

KHOTSO

August 2014

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Message from the Country Director

Dear Volunteers and Trainees,

You are part of something big- the Peace Corps Strategic Plan 2014-18! Your individual contribution matters, because of who you are and what you do in your site. As part of the community where you serve, as part of the Education, Healthy Youth, or CHED project, and as part of Peace Corps Lesotho, your service adds to the work of others, leading towards the mission of Peace Corps:

To help the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women

To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served

To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans

The goals of Peace Corps Lesotho are part of the big picture. Based on Lesotho's priorities and the strengths that Volunteers offer, we work in 2 focused technical projects. As I shared with you in the March issue of the Khotso, the 2015-16 goals of Peace Corps Lesotho are:

1. Provide enhanced safety and security training, guidance and support, in order to promote Volunteer well-being
2. Improve medical and mental health services and support, in order to promote Volunteer well-being.
3. Increase impact of Volunteer service through integrated MRE practices.
4. Increase training and support for staff development, in order to strengthen Peace Corps Lesotho as a high-performing learning organization.

These goals are tied to the Peace Corps Strategic Plan 2014-18, which is now being shared on the Peace Corps website through an orientation. Please take a moment to click on and view a video message from Peace Corps Director Carrie Hessler -Radelet inviting all staff and Volunteers to take part in the Strategic Plan Orientation:



The full document can be accessed at www.peacecorps.gov/strategicplan; you can also read the Strategic Plan on your mobile device or tablet by downloading it at www.peacecorps.gov/strategicplanorientation.

It is motivating to see how ambitious we are as an agency, and how much our work matters. I hope you are proud of what you do!

Thank you for your service,

Wendy

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From the Editor

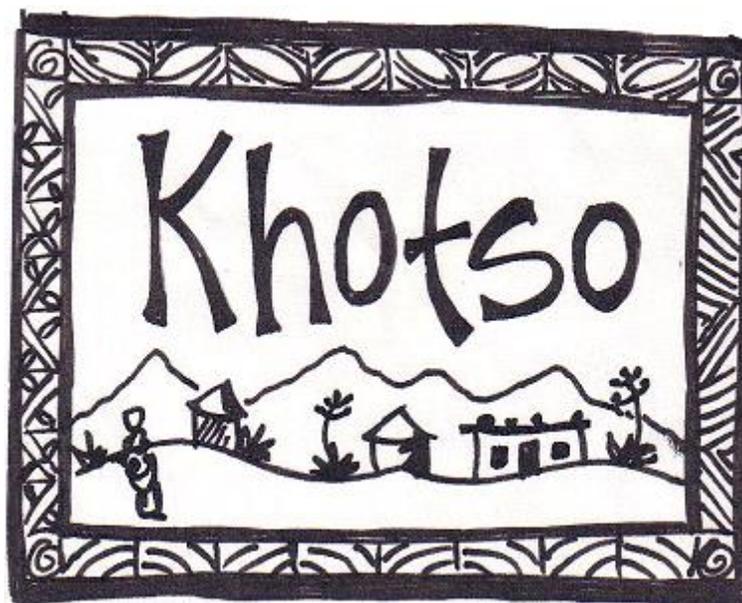
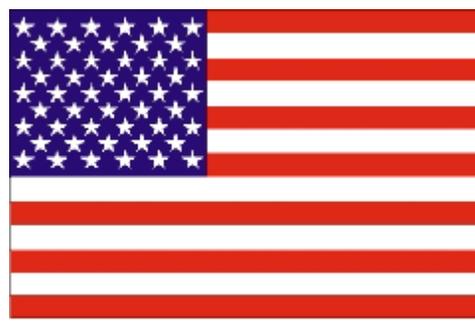
Articles must be received by the 4th Monday of the month to be included in the following month's edition of the Khotso. When submitting articles, please provide the name of the person making the submission and a contact person for follow-up questions. The Newsletter will be e-mailed in the office on or about the 1st of each month, and a hardcopy will be made available upon request. 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.



*Next
submission
dateline is
August 25,
2014*



PCV & STAFF BIRTHDAYS

August

1	Letsatsi Mohale/Programming and Training Secretary
3	Jessica Detrio
4	Tracy Rayburn
5	Jacob Glick
11	Joseph Downes
13	Mary Ladabouche
15	Elias Torres
16	Mary Kirk
29	Emily Brown

September

7	Eric Goldman/Director of Programming and training (DPT)
9	Tori Raymond
11	Federico Poitier
14	Majimisi Machai/HIV & AIDS Coordinator
17	Mamotebang Manyanye/Registered Nurse
19	Keegan Mackin
21	Itumeleng Notšhi
24	Jeanett Mosae
27	Narin Ratanavade

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND STAFF TRAVEL

August 13 HY 14 Swearing In Ceremony
August 25 - 27 ED 15 TDE

DUTY OFFICERS

August 1 - 7, 2014	DPT
August 8 -14, 2014	HIV-COORD
August 15 - 21, 2014	APCD-HY
August 22 - 28, 2014	PTS-HY

STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH - Ntate Majara Ralintoane/Peace Corps driver



Ntate Majara has been working overtime, and more over time, and even more overtime. His guidance of the OIG representative throughout the country was extraordinary, both in terms of the care he provided her, and in terms of the long hours of evening and weekend work. Another fine example was his coming into the office over a weekend to assist with logistical needs for the Supervisor and Counterpart workshops. He truly exemplifies both cooperation and genuine willingness to do whatever is asked of him to serve Peace Corps Lesotho and our Volunteers.

ifies both cooperation and genuine willingness to do whatever is asked of him to serve Peace Corps Lesotho and our Volunteers.

ED CORNER by Ntate Clement and 'M'e 'Malitaba

Hoa Bata ke mariha - keep yourself warm. We hope that you have all enjoyed your winter break and vacations. Schools are reopening and most of you surely are ready to start your work. Thank you Ed14's for the fruitful HIV/AIDS capacity building and PDM workshops that we had during your winter break. We hope to see your projects going on during our site visits.

VRFs

Once again thank you all for submitting your VRFs; we had a 100% submission rate. We have reviewed all the VRFs and we have sent feedback to all of you via email. If you have not received yours, let us know because there was a time when our server at the office was down. The data we received helps us to know what you are doing and how you are doing. We want you all to know that the work that you are doing out there is important and highly appreciated. This will also help us to write a report about your contribution in Lesotho to PC Headquarters.

Site Visits and Identification

We will continue with our Sites Identification in August and September for ED15 group. So let us know if you want to be part of helping us to identify new sites near to where you are.

ED13 COS Conference

We look forward to seeing the ED13s at your COS conference, which will be at Madiba Lodge at Tsehlanyane. Bring your cameras as you will have time to take photos. See you all there.

Gold Star Activities.

Narin Ratanavade - ED 13



I felt pretty confident going into the first quarter of my second year at school, but I forgot that the class sizes would continue to grow, classes would be cancelled out of nowhere, and students wouldn't be able to afford tuition - so many would drop out then come back later on. I was also so confident that I taught a little faster than last year. Well, all these factors combined resulted in grades not

being as good as I expected. Granted, the amount of students passing my quizzes and tests are comparable to last year, but I was hoping for more. So I changed the way I taught.

I would spend about 10 minutes in the start of every class reviewing. Not only would I review the subject material, but other subjects as well (to the groans of the students). I would ask a question and have multiple students answer the same question over and over. I would

pick on the students who looked tired the most so they would pay attention. I would also review for a few minutes in the middle of class and at least 5 minutes at the end of the class.

Another thing I try is having the students teach the material. I would have them stand up and explain to the others what I taught before. And any game or activity I did with them involved subject material, for instance, telling the students to touch their epidermis during a game of "Simon Says."

To control the rampant cheating in a large class, I would have the students clear everything around them and check random students' arms and desks to see if they wrote down possible answers there. I also have students switch seats so they won't cheat off a person they are comfortable with (for instance, having different rows or columns of students switch). If they cheat at least once, I have them use the floor as their desk and I take out 10% of their test grade. This is important so they know they'll have to really study in my classes.

These are just a few things I did to hopefully raise the amount of students passing. And thankfully, it worked! Comparing the first quizzes to the final test of the quarter, I had at least DOUBLE the amount of students passing! I was so happy I gave out the students' test grades early. Many students are now so confident that they would blurt out the answers instead of raising their hand. Granted, I don't allow students to just talk all at once, but who cares, as many are doing fantastic!

Zoe Schroeder - ED 13



The previous Volunteer at my site worked hard to make sure both schools I now work with had books. She applied for them through the African Library Project and got donations of hundreds of books. The library at Mopeli G.P.S. has been well-established for a few years and is well maintained by the students. They respect and care for the books and overrun the place during lunchtime to check out their favorite books. I wrote an

article about how inspiring this was to me which was recently published on the African Library Project's blog. However, my other school of Lepholisa did not have much of a success story. Due to the poor conditions of the school itself, the books were packed away in boxes and the children and teachers never saw them or used them. Yet, at the introduction of the 2014 school year, that all changed.

In 2013, Lepholisa acquired a small amount of funding to help develop their school. With this money, I helped them plan and build an enormous bookshelf which spanned the entire length of the back wall in the class 7 classroom. It was bolted there and the students helped to pull out all of the books out from the boxes and place them on the new shelves. Many of the students had never seen these books before. It made for a fun time of discovery and learning. I was monitoring the process and had to push students to continue working when they inevitably

stopped to sit and read a book they found interesting. Finally, all of the books were removed from the boxes where they had been collecting dust for years and put on the shelves where they could be accessible to all. I helped host an election with the students in class 6 and 7 to vote on who would be "librarians" and run the library. 5 responsible students were chosen for this job by their peers. I also held a meeting with teachers to introduce the library and explain how it functions and its rules. These rules were later placed on a poster board next to the shelves. The library was officially opened for public use at the beginning of 2014.

I admit I was skeptical about how well the library would function with 12 year olds in charge of it. However, to my surprise, it ran smoothly and continues to do so. Since the library is stationed in a classroom, there is always a teacher nearby to oversee it. The students do the work on their own for the most part. I taught the librarians how to fill out the check-out book and they do thorough work. Now, every week when I return to Lepholisa, I check on the library and I am impressed. When they finish my work early in class, I see my students take out the books they checked out from the library and start reading. It makes me happy to know that they are motivated to use the books. All they needed was for them to be accessible.

Gerad Thornton - ED 13



Over the course of my first semester last year I realized that punishments and I just really don't work well with each other. Classroom management seemed so simple, which it is not, and some Volunteers still manage to make it look simple (I have no idea how they do that). In this case when I talk about classroom management I'm really talking about "punishments". You know like

"taking a student's shoe if they are late" or "making them hop on one foot to get to their desks". I tried those things, a lot of different ones, and none of them really felt like they were working. Students always fought me over them and so it turned into a giant waste of time. At first I basically fought back, which failed. All of these punishments in the name of classroom management ended up giving me soooooo much stress and made me so unhappy. Instead I switched to a reward based system in my classes. Generally it works like this: I reward every behavior that I like. I try and stay excited and happy (especially when the students are doing what I want them to do), and I ignore the behaviors I don't like/want. This has actually been very successful; before I was always fighting with my students so they would behave or do what I wanted and needed them to do. This new approach, instead of fighting them, I provided an incentive for them to change their behaviors (turn in homework, ask questions in class, and so on). It has actually been very successful. In my form C class this year (I started the reward system last year when they were form Bs) almost every class every student will answer a question, and a lot of students will now ask

questions. They also focus a lot better in class. I would definitely say that this management approach has been very successful and I am in the midst of changing it right now so I can get the students to redo problems that they have done incorrectly or retake review quizzes to get more marks.

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

Hele-helele bana ba Thesele!

HY 14 Counterparts and Supervisors' workshop

The two regional workshops were a success! Thanks to the Supervisors and the Counterparts who made the time to participate in this important relationship and capacity building event. It makes us feel confident that once they swear in, the Volunteers will receive the expected support. We also acknowledge the great impact made by our two Resource Volunteers Joe and Clareese who made time to share their context specific experience to make the settling in of the trainees...soon to be Volunteers a smooth one. Rea leboha!

VRF Feedback

As the PST slows down, we have now rolled our sleeves to provide the much awaited feedback on your VRF. Thank you very much for all the patience that you have exercised throughout the waiting period. That is what sometimes being an older "baby" in the family comes with...a little bit of compromises and sacrifices to keep the "new babies" happier. Thank you so much!

CHED 12 COSer's

It is that time of the year where we will celebrate the good time and memories that we have had with the CHED 12s. Some are already RPCVs, leaving behind abuti Brendan Rosen (AKA) Lebohng, 'Me' Carlaine Reynolds (AKA) Lineo/Rethabile and ausi Wendy Stein (AKA) Lerato Nkuebe. Their input and wisdom will not go unnoticed! Bon voyage! Tsamaeang Hantle!

HY 14 Site Visits

We are working on a schedule to resume the Site Visits for the HY 14 to find out how you are settling into your sites and assignments. We will contact your supervisors to let them know of our travel plans so that they can also inform the Counterparts and the host families! It will be really interesting to see how far you have gone in turning your houses into sweet homes!

HY 15 Site Identification

The time for the site preparations for the HY 15 group has come. If you have any potential leads for a site that could make a PCV happy and effective in Lesotho, give us a shout! We will be more than willing to meet with them, issue out the PCV application forms and start the site identification process!

Success Stories

Wendy Stein (AKA Lerato) - CHED 12

"In a more remote village near Seforong of Lichecheng, I organized a gathering with a group of out-of-school young

women and single mothers, whom I have been wanting to connect with since 2013. I used PACA tools to learn their daily schedule, as well as their assets, challenges, and interests. This generated a lengthy discussion of gender roles, love and relationships, and HIV/AIDS as well as career and academic goals. On the next visit, I brought the "body mapping" drawing tool I learned from Camp Glow. The goal of the exercise was for the women to focus more specifically on their strengths, visions, and goals as well as to have an image of empowerment as a keepsake. Each meeting ends with dancing and photographs, which I share with the USA, and they share with local Basotho".



[LANGUAGE CORNER BY 'M'e Mamokola](#)

Khotsong baithaopi ba khabane! I would like to thank and congratulate all those who were able to take a chance to join the recent language IST that was held in the South and North regions. Though it was for a short period of time, they were able to build on their language skills as they also acquired new material. While it is Peace Corps' mandate for volunteers to secure and work with a tutor for On-going language learning, Language IST is one other strategy for supporting volunteers' language learning. For those who could not join, please take your chance with the next one coming up in January 2015.

Basotho ba re **"lets'oele le beta poho, kopano ke matla, etsoe tlou ha e hloloe ke moroalo."**

[ADMIN CORNER BY Ntate Tony](#)

Greetings,

In the admin unit we have a proverb – life is short where life is equated to time. Literal translation means do the things you can while time is on your side otherwise you will regret not doing that. It is amazing that a year has just gone by since my arrival in Lesotho. However, together we did heed the real meaning of the proverb and have achieved a lot. It was real nice being part of the fantastic team Lesotho for the past year supporting you wonderful Volunteers in the field, and responding to the needs of the Government and people of Lesotho. I do cherish the time spent with you and will remember this year as one of the best during my roving career which so far spans 12 years. I leave with a heavy heart but till our paths cross again stay well, focused as usual, and blessed.

As always thanks for your usual kind cooperation, understanding and support. Khotsong - Kea Leboha.

I like to take the opportunity to welcome David as your new DMO and exhort all of you staff and Volunteers to

give him the same support (even more) you accorded me during my stay here in Lesotho.

Ntate **David Wallace's Bio**



My Peace Corps experience (RPCV Kazakhstan, 1997-99) turned me into a big traveler/nomad. I've been to more than 30 countries and lived in 5 different states. I've worked for 9 different non-profits serving a variety of constituencies, from folks with developmental disabilities, to queer youth, to HIV/AIDS in the Black community, to at-risk youth in the juvenile justice system, to isolated elders and more. My non-profit experience has been at the Development & Communications level or Management.

My "passions" are travel, history, reading, movies, games, college football, and of course my son Kyle who I adopted out of the foster care system in Vermont when he was 14 (he is an adult now!) The coolest things that have happened to me recently: spending a year teaching in Guangzhou, China with Disney English and getting to be in Oklahoma when my kid sister completed the adoption of my awesome new nephew from the Congo—he is amazing! I am really looking forward to Lesotho!

[MEDICAL CORNER BY DR. Olga Wa Kone 'Me Mamotbang and 'Me Itumeleng](#)

Dear volunteers and trainees,



In the effort of serving you better, we made some modifications sometime back about how you could contact us at the Medical Unit. This scenario was tried and tested, and it was felt that we needed one more thing to

make it easier and accessible for all - an answering machine. **Here are the ways to contact the Medical Unit:**



- Medical Unit direct landline: **2232-3871**

- The Medical Unit direct landline is now provided with an answering machine, making it possible for you to leave a message 24/7 as long as

it is not an emergency.



- If you prefer email for non-emergency communications, the Medical Unit email is:

medical@ls.peacecorps.gov

- You can use either the direct Medical Unit landline or the Medical Unit email for any routine needs such as requests for medication, appointments, or to speak with the PCMO, and we will follow up with you within the next 24 hours or the next working day.



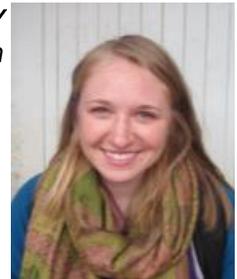
- The Medical Duty Phone number: **6285-1003** should remain only for emergencies. **Please use this phone number only for emergencies.**

Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation. We have enjoyed serving you thus far, and we look forward to going from the ordinary to the best. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us

[VOLUNTEER VOICES](#)

[The Interview](#)

*This month PCV **Tori Raymond HY 13** shares her interview with **RPCV Edgar Dalrymple** PC Lesotho, ED 1982-1984*



Edgar is a Federal employee working as a technical manager for the US Army, providing technical and managerial oversight for the acquisition of computing systems and other technology. He and his wife are training (currently in the French Pyrenees) for a coast-to-coast bicycle trip from San Diego, CA to St. Augustine, FL starting in March 2015. They have a

daughter who will be attending Kenyon College starting in August.

What projects did you do in Lesotho?

I taught Math and Science in Form B and C in Lesobeng (Thaba Tseka). My secondary project was setting up a science lab.

What did you do once you returned to the U.S.?

I went back to college for a computer class. I felt it improved my resume to reenter the technical job market.

What was the best thing about returning to the U.S. after your service?

Naturally it was great to reconnect with my family and friends, but like many RPCVs I felt a bit out of place. Being able to reinterpret American culture with the expanded awareness I gained from my years in Lesotho helped me form a richer appreciation for the wonderful diversity and capacity of the US and its citizens.

What do you miss most about Lesotho?

The smiles. The stars at night as seen from my site in Lesobeng. The quiet. The warmth of the Basotho. Periodic gatherings with other volunteers to swap stories.

Do you have any advice for current PCVs in Lesotho?

This is hard. Everyone's story is different. The best I can offer is to encourage PCVs to soak in all of the richness of Lesotho that they can. It is easy for any of us to be distracted by the mundane annoyances of any situation in which we find ourselves. I certainly had moments of lowliness and feelings of isolation. As I kept a journal, I can go back and read about them, which I do from time to time. I recently reconnected with a PCV friend from Lesotho that I had not seen in 25 years. We reconnected via Facebook and then met in Stockholm, Sweden by a curious sequence of events. It will be much easier for current PCVs to keep in touch with social media, and I hope that current PCVs will do so.

How do you plan to stay connected to Peace Corps (RPCV groups, reunions, Peace Corps Response, etc.)?

I have spoken at local recruiting events in Huntsville, AL, where I currently live. I investigated PC Response in hopes that my wife and I could find a fit there. I was told that PC Response did not place couples, which was disappointing, but we have not ruled out applying as a couple for another term of service.

Is there anything else you'd like to share with PCVs in Lesotho?

I always tell people who are interested, which unfortunately are few in number, that I feel certain that in the final respective of my life, my time in Lesotho will be among the 2-3 most significant events of my life. It has enriched my life in ways that are irreversible. RPCVs have turned up constantly throughout my life and we have an instant bond of understanding that is like that of a sister/brother. I'd like to thank you all for keeping PC Lesotho relevant and effective. Khotso, Pula, Nala.

Peer Support Network (PSN)

Life in the Raw

By: Laura M. Johnson – ED 13

August is upon us once more. Supposedly a fairly easy winter has passed. (Do you believe it? I don't know if I do.

I'm still waiting for snow.) Some of us are stepping onto planes home (CHEDs!), others are getting mighty close (Ed 13s, we can finally count our months on one hand), feeling in the groove, or even officially entering the Peace Corps Lesotho Volunteer family soon. (Welcome, comrades.)



Wherever you are in your service, for some reason this time of year has me thinking about the changes that are in the chilly July air. It's not just the people that come and go during our time in the Peace Corps; it's also the pace of life that changes. Sometimes my days feel like an eternity, yet other times it seems like everything should have been done yesterday. Sometimes I feel like I understand what's going on around me, but other times I find myself feeling entirely foreign and utterly confused. All of these changes can be good and/or bad, and of course they always keep the Peace Corps experience challenging. For me, often times these changes leave me feeling vulnerable. "Life... raw," is how Mary Beth once described it. I like that. Peace Corps aka "Raw living."

It's exhilarating. The good days feel really good, but the bad days can feel really bad, and change can sometimes make it seem even more unpredictable. What does this "raw living" teach us about ourselves? I would suggest that how we conduct ourselves in a challenging environment says more about our character than how we react when everything is hunky-dory. Back in the United States, life will be easier. We will be back in our comfort zones. We will understand more about what's going on around us and why.

I recently read a story about a man who had the following statement attached to his bathroom mirror, and I couldn't help but be reminded of our mission as Peace Corps Volunteers.

"I shall pass this way but once; any good, therefore, that I can do or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Our time here is fleeting, and constantly leading us to new people and places. My hope for all of us this August is that in the midst of this "raw living" and the changes all around us, both good and bad and other, we remember to be kind to others—to each other, to our communities, but most of all to strangers that we might not pass again. We would like to remind you that PSN is here for you if you ever want to talk via Whatsapp, phone, texting etc. Whether you're feeling happy, sad, pissed, anything, we'd love to be a listening ear. All of us have bad days, and together we can help each other be the best PCVs we can be, with a little bit of kindness and some airtime.

Diversity

The Power of Voice and Personal Diversity



By: Randi Helgesen – HY 13

When it comes to my personal diversity, I have always just *been*. I am typically accepting of the fact that I am who I am. I am a white, hyperactive female, with an odd Kelly Clarkson infatuation. I wear too much yellow, identify as a lesbian, and I think my jokes are ten times funnier than they actually are. Without explicit mentioning of my sexuality, I am assumed to be straight which can be both a

blessing and a curse. Before coming to Lesotho, I considered the issues I might encounter with my sexuality but, because my appearance generally fits into the societal ideal of female gender, I didn't worry. What I never acknowledged was the freedom I had in expressing my sexuality. I had a large community of other LGBTQ individuals whom I call friends, I attended pride parades and festivals, and I could come out to people that played major roles in my life (family, friends, coworkers, etc.) as I pleased.

Over a year ago, I sat in the diversity panel circle during PST. We each outlined the intersections that shape us, into who we are, the factors that fabricate our individuality. During that diversity circle I heard that being gay was not only dangerous in my country of service but Basotho viewed it as “very bad”. Immediately after hearing this, I began to realize the importance of my queer identity and how much pride I held in my LGBTQ community even without having previously acknowledged it. I was afraid of not only being in the closet, reverting to my 15-year-old self, but also of being alone with no one to relate to. What I have found is a very different experience than what I expected.

Throughout my time as a Volunteer, I have experienced interesting encounters in regards to the understanding of the LGBTQ community and how it is perceived. I have had multiple discussions about lesbians being boys, gay men being girls, and how lesbians have “male hormones running through their body.” I have had people tell me not to identify as a lesbian because it is an “ugly word” and that “gay does not exist in Lesotho”. But gay exists everywhere; perhaps it is just not widely discussed. As a Diversity Committee member, I have had the privilege to facilitate LGBTQ trainings for our Basotho staff. The discussions have been both inquisitive and meaningful, having a tremendous impact on my approach to expressing my personal diversity.

Individual voice and expression play a crucial role in building relationships amongst ourselves because these are the tools that promote understanding and acceptance of those different from us. I don't feel people need to know all about my sexual preference but I find discussing my sexuality helps people better understand my LGBTQ community and potentially brings about more accepting views of a phenomenon traditionally perceived as “very bad”. If we as individuals don't afford people in

our life the opportunity to understand our unique intersections, we fail to promote human dignity, which restricts all of us from reaching our full potential.

ABC's of Lesotho

By Jiggetts - ED 13

I thought it would be nice to come up with the ABC's of Lesotho. This will help you all to learn more about "The Mountain Kingdom." Read on:



A: Aloes. The spiral aloe is the national flower of Lesotho, and many villages are dotted with big, sprawling aloe plants and trees. The Basotho make chairs, roofs and body creams out of this versatile plant.

B: Bana. This is the Sesotho word for children. [The children here](#) always help their families by fetching water, herding animals, cooking and cleaning. They've truly been the brightest part of my service as a Volunteer because they know so much and have taught me a lot about survival. Without them, I would've have made it.

C: Chiefs. The chiefs keep the peace in villages. They also act as notaries by signing official documents, and have the authority to arrest and contain a person before police arrival. As a Volunteer, the chief signed on my school's bank account and grant applications. When you live on his (or her) land with his (or her) people, you have no choice but to respect the chief.

D: Districts. There are 10 districts in Lesotho. They are Maseru, Mafeteng, Mophale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, Bera, Leribe, Butha Buthe, Mopholong, Thaba Tseka. Volunteers are placed all over the country. I live in the lowlands, Mafeteng, which is located about 40 minutes from Maseru, the capital of Lesotho.

E: Eggs. Eggs because I couldn't think of anything else that started with the letter “E” that pertained specifically to Lesotho. LOL. But really, though, I do eat a lot of eggs here because it's hard for me to prepare and store chicken with no running water and refrigerator. So I get my protein fix from eggs sold in my village.

F: Feasts. Basotho hold feasts for weddings, funerals, births or [just because](#). They'll usually slaughter a cow or sheep, and drink lots of joala (traditional Basotho beer).

G: Girls. Young girls here fetch the water and help mom and granny cook and clean. They are also taught how to care for baby at a very early age. Sadly, some drop out of school and get married very young, continuing the cycle of poverty that plagues this country. One of the Peace Corps goals is to empower women and young girls, especially in a patriarchal society like Lesotho. Sounds corny but I try to spread this message in my Life Skills classes, with my school's craft project and at home, where I encourage my 15-year-old host sister to keep her grades up and stay in school. I've taught her how to make jewelry and scarves

to earn extra money.

H: Herd boys. Many boys, including my two host brothers, take their livestock for grazing. It is often a difficult and lonely life, especially in remote villages. But it is said that such training prepares a boy for manhood.

I: Initiation Schools. These are secret, sacred schools that are held in the mountains where young boys also train to be men. They are taught the duties and songs of manhood and, are usually circumcised. The ones that come back are widely respected, especially by their peers at school.

J: Joala. (Pronounced jwa-lah). This is very popular [Basotho beer](#). It is made out of either sorghum or ginger and served at many a mokete (feast).

K: King Letsie III. The King of Lesotho is King Letsie III. He is beloved by his people and admired and respected by his peers. I [met](#) him last year. Got to shake his hand but he was too hungry to take a picture with me.

L: Lesiba. This is a musical instrument played by herd boys to pass time. They attach a string to a stick and place a feather (lesiba) on the other end.

M: Mountains: Lesotho is known as “The Mountain Kingdom.” It is divided between the highlands, lowlands and foothills. I asked Peace Corps to place me in the lowlands because there was no way that I could survive the extreme winter and frigid conditions of the highlands. They listened. Smart people.

N: Nkhono. (Pronounced in-kho-no) This means grandmother in Sesotho and they really are jewels here. Many of them raise their grandchildren while their adult children work and send money from South Africa, where there are better financial opportunities. I always say that Lesotho is carried on the backs of the grandmothers here.

O: Osele. (Pronounced o-silly). This is a bad Sesotho word meaning crazy or very bad, but the Basotho will shorten it up and say “sele.” It’s a bad word to say to children, and the opposite of what Americans say to their kids when they act goofy: silly.

P: Princesses. Lesotho has two princesses: Princess Senate and Princess ‘Maseeiso. I’ve always wondered what their lives are like. I never see them running up and down with runny noses and dirt-caked faces like the kids in my village.

Q: Queen. Queen ‘Masenate is the Queen of Lesotho. Like her husband, she is a beloved figure here and like a queen, she always wears the most beautiful outfits. I often wonder what her manicures look like, and who does them.

R: Rain. This element is important to the Basotho because this is an agricultural society and many rely on their farms to support their families. The [rainy season](#) lasts from October through November.

S: Skiing. Yes, you can ski here at a place called AfriSki, which is located in the northern part of the country.

T: Twins. Back in the day, having twins here was a bad thing, one would have to be killed. Now, they’re considered a sign of good luck.

U: Umbrella. Like the Japanese, Basotho protect their skin from harsh sun rays by using an umbrella. I do this too, and always keep a mini umbrella in my pocketbook.

V: Villages. Lesotho is made up of many [villages](#) that the Basotho call home.

W: Wendy. This is the name of my Country Director. She’s been a big support to me as a Volunteer and has been easy to work for.

X: eXtreme. We’re going to pretend that this word starts with an “X,” OK people? LOL. This is a word that does my experience here justice. Some days I love Lesotho. Other days I loathe it. Overall, though, I really am extremely grateful for this extreme experience.

Y: You. I’d be nothing without your support. Your encouragement, letters, cards, notes, parcels and care packages have really gotten me through during my service. You have held me down while lifting me up and I’ll always be grateful for you!

Z: Zed. I always find it funny when Basotho say “from A to Zed” instead of “from A to Z.”

So there ya go! Here is Lesotho in A-Zed, er A-Z format. I hope you learned a little something about my country of service!

Sources: *My Culture: Just the way things are done at home by Patrick Mohlalefi Bereng, Peace Corps, my host mom and my own experience*

Gender Equality Lesotho (GEL)

Morgan NVB—ED 13 and Evan Brown HY 13

GEL: Programming and Training Sub-

Programming and Training (PTSC) is a sub-committee of the Gender Equality Lesotho committee. This sub-committee was established to help create linkages between Peace Corps and local organizations and ministries to better deliver cross-platform, unified support to all PCVs in the field. PTSC strives to further create gender awareness and provide education to incoming PCVs and community partners. Through the development of practical, Lesotho specific training material and programs, we hope to offer a product that can be easily applied in real-world scenarios. However, it is not our in-



Morgan NVB

tention to redo all the work accomplished in Lesotho. We instead have begun aggregating all the gender programs and materials in Lesotho from PCVs, local NGOs, and ministry, and will further expand into resources available from the global Peace Corps platform. From the collection of this information, we hope to offer all incoming volunteers material the local and global community has found useful when applied at a grass-roots level.



Evan Brown



HY 14 Supervisors and Counterparts Workshop

[PCVs'/Trainee's /Staff Life in Pictures](#)



ED 14 PDM Work shop - North



HY 14 site announcement



PC-staff back to school

