So, now I'm left asking, "How do we do this?"



Mary Beth, ED13: When I joined Peace Corps, I knew that I wanted my role as an educator to be more than what I did within a classroom. I wanted to help inspire my students, especially my girls, to be confident, independent, and healthy adults. So I wasted little time starting a Young Women's Group (YWG) at my high school, during my first few months of service.

Starting and maintaining my YWG has been occasionally challenging... It's been a slow and steady process that has evolved over months, with lots of guidance from other PCVs and staff. It's meant establishing boundaries, finding the time and place, creating student ownership, encouraging honesty, and most importantly, earning their trust. In the YWG group, we talk about setting goals, decision-making, identity, and relationships... Our meetings range from hilarious skits and self-portraits with coloured pencils to goal setting worksheets and poetry discussions. But, no matter the topic or activity, my goal for my girls is always the same... I want them to find it in themselves to honestly ask and answer, "What does being a strong, independent woman mean to me?"

Trying to find an answers to these questions is why we have become interested in starting a Gender Committee in Peace Corps Lesotho. We want to create a community that will help us find the tools to help Basotho men, women, and youth cope with these complex and sensitive issues. We hope that creating this community of support will allow us to support fellow PCVs, as we all blindly navigate this new territory. There is incredible potential for PCVs to contribute to Gendered Development issues in Lesotho, and we each have unique experiences and skill-sets that could be helpful in advancing this shared purpose. So we invite you all to join us in exploring how we can help our young men and women receive the skills and empowerment they deserve. So the only question left to ask is... Will you join us?

For more information on getting involved, contact PCVs Amanda Frye or Mary Beth Bird, or APCD 'M'e Selloane Pitikoe.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GenEq)

On the new VRFs, coming your way soon, you will see a new focus area. Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment is one of the cross-sector programming priorities that Peace Corps Lesotho will promote within the work of all Volunteers. There are materials available and training sessions we can access. The motivation of PCVs to strengthen their work on gender and development issues through formation of a new PCV Committee is well-timed!

GenEq News

from 'M'e Selloane Pitikoe, staff point of contact for GenEq

Girl Rising

This is a powerful documentary film about nine girls in nine countries who overcame great obstacles through their own strength and determination. As it is divided into nine segments that each show one girl's story, Volunteers can show the entire film or choose just a few segments to show and discuss with youth clubs, after school groups, camps, or in other venues. The film has subtitles in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, Dutch, and Hebrew. We can't wait to hear about all the ways Volunteers can use the film! Please contact DPT Eric if you are interested in showing this film.

International Men's Day

Don't forget International Men's Day on November 19. At PC headquarters, they are organizing a fair that will highlight what local service providers in the Washington DC area are doing to support at risk boys and youth in general. They will also highlight Volunteers' work with men and boys worldwide. We'd love to see any pictures and stories you have about your work in this area.

District Aids Representative (DAR)

Nurturing Life: Food Wisdom from China, by Wendy Stein CHED 2012

"People who practice medicine must first thoroughly understand the source of the disorder and know what has been violated. Then, use food to treat it, and if food will not cure it, afterwards apply herbal medi-



cines." Sun Simiao

粥

, congee, and jook, (lesheleshele reisi, ka Sesotho) - various names for Chinese Rice Porridge - a recipe I frequently recommended to clients living with HIV/AIDS, when working as an acupuncturist in the USA. Most Chinese restaurants serve it to staff, and even patrons who inquire, though it is rarely on the menu. You don't have to be ill, or go to a Chinese restaurant to enjoy this, as the ingredients are commonly found in Lesotho, it is easy to make, and many of us can reap its benefits.

The benefits are best explained through the philosophy of Chinese Medicine. Treating disease before it arises is a common practice in Classical Chinese medicine, as is using the least invasive treatment methods - namely food and lifestyle practices. The challenge in working with people living with HIV/AIDS is that the virus affects each person differently, based on the individuals' constitution, family history, lifestyle, and pathogenesis of the virus. Treatment is uniquely tailored to the individual after a thorough client intake and differential diagnosis is made, including pulse and tongue diagnosis, which show the individuals' strengths and weaknesses, sometimes even before symptoms are visible. Treatment utilizes the philosophy known as "ben biao," or "root and branch," which is applying knowledge of when to treat the root of a condition and when to focus on the symptoms, or both. Treating the root is a way to strengthen the person's body, so as to maintain health and prevent further harm.

From the Chinese Medicine perspective, in its simplest terms, HIV is considered a disease of heat, which can be more obvious during later stages of the viral progression in some people (some people develop concurrent symptoms of cold). The Stomach and Spleen systems- not as we think of them in western medicine, yet as the functional Chinese Medical interpretation (written in capitals, so as to not confuse the reader) - are often the first to be affected by HIV. Symptoms may include fatigue, low appetite, inability to gain weight, and diarrhea to name a few. Which is why supporting the Stomach and Spleen are always helpful in nurturing the immune system, as well as lessening/preventing side effects of medications.

One way in which Chinese Medicine approaches diet is through classifying foods by their temperature, channels they benefit, and flavor(s), namely: sour, bitter, sweet, spicy, salty, and extra flavors of bland, aromatic, and astringent. Each flavor has a unique benefit to the body. For example, the sweet flavor in small amounts, such as the sweetness of pumpkin, can be strengthening to the body. Too much of the sweet flavor, (anything sweeter than a pumpkin), can be cloying and thus add to feelings of congestion in the digestive system as well as weight gain. All foods are also given a temperature. For example, cucumbers are considered cool, whereas chili peppers are hot, and grains tend to be closer to neutral. Too many cold, raw, or high fat foods can put out the digestive fire, slowing down digestion and creating challenges in adequately absorbing nutrients. Even too much cold or tepid water can have this affect. Too many hot foods, such as coffee, alcohol, chili pepper, sugar, can overheat the system, leading to symptoms such as nausea, pimples, bad breath, and constipation.

The foods that most greatly benefit the digestion are bland, slightly sweet, and slightly warm. Congee is a great example of such a food, as it is easy to digest, can strengthen the body's ability to build the immune system, can increase energy and encourage the body to better build blood; and its demulcent properties nourish the intestines and can promote healing from inflammation.

As congee is a "food medicine," benefits will be less noticeable with one serving, than a western drug. That said, eaten often it can produce results without side effects, and can be used concurrently as a support when taking western drugs. Besides being supportive for people living with HIV and AIDS, it is also a beneficial food for those recovering from the flu or cold, any debilitating illness or conditions where the digestion has been compromised, or the elderly or young who's' bodies are more fragile. From my experience in country for over a year, I have sneaked peeks at people's tongues for diagnosis purposes, and based on this I observed that many people could use support in their spleen-stomach systems, whether with currently active symptoms or as prevention.

Breakfast is often the easiest time to incorporate this meal.

I presented this recipe to 141 Village Health Workers, and they were engaged and excited in learning this recipe, which I will share with you, below. There are many variations on this dish, yet the basic recipe is as follows. Please feel free to contact me for the Sesotho version.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup rice
- 1/2" slice of fresh ginger (or 1/4-1/2t - powdered if you don't)
- 1/4 t salt
- Peanuts, chopped
- 9 cups water
- Cooked protein food: fish, meat, hardboiled eggs or even beans, cut into bite-sized pieces. Pork is classic. Avoid excess-
- Green onions, chopped

Cooking Directions:

Rinse rice in water

Put rice, water, ginger, and salt in a pot and bring to a boil.

Turn down the heat and simmer for 3 hours.

In the last 15 minutes, add one or two pre-cooked protein foods, cut into bite-sized pieces (pork and hardboiled eggs are traditional), add chopped green onions

Serve while warm. Garnish with chopped peanuts

The recipe is flexible, and can take addition of food and local herbs. Some common additions/substitutions include the following:

- Peeled chopped ginger can be added in the last 15 minutes, if the person is in the first day or so of having the common cold or flu, and their fever is not too high.
- Carrots can be added in the last 15 minutes, to decrease flatulence
- Substituting brown rice instead of white rice. This will be diuretic and also thirst quenching, and is said to increase the nursing mothers' supply of milk more than the white rice variety (though both are beneficial)
- Using wheat instead of rice can lower fevers, and is calming and sedating to the heart and mind and good for children.
- The liquid can be strained from the porridge to drink as a supplement for infants and for serious conditions.

PELA TSOEU EXAM JAM



BY Christian Perry, Kyle Oney & Michael Solano

Christian, having been integrated and acclimated to the area before we arrived, had an idea to use Makhobalo HS to hold a large HIV/AIDS awareness and testing event. He brought the idea to our attention and we started brainstorming ideas to make the event a possi-



bility. This brainstorming process went on for a few months; we took our time, each talking to our counterparts and other community members to make sure this was something they would support and participate in. It was very interesting to us that no large scale sporting event or youth focused activity day had ever been organized, by the Ministry of Youth or the High Schools. We eventually decided on the Pela Tsoeu Exam Jam, a day full of fun and educational activities for the children. It would be an opportunity to bring HS students, teachers, and principals together, a showcase of unity in our area, and equipping our youth with the proper Life Skills that can be educational as well as fun.

We decided this event would best be held the Friday before Lesotho Independence Day break. It would be a day with 2 parts: the first part would be HIV/AIDS Awareness & General Health activities and the remainder of the day would be soccer/netball tournament along with a DJ playing music till the sun went



down. So who would we invite? Kyle Oney taught at Makhobalo HS, **Michael Solano** taught at St. Denis HS, both Volunteers were familiar with St. Phillips HS, and Mahala Secondary was just across the road - BOOM - we had our schools. With a combined student population of about 1500 there was no way we could pull this event off with just us 3 Volunteers and teachers. Not only would we need to enlist the help of outside organizations, we also needed a source of funding. Have you tried to pull off an event of 1500 students without money? We didn't think so. On our list of organizations was Kick4Life, Sesotho Media, St. Denis Clinic, New Start, PC & PCVs, World Vision, and Christian's main organization - LASTC. Right out of the gate we contacted 'M'e Jimi and as always she was there to show us support. We worked with her to get into contact with and confirm Sesotho Media and New Start attendance. After holding a meeting with PCV Joe Downes and Ntate Stango of Kick4Life, we had them on board and ready to go. Coordinating logistics via PCV Joe made the process that much easier. We had secured all the organizations except PCVs and funding. Kyle and Michael visited World Vision a number of times and eventually secured the funding we needed to provide lunches for all the students and staff that day. They also sent



out a call for Volunteers to help facilitate Life Skills and Grassroot Soccer (GRS) activities, and immediately received responses requesting to assist us.

The week of the event was rather stressful, as you can imagine. We had to confirm and reconfirm each organization's participation, while coordinating the logistics of how the day's activities would flow. We also held one final meeting with the principal and teacher representative from each HS, as it was important that we were all clear and on board with how Friday would happen. We decided that it would be easiest if each school fixed their own food and simply brought it for the students to eat, so the day before we went shopping and provided each school with the necessary amount for their total student body population. Just knowing we were able to feed students lunch on a Friday put smiles on our faces. For D-Day, the forecast was cloudy but no rain, and we 3 arrived at Makhobalo bright and early along with the other PCVs. Sure we said we would start at 8:30am, but 8:30am came and went in the blink of an eye and still no students no organizations - there was no one. It was a bit too quiet for us, so we went up to the main road and there they were just sprawled out all over the soccer field, hiding in the forest, chilling in the streets as if waiting for us to tell them it's time. So that's what we did,





we went out into the fields and the surrounding land of Makhobalo and moved the students to the staging area. Almost immediately as we began doing this the clouds opened up and the sun peeked out, Kick4Life and Sesotho Media pulled up, it was time. It was also around 10am so no opening ceremony just time to go to work! We split the kids up into groups between the organizations and it started. Every 45 minutes or so, we switched the groups to make sure the kids got to experience all of the activities. Did the transitions go as smoothly as we had planned? No, but what was occurring was a sight to behold: different students from different schools having fun and learning while doing it, PCVs facilitating (what they did that day was epic, holding 25+ kids attention, painting, Life Skills, GRS), Kick4Life coaches running and singing (doing what they do best), clinic nurses having meaningful deep conversations with single sex groups about their health, and Sesotho Media challenging the youths' perception about a number of topics. It was amazing we had done it, was the community of Pela Tsoeu.

The time came and went; it was time for a lunch. The DJ came and the Soccer Tournament started, by now we are sure you've experienced a similar sight. Nothing brings out the community more than music and soccer, and after 1 pm the community was out in full force; supporting each other and the students, playing sports and dancing the night away. Unfortunately we waited all day for New Start (they were to do HIV counseling and testing) and they never came. It might have been slightly okay had they just simply not showed up and no one had noticed. Indeed one of our major goals was to get the students tested, we even had permission slips made and signed. Yes, we would have been a bit more tolerant of their no show if we hadn't had student after student coming up to us asking about testing. We, during all our months of service individually, hadn't had any of our students ever express the desire to be tested. Today, however, students from Makhobalo, St. Denis, LASTC, Mahala, and St. Philips all wanted to be tested. It was beyond disappointing, but what could we do? Even after many trials and challenges, we handled the situation with great sangfroid.

We learned many lessons from this event and are working on putting a report together, so that we don't make the same mistakes in the future and for any others who might be interested to learn from our mistakes as well. Events like this should be occurring all around Lesotho; it is an opportunity to bring our communities together for fun and education,



testing, and support our youth. We would like to encourage our fellow Peace Corps Volunteers to dream big and not to limit themselves. Our

communities here, the youth we work with, are looking for new and exciting opportunities. Let's give it to them.

We need to shout out Ntate Eric & 'M'e Jimi who came out and showed support. Also, special thanks to PCVs Morgan, Chelsea, Joe, Shawn, Kim, Mishelle, and a BIG thank you to Laura and Mike Goularte for their outstanding help and participation. Without the support of these Volunteers, PC, and the Partnering organizations, this event would not have been a success. Laura seriously the mural was epic!

One last note: the PC Volunteers and their Counterparts of the Pela Tsoeu River Valley aren't finished yet. We're planning something for the end of summer - details forthcoming.

Life Skills Survey by Janelle Leza ED 2012

Lumela baithaopi kaofela!

If you recall, there was a Life Skills' survey posted in the September Khotso. We asked that you give the survey to youth in your schools or community and send in the results which were to be compiled and posted in the November Khotso. Unfortunately, we have not received enough data worthy to be published in this month's Khotso. Participation in such survey is 100% voluntary but we would greatly appreciate any and all information provided to us. This is a very brief survey that does not require much time but has already led other PCVs to intriguing conversations with their Life Skills classes/youth in their area. If you have any questions, you can feel free to contact Janelle Leza via email, BBM, or What's App/Viber. Survey data can also be sent to Janelle through any of these modes of communication. Results will be posted in the December Khotso. We appreciate your interest and participation! Contact information for Janelle:

Email- janelle.leza@gmail.com

BBM- 25B8F76A

What's App/Viber- 59497488

A MESSAGE FROM FRIENDS OF LESOTHO- FOL

- FOL Representative Richard Rowan qhomaki@mac.com



As PCVs, we trust that you are familiar with the FOL Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) and we hope you took advantage of TAP funds to help further the goals of some of your best, brightest and most needy students. FOL was very pleased to be able to contribute more than \$16,000 this year to support TAP.

FOL is interested in finding ways to support short and longer term projects in Lesotho. We want to make sure you know that FOL has funds available to support projects other than TAP for both PCVs and RPCVs. We have supported a number of projects submitted by RPCVs—some of whom were Education volunteers with secondary projects they continued to work with after leaving Lesotho.

If you are about to be a RPCV, fell in love with the country and its people and want to continue to help your community, FOL can work with RPCVs to fund sustainable, community-based projects. You can download the Grant Application from the FOL website.

If you are a current PCV who has attended the PDM workshop with a counterpart, discuss your project idea with your APCD and M'e Jimi, and you may consider applying to the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP.) FOL can fund projects through PCPP, so let us know when your project is approved and posted on the PC website.

We look at each request for funds on an individual basis and make our decision based on several factors. (1) Does the project have local buy-in and some form of matching support such as local labor or use of a facility for training projects; (2) Will there be a finished product, lasting impact or a method to assure sustainability; (3) Is the budget and completion timeframe realistic; (4) Will FOL have a reliable contact for progress reports and documentation of how the funds were used. Note: FOL does not make grants to cover travel between the US and Lesotho or for travel while in Lesotho. Scholarship grants are only made to scholarship programs, not to specific individual students.

Complimentary Membership Reminder

Just a quick note to remind you all that you are entitled to free membership in FOL while serving in Lesotho and for one year from your COS date. We will send you our newsletters, annual report and other communications via e-mail if you simply sign up on our website <http://www.friendsoflesotho.org>

Welcome to Lesotho

In November we welcome **Dr Leysa Pasichnyk**. She is a PCMO from PC/Ukraine, and we are so pleased to have her friendly and experienced voice in the medical unit this month.



ED TRAINEES HAVE ARRIVED!!!

