

KHOTSO

November 2014

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Message from the Country Director

Dear Volunteers and Trainees,

What is the *corps* of Peace Corps? The French speakers out there- and there are quite a number of you here! - know that *corps* means body. The word is also used as a military term, but the relevant definition that refers to us is:

“a group of persons associated or acting together”

In order to act together, we align our efforts within the same framework. That is how our work has impact. We see that impact in our sites, classrooms, VRFs, and the capacity of our neighbors- and we aim to see it in PEPFAR statistics and real change for the HIV epidemic in Lesotho. The global Peace Corps community is helping people to help themselves across many lands. Together, when we focus, it does matter.

And we are also a group of individuals. Each Volunteer serves in a unique way, drawing on his or her strengths, and developing clearer perspectives and philosophies. To be part of a *corps*, you act with others, though you often find yourself alone. PST or consolidation can be times of overwhelming togetherness, but most of service is much more solitary, and that is a powerful factor. The *corps* in Peace Corps is the essence of why we are here- to work together. To be part of the *corps*, you are guided by Core Expectations, project frameworks, and policies designed to support your success as Volunteers. The individual working within the group is stronger than any person alone, though it can be harder to work together.

When you join the Peace Corps, you express readiness to take on many challenges. You are a group of individuals who choose to pursue a shared vision here in Peace Corps Lesotho. To act together, we respect each other and we strive to achieve the goals of the Peace Corps. Be honored to be part of the Peace Corps, and recognize that it is hard- but so worth it!

Kea leboha,

Wendy



Mary Ladabouche and teachers at her farewell party

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Jiggetts

From the Editor

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

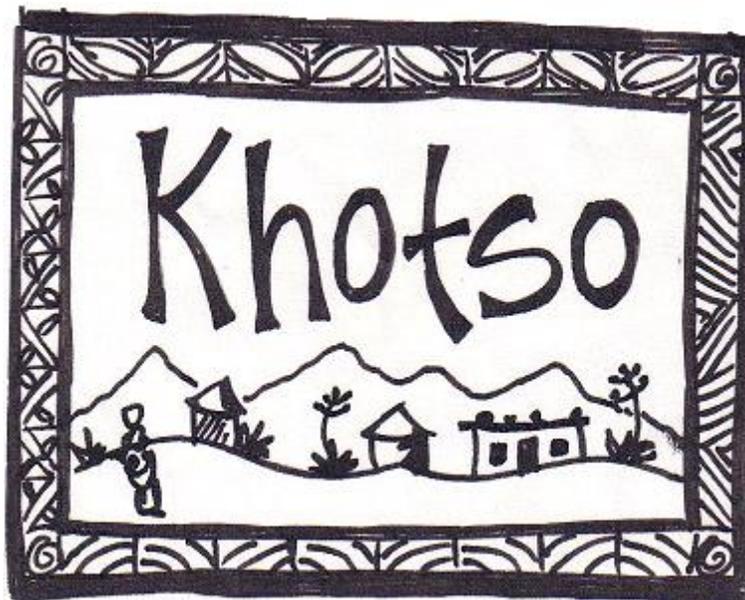
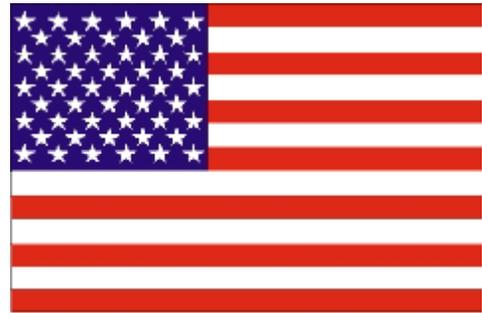
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you.

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

Distribution – Lebohang Ranooe



*Next
submission
deadline is
November 24,
2014*



PCV & STAFF BIRTHDAYS

November

3	Eunicia Nkoro/Training Centre Manager
4	Justin Leroux
7	Sarah Kurihara
10	Amy-Morgan Mycoff
10	Betty Lambert
15	Randi Helgesen
16	Wendy Van Damme/Country Director
18	Lauren Watson
20	Lebohang Ranooe/Receptionist
20	Tyler Smith
22	Clement Lephoto/APCD Education
22	Priyanka Verdartham
23	Jordan Limoges
26	Jody Lewis

December

5	Edward Wycliff
6	Chelsea Kelleher
14	Zeke Landes
20	Robert Owens
23	Peter Selete/PC Driver
25	Torle Nenbee
26	Mishelle Eysallenne
28	Mary Lemoine
28	Kyle Pease
30	Thomas Lindner
30	Maliabo Ramaliehe/Janitor

PEACE CORPS LESOTHO HOLIDAYS (Office closed on the following days)

November	11	Veterans Day	(U.S. Holiday)
November	27	Thanksgiving Day	(U.S. Holiday)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND STAFF TRAVEL

November	24 -28	HY 14 Phase 3
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STAFF MEMBER OF THE MONTH by Ntate Peter Selete/Driver



Ntate Peter Selete has been an amazing force this month of October. You might have thought that after spending September in support of consolidation activities, he would need to slow down. But with the arrival of 33 Peace Corps Trainees this month, his pace has even accelerated now! He is in motion all the time as PST Logistician and driver. The staff, trainees and host families all welcome his arrival, feel supported by his work, and enjoy getting to

know him. Ntate Peter's dedication to Peace Corps Lesotho is noticed and appreciated.

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

Education News

With PST well underway, we wish to thank everyone for their support and contributions thus far. We wish to specially recognize those who hosted the trainees for their HVV and of course those who participate as Resource Volunteers. The trainees will receive their site assignments around the middle of November, and following the supervisors and counterpart workshop they will travel to their sites to spend a few days there.

ED13 COSers this month:

In November we will wish the largest group of ED13 a farewell as they prepare to depart Lesotho following their successful completion of their service. We wish the following a safe return to the US; Kyle, Mishelle, Laura, Kim, Jiggetts, Zoe, Mary Beth, Jesse, Mary, Rachel and Elias.

PCV Success Stories

Kim Arent

I would say that my success story in my village continues to be revolving around the construction of the school library and youth resource center. I am amazed at the amount of community support and flexibility in incorporating this new innovative project into the community. After July, when the PCPP grant funds were placed in my account, the community came together to donate time, labor, and resources towards the construction of the library. The library committee that has been formed has also been a wonderful influence and helpful in recruiting volunteers to help us with the work. As the project nears completion over the course of the next month, I feel uplifted and assured that this will be a sus-





tainable and beneficial project towards the Motete community.



HY CORNER by M'e 'Mamakhetha

I welcome you all back to your sites after three weeks of consolidation. Hope everyone is readjusting and enjoying spring!!!

Phase II Assignments

Please remember to submit your phase II assignments as they are very important. It is also mandatory to do them.

HY14 Phase III Training

The dates for the Phase III are **November Monday 24-27th 2014**. A reminder e-mail has been sent out about submission of training needs. Please continue to send them in to help us make necessary arrangements.

HY 15 Site Identification

The process of site identification has started and PCVs are welcome to suggest host organizations that may make good partners for Peace Corps.

VRF

Your VRF is very important. The annual reports can only include what you report.

NEW STAFF INTRODUCTIONS

We would like to introduce you to new staff members who joined Peace Corps a couple of days ago. Their brief bios are as follows:

Lebohang Mabela/Peace Corps Driver Mechanic

Lumelang Baithaopi!

I am Lebohang Mabela and I hail from Mafeteng district



and have just been employed by Peace Corps as a driver/mechanic. I have worked for different companies and organizations as a driver for the past ten years. I bring along extensive skills in driving both light and heavy duty vehicles.

I started working for Peace Corps as a temporary PST driver in 2011 and hopefully most of you remember me from training. I am very glad to be here, this will give me an

opportunity to meet and interact with you as we move along. I play and watch soccer during my spare time. Lastly, I'm married and blessed with a boy child.

Becky Banton

**Programming and Training Manager PC/Liberia
interim HY APCD**



Becky joins us Ebola-free from Peace Corps Liberia. The 21-days of Ebola's incubation passed on October 21, and though she was never in physical contact with anyone with Ebola, all her friends and family were HYPER-paranoid. Education is a powerful thing.

Becky served in Lesotho from 2005-2010. She was a TEFL Volunteer, teaching English and Geography at St. Agnes High School in TY for three

years. Overlapping her work at St. Agnes, she served as a field liaison with the African Library Project, supporting Volunteers in opening libraries across the country and conducting teacher training on setting up and running libraries. During Becky's fourth year of service, she moved to Maseru to continue her work with libraries and began work with Sentebale developing Letsema, the information sharing network focusing on orphans and vulnerable children.

After COSing, Becky began working at Peace Corps/

Washington in May 2011 as an unpaid intern with Overseas Staff Training, and then became a Technical Training Specialist in OPATS. She worked intensely on the development of training resources with the sector specialists for PST; although she supported training packages from all six sectors, her main emphasis has been the Global Core and Community Economic Development.

Becky joined Peace Corps Liberia's Programming and Training Team in August 2013 as the Programming and Training Manager (a similar position to Debra and Eric). However, since the outbreak of Ebola in March and the subsequent evacuation of all 108 Volunteers from Liberia in August, she, #1, has learned A LOT about Ebola, #2, has just completed a much-needed vacation, and #3, while the programming and training team in Liberia is working closely with the CDC to raise awareness about prevention and treatment of Ebola throughout Liberia, Peace Corps Washington has sent Becky to her beloved Lesotho to lend a hand.

Prior to Peace Corps, Becky was a high school Geography teacher in Bowling Green, Kentucky (and loved every minute of it.) Becky has a Master's Degree of Arts in Education and Secondary Guidance Counseling and a Bachelor's of Science in Geography, History, and Secondary Education from Western Kentucky University. In her spare time (when there is some), she loves to read and listen to Supreme Court cases, and she is obsessed with movies.

[VOLUNTEER VOICES](#)

Peer Support Network (PSN)

I'd like to share an email update I sent recently to "friends and family **reflecting on my past year.**"

Brandy Hart ED 14

Hey Folks,
365 days have gone by since I stepped foot on that plane. I said goodbye to the only life I knew in order to live as a Peace Corps Volunteer in a country I didn't know existed. Here's a brief look at what has happened in the past year:

In 365 days I have been through a roller coaster of emotional distress and relief. I've learned what it feels like to be genuinely happy. I left my family, friends, comfort, all the things that held me together in return for an equally amazing group of people who challenge and inspire me to keep going; who I sometimes think know me better than I know myself. I've had more introspective moments than I'm comfortable with. I've learned to let go.

In 365 days I've had 365 different experiences. Some of



these experiences I wish I hadn't, but they were experiences that still taught and I listened, nonetheless.

And in 365 days I still wonder what it is I'm doing here? What was I thinking? Was I thinking?

But in 365 days not a day went by when I regretted my decision to step on that plane, leading me to a journey I hadn't expected to begin.

I was told that despite it all, I still smile. Here's one reason why. At the end of the day, regardless of everything I've been through with this place, I can't help but still look up and see a night sky that continuously gives me reason to be grateful I'm not anywhere else at that moment.

Cheers Lesotho! Here's to the past 365 days, gone but never forgotten. I can only imagine what adventures and memories await us.

Khotso Pula Nala

They aren't kidding when they say that Peace Corps will be the "toughest job you'll ever love." If you talk to any Peace Corps Volunteer, past and present, they will share stories of success paralleled with those of struggle. Let's talk about the latter. Bear with me for a second.

Struggle. It's a word I've come to realize carries a lot of weight in my life here in Lesotho. I cannot speak for everyone, but I've struggled more in the past year than I ever did through my young-adult life. Whether it was with school, my host family, my skin color, my gender, other

PCVs, loneliness, stolen items, broken electronics, moving sites, or having too much time to get inside my head, struggle was there in the flesh.

I can't stress how important it is to realize these uphill battles as normal parts to your Peace Corps service. Don't make things harder on yourself; the point isn't to fight it. It's to master the art of recognition, acceptance, and release. Simple, right? Well, mastering this art may take more than two years, but at least we're trying. Let's be honest, if we wanted simple, if we wanted a routine uncomplicated life we wouldn't have joined the Peace Corps in the first place!

The good news is; there is beauty and light that comes out of our hardship here. That I know for sure. If I didn't think so, I don't know if I'd still be here. The beauty of it all is that it makes small successes seem much more worthwhile. Maybe a disruptive student finally shows you respect and also spells the word of week correctly or your community stops referring to you as "lekhoora." These are just examples that emphasize how these challenges are worthy of our time. All of these small things build. They build every day, and through your struggles personally and professionally you're creating something that is unique to you.

Thich Nhat Hanh says, "In seeing the true nature of others, we also discover all their problems, their aspirations, their suffering and their fears." Although our individual experiences are special to us, the foundation of struggle is shared between everyone. This individuality adds to the patchwork family blanket that is our Peace Corps program. It's important to remind ourselves that we are having this extraordinary experience together. Talk to one

another; be engaged in the struggles and successes of each other's lives. We are the only ones who are able to empathize and understand the depth of our experience now and once our service is over.

I'll end with this. Whether it's talking to a friend, to a Peace Corps staff member, to your PSN, or even to the mountains of this beautiful country we call home, sometimes it just helps to know you aren't alone. At the end of the day, I promise you'll find at least one reason for being here, and that in of itself is magical.

Diversity

Over the course of my service, there has been a lot of news about anti-LGBTQ legislation in several different countries in Africa. Legislation, where homosexuality is already illegal, would make the punishments for open and "practicing" homosexuality stricter and more severe, more or less making homosexuality a death sentence (and sometimes even a death sentence for those who are not gay but know someone who is).

Lesotho is one of the countries where homosexuality is illegal. However, the attitude towards homosexuality here is entirely different from many other countries on this continent (and in the world). While I do periodically hear from locals that homosexuality is not an "African thing" in my experience this is anything but true.

I have met and heard of quite a few bisexual and gay Basotho. The first openly gay Mosotho I met was in my training village. I would have guessed that this Mosotho goes through a fair amount of harassment and discrimination. What was interesting to me, though, was how little harassment I saw. He hung out with the other bo-abuti, he wasn't excluded from activities, as far as I could see, and once I heard about a conversation between a volunteer and an ausi about his sexuality—she didn't judge him for his sexuality because God is the one who judges us. I don't know if this attitude is similar for some, most, or all Basotho, but in my time here I have never seen much discrimination towards any of the open Basotho.

Generally, I don't feel like I am hiding anything about myself by not blasting my sexuality. However, rural living is a bit different compared to the camp towns and Maseru in regards to sexuality. I'm sure there are just as many bisexual and homosexual Basotho in the rural areas as there are in the more urban and developed places. However, it is rarely talked about where I am. This has been a good thing for my mental health because I do not think I would have survived here if I had to listen to negative statements and opinions about homosexuality regularly. The worst I heard was recently when a teacher saw a piece of chalk dust that got on another teacher's face. She wiped it off and then asked if he was gay (because apparently she thinks gay people put glitter and other things on their faces). Mostly what I have come to gather about Basotho's view on homosexuality is a homosexual guy is a very feminine guy, "guys who act as women." Thankfully, this makes it difficult for them to guess my sexuality because I'm not a stereotypical gay guy.

Despite my occasional with homophobic remarks (not unlike what is experienced in America), for the most part my sexuality hasn't had a negative impact on my experiences here. While I am not open in Lesotho, at least not to the general public, there are a few Basotho who know about my sexuality. Peace Corps staff is aware, or at least should be (especially after the Diversity Panel for the Ed 14s,) and several bisexual and gay Basotho and at least one stereotypical taxi driver/herd boy also know about my sexuality and I have felt no negative repercussions from their knowledge of it. I have even had a Mosotho man try to kiss me twice in a 4 + 1 when the driver wasn't looking.

So while living in Lesotho I can't be fully honest, while the conversations on sex I have with Basotho serve as a reminder that if they knew about me it would at best confuse them and at worst ostracize me, and while it is difficult for me to find a way to satisfy that more animalistic need of ours. This country is a much better place to be homosexual than in most of the world and it has been an honor serving here!

By Gerad Thornton ED 13

Gender Equality Lesotho (GEL)

2014 Camp GLOW "Girls Leading Our World!" for Northern Lesotho:

By Mary Beth Bird ED 13



"I say Camp, You say GLOW!" 'Me Pontso, one of our counselors yelled. "CAMP..." "GLOW!!! Girls Leading Our World!!!" 186 young Basotho women shouted in response. The roar in the Assembly Hall of Makhobalo High School was deafening; the excitement infectious. After more than 6 months of planning, 186 young women from 14 schools across northern Lesotho had finally made it... We were ready to kick-off

Lesotho's first inter-district, grant-funded Camp GLOW!

Founded in 1995 by Peace Corps Volunteers in Romania, Camp GLOW "Girls Leading Our World" programs worldwide are designed to empower young women to become active citizens in their countries and communities. In Lesotho, our Camp GLOW focused particularly on life skills education, targeted at HIV/AIDS prevention for young women from rural and remote schools.

This year's 2014 Camp GLOW for northern Lesotho, was held September 27th through October 1st at Makhobalo High School in Ha Khabo, Leribe. Hosted by Lesotho's Ministry of Gender and Youth, Sport and Recreation, in collaboration with 12 Peace Corps Volunteers, the English-intensive, five-day camp provided 186 young Basotho women with hands-on activities and training in life skills topics, such as Leadership, Healthy Communication, HIV/



AIDS, Goal Setting, and Sexual and Reproductive Health. Through small-group (10-15 students per camp counselor) discussions and activities, girls were encouraged to forge positive and empowering relationships with Basotho and PCV counselors. Girls also participated in fun events, such as a bon-fire, movie night, and GLOW dance party! In addition to training students, the Camp also provided support and training to 14 teachers, one from each school in attendance, to enable them to serve as GLOW Advisors for a GLOW Club at their schools. All participants received full sponsorships, provided by a Peace Corps VAST Grant, to attend the camp.

As a teacher in Lesotho, leading and attending Camp GLOW was made all the more meaningful by the presence of 15 girls from my own Young Women's Group at Linokong High School. In the safe and empowering space of the Camp that week, I watched my normally timid girls come alive with confidence. Selfishly, I felt the entire week was a show-case to my investment in their lives, and their knowledge of life skills topics. They left inspired, invigorated, and ready to lead the Young Women's Group without me next year... And I left content, knowing that my Peace Corps service has made a tangible difference, if only in their lives.

Thank you so much to all of the AMAZING volunteers and



staff who supported us through the Camp! It was truly a

collaborative effort that showcased the talent, intelligence, and incredible passion of both Basotho and Americans. If you are interested in hosting a Camp GLOW "Girls Leading Our World" or BRO "Boys Respecting Others" event in your community/region, please contact the Gender Equality Lesotho (GEL) Committee at geneqlesotho@gmail.com for more information.

I say GLOW, you say... GIRLS LEADING OUR WORLD!!!

A brand new hat: advisor training for GLOW

By Amanda Frye ED 13

Planning for GLOW camp 2014 was a large endeavor that took many resources, both human and capital. Though the camp was very successful, keeping GLOW alive in the schools and communities which attended is currently on-going. To encourage our campers to put their newly acquired skills to use, we required each school to send one teacher that would fulfill the role as advisor for the upcoming school year. For their part campers agreed to start a GLOW club at their school upon returning to their communities. Each school was required to sign contracts stating that they would follow through with this goal. It was a sizable commitment we were asking participants to make to ensure GLOW's sustainability. To help advisors feel supported in the process we chose to hold workshops for them throughout the camp so they too could gain some much needed skills.



The GLOW team consisted of a fairly large group of participants, but we were limited to only three advisor trainers, Chelsea Kellerher, Tyrel Dixon, and myself. Chelsea and I were part time trainers as we were also working as camp counselors. Tyrel, with his almost fluent Sesotho skills, was available at all workshops and throughout the camp to assist advisors. Together we developed a schedule of sessions that included topics on Gender Roles, Confidentiality, The Role of an Advisor, Healthy Communication, Answering Difficult Questions from Students, How to Start a GLOW Club in their own schools, Preventing Gossip and Building Trust with students. Mike Yoon made a special appearance for Safe Schools. When the advisors were not in sessions with trainers we encouraged them to attend camp with their students.

Because this was the first ever inter-district GLOW camp, we ran into a few hiccups along the way. We were grateful and appreciative of the advisors' willingness to work with us and provide helpful feedback. Though most everyone was often exhausted each day from having spent a sleepless night on a mattress on the floor of a



classroom, surrounded by up to 40 loud young women who refused to go to sleep at lights out, we generally had a turnout of at least nine advisors at each session, from a total of 14. Participation ebbed and flowed depending on the topic, but there were a few topics which seemed to really generate a great deal of conversation. The first one was Safe Schools presented by Mike Yoon. The thought provoking questions this training presented had our group of advisors deep in conversation for long periods of time. This forced Mike to extend the training into the following day to finish. Tyrel and I attended as well; we enjoyed listening to advisor responses to various scenarios presented. During the session I watched our group of advisors transform as they actively engaged with one another in critically thinking about the subject matter. This was an important shift and we did our best to roll with their new found energy.

However, the question we kept coming back to time and again was how to keep them motivated after the conclusion of camp. What could we do as trainers to support this group of dedicated teachers in feeling like this project, helping their students start a brand new club at school, was a goal they could actually attain and follow through with? Coming up with some ideas, we then decided to put this question to the advisors: how can we help you? The advisors suggested that they would support one another by keeping in touch, going so far as to start a whatsapp group by the end of camp, and asked for our support through phone calls or visits. They also suggested follow up workshops where they could come together as a group to discuss what was, and wasn't, working at their schools, acquire new found motivation, and be presented with more training and resources for their clubs, by

either PCV's or NGO partners. All of their requests seemed reasonable. The team and I have committed to supporting them as they head back to their communities to start their clubs.

One way we encouraged motivation during the camp was through a session entitled 'How to Start a GLOW Club'. In this session we presented the advisors with a list of questions to think about in beginning their club such as where and when would the club meet? How would the club be presented to the school and community? How would student members be selected? How would advisors encourage responsibility in their GLOW participants? How would they keep the members motivated in participating, as well as how would they motivate themselves? After coming up with their own answers advisors were asked to lead this session with their students, presenting students with the same questions so that together they could all come up with some planned activities for their return to their communities. Through this activity we hoped to foster a sense of team work and trust in teacher and student, and help to alleviate some of the anxiety advisors were having in being asked to add one more task to their already very full schedules.

While I greatly enjoyed being a GLOW counselor, and being able to attend camp with girls from my own community and club, I also very much enjoyed my time with the advisors. Having lived in Lesotho for two years, I feel like I know and understand quite a bit about Basotho culture. But during our sometimes thoughtful and engaging conversations I found myself learning about topics that most Basotho seldom talk about. I so appreciated these rare moments of genuine honesty and frankness from the advisors, and their willingness to open themselves up.



Tyrel, Chelsea and I are still actively working to support the advisors. We offered to host a meeting this year where we can all come together and help motivate each other for the upcoming year. We have shared advisor feedback, our suggestions, and concerns with the GEL committee, and hope that next year's advisor training will be very successful. Who knows, perhaps one of these advisors will be inspired to become a camp counselor or advisor trainer for next year!

The BRO Sub-Committee Updates

The Coming of BROvember

Joseph Downes HY 13



Khotsong bro-'me le bro-ntate! We at the Camp BRO sub-committee invite you to join us in spreading awareness about prostate cancer and men's health issues by partaking in the global MObvember movement. While many men around the world grow a moustache during this month in order to raise money for related charities, we figured you could use your new look to generate dialogues in your local communities about such important issues as prostate examinations, voluntary male medical

circumcision and other mens' health issues such as testicular cancer. As connoisseurs of both facial hair and fun projects to spread knowledge about healthy lifestyles, we at the committee urge you to spread the word in your community and back home in America (social media and moustaches are like two peas in a pod). Ladies feel free to join up too! (I know some bo-nkhono in Hlotse who are very prepared to spread awareness!) Even if you draw one on, it might create a great opportunity to educate Basotho men about making healthy decisions. Thanks and have a great day!

Men's Challenge

Mark your calendars! International's Men's Day is on Wednesday, November 19th. In honor of this approaching occasion, the BRO subcommittee of GEL is issuing a Men's Challenge. This challenge is a chance for PCVs to recognize a Mosotho man who has worked hard to promote gender equality, men's health, and/or leadership in their community. The winner will be selected, given a certificate, and featured in the December Khotso. In order to nominate someone, please send a brief description and a photo to geneqlesotho@gmail.com by November 12th.



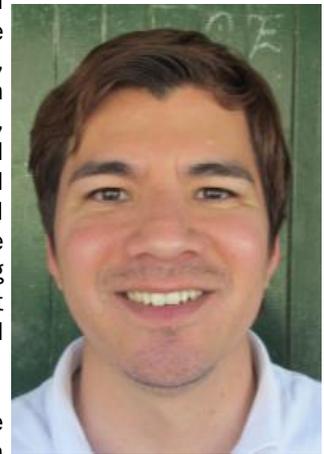
Matthew Lee Merritt

Peace Corps Volunteer | Lesotho '13-'15

Musings from a soon to be RPCV

By Elias Torres ED 13

"What's your Sesotho name?" he asked me after I walked into the internet café, saw a fellow volunteer that I hadn't seen in some time, and went slightly insane. "Ntate Hlanya," I said. "You can call me Ntate Hlanya." He laughed, introduced himself, and laughed some more on the way out. Two days later, as I was walking in town, I suddenly heard someone call out, "Ntate Hlanya!" I turned around and saw the ntrate from the internet café smiling as he waved hello. I couldn't help but chuckle inside and return the greeting.



As I reflect back on the time that I've lived and spent in Lesotho, Ntate Hlanya seems to fit just right, not because I've lost my mind (although some people might find that point debatable) but because this has definitely been one of the craziest experiences I've ever had. From surviving a freak storm which blew the roof off of my house 1 month after moving to site to winning a flat screen TV at a spin the wheel contest in Mafeteng town (yes I'm that guy) to being holed up in a resort in South Africa for 3 weeks after an "attempted coup" not knowing if we'd return to finish up our service (wasn't that fun?), Peace Corps has left an indelible mark on my psyche that can never be erased. And through it all, one element of the time I've spent here sticks out like a sore thumb and has made every crazy second worth it, and that's been the relationships I've formed with the people around me—from volunteers to the best host family anyone could ever ask for to coworkers to the beautiful kids who smiled and waved whenever they saw me walking by. The list could go on and on.

Things weren't always peachy and rosy though. About a year into my service, I had decided that I was done with Lesotho and with Peace Corps. I was feeling frustrated with my job and with the lack of progress at my schools and was strongly questioning whether my presence here was having any effect on the people that I came to serve. I was experiencing the proverbial mid-service crisis. One day, I broke the news to my 17 year old host brother that I was planning on leaving Lesotho. After explaining to him the reasons for my decision, he simply said, "Please don't go. We need you here." His words were few and simple, but they carried with them a sincerity that made me completely reevaluate how I viewed my situation. I realized that I wasn't going to change the world, as cliché as that is, but I was doing something to change the world for the people around me. And for me, that's what really mattered.

Now as I close this chapter of my life, I look back and tell

myself that it was all worth it—every single moment. I am a better person because I stuck with it, through the good and the bad, the ups and the downs. There isn't any challenge you can throw my direction that I won't be able to overcome because I have survived Peace Corps. Ka 'nete.

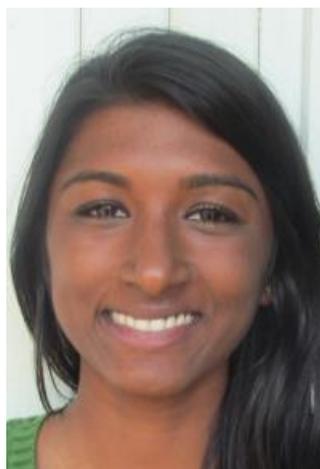
To everyone who has been a part of my journey these past 2 years, a sincere thanks. But it's back to the real world for this moithaopi. Ntate Hlanya signing off.

Khotso.

Back at site

Priyanka Vedartham HY 13

I haven't had very many challenges this term. The biggest challenge was the air of uncertainty with consolidation. We were told on September 1st we were meeting at our consolidation points, but we had no clue how long or where we would be heading. Thankfully I packed enough clothes! I was initially thinking we were only going away for a couple days, so I thought to pack for 2-3 days. I packed for 7 instead, thankfully!! I couldn't be more impressed and thankful of PC staff



after consolidation. Things are uncertain right now, and no one really has answers. I am very thankful Lesotho is a peaceful country. I'm thankful we were taken away for our safety, but I am also very glad for our return. The time away has made me realize how much my life is in Lesotho right now, and how much I love it. I am so thankful despite all my previous challenges that I stayed, and have since been trying to make my service a lasting one. It'll stay with me forever, and consolidation has given us all (even the COSing volunteers who thought they had seen it all) the fond memory of all of this almost being taken completely away. We could have been evacuated further, and we still can. I have 10 months of service left, and I am nervous of it being taken away again. Consolidation was a huge test to all of our patience, but I think we are the perfect group to go through that. I don't think any of my friends back home could have handled what we did. Peace Corps (specifically, our experience in Lesotho) teaches you that some things in life are uncertain, and all you can do is wait. I felt very prepared to handle it, and that confidence helped me get through it. There were times where I was very worn down because of the uncertainty, but with my PC family, we did it!! I'm so happy to be back at site.

What's your Plan?

Jenniffer Jiggetts ED13

Many of you have asked what my post-Peace Corps plan is.

Well, I've finally figured it out.

I'm going to be a professional couch potato.

Yep, you read that right! A professional couch potato.

Pretty soon, my butt will be firmly planted on my brother's sleek, brown leather couch for an unspecified amount of time.

I will acquaint myself with mentors like Little Debbie and Twinkie, people who have not induced my blood sugar and cholesterol for the past two and a half years.

I will exercise, as my right thumb will work the heck out of my brother's remote control.

And I will network—or more appropriately 'neckwork.' For my neck will work those big fluffy



Jiggetts and her host family receive a visit from Amb. Harrington and DAS Smith

pillows that call my brother's couch home.

Pretty soon, that couch will be my comfy abode, too.

Not a half-baked plan, eh?

LIFE IN PICTURES



Kara with host siblings



Jenea



Laura and some students



Shawn's last day at Peace Corps



Brandy, Katie, Evan & Travis



Adrian at PST



Riley at PST