

KHOTSO

February 2015

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In this issue:

- Birthdays
- Holidays
- Events & staff travel
- Duty officers
- Staff Member of the Month
- Staff Corners
- New Staff announcement
- Volunteer Voices:
 - RPCV Interview
 - Diversity
 - Gender & Equality Lesotho
 - Grad School
 - World wise schools
 - PC 2015 Calendar
 - Life in Pictures

Message from the Country Director

Dear Volunteers,

78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83- that is you- you are part of the history of Lesotho! To date 2,385 Peace Corps Volunteers have served, or are serving here. Through research into the files at HQ we have learned that they don't keep records of training classes, just the dates when people entered into service. Going through and counting inputs of 10 or more PCVs at one time, we estimate that the next Trainees that arrive here to begin PST in April will be the 84th group!

Your service contributes to the impact of Peace Corps Lesotho over the years. Your work matters, and when it is added together as training group, as part of a project framework, and followed over the course of years, it can be measured. Your kindness, connections and motivation keep each day real and relevant. The achievements each of you shares with the Basotho in your lives are important and memorable.

Your two years here are a gift that you both give and receive. Peace Corps service is hard and you may struggle some days, but you have the opportunity to help others to help themselves.

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can." -Arthur Ashe

If you plan your days and weeks and years, if you break time into smaller pieces, you will feel the momentum of moving forward, and you will progress! On the last page of this issue are the big dates on the PC/Lesotho calendar, to help you make your plans. Inside there is information about successful Goal 3 activities, ways you can mark International Women's Day, reflections from a recent RPCV, and some smiles from mid-service. You can also see that an All Volunteer Conference will be held in July- please share your ideas about this with your VAC representative.

Kea Leboha,

Wendy

2,385

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From the Editor

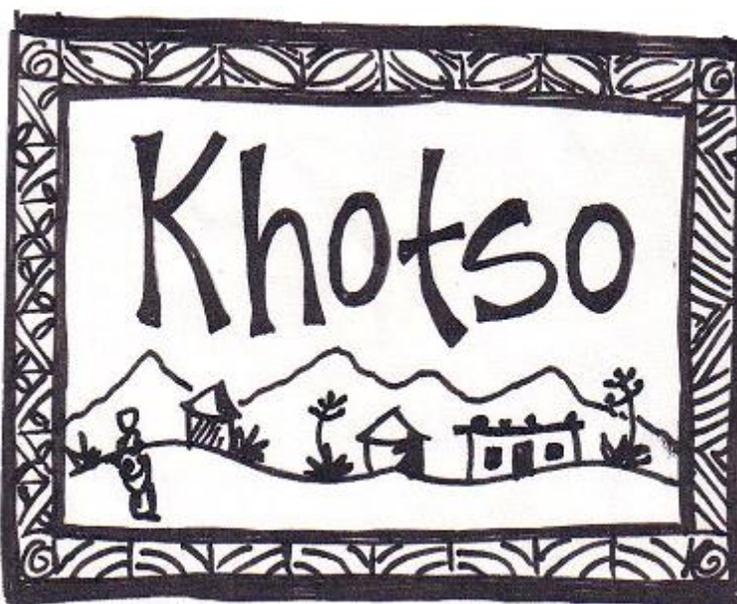
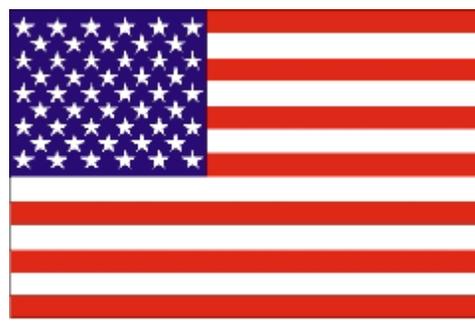
Articles must be received by the 4th Monday of the month to be included in the following month's edition of the *Khotso*. When submitting articles, please provide the name of the person making the submission and a contact person for follow-up questions. The Newsletter will be e-mailed in the office on or about the 1st week 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 *Khotso* 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
deadline for
March is
February 23, 2015**



PCV & STAFF BIRTHDAYS

February

- 5 Laurel Schall
- 7 William Thompson
- 8 Tholoana Masupha/IT-Specialist
- 12 Nthoalo Masiphole/Safety & Security Manager
- 21 Travis Wohlrab
- 22 Dr. Olga/PCMO
- 28 Michaela Puryear



March

- 8 Lisa Bergman
- 15 Bernard Letsella/PC Gardner
- 19 Catherine Wheat
- 20 Jon Beckerle
- 27 Brittany Hibbs
- 31 Jamie Langlois

PEACE CORPS LESOTHO HOLIDAYS (Office closed on

the following days)

February 16 President's Day (U.S. Holiday)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND STAFF TRAVEL

- Feb 2-28 DDMO at OST
- Feb 2 APCD/ED on site visit-Ha Moruthoane
- Feb 3 APCD/ED-Tsakholo
- Feb 9-13 APCD/ED on site visit-M-hoek, Quthing, QNek
- Feb 19 APCD/ED on site visit-Botha Bothe

DUTY OFFICERS

- February 6-12, 2015 ITS
- February 13-19, 2015 PTS-ED
- February 20-26, 2015 DPT
- February 27-March 5, 2015 APCD-HY

STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH

by 'm'e Lebohang Ranooe/Receptionist

M'e Lebohang is our receptionist, and a whole lot more. She is the voice and face of Peace Corps, she is a



great team player, and she carries out many varied responsibilities at the hub of Peace Corps. When Peace Corps staff gather to receive a visitor or to say goodbye to a PCV who is COSing, M'e Lebohang always offers up a kind and thoughtful word. She is attentive to correct timesheet submissions and leave requests, which helps all of us, and she works faithfully on the *Khotso* and on its timely distribution each month.

And in January she joined others to spend a week renewing her LPI tester certification - an added skill and

responsibility that she has accepted to help Volunteers, optimizes our operations, and keeps her at the heart of Peace Corps.

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

This week marks the beginning of the academic year for most of you and we once again wish you well. We hope the year will be productive and fulfilling to you and your students. With the beginning of the year, the Ed Team is gearing up for the Lesotho 84 Training Class (formerly known as "ED15s") initial site visits. You should all have our site visit schedule and we appeal to you to remind your supervisors of our visits. We have received a few Phase II assignments already and this is a reminder that the first batch is due January 30th. We are looking forward to learning a little more about your experiences during this period of your service in Lesotho. For this edition we are sharing with you a gold star activity from **Mike Langley ED 15** highlighting the importance of setting connections between Basotho children and the American children.

Gold Star Activity:



One thing I was happy with was setting up my standard 6 students with American pen pals. I connected with the mother of one of my high school friends who is an English teacher in my hometown, and her students wrote nine long letters with lots of pictures. The kids were very excited to read the letters, asked me lots of questions about what their American pals were talking about, and had a great time writing their responses. I

sent them off and am looking forward to getting responses in the coming months.





Here are two of the kids showing off the letters they have received from the American pen pals. The boy's name is **Likhetho Lethola**, and the girl's name is **Mpeoane Moseli**.

[HEALTHY YOUTH CORNER by 'm'e 'Mamakhetha](#) **HAPPY NEW YEAR**

All Volunteers are wished a happy and prosperous 2015!!!!

SITE IDENTIFICATION

HY 15 Site Identification has begun and volunteers are most welcome to suggest some host organizations in their different communities which could possibly host an HY PCV.

HIV/AIDS CPW/PDM

All HY 14 PCV will be attending an HIV/AIDS CPB/PDM Workshop this coming weekend at BMI Hotel in Teyateyaneng. PCVs will be attending with their respective counterparts and will be equipped with skills on how to design and implement sustainable projects at their different communities. The workshop will run from the 09th to 13th February 2015. The arrival day is Sunday 08th February and departure is Saturday 14th February 2015. This departure day is Valentine and there will be love in the air!!!

[LANGUAGE & CROSS CULTURE CORNER by 'm'e Mamokola](#)

Likhomo tseo le manamane a tsona baitaopi!
Lumelang kaofela hohle moo le leng teng. Ke le lakaletsa bophelo bo bottle le mahlohonolo a selemo se secha. Ke le rata haholo.

Many of you if not all, have worked very hard and managed to settle in, established themselves and are slowly but surely becoming part of their communities. I also know that a few of you are still struggling and are being challenged to do so, especially due to limited language proficiency, but I'm sure with good will and spirit, they will get there. Let me know how I can assist. Throw me an email anytime, ask me questions and I will get back to you whenever I get time. My schedule is very busy, but I will always try to find time for you. Keep trying to get tutors as that is how you will continue on-going language learning. While you also have worked very hard to learn and acquire Basotho Culture Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes, there's one thing, as a Culture Contact Person, I have realized. Some of you have put aside the cultural norms of Basotho dress code. The Peace Corps Office is a professional environment where we as staff members and Peace Corps Volunteers should demonstrate professionalism. While some casual attire can be alright, could we please not wear shorts (they are too short and unprofessional). I am sure this will not be difficult to any of us and we are going to work as a team in this regard.

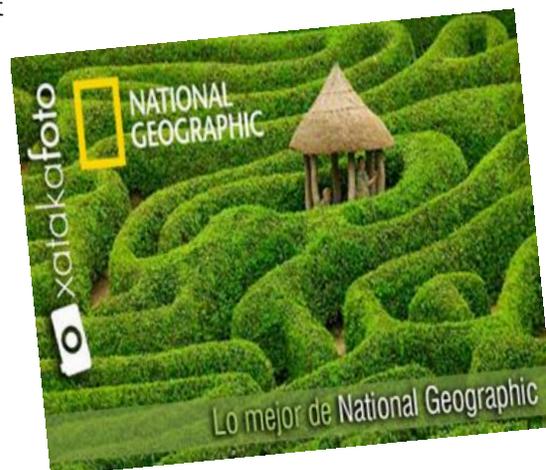
Once again, thank you for all your efforts and your service in this country.

Wish you all the best and good life.

Khotso! Pula! Nala

[ADMIN CORNER by Ntate David](#)

For any interested English Teachers, I've got 20 issues of National Geographic available to the first person who e-mails me and promises they will put them to good use in the classroom. I am working on "clearing my clutter," and have had these for some time – some of the issues are from long ago. A clever teacher could find multiple uses for them in the classroom. Also, FYI, if you're coming to Maseru and needing to mail stuff back to the states, or just



need some shipping boxes for other reasons, I have several in my office – along with a limited amount of packing paper, bubble paper, etc. 'M'e Debra has some as well.

CASHIER CORNER by 'M'e Maggie

PCVs are advised to give their mobile numbers to the bank and set up text alerts when withdrawals are made to help prevent fraud. Of course this also means that if you lose your phone, you should just make a "sim swap" to keep your same number. And speaking of the bank, PCVs should always take their passports for **any services** inside the bank (e.g., lost ATM card, forgotten pin, closing your account, etc.). Finally, the bank encourages PCVs to come into your local Standard Lesotho Bank personally for any issues, rather than using staff as a go-between; you will usually get a quicker response and it will be easier for you on the whole. Certainly, report relevant issues to staff, and request help if needed or if you encounter difficulties.



MEDICAL CORNER by Dr. Olga

ASK YOUR PCMO

"WHAT IS ALTITUDE SICKNESS?"

Considering that Lesotho is a mountainous kingdom,



PCVs get worried about this sickness. Let's first understand what it is.

What is altitude sickness? – Traveling to high altitudes (for example, the mountains) can sometimes cause health problems. This group

of problems is called "altitude sickness."

The 3 main types of altitude sickness are:

- **Acute mountain sickness** – This is the most common type and causes symptoms like those caused by an alcohol hangover.
- **High altitude cerebral edema** (also called "HACE") – This is less common but more serious than acute mountain sickness. It involves

swelling of the brain.

- **High altitude pulmonary edema** (also called "HAPE") – This is also less common and more serious than acute mountain sickness. It involves fluid build up in the lungs.

If you are planning to go somewhere at high altitude, there are things you can do to keep from getting altitude sickness.

What are the symptoms of altitude sickness? – The symptoms differ depending on the type of altitude sickness you have.

Acute mountain sickness can happen within a day of traveling or climbing to a very high altitude. The symptoms can include:

- Headache
- Feeling tired
- Feeling lightheaded
- Having no appetite
- Trouble sleeping
- Nausea, sometimes with vomiting

If you have these symptoms, do not travel or climb any higher until you feel better. You should feel better within a day or so.

The symptoms of HACE (swelling of the brain) usually start 1 to 3 days after traveling or climbing to at a high altitude.

They include:

- Extreme tiredness and weakness
- Trouble walking normally
- Confusion and irritability
- Acting drunk

The symptoms of HAPE (fluid in the lungs) usually start 2 to 4 days after traveling or climbing to a high altitude.

They include:

- Coughing
- Feeling breathless
- Trouble walking uphill

Can altitude sickness be prevented? – Yes. The best way to prevent altitude sickness is to avoid moving quickly to a higher altitude. Going slowly gives your body time to adjust.

- If you are traveling to a very high altitude, plan to stretch your trip out over several days.
- If you are hiking or climbing, don't do difficult physical activities for the first few days, and avoid alcohol and sleeping pills.

- When hiking, go to a higher altitude during the day and then go back down to a slightly lower altitude each night to sleep.
- If you have had altitude sickness before, your doctor might give you a medicine to keep you from getting it again.

Is there anything I can do on my own to feel better? — Yes.

If you have mild symptoms of acute mountain sickness, you should rest. Do not travel or climb to a higher altitude until you feel better. Moving to a lower altitude can also help, if symptoms do not go away in a day or 2.

If you have symptoms of a more serious problem, such as HACE or HAPE, try to get help right away (by calling the PCMO) and move to a lower altitude **immediately**.

Should I see a doctor or nurse? — If you have severe symptoms after traveling or climbing to a high altitude, get medical care right away. Waiting to get treatment could cause serious health problems, or even death.

How is altitude sickness treated? — Treatment depends on which type of altitude sickness you have. If you have symptoms of acute mountain sickness, rest and stay where you are until you feel better. If your symptoms get worse, move to a lower altitude. For a headache, you can take medicines such as aspirin, acetaminophen or ibuprofen .

There are also prescription medicines that can help treat the symptoms of acute mountain sickness. These include: diuretics and steroids

The most important treatment for HACE (swelling of the brain) or HAPE (fluid in the lungs) is to get to a lower altitude right away or seek medical care from the PCMO.

With the above information, our health unit believes that no PCV will be left unattended as soon as he/she discovers and reports such symptoms. So far, we have not yet recorded a clear case of acute mountain sickness, HAPE or HACE unless PCVs treated symptomatically acute mountain sickness. Kindly, let us know for record purposes even if symptoms went away within hours or few days.

Contact us for emergency on 62851003

For routine care on 22323871 or email us on

Medical@ls.peacecorps.gov

Please send your questions for Khotso to

Medical@ls.peacecorps.gov before the end of 2nd week of February and it will be answered and published in the next edition.

NEW STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT!

Sekhonyana Makhaola is Peace Corps Lesotho's new Human Resource Specialist. He studied at the University of KwaZulu Natal, in Pietermaritzburg - South Africa, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Social Science degree in Human Resource Management and Political Science, as well as an Honours degree in Human Resource Management.



Since his return to Lesotho in 2010, he has worked in the office of the Prime Minister as an Assistant Human Resource Officer, and at Quadrant Training and Consulting, as a Human Resource Consultant. While at Quadrant, he managed and successfully completed a number of consulting assignments for leading organisations in Lesotho, including the

Independent Electoral Commission, the Lesotho Revenue Authority, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority, the United Nations Development Programme, as well as the Ministry of Education.

We welcome him to Peace Corps Lesotho, and look forward to working closely with him for a better Peace Corps!

VOLUNTEER VOICES

RPCV interview

Name: Molly Mclsaac

PC Sector: Community Health and Economic Development (CHED)

Years served in Lesotho: 2012-2014

Where in Lesotho you served: Quthing; Qacha's Nek

Lumelang Metsoalle! I am currently living the good life in Seattle, Washington. After taking a month of just relaxing I moved here so I can be closer to the rain, living near both the water and mountains yet in a metropolitan area, and having splendid choices of great beer and assortments of food. I am working at an adult day health center as a case manager providing social and health services for elderly, individuals with a variety of chronic illnesses, and the developmentally disabled population. Other than working I have been spending a ton of time catching up with friends and family, cooking, spending time outdoors and let's be real spending time with my newest family member, Luna... my cat.

What was your favorite place in Lesotho?

My favorite place in Lesotho depended on my mood and the context. When I had the energy and time to bring food from Maseru it was definitely in my house, cooking. When I was feeling social and happy, and it was going to be a less than 3 hour trip in the sun, I loved taking public transit. For those quiet pondering days I loved being anywhere up in isolated areas in the mountains just looking at the beautiful scenery. In Qachas Nek when I wanted



the best chicken around, my favorite place to go to with other PCVs was Mazisis. My favorite resting place when I lived in Quthing and in Qachas Nek, was on my host families couch especially after a big meal when we were all laying sideways.

What was one of your most memorable moments of PC service?

This is a difficult question; I have tried to answer versions of this question to so many people since I have arrived back into the US. Unfortunately, I cannot pinpoint one memory to be my favorite just like I cannot tell you my favorite movie or color. But I can give you some fond memories that I love to look back on and think wow Lesotho will always be near and dear to my heart. One thing I will never forget is spending hours (like a ridiculous amount of hours) with Anri, a fellow CHED '12 volunteer in trainings, workshops, and meetings with our organization. This meant being together from 7 am to 9 pm and even one time 12 am! Through all of the long hours we found ourselves always looking through the silly quotes on the sugar packets and taking cat naps while we could. Or that time when PC staff scared us so much by saying never

leave our rooms when it gets dark during PST and we were all still having issues with our bodies adapting to the food. Well a bowel movement may or may not have had to happen in front of a different volunteer in our good old pee bucket. Great friend now and I know everyone has a story like that! Another warm memory of mine was all the evenings watching South African and US soaps with my host family and imitating the accents and following the different storylines religiously. Another day I will also never forget would be Tara (CHED '11) and Lebohang's engagement party when a group of some fantastic volunteers and friends in Qachas Nek got together and danced, smiled, and ate until the next morning. Additionally, there were times with colleagues that I will always remember because of genuine conversations surrounding around positive system change that were proven milestones of the work we were doing together.

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

12 hours after I arrived in Washington state I was off to George, Washington aka the middle of nowhere in Washington State for Watershed. If you do not know what that is well never agree to go if you are going right after finishing your Peace Corps service. It is one of the busiest crowded country music festivals around. Let's just say too much America way too soon. After 3 days of that I went and lived with my parents for the remainder of the month to relax and catch up on well needed friend and family time. This included lots of coffee, giant sandwiches and salads, and gourmet cheeses. I would say it was my month of no self-loathing after eating way too much cheesecake, no shame for taking my time in crowded places when overwhelmed or stimulated, and being content with being at home, not working and finding my feet. It was amazing.

How did PC prepare you for what you wanted to do after service?

I think it is still too early for me to say how PC prepared me for what I wanted to do after service. Career wise, I think it just confused me more because now, I have been introduced to so many options for different paths and while there I had thought through 5 different routes for continuing my education and had changed it at least 3 times monthly. But I do not know if that was from PC or taking time from the rush and social pressures of the American culture.

How have you stayed connected with other RPCVs?

I have stayed connected with RPCVs mostly via telephone. Unlimited data is a great thing. It can be overwhelming and at first it was hard to stay on the phone

calmly because after 2 years of getting my point through in less than 10 seconds it is difficult to retrain that habit. I have not utilized any sort of RPCV local groups because of time and proximity. Maybe down the road I may look into it when it becomes something I want as a social or career networking tool.

Do you have any advice or wisdom for current PCVs in Lesotho?

For wisdom I would say live in the moment there. It is hard sometimes but really try and enjoy every bus ride, conversation on the street, mystery meat, long hours of sitting outside waiting for meetings to start, and the long nights without electricity; once you get back its just about jumping right back onto the bandwagon of work and social expectations

Gender Equality Lesotho (GEL)

International Women's Day

Almighty and Fabulous Peace Corps Lesotho Volunteers,

As the year comes to a rushing start, it is important to keep in mind special dates that inspire education and



growth and allow us to celebrate accomplishments of those with whom we work and live. As a co-chair of the GEL (Gender Equality Lesotho) Committee and active supporter of our Gender and Development CSPP (Cross Sector Programming Priority), I write to inform about International Women's Day as a day to recognize efforts that promote gender equality and highlight the

opportunity to raise awareness of gender issues, to inspire change at micro and macro levels.

Every year, International Women's Day is celebrated on March 8. The UN declares an annual theme, 2015 being: *Make It Happen*. This theme will be a part of a global campaign we can all take part in.

Some ways that we can all support International Women's Day:

Run an event at your school, organization, or in your village. (Talent show, nomination of powerful people promoting gender equality, movie showing, informative panel of powerful individuals to present their work, etc.)

Participate in a local event or campaign. (Check the gender links website for potential events happening near you: genderlinks.org.za)

Encourage individuals to "Paint it Purple" by wearing

the color or using the color for your blogs or social media sites for the day.

- Why

Purple?

Purple signifies justice and dignity and when worn together we show support for solidarity.

Do a media interview.

Post pictures or videos of related material.

Participate in the social media campaign using hashtags: #MakeItHappen #womensday #IWD2015 #internationalwomensday

#PaintItPurple.

Join Peace Corps' Gender and Development Facebook Page for more information or to post your own events and happenings!

Do something special for counterparts to simply be mindful of the special day.

I encourage you to show your support for Gender and Development. If you have any ideas you would like to share with your fellow volunteers or would like help planning further ideas, send us an email at: geneqlesotho@gmail.com.

Happy February!

Randi HY 13

Co-chair GEL Committee

rhelgese@gmail.com

Grad School Opportunity for RPCVs

This message is sent on behalf of Stephan Schmidt, the Direct of Graduate Studies for City & Regional Planning at Cornell University. Please forward to PCVs considering graduate study after service:

Cornell University's renowned city and regional planning program has partnered with the Peace Corps to develop two programs that offer graduate planning students an opportunity to combine a Cornell learning experience with a hands-on Peace Corps community-building experience.

- **Paul D. Coverdell Fellows Program** is a graduate fellowship program that offers financial assistance to Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs)
- **Master's International (MI)** offers the unique opportunity to integrate a master's degree with overseas grassroots development service

For more information about Cornell's City & Regional Planning graduate program, please visit our [website](#).

As a returned volunteer myself, I understand the difficulties in researching and applying to graduate school from abroad. Please contact me if you are interested in applying.

Sincerely,

Stephan Schmidt

Associate Professor

Director of Graduate Studies

Department of City and Regional Planning

Cornell University

sis96@cornell.edu

World Wise Schools

HQ has let us know of a few changes to the program:

Facebook group: We have created a Facebook group for PCV Correspondence Match participants. You are welcome to join the [conversation](#) and encourage your PCVs to join as well!

Program Changes: We are in the process of updating our systems, and will be contacting PCVs to verify that the information we have is correct. Currently there are still many more PCVs needing matches than educators, so continue encouraging PCVs to find their own matches and register them.

For the future: We are also looking for top PCV content producers (blogs, video, photos) with great school/student connections. Send 1-2 suggestions to: wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov.

Thank you for your continued support of the Correspondence Match program.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Office of Third Goal & Returned Volunteer Services

wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov



Lars with grade 4 learners



Betty with grade 4 learners



Kristin and IL



ED 14 MID SERVICE

Peace Corps 2015 Calendar of Events

January

- PSN w/shop (16th-18th)
- LPI Testers w/shop (19th-23rd)
- *Schools begin (26th)*
- ED14 (L81) Mid-Service (30th-Feb 1st)

February

- DSR Training-South (7th)
- HY14 (L82) HIV/AIDS & PDM w/shop (8th-13th)
- DSR Training- North (14th)
- Lesotho Technology Committee Meeting (14th)
- VAC Meeting (21st)
- HY15 (L84) Training of Trainers-TOT (23rd-27th)
- *Lesotho General Elections (28th)*

March

- Gender Equality Lesotho-GEL Committee Meeting (7th)
- Staff Retreat (12th-13th)
- ED15 (L83) Phase 3 (27th-31st)
- Grassroot Soccer w/shop-TBD, *late in the month*

April

- Optional Sesotho IST-TBD, *early in month*
- HY15 (L84) Trainees Arrival (22nd) PST starts

May

HY13 (L80) COS Conference (5th-7th)

June

- HY 15 (L84) Supervisor/Counterpart Workshop- *early in month*
- ED15 (L83) HIV/AIDS & PDM w/shop-South (21st-26th)
- *Schools close (24th)*

July

- HY15 (L84) Swearing In (1st)
 - ED15 (L83) HIV/AIDS & PDM w/shop-North (5th-11th)
 - *King's Birthday (17th) Lesotho holiday*
 - All Volunteer Conference (29th-31st)
- Optional Sesotho IST -TBD

August

- *Schools reopen (3rd)*
- ED16 (L85) TOT (24th-28th)

September

- ED14 (L81) COS Conference (4th-6th)
- HY14 (L82) Mid-Service w/shop (14th-16th)

October

- *Independence Day (4th) Lesotho holiday*
- ED16 (L85) Trainees Arrival (7th) PST starts

November

- ED16 (L85) IL/Supervisors w/shop-TBD
- HY15 (L 84) Phase 3, TBD- Oct or Nov
- Grassroot Soccer w/shop (28th-30th)

December

- ED16 (L85) Swearing In (16th)
- *Christmas Day (25th) US & Lesotho holiday*
- *Boxing Day (26th) Lesotho holiday*