

KHOTSO

May 2013

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Message from the Country Director



A Snowy View at the Mountain Pass between Ha Lejone and Hlotse

Dear Volunteers,

Let me start by recommending Botswana as a tourist destination, particularly if you want to see lots animals. Michael and I spent a couple of weeks earlier this month touring around the country and had loads of awesome animal sightings (leopard cub playing in a tree, charging male lion, more zebras and elephants than we could count, to name a few). One bonus of the trip was that Setswana, the national language of Botswana, is very similar to Sesotho (for example, the name of one of our safari guides was Metsi), and we actually got to use a fair amount of our limited Sesotho, which was cool.

PCV Blogs: For the past several months, the Khotso has included an entry from a Volunteer's blog. We've gotten positive responses to this and a suggestion that a list of Volunteers' blog addresses be included in the Khotso. There used to be a website called PC Journals that listed PC blogs from around the world, but it was recently taken offline so we don't have an easy way to track down Lesotho PCV blogs. If you'd like other Volunteers to check out your blog, send a link to it to 'me Lebohang (lranooe@peacecorps.gov) and we'll include a list in an upcoming Khotso. Please also send us blog entries that you'd like published in the Khotso. In the meantime, we'll continue to Google and see what we come up with.

Healthy Youth PST: As you know we're gearing up for the arrival of the Healthy Youth (HY) 13 trainees on June 7. It's always exciting to receive a new group, but it's particularly special since they'll be part of a new project. The HY project is not a major departure from the CHED project but does have a more strategic focus on youth and a more concerted effort to partner with various

ministries. We're looking forward to meeting the newest group of Peace Corps Lesotho Volunteers and preparing for their work in the Mountain Kingdom and thank everyone who will be helping out with training one way or another.

Acting Director's Visit: We're also looking forward to the upcoming visit by the Acting Director of Peace Corps Carrie Hessler-Radelet. Not every post is visited by such a VIP so we feel quite honored. I've emailed several of you whom we plan to involve in the visit one way or another and will be in touch with more details as soon as possible. Sadly, her schedule is tight so we won't be able to venture too far.

Recent Site Visits: Given my vacation, I only managed a few site visits in April, but they were good ones (as usual). Last Thursday, I got to see ED13 Carol Hayes dance with pre-schoolers, Jennifer Jiggetts sing the "Friendly Letter" song with Standard 5s and Jesse Loflund manage a *maths* class of about 60 quite enthusiastic Form Bs. Then on Friday, Michael and I set out for what was supposed to be an overnight trip to see ED 13s Laura Johnson and Kim Arent, primarily to get some video footage of them teaching to put on the PC Lesotho website. Unfortunately, it rained the whole day and the rain was starting to turn to snow in the mountains so we had to cut our trip short, not before we were treated to a concert (Lesotho style where you can pay to make people sing or stop singing), however. Laura and Kim sang with the Primary School teachers' choir, and Laura even humored Michael by singing a duet version of "Help" by the Beatles. We then high-tailed it out of their lovely valley and made it back to Maseru just before the roads got too treacherous!

Speaking of roads, winter seems to have arrived early (or at least the snow) so we have begun to monitor conditions, and will communicate any pertinent information we get. If you hear that a big storm is coming or something has happened to a road in your area, please let us know.

Keep up your great work!
Kathy

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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 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.

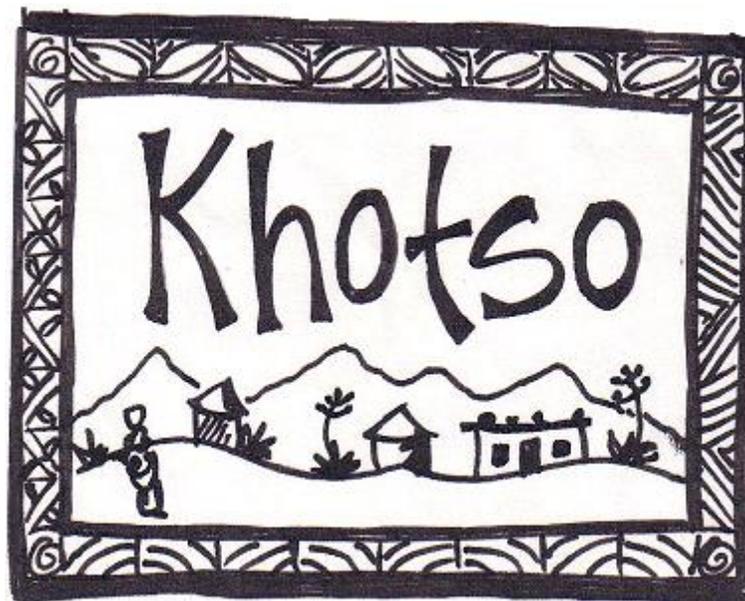
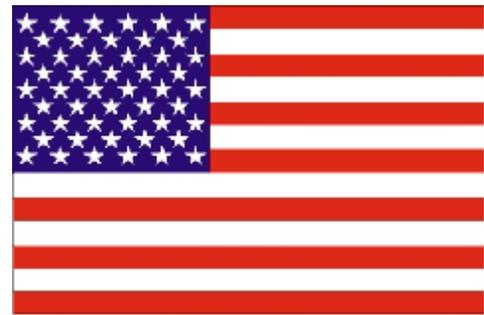
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you.

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**May**

May 2	Majara, Ralintoane (Driver/Mechanic)
May 9	Mapena, Masechaba (Training Manager)
May 9	Drew, Philip
May 12	Buer, Lin
May 22	Good, Tommy
May 22	Meyer, Barbara
May 23	Frye, Amanda
May 30	Leza, Janelle
May 31	Kary, Erinn

June

June 6	Hlabana, Malitaba (PTS Education)
June 8	Feraco, Nancy
June 8	Joshi, Shawn
June 11	McFarland, Carol
June 12	Pender, Melvis
June 13	Matlanyane, Mamokola (LCHC)
June 15	Mofokeng, Lereko (GSM)
June 16	Kang, Peggy
June 20	Patel, Arti
June 21	Abruzzo, Alyssa
June 21	Edmonds, Rachel
June 26	Schroeder, Zoe

PEACE CORPS LESOTHO HOLIDAYS (Office closed these days)

May 1	Worker's Day (LS Holiday)
May 25	Africa Heroes Day (LS Holiday)
May 27	Memorial Day (US Holiday)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND STAFF TRAVEL

Apr 27 – May 4	Kathy on site visits to Qacha's Nek and Mokhotlong
May 2	Clement on site visit to Ha Matela
May 6 – 8	Malitaba on site visits to BB and Leribe
May 6 - 9	Acting Peace Corps Director visit
May 8	Mamakhetha and 'Masechaba attending safe driving course
May 9 – 11	Selloane and Kathy or Eric at CHED 11 COS Workshop in Semonkong
May 10	Malitaba on leave
May 13 – 17	Kathy at CD conference in Johannesburg
May 16	Malitaba on site identification in BB
May 20 – 23	Malitaba on site identification in Mafeteng and Quthing

Duty Officer Schedule

May 3 – 9	FA
May 10 – 16	GSM
May 17 – 23	DPT
May 24 – 30	CD
May 31 – June 6	DMO

**STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH – Masechaba Mapena, Training Manager**

'Me Masechaba went above and beyond the call of duty in planning and co-leading the Training Design and Evaluation workshop and

in planning the Training of Trainers Workshop in preparation for the Healthy Youth Project Pre-Service Training in June. Given the recent creation of this project, she has also demonstrated strong leadership in guiding Volunteers and staff to ensure that post is adequately prepared to provide an effective training.

ADMIN CORNER by Jim**Welcome Back...!**

Hopefully those of you that travelled during the recent Holiday Season enjoyed your time away from your sites and feel refreshed and rejuvenated as you returned to your towns.

Protect Yourself

As is often the case during Holiday seasons (when PCVs travel) there were a few PCVs victimized by pick-pocketing, non violent robberies and lost items during their time away from their sites. If this happens to you please remember that it isn't the end of the world. Most items can be replaced. It is important however that you take steps to protect yourself. For example, an ATM card is absolutely useless to anyone without the PIN code so don't make it easy for someone who steals yours to use it. Never, ever have your PIN code written down in the same place you carry your card. I know it is tempting to have many of your valuables in one wallet/purse etc. but you are putting yourself at greater risk by doing so. Just use common sense in your approach and always be on the alert when you are out and about.

Living Allowance

We have independently collected market data from every region (except for Qacha's Nek which we will have in early May) and are correlating it to see what amount of living allowance increase might be justified. Although there are some budget restrictions we promise that we will fight for whatever the data supports. Stay tuned...!

Travel Advice (Important Reminder)

Please remember that if you are going to be vacationing (or even passing through) a country where yellow fever is present you will need to have your Medical (Yellow) Card with you to show immigration that you have been vaccinated against the disease. If you don't and are travelling back through Johannesburg, you might not be allowed to re-enter South Africa. Save yourself the hassle and arrange to get your card from the PC Medical office in Maseru before you travel.

My Status

A few PCVs have asked me if I know when I will be leaving Lesotho and to be honest, I don't have a firm departure date as of yet. Although my tour as DMO here ended in April I have been given the "okay" to continue as DMO in Lesotho for now while some other options are being evaluated by me and the Africa Region at HQ. As it stands now I will be here at least until the end of June when my daughter finishes school at AISL. I will definitely keep you informed, and thanks for asking...!

Joke of the Month

A Peace Corps Volunteer was trying to explain English linguistics to his class one day. "In English," he said, "A double negative forms a positive. In some languages, though, such as Russian, a double negative is still a negative. However, there is no language wherein a double positive can form a negative." Suddenly, a voice from the back of the room piped up, 'Yeah, right.'

As always, please stay safe...!

ED CORNER by Dr. Lephoto & M'e Malitaba

Litumeliso tse mofuthu ho tloha Maseru!

Please join us in welcoming Eduardo Cabret into the Peace Corps Lesotho family. Eduardo brings with him nearly two years of experience as a Peace Corps Volunteer in The Gambia. We are pleased that he opted to extend his service in Lesotho. Eduardo was born and raised in Puerto Rico but was an "Air Force



Eduardo Cabret and Students at Renekeng High School.

brat" (his words!) so got to live in several other places as well. He's a Masters International Student getting his Masters in Science Education at Michigan Tech. He has a Bachelors degree in geology and will be teaching science at Renekeng High School in Leribe. We're glad you're here, Eduardo!

Site Visits and Identification

As mentioned earlier we are at the moment conducting site visits to the Ed 12s whilst simultaneously touching on the site iden-



Life skills class with ED12 Shanelle France looking on.



ED12 Dr. Okegbe with her Form B math class.

tification for the Ed14s. Please check the pictures from the recent site visits in Quthing and Qacha's Nek elsewhere in this edition. As much as possible we will engage some of the Ed 12s as we visit particularly new potential sites, this in order to solicit Volunteer's own perspectives on these sites. For those who have already joined us in these trips we recognize and appreciate your help.



ED12 Janelle Leza in the company of her IL and counterpart.



Enjoying the traditional dance at Matholeng PS with Shanelle.

Gold Star Activity



ED 12 James D. Forté and CHED 11 Tara Hughes helped created the Thaba Tseka Institute Gym. The gym was donated by the Thaba Tseka Technical Institute and aims to provide training in the following life skills, HIV/AIDS awareness and health; weight lifting; aerobics and Taekwondo. Currently, the gym, which opened in February of this year, has 24 hour security, 24 hour access and reaches out to students and teachers of secondary and high schools and the technical college because of the shortage of weights. There are a total of about 14 young men and 4 teachers who are trained by James 3 times a week. The gym motto is "outside in". The belief is that if you see yourself as "beautiful" or "handsome" you will begin to care about your body which in turn builds a healthy person inside out. The impact felt thus far is that one of the young men who is in form D attained first place in track and field event. This was a major improvement, because last year he received 6th place.



James and the team are working on a Peace Corps Partnership Project application to fund more equipment.



ED12 Sadie Nelson guiding the Form Bs.



Ed12 Peggy Kang and her host mother on a cold day this year!



ED12 Nancy Feraco with likonyana in Masitise.

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

Likhomo tseo Baithaopi!!! As the mountain tops begin to wear their snow caps, equip yourself with information about areas that are hard hit/vulnerable to avoid being snowed in.

Healthy Youth Project

Our Healthy Youth (HY) Project Framework is now close to the finalization stage. Thanks to the PAC members who provided valuable input on this document.

The HY Training Design and Evaluation workshop was a success! Once again, thanks to the Volunteers who worked tirelessly to make this important workshop a success! Rea leboha!

The Training of Trainers (TOT) is taking place as we write and so far is also a big success thanks to the hard work of staff, LCFs and Volunteers. This workshop builds on the work that was done during the TDE process.

Gold Star Activities



CHED 10 Kelly Anderson (*kapa Refiloe*) – Every Wednesday the Mohale's Hoek Correctional Facility HIV/AIDS Support Group meeting is held. Kelly's co-worker (the HIV/AIDS counselor) runs it while Kelly co-facilitates and shares ideas. This collaboration leads to open discourse about problems with adherence, basic facts about transmission, and the future of Lesotho. Activities carried out in this meeting include showing movies and TV series and playing games. Bontate have also worked on a screenplay. There is a committed group of men who regularly attend the meeting and get a lot out of it.



CHED 11 Jess Wilhelm (*kapa Thabo*) After facing challenges among the members of his host organization, Jesse discussed the formation of smaller groups of members within the cooperative who will undertake projects using loans and/or capital shares from the cooperative. While this model was his idea, it has been supported and amended considerably in its details by coop members themselves. This transformation is an ongoing process. Although the "group model" has come to be better understood, it is not necessarily better utilized yet. The cooperative has purchased 30 bags of seed potatoes to sell and lend to members for planting.



CHED 12 Lin Buer (*kapa 'Me' 'Malimpho*) Lin provided 11 sessions of the Grassroots Soccer PC SKILLS curriculum utilizing games using soccer balls and HIV/AIDS awareness to youth aged 10-18. Three other PCVs helped facilitate the camp along with two Basotho counterparts 'Mé Makopano Tau, Principal of Leqooa Primary School, and Abuti Rapelang Tau, a 22 year old who made the bridge to the youth facilitating the energizers and helping in Sesotho translation. Lin reports that PC Skills is "a terrific curriculum!"

HEALTH CORNER by Dr. Victor

Hemorrhoids

What are hemorrhoids? – Hemorrhoids are swollen veins in the rectum. They can cause itching and pain. Sometimes they can also make you bleed during a bowel movement. In some cases, you can see or feel hemorrhoids around the outside of the rectum. In other cases, you cannot see them because they are hidden inside the rectum.

Should I see a doctor? – You should see a doctor if you have any bleeding or if your bowel movements look like tar. Bleeding could be caused by something other than hemorrhoids, so you should have it checked out. If you do have hemorrhoids, the PCMO can suggest treatments. But there some steps you can try on you your own first.

What can I do to keep from getting more hemorrhoids? – The most important thing you can do is to keep from getting constipated. You should have a bowel movement at least a few times a week. When you have a bowel movement, you also should not have to push too much. Plus, your bowel movements should not be too hard. Being constipated and having hard bowel movements can make hemorrhoids worse. Here are some steps you

can take to avoid getting constipated or having hard stools:

1. Getting enough fruits and vegetables is tough particularly if you live in a remote area, but eat as much as you can, whenever you can. They have fiber, which helps to increase bowel movements.
2. Take fiber powders, wafers, or pills. You should get 20 to 35 grams of fiber a day.
Take stool softeners

What can I do to reduce my symptoms? — Some people feel better if they soak their buttocks in 2 or 3 inches of warm water. You can do this up to 2 to 3 times a day for 10 to 15 minutes. Do not add soap, bubble bath, or anything to the water. There are also medicines that you can get without a prescription. They are usually creams or ointments that you rub on your anus to relieve pain, itching, and swelling. Some hemorrhoid medicines come in a capsule (called a suppository) that you put inside your rectum. Others come in a cream that comes in a bottle with a nozzle that you put inside your rectum. It is OK to try these medicines. But do not use medicines that have hydrocortisone (a steroid medicine) for more than a week, unless your PCMO approves.

What if the self-care steps do not work? — If you still have symptoms after trying the steps listed above, you may need treatments to destroy or remove the hemorrhoids so call the PCMO. One popular treatment is called “rubber band ligation.” For this treatment, the doctor ties tiny rubber bands around the hemorrhoids. A few days later the hemorrhoids shrink and fall off. The doctor can also use lasers, heat, or chemicals to destroy hemorrhoids. But if none of these options works, there is always surgery to remove the hemorrhoids

PCV CORNER

Volunteer Voices

This month’s blog entry comes from ED 12 Shanelle France’s blog.



Yay to My New Friend

I have a new girlfriend who’s living in my village! Yes, I have many friends (that do not exceed the age of 12 yrs old) but Keke is young, educated and so much fun. She is an answer

to prayer because as much as I love my life here, the wintertime tests all my limits and it will be nice to have a friend close by.

Keke just recently moved to my village from Maseru and will be working here at the [health] clinic right behind my house for the next few months. She stopped by my place a couple weeks ago to introduce herself and basically said that she’s looking for a friend. This reminded me of the good old days when I vividly remember my mom teaching me how to introduce myself to new people. “Hi, my name is Shanelle. Want to be my friend?” and my answer to Keke was YESYESYES!!!!

She stops by every day after work just to say hi and we hang out on Sundays. She also has a BlackBerry so we can communicate for free. We talk about village life, boys, cooking and read trashy magazines. As trivial as it may sound, it’s little things like that that keep me sane. This new relationship has revealed to me what a gift friendship really is. I didn’t realize how desperate I was for a friend until out of the blue; one came knocking on my door.

From DAR

Submitted by ED 12 Caitlin Fisher



For World AIDS Day 2012, I did not hold a large, community testing event or even plan a complex life skills lesson. Together with four of my neighbors, we “chalked” a mural onto one of our local shops. To be honest, this was a very last-minute activity. It cost no money. It had few participants and it wasn’t even permanent. Originally, I was disappointed and embarrassed that I didn’t do more. What I’ve come to

realize, though, is that this type of intervention is exactly what seems to be working when it comes to fighting HIV and AIDS. I would like you to consider two HIV/AIDS case studies. The first is a country which UNAIDS considers to be the world’s earliest and most compelling national success stories in combating the spread of HIV. The second is going to hit a little closer to home.

Uganda is the clearest example that HIV is a completely preventable disease and that behavior change within a population is attainable. According to the periodical *AIDS and Behavior*, in 1993, around 2 million Ugandans, 18 percent of the adult population, were infected with the disease, and this was the highest national HIV prevalence rate recorded at the time. The infection rate began to drastically decline in the early 90’s and it eventually fell to around 6 percent in 2003, a decrease of about 70 percent. Most importantly, studies have proven that this decline was due to a decrease in *incidence rate*, which is proof that Uganda underwent a shift in sexual behaviors.

What’s even more amazing are the factors said to contribute to this harsh decline. Uganda actually lacked what most people consider to be essential in the combat against HIV/AIDS. The entire country had only one clinic specializing in STD testing and treatment. ARVs didn’t exist at the time and their health system had nearly been destroyed during their civil war. They had few funds for mass-media campaigns. Few used condoms; in fact, HIV rates were rising in South Africa, Botswana, and Lesotho — countries where condoms were reported to be used more frequently. Instead, they had something that is impossible to “program” or “budget” for — something that cannot just be packaged and shipped anywhere in the world. They had compassion. They had openness and personalization of the disease. President Yoweri Museveni spoke of AIDS in many of his public speeches and even referred to fighting AIDS as a “patriotic duty.” Communities were mobilized and there were hundreds of community and church-based AIDS care and support groups. Uganda also pioneered the idea of home-based care for the infected. There really was no “theory” behind Uganda’s approach to fighting HIV/AIDS. This willingness to talk and grassroots response is what led to a reduction in AIDS-related stigma and denial and, ultimately, a nationwide sexual partner reduction.

Conversely, we can consider what is happening in Botswana. As reported by the World Health Organization, Botswana’s adult HIV prevalence rate is around 25 percent, the second highest in the world. Botswana, especially when compared to Uganda, had a very well-organized and well-funded plan to combat HIV/AIDS. It was the first country to introduce free ARVs to its HIV-positive people in 2002 and Botswana even had programs promoting condom use since 1992. There were programs to encourage STD and HIV testing and treatment and many government councils were created that were strictly devoted to the disease. However, no one talked about AIDS. Government officials never addressed it in public speeches and Botswana had very few community-based organizations committed to HIV/AIDS.

The point is that we are constantly bombarded with statistics, studies, and proven theories for how to fight this epidemic. We compare ourselves to our peers, who seem to be doing much

bigger and better things at their sites to address this problem. Initially, I was embarrassed by my impromptu WAD activity, but this type of informal, intimate, and personalized community-based action is exactly what seemed to have worked in Uganda. Big testing and workshop events are great, but they must be coupled with discussion for a larger impact. As PCVs, what we can do to help stop the spread of HIV in Lesotho is a lot less dramatic than I originally thought. **We should be willing to talk, be open, and promote discussions about HIV/AIDS.** Help your community members talk about AIDS in a “my father” or “my neighbor” type of way. Assist your existing community organizations, or help your villagers start their own community group. Basically, you just have to be there for people. What seems to have worked in Uganda is the ability of people to join together and help one another. And isn't that what Peace Corps is all about?

Beth Pagan's HIV Testing Event



Overcoming some earlier setbacks, CHED 12 Beth Pagan recently helped organize and implement an outstanding HIV testing event in her village. She and her host organization Lekoaneng Multi-Purpose Coop sought out and worked with both New Start and Kick4Life, and more than 100 people were tested. PCVs Rachel Edmonds, Morgan Nees Van Baalen and Lyndsey Chaillé joined in to help out and offer their support. Peace Corps staff 'me Jimi and

Eric attended as well.



Rachel, Morgan and Lyndsey, with Beth, who helped out and supported Beth's HIV testing event.



An added bonus to the Beth's HIV testing event- reading.



Beth Pagan with some of those who participated in her HIV testing event.

Write On!



Submitted by ED 12 Heather Mangan

This year, we are launching Write On! in Lesotho. Write On! is an international creative writing competition hosted by PCVs and host country nationals. It was started by PCVs in Georgia and has expanded to 15 countries.

The purpose of the program is to get beyond the formulaic classroom and encourage students to use their English in a creative way. Essays will be judged on creativity, rather than grammar and spelling.

The competition is open to students in Standard 6 through Form 5, as well as students in their first four years of university. PCVs do not need to be working at a school to host a writing session in their village.

We would like to collect all essays by **May 31** and a committee of PCVs, Peace Corps staff and Ministry of Education personnel will judge the essays in early June. We will select one winner for each level in each district and then the top three national essays for each level.

If you are interested in hosting a writing session in your community or school, please email the Write On! Lesotho co-chairs, Heather Mangan, heathermmangan@gmail.com, and Chelsea Kelleher, ckelleher89@gmail.com. We will send you the guidelines and essay prompts. For more information about the competition, previous winning essays, practice prompts and creative writing lesson plans, visit <http://writeoncompetition.wordpress.com>.

An Idea for Your School?

Primary Schools Compete on Health Education

Lena (April 14) - At least five Mapholaneng primary schools engaged in water, sanitation and hygiene education competition on Saturday.

The competition was organized by the Mokhotlong District Health Management Team (DHMT) and supported by Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) United, whereby Tsepong Primary scooped the first position on songs and Mapholanang won the poems category.

When addressing the scholars DHMT Public Health Inspector, Mrs. Masempe Moreki said cleanliness has to be practiced at childhood stage in order to promote healthy lifestyles.

Mrs. Moreki said promoting cleanliness in schools is essential as that contributes in eliminating diseases in communities. She further encouraged scholars to spread the message on health

education to their colleagues at home and their family members.

Also speaking at the same event, WASH United Representative, Mrs. Palesa Moiketsi said health education is a core value which leads to good and positive life, hence why they have taken an initiative to promote cleanliness among pupils. Mrs. Moiketsi said pupils are encouraged to use clean toilets and wash their hands with running water before handling any food stuffs in order to avoid diseases. However, she urged pupils to use water with great care so that it can sustain them for a longer period.

Tsepong Primary teacher, Mr. Makoro Thebe said cleanliness is one of their major practices at school, hence why they won the competition. Mr. Thebe said though they practice cleanliness at their school, lack of bathing soap is their major need.

Apart from Mapholaneng and Tsepong, other primary schools which took part at the competition include 'Meta, Mofolaneng and Phatlalla.

WASH United is a non-governmental organization which promotes health education in schools.

PCV Life in Pictures



ED13s Laura Johnson and Kim Arent singing with Motete PS Teachers' Choir.



ED13 Carol Hayes shakes her booty with the pre-schoolers.



ED13 Jesse Lofland and some of his Form Bs.



ED13 Jiggetts sings the Friendly Letter song with Std 5s.

pessimist = glass half empty
optimist = glass half full

**Returned
 Peace Corps
 Volunteer = "I could take a bath in that!"**



**Happy
 Earth
 Day!**

