

KHOTSO

August 2012

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



CHED11 Jasmine Smith in Her New House.

Dear Volunteers,

In addition to touring the Great Pyramid, the Sphinx and the incredible display of King Tut's tomb at the Egyptian Museum while in Cairo last Saturday*, I had a chance to discuss the recent elections there with my tour guides and learned that some Egyptians aren't as thrilled with the whole process as one might think. This underscored for me the historic nature of the elections that took place in Lesotho in May, which were met with far less fanfare by the international news sources than the Egyptian elections yet were held without incident, are considered by all to have been free and fair and were followed by a peaceful transition. If you think about it, we're pretty lucky to be here to witness this period in Lesotho's history!

In July, I visited CHED11 Jasmine Smith in Pitseng. After checking out her new digs, which has one of the best views in Lesotho, I attended an elderly support group meeting that Jasmine helped start and is facilitated by Jasmine and one of the youth leaders from Help Lesotho where she works. It was one of the most heart-warming activities I've attended in Lesotho. Eight *nkhono*, who live at a "retirement home" at the local Catholic Church, attended the meeting and talked about what's impor-

tant in their life, what they have to be thankful for and how they can make the most of their time on Earth. Most of them couldn't hear or see too well, but Jasmine reported that they are always eager for the weekly meeting, which gives them an opportunity to bond and break up the monotony of their day. Great job, Jasmine!

If you haven't already done so, please complete the AVS. As of July 30th, Peace Corps Lesotho was at 95% and we'd love to be the first post in Africa to reach 100%. Thanks to all who have already completed the survey, which includes all ED10s, CHED10s and ED12s and most of the CHED11s. If you're one of the 3 CHED11s who hasn't completed it, please do so ASAP. We're so close!

As we celebrate the CHED10s' successful completion of 2 years of service and the CHED12s embark on their PC journey, I'd like to thank all of you for your service—whatever stage you're in.

Khotso,
Kathy

*Gratuitous mention of recent vacation in honor of Jess Wilhelm.



Jasmine and One of the Members of the Elderly Support Group.

Editorial Staff

Managing Editor – Kathy Jacquart Dill, Country Director

Editor – Deepak Pullanikkatil, IT Specialist

Staff Contributors:

Administration – Jim McCormick, Director of Management and Operations

Program and Training:

Eric Goldman— Director of Programming and Training

Education – Clement Lephoto—Associate Peace Corps Director & Malitaba Hlabana— Programming & Training Specialist

Community Health & Economic Development - Selloane Pitikoe—Associate Peace Corps Director & Mamakhetha Moranye—Programming & Training Specialist

Training – Masechaba Mapena—Training Manager, Mamokola Matlanyane—Language, Cross Culture and Homestay Coordinator

Safety & Security – Nthoalo Masiphole

Medical—Dr. Victor Inegbedion

Distribution – Lebohang Ranooe

All other staff and PCVs who contribute

From the Editor

Articles must be received by the 4th Monday of the month to be included in the following month’s edition of the Khotso. **When submitting articles, please provide the name of the person making the submission and a contact person for follow-up questions.** The Newsletter will be emailed and a hardcopy made available in the office on or about the 1st of each month. Please make sure that your email address is on file with Peace Corps. Remember that it is your responsibility to read the Khotso Newsletter for updates from Peace Corps Lesotho.

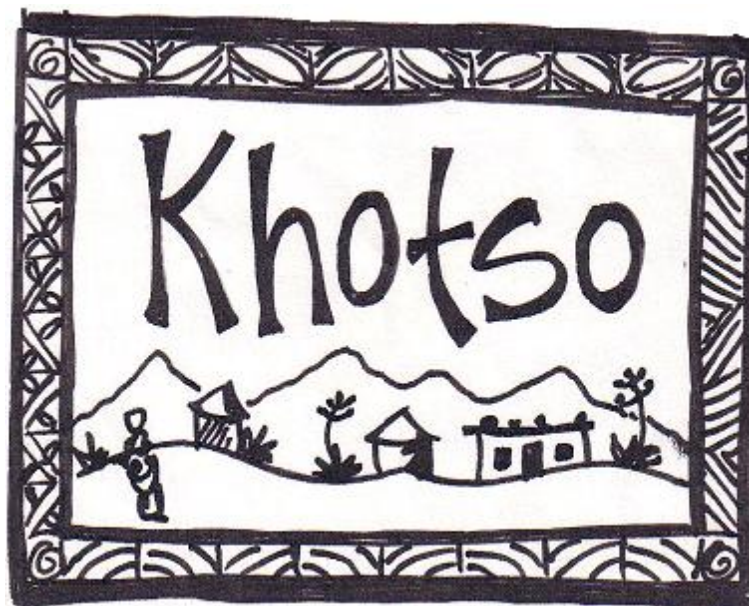
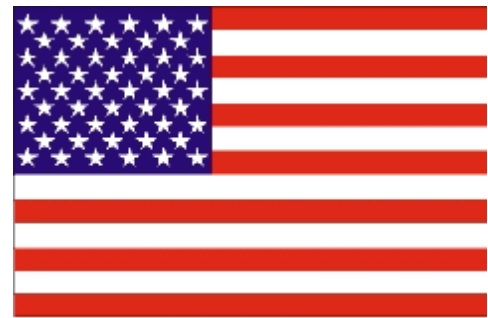
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you.

By submitting articles, you are providing Peace Corps Lesotho with the right to reprint your article in full or part in any publication.

Deepak Pullanikkatil, Editor



Editorial



PCV & Staff Birthdays

Birthday greetings go out to the following Volunteers and staff!

August

Mohale, Letsatsi (Programming and Training Secretary) – 1
 Wilhelm, Jess – 2
 Mclsaac, Molly – 3
 Day, Maggie – 4
 Smith, Jasmine – 4
 Okegbe, Tishina – 9
 Deakin, Matt – 9
 Berdini, Ariana – 12
 Cain, Shawna – 17
 Buechel, Katie – 26
 Peel, Adam – 27
 Pagan, Beth – 30

September

Blatt, Amber – 5
 Stein, Wendy – 7
 Machai, Majimisi (HIV/AIDS Coordinator) – 14
 Notsi, Itumeleng (Medical Assistant) – 21
 Mosae, Jeanett (Executive Secretary) – 24
 Inegbedion, Victor (PCMO) – 27
 Biron, Cassie – 29
 McCormick, Jim (Director of Management Overseas) – 30

Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays (Office closed these days)

August

No holidays this month.

September

Labor Day – 3 (US Holiday)

Calendar of Events and Staff Travel

July 30 – Aug 4 'me Mamakhetha, Aparna Jayaraman, Peggy Kang, James Forté at Racial Diversity Workshop, Pretoria
 August 6 CHED12 Swearing-in Ceremony
 August 13-18 Jim at DMO Conference in Pretoria
 September 6-8 CHED11 mid-service conference (tentative)
 September 10-14 Kathy at CD Conference in Washington DC
 September 17-21 ED13 PST TOT

Duty Officer Schedule

July 30 – August 5	PTS ED
August 6 – 12	PTS CHED
August 13 – 19	SSC
August 20 – 26	ITS
August 27 – Sept. 2	FA
September 3 – 9	GSO
September 10 – 16	CD
September 17 – 23	DMO
September 24 – 30	APCD (ED)

New staff member – Eric Goldman, DPT



On July 31st, we welcomed Eric Goldman who will replace Charles Miller who will move to Pretoria as the Peace Corps Regional Advisor for programming and training.

Before joining us, Eric worked as the Director of Programming and Training (DPT) at Peace Corps Malawi. He has also worked as manager of the Master's International program and the Office of Diversity Recruitment at Peace Corps in Washington DC. Prior to that he served as a volunteer in Uganda. Preceding that he was a high school principal with a long career in education. Eric was born and raised in South Africa. He received his college education at the University of Massachusetts. He is married with two children who are all still in the United States.

Staff member of the month – Victoria Mofolo, Financial Assistant



'M'e Victoria assumed the role of acting Director of Management and Operations (DMO) during the month-long absence of DMO Jim McCormick and kept the office flowing administratively. In addition to handling the daily duties of the DMO, during this period 'me Victoria also managed the COS process of 10 CHED Volunteers and drafted Peace Corps Lesotho's FY 2013 Operating Plan.

ADMIN CORNER by Jim & M'e Victoria

July 26, 2012 marked Ntate Jim's return from Cameroon as Temporary Duty CD. We welcome him back and hope Cameroon hasn't exhausted his energy as he comes back since there is a lot going on here.

Anglican Training Center

We have recently been made aware of problems that Volunteers have faced regarding the ATC, particularly related to the men and women's bathrooms. Jim and nate Mohale subsequently met with ATC manager nate Maseru to address these problems. Ntate Maseru was very sympathetic and apologetic. He explained that because the overwhelming number of their overnight guests is male, it became necessary recently to dedicate both sides of the bathroom area for use by men. (Previously one side of the building was available for women.) Unfortunately, this was not communicated well to their guests causing confusion. Women now have their own (exclusive) bathroom in a separate building, which has three toilets and two bath tubs. Ntate Maseru said that if the ATC is not very crowded, female Volunteers who prefer a shower to a bath can let him know and he will arrange for them to use the men's shower with one of the female custodians standing guard outside the door. He was also apologetic about the unclean facilities this past week and said it was because they were full a few nights in a row and couldn't keep

up with the cleaning as they normally would. If you have an issue at the ATC, please feel free to address it immediately with Ntate Maseru (5899-3198).

On the flip side, and we hate to bring this up since for the most part the ATC has been quite pleased with the Volunteers who have stayed there, the manager said that used condoms continue to be left in the waste receptacles in the rooms despite Volunteers being asked not to deposit them there. Please remember that this is a church facility and you should find another method of disposal for these items. Thanks for your cooperation.

Duplicated Payments in Standard Lesotho Bank Accounts

Ned Bank has confirmed their system error in processing payments; staff and Volunteers were double paid at the end of July and accounts subsequently frozen so that you would not withdraw money from the ATM unless you went to the counters. We did communicate to the banks about the inconvenience this has caused and requested them to unfreeze your accounts, which they confirmed they did on July 25, 2012. They are aware how much of an inconvenience this is. They blame it on their systems which they are working on fixing. The bank will either recall the duplicated amount or will leave that money and withhold your September LA, which should be paid end of August. That said, please be cautious in your spending.

CHED10 COSers

Despite reminders made about not dropping off stuff in the VRC, there are still a few "unknown" items left in there. Please ensure that you return Peace Corps books to Ntate Mohale and take all your personal items with you. Please do not leave anything in the VRC.

Absentee Voting

There is still time to register for your absentee ballot for the November US elections. It can be done on-line at www.FVAP.com. If you don't have reliable access to the internet, ask Jim for a card, which you can fill out and mail in. (You can also print a card here) [Federal Post Card Application \(FPCA\)](#). They will be mailed (for free) by the Consular Officer at the U.S. Embassy.

Rugby Balls

A friend of Jim's from the States (who played rugby for many years) sent him a dozen rugby balls. If you would like to introduce rugby to the kids in your community (or simply would like to provide them with a ball to kick around), please stop by Jim's office or send him a message and he will hold one for you.

DPT CORNER by Charles

Transitions

Spring will soon be upon us as we say farewell to winter and hello to warmer weather. The CHED 12 PST will conclude in just a few short weeks and we'll welcome 21 new Volunteers (no longer trainees) to the PC/Lesotho community. CHED 10s have completed 2 years of service and have started to COS and while it has been sad to bid them farewell, we wish them much luck as they head off to begin new chapters in each of their lives. We are happy that two CHED 10 PCVs will be extending their service in Lesotho.

Kelly Anderson will be extending for 13 months to work with the Mohale's Hoek Correctional Services where she will provide

support for HIV prevention and other life skills activities, as well as vocational training. Delia Helie will also be extending for 13 months to work with JHPIEGO on their male circumcision program in Morija. Delia will also serve part time as Peace Corps Volunteer Leader (PCVL).

I will also be beginning a new chapter as Regional Advisor for East and Southern Africa, based in Pretoria. While I'm sad to leave Lesotho, I'm happy with all we've been able to achieve together. I'll still be providing technical support to Lesotho and won't be too far away. The new Director of Programming and Training for Lesotho is Eric Goldman who worked as DPT in Malawi and at PC Headquarters previously. Eric arrives on July 31 for a few weeks of overlap before Prince and I depart on August 17.

CHED12 PST

A big thank you to all who have assisted with the CHED 12 PST, as Resource Volunteers, host Volunteers during HVV, or just by providing moral support. CHED 12s got their site placements on Thursday, July 12, a few days ahead of schedule, and ALL got one of their top 10 sites. Congratulations to the CHED 12s on your site placements and thank you for your very thoughtful essays and contributions to the site placement process.

VRF Announcement

You should notice in your VRF that the Total Participants tab has been disabled. You no longer need to complete this tab as the number of total participants can be tabulated by counting the number of participants listed in the Activity and Outcomes portion of the VRF.

LANGUAGE AND CROSS CULTURE CORNER by M'e Mamokola

Beginning on Friday, July 13, 2012 in Quthing Upper Moyeni, seven southern region Education Volunteers held their first Language IST. The workshop was led by our two experienced LCFs, 'm'e Lisebo and 'm'e Francina. Despite the cold and snowy weather conditions, the workshop was a great success. Volunteers learned a lot of relevant language for their needs. Thanks to Tishina for hosting all the volunteers and for making this work.

As LCHC, I really appreciate the cooperation, motivation and the interest the Volunteers demonstrated during this IST. Their great support, understanding and encouragement to one another contributed a great deal to its success. The challenges that came along have not been overlooked. They will help me to improve future ISTs. For Volunteers in the northern region (and those in the south who couldn't make the Quthing IST), I am beginning to plan a second IST. As soon as I am done with preparations, I will let you know.

EDUCATION CORNER by Nt. Clement & M'e Malitaba

Khotsong Baithaopi ba batle,

Hei ke mariha hoa bata but hope you are doing your best to keep yourself warm and busy during the winter school break.

VRFs

Once again thank you all for submitting your VRFs; we had a 100% submission rate. We have reviewed all the VRFs and we will start sending feedback to you to you via email. The data we received this year will help us to write our end of year reports. We want you all to know that the work that you are doing out there is important and highly appreciated. Since you already have VRF3, start working on it and observe the October 7th deadline.

Site Visits and Identification

You all got our schedules for August and September and noted that we will both be out in the field for sites identification. If you live near any of these sites and you want to be part of this process, let us know.

ED13 PST

If you would like to participate in ED 2013 PST as a Resource Volunteer please send letters of interest stating clearly sectors that you want to assist with to 'Me Masechaba Mapena (mmapena@ls.peacecorps.gov) by August 16, 2012.

Mohoma temeng Baithaopi.

Gold Star Activities

Caitlin Vincent, Secondary Math and Science Teacher, Mabuleng: Every Tuesday, I bring my ipod and speakers to school. Once classes are finished in the afternoon, a majority of the girls at school gather in one of the classrooms for our hour-long weekly dance class. I danced for 9 years when I was young (tap and jazz), so I have a lot of fun activities to do with the girls. At first, some of them were shy, but over time it has helped the girls at Mabuleng become more comfortable with one another as well as self-confident (teenage years can be awkward times). We have not only practiced dance, but also how to present ourselves in front of a crowd and how to walk like we "own the world." The girls really become alive and free at this time...it's a huge change from the classroom environment. At the end of each class, I praise them and give them a little pep-talk to boost their self-esteem. Tuesdays are a great day at Mabuleng Secondary School.

Norma Lynn Hood, LCE Resource Teacher, Mphaki: After receiving positive responses from other Volunteers in my group during the Material Production Workshop I helped conduct during Phase III training, I decided to share my idea with one of the schools that I work with. In April, I introduced new teaching material to the staff at Mopeli Primary School to create innovative ways to implement a lesson plan as well as establish an intellectually-stimulating classroom environment. I created a makeshift dry erase board and a word wall. The former consists of thick poster paper covered in cello tape. The poster paper and piece of fabric for erasing were provided by the school and the cello tape bought by the Principal and myself. I also initially supplied the dry erase markers. The latter was created from recycled cardboard slats, covered in white paper and lastly plastic covering. With the help of a few teachers, we created 4 dry erase boards and more than 50 word wall slats.

I utilized a classroom to show to the team of teachers how a makeshift dry erase board as well as a word wall can be essential tools not only for their daily teaching but also for the learning process of the students. I placed one dry erase board on a wall adjacent to the chalkboard and multiple word wall slats on the back wall of the classroom. I defined a makeshift dry erase board and described the materials used and how it was made. I then modeled how to use a dry erase board and its multifarious uses such as warm-ups, notices and announcements, homework, group work, presentations and an extension of a chalkboard. I also highlighted sources where the school can purchase dry erase markers as well as the environmentally-friendly aspect of the use of a dry erase board as it is reusable and conserves paper.

Further, I defined a word wall and described the materials used and how it was made. I then modeled how to use the word wall and explained thoroughly its many benefits. In addition, one of the teachers assisted by drawing pictures prior, which provided a visualization of the words written and reinforced the use of a

word wall.

During the training session, I noted active participation amongst the teachers and received positive feedback.

I returned to the school the following week and observed that several teachers had integrated the makeshift dry erase board and word wall into their classrooms and plan to continue to provide assistance to the staff at Mopeli Primary on utilizing the teaching material as an integral part of the curriculum.

CHED CORNER by M'e Selloane & M'e Mamakhetha

Khotsong sechaba sa Thesele!

Good byes to the chilly and snowy Winter and welcome Spring!

Hail and Farewell

Ntate Charles (aka Thabo Thamae) will be leaving us soon and we will miss the cookies and the fresh smell of coffee...not to mention the candies and the doughnuts! Tsamaea hantle we envy the Pretorians! The Mountain Kingdom will surely miss your infectious smile!

Ntate Eric (the new DPT), Lesotho is great and you will have a wonderful time here! Rea u amohela! Re soabile because you missed our winter! A bata haholo, but we have survived even the worst cases of being snowed in, in the mountains! Welcome, Ntate.

CHED 10s

Time flies by so fast! A few CHED10 Volunteers have already left Lesotho while others are completing their goodbyes with their communities. Congratulations to all current and soon-to-be RPCVs.

CHED 11 Mid-Service Conference

Congratulations to all CHED 11s on reaching the mid-point of your service in Lesotho! The CHED11 mid-service conference is tentatively scheduled for September 6-8, but more information will be sent in the coming weeks. If you haven't already done so, please send us your input for the contents of the workshop.

CHED 12 PST

- **Counterparts workshop:** What a memorable moment! Meeting with "metsoalle ea baithaopi" for the first time, your participation in this workshop not to mention the way you clicked with your counterparts was great. A word of thanks also to the Resource Volunteers Terry Ellard and Jenny Cain who did a wonderful job of training the CHED 12 and their counterparts!

- **Site visits:** Surely you had a great time with your host organizations, counterparts and the supervisors. Surely you can now attest that a good knowledge of Sesotho language is a survival skill in Lesotho. How many new words did you come back with?

- **Swearing in:** The CHED 12 group is almost due for their Swearing in! Time really flies! Surely you just cannot wait to move into your new homes...permanently this time around! A word of caution though...make sure you eat well and do not burn your food or your fingers (it happens sometimes)!

CHED 12 Site Visits

We will be conducting site visits during Phase II. We will call you ahead of time to make arrangements for the visits. During the visit, we would like to see your house and meet with your host family, counterpart/s and the supervisor. Meetings with you/counterparts/supervisor will be conducted individually.

CHED 13 Site Identification

We are always looking for potential host organizations. If you

know of any, please pass on the information to 'me Selloane or 'me 'Mamakhetha. We will follow up the leads and help them fill in the application forms. Your help in this regard will be highly appreciated as it will facilitate timely planning and implementation of the processes that have to follow. Please note that CHED does not intend to place Volunteers with schools as primary assignments as this is the Education project's field of expertise. A good site must have:

- ◆ a well-defined job
- ◆ a supervisor and counterpart/s interested in working alongside a Volunteer
- ◆ the supervisor and the counterpart must be working on the same project requesting the PCV.
- ◆ plenty of work that involves mitigating the impact of HIV and AIDS on individuals and communities
- ◆ a house that meets PC/L's safety and security standards.

SAFETY & SECURITY CORNER by Ntate Nthoalo

From January 2012 to date, Peace Corps Lesotho Volunteers reported seven incidents of lost or stolen cell phones. These reported cases happened either on taxis, buses or in the taxi rank. Some of these incidents may have involved theft, but it is hard to tell. Given this situation, I would like to remind you to exercise extreme caution and ensure that you do not leave your valuables unattended while on taxis and buses and or flashing your valuables while in the taxi ranks or in the streets. If you put phones, I-pods, I-phones, money or other valuables in a bag or purse during travelling, be sure to hold onto the bag for the duration of your trip. Always be on the lookout for suspicious people and maintain vigilance. If you have your phone in your front pocket, take it out only when it rings and after finishing up communicating, put it back in the pocket. Please do your best not to give any opportunity for the criminals. We would like you to have a more alert and a security focused mindset while travelling and while visiting Camp Towns. Check around you before exiting a taxi to ensure that you have not dropped the phone on the floor or ground.

When a Volunteer reports a lost or stolen cell phone, we encourage the Volunteer to inform the police who can try to trace the phone. They don't always but have in the past managed to recover a few Volunteers' phones.

We continue to encourage Volunteers to report any incidents causing concern or discomfort to you so that we can provide the necessary support. Thanks and be safe!

HEALTH CORNER by Dr. Victor

Important Announcements

- ◆ Butha Buthe District Hospital: The PC health unit has received complaints that hygiene conditions at Butha Buthe Hospital are dismal. We're looking into this and I will be paying a visit to the hospital at my earliest convenience to ascertain things for myself. Please note that PC sends Volunteers to district hospitals only for outpatient consultations for minor ailments and not for in-hospital stays unless absolutely necessary. Volunteers with more serious conditions and those requiring a hospital stay are usually brought to Maseru.
- ◆ Medical appointments: Volunteers are required to schedule appointments in advance for non-emergency medical consultations with the PCMO. Drop-ins are not encouraged. Although the PCMO may attend to a Volunteer who drops in without a prior appointment, this cannot always be guaran-

teed and you should not take it personally if he is unable to attend to you. To schedule an appointment, contact the medical secretary (6286- 6050).

- ◆ Requesting medical supplies: Volunteers are encouraged to send in their requests for supplies in advance. That will give us enough time to order the medication/supply if it is not available at our pharmacy, and to package it for you. To request medications/ supplies, contact the medical secretary (6286-6050).
- ◆ Pick up of medications/supplies: Pick up does not require a prior appointment.
- ◆ Mid-service medical evaluation for CHED11: The tentative date of commencement of CHED11 mid-service exams is the second week of September. Any changes will be communicated to you. Each CHED11 Volunteer will be notified of his/her mid-service medical and dental appointments at the appropriate time.

Schistosomiasis

Recently, Peace Corps HQ has documented an increase in the number of cases of schistosomiasis among Volunteers at various PC posts. This parasitic infection occurs after exposure in fresh water (i.e., streams, rivers and lakes) in endemic areas. It is widely distributed throughout Africa, and parts of Asia.

The infection can result in very serious complications including severe damage to the urinary bladder, liver problems and very significant neurologic problems from involvement of the spinal cord. Peace Corps worldwide has recently seen all of these complications in your fellow PCVs serving at other posts. Fortunately, Schistosomiasis is not endemic in Lesotho but our Volunteers traveling outside Lesotho are potentially at risk.

This is a preventable disease, but it requires you to take the risks seriously:

- ◆ You should not wade or swim in fresh water except in a chlorinated pool.
- ◆ Bath water obtained from a river or lake should be boiled for at least one (1) minute then be allowed to cool to prevent scalding.
- ◆ If you do have exposure to fresh water, immediately dry yourself off with vigorous toweling. If possible apply alcohol (hand sanitizer) to the exposed areas of your skin particularly between your toes.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact your PCMO.

PCV CORNER

From the DAR Committee: HIV in Washington DC
Submitted by Courtney Lane, CHED 11, DAR Member



In our efforts to educate and inform about HIV/AIDS here in Lesotho, we often lose the global perspective of the spread of the disease. Here are some excerpts from a recently published article concerning the effects of HIV in our nation's capital. The article was published here: http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/north_america/jan-june12/hiv2_06-11.html

They may surprise you and could prove useful in showing Basotho that this is a problem that affects all countries, even our own.

"If the nation's capital were a nation in Africa, it would rank 23rd in percentage of people with HIV — a higher rate than the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Rwanda, Ethiopia and 28 other African countries.

Just a few years ago, AIDS in Washington had become such a dangerous threat that federal officials in the DC offices of the US global AIDS effort used to say with somber cynicism that Washington itself should be part of the extraordinary global push.

DC, they said, should have been the 16th PEPFAR country — PEPFAR — standing for President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which was started by President George W. Bush in 2003 to fight AIDS in 15 countries where the problem was among the worst in the world. Indeed, Washington is among the worst. Statistically, it has a higher HIV rate — 3 percent of all adults ages 15 to 49 are HIV positive — than five PEPFAR countries today, according to United Nations statistics.

But Washington, which was host to the International AIDS Conference in July, attracting attention to the homegrown epidemic from more than 20,000 participants, is finally getting a handle on how to fight AIDS effectively. The reason is surprising: It has learned from the fight against AIDS in Africa.

That congressionally funded effort has come back to benefit the neighborhoods around Capitol Hill as several PEPFAR veterans returned home to take jobs in the District's AIDS office. They brought with them proven strategies and tactics tested in Africa, which gave them newfound confidence that they could turn around a lackluster fight against the epidemic in not just any American city, but the city with the worst epidemic in the nation.

The turning point came with a simple decision: Learn the epidemic. For years, the District had failed to do in-depth surveillance of the AIDS epidemic and had perceived it to a problem largely limited to the gay community and injecting drug users. But new data uncovered a new reality: AIDS was centered in the African-American community, infiltrating the general population of heterosexual couples. Nearly 7 percent of all African-American men in the District are HIV positive.

That knowledge changed everything. It meant that the focus should expand more broadly to the entire city but focused specifically on African Americans, encouraging more to get tested for HIV and starting major outreach efforts to let people know about the risk all around them.

On a recent day not far from Capitol Hill and the White House, about a dozen HIV outreach workers toting bright yellow duffel bags stuffed with condoms and prevention information stood outside of the Anacostia Metro station, waiting for the next wave of passengers to arrive.

When hundreds of commuters emerged from the subway, the outreach team fanned out to meet them, handing out free condoms and sharing facts and common misperceptions about AIDS.

The process repeated itself about every 10 minutes with arrival of each new Metro train. After a couple of hours they had handed out hundreds of packs of condoms — and had persuaded 21 people to take an HIV test with an oral swab in a Chevy van parked nearby.

This type of outreach mirrored programs in many African capitals, where young people, funded by the US government, routinely reach out to their peers in the street to engage them in discussion about AIDS and to pass on knowledge of how to pro-

tect themselves. The African efforts also included innovative ways to test people for HIV, including going door-to-door and setting up testing days in community centers and churches, tactics also started or being considered in Washington. But the first step — getting the data — was the most critical one.

"PEPFAR set up a very structured model for evaluating programs and outcomes around the work being done in Africa to address the HIV epidemic," said Tiffany West, who directs HIV surveillance for the DC Department of Public Health. "[DC government] was really good at bringing some of those international best practices into the domestic realm."

Even with these lessons, the Anacostia neighborhood and others like it in the Bronx, New Orleans, Los Angeles and elsewhere still struggle against high HIV infection rates. This is somewhat due to the belated response in recent years to the growing domestic epidemic in African-American communities as well as the inherent difficulties in treating drug addicts and alcoholics, who with high frequency stop taking treatment.

Anacostia is located in DC's Ward Eight, right in the backyard of the White House and Congress, and the African-American men and women who live here are disproportionately affected. Black men in DC accounted for nearly three quarters of cases among men, and black women accounted for about 90 percent of cases among women.

The disparity is not exclusive to DC. According to a report by the CDC in 2007, in the United States, the prevalence rate for blacks was almost eight times as high as that of whites.

Across the Anacostia River from Capitol Hill, one of the more vibrant community organizations fighting AIDS is the Community Education Group. Its director [Ms. Young] remembered the old ways of fighting AIDS before the arrival of PEPFAR veterans.

"It was kind of like the wild, wild West," she said. "Who got there first got [funding]. Who shouted the loudest got it. Didn't matter if you were right, didn't matter if you could prove efficacy of what you were doing. Somebody liked you, so you got it. There was no infrastructure; nobody got it, surveillance forms in the basement."

With the arrival of the PEPFAR veterans, Young's organization set out to permeate their communities and test as many people as they could. More importantly, they started linking recently diagnosed HIV-positives to care. The Community Education Group trains nearly 30 people a year to become HIV testers. The rule is that they must come from Wards 6, 7, or 8 — the same neighborhoods they will ultimately serve.

The newly certified go on to work with a variety of HIV groups, but many will stay with Young and carry on testing on the streets corners, universities and more recently, churches. She said that the lessons of Africa, and the lessons of DC, should continue to spread across America. She's confident that will happen.

"If not for PEPFAR, we wouldn't have the National AIDS Strategy," Young said. That strategy "tells us we need academics, we need federal partners, we need government partners, community partners and individuals in order to turn this whole thing around."

From the PSN: Coping Mechanisms**Submitted by Rusty de Lucia, ED10, PSN Member**

I love cooking...have always loved to cook and shall probably never lose that passion! It does come, however, with some challenges. I remember cooking huge wonderful Sunday dinners for the immediate and extended family while my three children were growing. As they grew and "spread their wings" across our wonderful country, I faced the challenge of paring down my meals to accommodate only one or two people...a challenge I was able to meet successfully. And so, my enjoyment of

this art continued.

In 2010, I was invited to join the Peace Corps in the tiny country of Lesotho, where *papa* and *moroho* are the basic foods...day and night! I am still in Lesotho and still enjoying cooking! My biggest challenge here was first learning to cook my meals on an open flame or a two-burner gas stove. Both were easy challenges to meet.

Ah, but my love of baking! How was I ever going to bake my cakes, scones, cookies and pies? The Peace Corps supplied all volunteers with a HUGE cooking pot which I quickly converted to a Dutch oven; I did this by lining the bottom of the pot with empty tuna fish cans...one layer of cans for a certain temperature and a second or even third level for items which tended to cook faster on the bottom, so as not to burn those bottoms. It worked and I was able to bake again!

I am a volunteer at three different primary schools in the district of Leribe. In these schools, I have met the most wonderful, dedicated and fun-loving young people I could ever hope to meet. All of them remind me, daily of my three children and three grand children at home. To help them celebrate themselves, I have begun the tradition of baking cakes, cupcakes or biscuits (cookies) for them on each of their respective birthdays! For the past two and a half years, I have managed to bake something for each and every teacher and principal at all three schools and for my host families. What fun it's been to watch their surprised faces as they're called into the principal's office for a meeting, only to find a cake filled with burning candles and a group of fellow staff members singing "Happy Birthday" to them!

It thrills me to know that in all three schools, not only is "their day" something that is looked forward to with anticipation, but I have seen how, during these gatherings, the teachers have learned to communicate with one another on a more personal and warm level. One of the schools has already decided that this is a tradition that will not be dropped when my tour is finished in Lesotho! In fact, that very same school had a birthday cake for me for my 70th birthday this year!!

All Volunteer Survey completion statistics for Africa Region as of July 30, 2012

Peace Corps Post	%age complete
BOTSWANA	98%
LESOTHO	95%
THE GAMBIA	86%
TOGO	84%
GHANA	82%
MADAGASCAR	82%
ZAMBIA	81%
GUINEA	74%
NAMIBIA	70%
SWAZILAND	69%
MALAWI	64%
ETHIOPIA	60%
MOZAMBIQUE	53%
TANZANIA	51%
CAMEROON	49%
SIERRA LEONE	47%
BENIN	45%
UGANDA	45%
BURKINA FASO	39%
KENYA	39%
LIBERIA	36%
SOUTH AFRICA	36%
RWANDA	34%
CAPE VERDE	27%
SENEGAL	26%
AFRICA TOTAL	57%