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Message from the Country Director



Lumelang baithopi

July and August are transition months for Peace Corps Lesotho. Those CHED PCVs who began two years ago are completing their service and moving on. Some brave and committed souls have extended their service (kudos to Ann and Andrew!) while most have sought new adventure, graduate school and real paying work. Then, of course, a new group of CHED PCVs is sworn in to start their two years of service to Lesotho and to the US. The natural confluence of these events is both thrilling and sad, rich with complexities that help make us all feel alive.

And now the news.....

1. Braving winter is never easy in Lesotho, but the increased price of natural gas has been a significant burden on PCV living allowances so I'm happy to report that we are providing a heating allowance booster of 100%, retroactive to June. Thank your advocate Rich Carlson for bringing this to my attention and together finding a way to make it happen.

2. No one is happy with situation at the Anglican, myself included. I expect the VAC will be specific and extensive with issues regarding PCV stays in Maseru when we meet on August 10. My message to all of you is thus:

- Limit your trips to Maseru as much as you can.

We are working on alternative solutions which we hope can be in place by November or earlier.

3. Leave Without Allowance: As of today my liberal interpretation of this privilege is over. LWA was intended very specifically to provide PCVs with the opportunities to participate in life-changing family events, both good and difficult. It was never intended to provide additional annual leave. Please do NOT make any further request for LWA unless you can point to a **significant life-changing family event**.

4. We are hopeful that a new APCD for CHED will be on board by mid-September. When there is an accepted offer, I will announce it on Sharepoint. Likewise we expect our new PCMO to be on board by the end of August and news, once verified will be sent to everyone.

I reviewed the Khotso article I wrote a year ago and it seemed so interesting that some things remain the same and many things changed significantly. Transitions are like that.

May all your transitions lead to an ever progressive life of curiosity, learning, doing good work and personal fulfillment.

Khotso Pula Nala.

Ted Mooney
Country Director

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From the Editor's Desk

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 list the name of the person making the submission and a contact person for follow-up questions.** The Newsletter will be emailed and snail mailed on or about the 1st of each month. Please make sure that your email and mailing address is on file at the Peace Corps office.

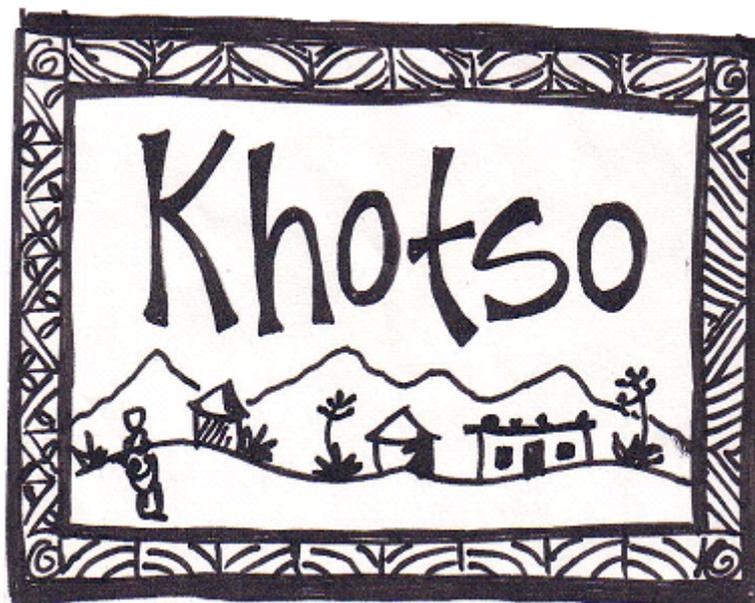
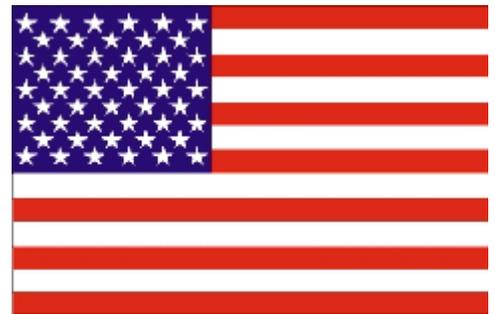
The editorial staff would like feedback from PCVs regarding the content. It is our desire to provide you with information that is useful, helpful, and encouraging. We would appreciate receiving constructive feedback from you as to whether the information contained in this newsletter met your needs.

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 Birthdays

Birthday greetings go out to the following PCVs. The Peace Corps Lesotho staff sends you greeting and hope that you have a very prosperous year.



August

Conz, Christopher	August 13
Laufman-Walker, Aaron	August 16
Langridge, Jessica	August 19
Veiga, Tarsha	August 19
Murray, Melody	August 31

September

Reed, Kristan	September 5
Jones, Christopher	September 9
Dreyfus, Clare	September 10
Wade, Cullen	September 10
Severson, Samuel	September 12
Washington, Maya	September 19
Valentino, Lindsey	September 21
Treski, Victoria	September 23
Kelly, Megan	September 25

October

Jimenez, Violeta	October 2
Lindquist, Karen	October 7
Wyzinski, Lorian	October 14
Dernovsek, Andrew	October 22
Adams, Darrin	October 25
Gilde, Emilie	October 25
Milloy, Erin	October 25
Wierzbicki, Ashley	October 26

CHED and ED News Letters in addition to Khotso!

CHED Volunteers! A new CHED News Letter is in the works, written for you, by you! Right now we are looking for any contributions you feel worthy of print. These include stories, cooking tips, book reviews, or anything else you want. This news letter can only work with your support. Please contact Kevin for more details. Email: MaloneKevinP@gmail.com, Phone: 59135491

ED PCVs, please contact Kaitlin Leaf for more details. Email: kaitlinleaf@gmail.com. Phone: 59167941

Ke Kopa Thuso Bo-'M'e le Bo-Ntate:

I am working to establish a network of all service providers working with orphans and vulnerable children called Letsema. We have to interview many organisations all over the country. However, due distance and time we are struggling to reach all the organisations. If you would be willing to help us in your area, please let me know. We especially need help with Thaba-Tseka, Qacha's Nek, Butha-Buthe, and Mafeteng. We will reimburse you for transportation, phone calls, other expenses you incur while gathering information for us.

If you are interesting in helping, please let us know. We need to have the information before the end of August or mid September. If you hear of an organisation working with orphans and vulnerable children in your area, please let me know, so we can interview and add them to the Letsema directory and website. Call or text Becky at 5801 6350.

African Library Project Deadline

The deadline for African Library Project application for the 2010 container of books is September 1st. Please email applications and photos to:

beckybanton@yahoo.com. Please place letters in the Maseru box with my name on them.

Our goal is to get another 55,000 books in the next container.

I am attaching a copy of the application to the Khotso. Please remember only PCVs from Ched 2008 and Ed 2009 are eligible to apply for libraries because the books will be arriving in March 2010.

Please remember it is not mandatory to have a book drive organizer in the US to apply for African Library Project. However, if you do, it does make the process smoother and will guarantee your library will arrive.

If you have any questions please email me or text me at 5801 6350.

PCV TECH-COMMITTEE MEMBERS NEEDED

Please see the Country Director if you are interested in joining this committee.

PCV News Corner



Staff Birthdays



August

No birthdays this month

September

Majimisi Machai September 14

October

No birthdays this month

Peace Corps Lesotho Holidays

August

No Holidays this month.

September

September 7— Labor Day (US Holiday)*

October

October 4— Independence Day (LS Holiday)*
October 12—Columbus Day (US Holiday)*

* PC Lesotho remains closed on this day.

Education Corner By Clement and Malitaba

With the schools closed and almost all PCVs on vacation, it's been a little quiet here at HQ. We would like to make a few reminders and announcements though:

1. If you haven't submitted your trimester report please do so, we are already looking through these reports and analyzing them for our

annual Project Status Reporting.

2. For those who are COSing please remember that the Conference is on August 24 to August 26, 2009. Arrival date at Training center is Sunday August 23. Arrival date at Maseru Sun is August Monday 24 and Departure date is August 26.

3. PAC meeting will be on Wednesday August 26 at PC Training Center. So PAC members will check in at 9:00am at Training Center.

4. 'Me Malitaba has placed her August and September travelling schedules for sites development for new Ed group.



Staff Corner
Education Corner

CHED Corner By Majimisi Machai

Khotsong!

I want to say thank you to all the volunteers that assisted during Pre-Service Training this year. This was a tough time without CHED APCD. Your new peers in training were impressed with everyone who participated during PST. The Volunteers from the HIV/AIDS Committee, GAD, Diversity Committee and volunteers that hosted our new volunteers during PST added valuable insight and technical expertise during training.

Everyone worked hard to keep the wheels turning, thank you all.

Invitation to Swearing-in

All PCV's who assisted during PST are invited to CHED swearing in. It will be held at

Manthabiseng Convention Centre on Wednesday August 5, 2009 from 11:00am - 2:00pm.

If you plan to attend, please note that you are to make personal arrangements for accommodation and also PC will not reimburse you for transportation and give you any per diem.

Volunteer Reporting Forms

We need your help in completing the Volunteer Reporting forms. Four CHED PCV's were trained on VRF's. They planned a schedule to train the rest of CHED PCVs during the month of June. I hope you all received this VRF training; if not please let Kompi or myself know so that we can arrange training for you.

Since it has been so busy for everyone, I extend VRF's submission date to August 21, 2009. For some of you who submitted I appreciate your timely submissions of VRF's.

CHED Reconnect

Initially CHED reconnect was scheduled to take place in September 14-17, 2009. This training has been postponed to September 28-29, 2009. I am hoping that the new CHED APCD will have arrived and be part of this training.

CHED Placements

Please see the list of placement and continue to support the new volunteers to integrate into their communities.

Names	Placement	District
Irena Erdeg	Weaving groups (Helang Basali, Hatooa Mose Mosali and Tapestry)	Berea
Jonathan Mohr	Monyetleng Community Council – Mashai,	Thaba-Tseka
Aaron Laufman-Walker	Ketane CRS- MOVE Project	Mohale'shoek
Melissa Hill	Cross Roads- Kings Gate High School	Mafeteng
Emily McKeen	Sekameng -	Mafeteng
Brice Foster	OYAP - Lithabaneng	Berea

Name	Placement	District
Rocio Enriquez	WFP- Camp town	Thaba-Tseka
Jessica Langridge	SOS Children's Village – Qomo qomong	Quthing
Gregory Viola	Thuso e tla tsoa kae and Re tla hlola support group	Buthe Butha
Elissa Kaufman	World Food Programme (WFP)	Mohale'shoek
Erin Milloy	Anti Drug Abuse Association of Lesotho (ADAAL) – Mt. Moorosi	Quthing
Kristine Movalli	Grow	Mokhotlong
Christopher Jones	Rural Self Help Development Association (RSDA)- Phamong	Mohale'shoek
Karolina Lobrow	Mapheleng clinic – Mapoteng	Berea
Carol Griffin	Matsieng – Community	Maseru
Ed Griffin	Matsieng – Moshoeshe II High school	Maseru

From the HIV/AIDS Committee...

The HIV/AIDS Committee met a month early this quarter in order to accommodate a request from OneLove to attend the meeting. Therefore, if you were not able submit an HIV FOL Grant for an upcoming project, we will have an extended deadline of August 24th. Please notify your District AIDS Representative (DAR) if you plan to submit a grant. If you find yourself in Maseru, you may place the application in the Committee Box in the VRC prior to this date.

The Committee would like to congratulate Ashley Weizbicki on her election as Co-Chair! Ashley has been a member of the committee for a year, and has a lot of knowledge and experience with HIV/AIDS work. She will make an outstanding leader. We also bid farewell to Ben Shasby, Ben Klein and Lindsey Valentino. Thank you guys for all of your hard work and good luck with your future endeavors! This means that these three districts will be electing new DARs before the next quarterly meeting in November. If you are in Berea, Mokhotlong, or Thaba-Tseka and would like to join the HIV/AIDS Committee, please make your DAR aware. The DAR is elected by their district members. ALL PCVs are welcome to campaign regardless of amount of time in country or sector. We look forward to seeing three new faces in November!

OneLove

The OneLove Campaign has been created in response to Multiple Concurrent Partners (MCP) being identified as a major driving factor to the spread of HIV in sub-Saharan Africa. MCP is a situation where men or women have more than one sexual partner in the same time span that can overlap for weeks, months, or even years. When people participate in such sexual networks, they place themselves at higher risk for contracting HIV. OneLove is a five year campaign. The strategy is twofold: mass media and community mobilization.

OneLove has approached Peace Corps Lesotho to be a partnering organization in the community mobilization initiative. This happens in the form of community based dialogues. These dialogues will occur in an already existing group of people such as home based care workers or support groups. The program begins with a mentor training workshop. After the mentors are trained by OneLove, they then identify facilitators from these already existing groups to implement the OneLove curriculum into their meetings. The mentor follows up with the facilitators by attending 3 sessions and observing them. There are 8-12 sessions total. Since PCVs already work in the field, we are ideal candidates to identify community counterparts who could be potentially trained as mentors. This is a great way to raise awareness and to start the conversation of the relationship between MCP and HIV. We all know that behavior change is a challenging and critical component in fighting this pandemic. Creating a dialogue is an important step. If you are interested in participating in this program, contact your DAR!

To learn more about the OneLove Campaign visit <http://www.onelovesouthernafrika.org/>

Best Practices

Mafeteng: Kelly F. organized and completed a Speak Aloud for over 30 youth across the district.

Quthing: Jeremy K. held a Diversity Camp in Bethel where his students presented to their peers on issues regarding HIV/AIDS. Julie L. and Gwen K. organized a successful Speak Aloud in Mt. Moorosi. The event included fun-filled dramas and a KYS testing event with over 70% attendees opting to test.

Qacha's Nek: Megan K. and QN LeNePWHA have completed their PEPFAR VAST grant. The project, which consisted of a series of 6 'Men as Partners' workshops and an HIV/AIDS Campaign Walk in remote villages of the district, set out to achieve the following goals:

- ◇ Enhance men's awareness and support for their partners' reproductive health choices.

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- ◇ Increase access to comprehensive reproductive health services, such as family planning.
- ◇ Mobilize and support men and women to take an active stand for gender equality and against gender-based violence.
- ◇ Increase utilization of HIV/AIDS and STI services, including prevention, testing, care, support, and treatment.

Leribe: Tara S. held a two day 'Men as Partner's workshop for 8 teachers in the camptown. Tricia S. has continued to work on the HIV/AIDS youth training manual for Help Lesotho.

Butha-Buthe: Jen W. and Kristan R., with assistance from other BB volunteers, completed a successful Speak Aloud for over 20 students. Kristan R.'s youth group independently organized through the Ministry of Youth a 2 week long business and HIV/AIDS training. At the conclusion of the training, the youth are eligible to apply for a loan of M3000.

Mokhotlong: PCVs in the Mokhotlong district organized a Speak Aloud. A gender unit came out and assisted in condom demonstrations and presented on issues regarding sexual violence and discrimination.

Learn & Share

On Wednesday, May 27 Megan Kelly and Ashley Wierzbicki attended the monthly Learn and Share forum at Lehakoe. The symposium included a presentation on the national NGO Apparel Lesotho Alliance to Fight AIDS (ALAFA). According to ALAFA CEO, Dr. Vander Bart, 90% of HIV infected people are adults of the working age and at least 20,000 of the infected adults are working in the Lesotho apparel and textile industries. These factories, which are the largest employer in the private sector, are located within the high prevalence areas of Maseru, Leribe, and Mafeteng. ALAFA statistics show the following:

- 88% of factory employees are female.
- 78% are parents.
- 47% are the sole bread-winners for their families.

43% of apparel employees are HIV positive.

Because of these numbers, ALAFA has implemented a prevention and treatment program with the aim of providing free universal HIV care services. Factories participating in the ALAFA program have access to private doctors accredited to the program, including monthly visits for ART patients and bimonthly visits for PREHAART patients. Additional services include peer education, Life Skills sessions, voluntary testing and counseling, PMTCT, and management of HIV/AIDS, OIs, and STIs. At present, there are now 23 workplace based clinics providing care onsite at the factories. With treatment locally available, it is anticipated that there will be a reduction in the loss of essential skills and experience. Factories will keep the worker in commission as long as they are fit to work. Furthermore, ALAFA also seeks to reduce stigma and discrimination by demonstrating the benefits of treatment through their own expert-patient role models.

For more information on ALAFA, contact your DAR or visit: <http://www.alafa.info/Pages/Default.asp>

HIV/AIDS FOL Grants

*Ben K. is purchasing supplies for a nutrition workshop geared toward OVCs. The project, which will occur in Mapoteng, Berea, is an extension from a previous series of Life Skills workshops.

*Kaye T. is providing transport costs for the St. Rose Youth Group to travel to two high schools. The group has developed a play designed to educate and inspire high school students to form their own youth groups.

*Darrin A. is purchasing supplies for a workshop designed to address issues surrounding HIV/AIDS. The message will target members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) Community.

NEXT MEETING: November 5-6 2009



Public Letter #18: Two murders

July 22, 2009

By PCV Madeline Uranek

I know months have passed since my last public letter. Frankly, I got stuck. I was in a different place than you. You were asking, When are you coming home? What are you going to do next? Or How is that desk building project coming?

But I was back here pondering two murders. As in that pause before I told you about the death of my brother and the orphan Dintle, I didnt want to be a downer, dragging you, my friends, through sad stories.



But the purpose of my public letters is two-fold: 1) to help me remember the details and emotions of my time here, and 2) secondly, to share it with you. So skip this letter if you don't want to follow me on this particular path.

I'll back-track to March 2009, where my heart and head remain, and tell you about the second murder, then the first.

The second murder

In my 2 years here, I've made four wonderful women friends, all teachers. Halieo (pronounced hah-DEE-oh) and Lingoane (pron. deen-GWAN-ney) were two teachers I found in the remote mountain village, Pulane, where I wanted to build the little school. The first time I visited, arriving well past dark (I was surprised that neither of them were surprised), all three of us slept together in Lingoane's big bed, giggling. I gave them my cold; they gave me their bed bugs.

The two women were inseparable friends, always laughing, obviously making life in the village fun and important for one another and others around them.

Their teaching assignment was a tough one. Halieo had been there for 14 years, starting as a volunteer teacher, finally being hired by the School Committee, then enrolling in (my) distance education program to get certified. Lingoane had been there for 4 years. The school was 45 minutes from the road, up hill. You didn't start walking till you'd been on the bus for 2 to 3 hours bump, bump, bump crossing and re-crossing the river then you re-crossed the river on foot after you got off the bus.

The village of Pulane is just spit on the side of the mountain. A few old women living in huts, a chief who's not quite all there in the head, and a hundred children, half of them orphans, who somehow rise from the rubble each day to attend the little school. The school is everything to them.

So, on a Sunday evening in March, Halieo got off the last bus. It was twilight, autumn. She'd been visiting her mother in the hospital in the camp town, Quthing. At 6 pm, Lingoane went to her rondavel and knocked, expecting her to be home by then. Later, Lingoane figured that 6:00 was exactly the time that Halieo was being murdered.

A shepherd fell into step with her as she left the road. He was a former student; she'd last taught him in 3rd grade; he'd dropped out of school after 5th grade and had been in the mountains for several years. He hadn't been seen in the village, where his grandmother still lived, for months.

Later, he told the police that he proposed love to Halieo and she insulted me. She even spit in his face. But another neighbor was following them, and the young man split off the path from Halieo, heading toward home.

The next part is scary. The road at this point is absolutely isolated no houses. If Halieo had turned back, or chosen any other way to go home, maybe she'd be alive. But she followed her usual path home, past a little creek. At that point, in the darkness, the young man had made a circle and ambushed her. One shoe was found near the creek, another in the woods between the creek and the school.

Did he murder her, then rape her? Or rape her, then murder her? To Lingoane the order of what happened is important. Halieo once told Lingoane that she'd rather die than be raped. We only know that she, a small, slender, beautiful, woman, fought mightily. She screamed. Villagers heard screams, but never imagined a murder.

Was she running without shoes over small boulders? The boy chased her, caught her repeatedly. Finally he pummeled her to death with one, then another sharp stone.

The story gets worse. He raped her, and left her to bleed to death in front of the school.

The next day was Monday. He slept, then came back to the school in the early morning, re-dressed her, and tried to hide her body in the weeds just in front of the school. But too late. Small children were arriving for their school day, and they found her.

Lingoane, walking to school at 8 am that morning, was met with shrieking, crying first and second graders, Madam is beaten! Madam is beaten! they were delirious. Lingoane set off at a run, and could not comprehend the scene. Too much blood. All over the playground. Her disheveled, crumpled friend.

To me the saddest part is that after an hour of mayhem and confusion, when parents gathered, when Grant the South African guy who runs a little orphanage is sent for, then tore off to get the



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police on his motor bike, Lingoane and the children formed a circle around Halieos body. They found her shoes and put them on, smoothed her skirt.

The police arrived in record time 3 hours. Of that time, for at least 2 hours, Lingoane, the other two teachers, and all the children, sang hymns to Me Halieo. That breaks my heart! To see how small these children are! Singing to their blood-covered teacher.

The young man was apprehended easily. He was in his grandmothers hut, washing blood from his clothes. He denied nothing. The policeman, sobbing because he, too, was a friend of Halieo, took him to jail in the camp town, where he remains today.

Violence amidst beauty

This valley is incredibly beautiful something like Colorado. There's a distant waterfall. Sheep and goats graze on steep hillsides. The sunsets are spectacular. The mind cannot accept violence amidst such beauty. We need the whys.

Some of the whys came when it was discovered that Halieos rape was the boys sixth. His first murder, but his 6th rape of both women and girls. Each had complained to Pulanes chief, a relative of the boys, but the boy had gone un-apprehended. Because he was a shepherd, the rapes were distant from one another, and none of the women knew of the rapes of the others. Each thought she was the only one.

Townpeople describe the young man as a short, dirty boy, disliked by other children. To this day I don't know his name. The story hasn't appeared in the newspaper or on the radio.

The story continues. Halieo was to be buried at her parents village. The funeral would be too far for the school children to attend. Knowing they needed to deal with this trauma in some way, the three teachers planned a memorial service at the primary school.

The memorial service

I attended the memorial service. It was a crisp autumn day. I had to arrive the night before and had NOT hiked up the mountain in the dark, though I very much wanted to be with Lingoane. More than 300 teachers and children attended, the farthest-distant getting up at 4 in the morning and hiking down steep mountain paths to be there at 9 am. Three schools of children were in attendance, all in uniform the primary school children; the 7th graders who had to go to another primary school because their little school lacked a 7th grade; and the entire neighboring secondary school, all of whom had been taught by Miss Ntomane, as she was known.

We sat outside on benches, and the CHILDREN conducted the service. It was healing, poignant, powerful. They told what they remember about her. They made pictures of flowers, which she loved. They explained that they would not walk on the playground at the place where she had been killed. Most amazing of all, they did a role play about the rape of a girl.

In the role play, the blame for the rape is not on the boy, but on the chief. In the role play, the chief will not listen when the girl says she has been raped, nor will the village councilman. The audience howled. They knew exactly who was being parodied.

The teachers later explained to me that a school cannot operate in a vacuum. This particular alcoholic, developmentally disabled chief, and the never-present, alcoholic councilman do not serve the village. Pulane, with so many (old) (pregnant) women and (ragged) (hungry) orphans, needs resources. Four, now three, teachers cannot be everything parents, counselors, grocers, disciplinarians, preachers, mediators, cooks, planners, shoppers, builders, laborers.

At the service, there were many stories about Miss Ntomane. The one I liked best was that after she had worked as a volunteer for the school for three years, she told people that if she ever got hired by the School Committee, she would throw a feast for the whole village. And she did just that. In her 4th year as a teacher, she spent her entire first paycheck to have a goat slaughtered, and treated everyone in the village for a feast of meat, vegetables, *papa* (corn meal mush). At the feast she said, I will teach in this village till the day I die. And many recalled that statement.

In another story, Lingoane told how her friend Halieo was generous to a fault. She repeatedly gave away their last sugar, or their last cup of beans, if she knew someone was truly hungry. One day Lingoane came home and found there was no flour. Halieo had given it to the old grandmother living up the hill. No! objected Lingoane. Go get it back! I say, go get it back! But Halieo refused. And the old grandmother in the story, of course, was the grandmother of the boy who had murdered her.

Vicki's irises

There are two more small chapters to this story. A month later I came back, bringing irises to plant. Our Wisconsin Folklore Village friend Vicki Amble had passed away, 53 years of age, in Wisconsin.



Irises being one of the flowers Vicki loved, her husband Greg had offered them to friends. He sent me some. I decided that Vicki had a kind of gritty strength that somehow matched this story and its mountain setting. So Vickis Wisconsin irises got involved in a planting ceremony we held for Me Halieo. There was a Tibetan prayer flag, Jane Farwell dances, gospel singing. It was another gorgeous, cold, autumn mountain day. I was helping to create the healing I needed, inspired by little kids.

I spent that night with Lingoane, whod lost much weight in the intervening weeks. So I wasnt within telephone range for a job interview that was supposed to take place. Im supposed to be HERE, I said. Its hard to explain to would-be employers. Lingoane talked non-stop about Halieo. We sobbed.

Kicking butt

I visited Pulane a month later. Lingoane had somehow found a taekwondo expert, and decided the girls in school needed to learn self defense. So I walked into a school where the girls were sparkly eyed and alive, yelling, kicking. They were all in unison, powerful, vital. They had no martial arts uniforms, not even slacks. Just doing head-high kicks in their little red cotton school skirts. Dont mess with these gurls!

The first murder

The first murder was as complex, and has as many sub-stories, but Ill make it shorter. It happened during my first year in Lesotho, but I didnt mention it in my public letters. At the time it seemed private, not a part of the LESOTHO story. Now it fits right in.

The girl who was murdered was Tumi. She was the daughter of Teboho, a tall, brilliant, remarkable woman Id met in the 1980s when we were both graduate students at the University of Wisconsin. I dont know in those apartheid years how many black South African women attended UW-Madison, but Teboho was certainly the first I knew.

Now it was 2007. The little baby boy shed had with her in the 1980s was 33 years old, and getting married. Id received an engraved wedding invitation and was honored to be a guest. Tebohos family lives in Pretoria, in a gated community in a ritzy suburb of South Africas capital city, and it was important for me in those days of comprehending poverty to meet real, warm, wonderful, but affluent families.

Somehow, in the time between when I bought a ticket to fly to South Africa and when I landed, Tebohos daughter was murdered. She was murdered not in South Africa, but in New York City, where Teboho currently lives and teaches at NYU. The young man wasnt a shepherd but a former boyfriend of Tumis. Like both murderers, he wasnt a stranger, but someone known. He suffocated Tumi with a pillow, then exited the apartment, leaving the radio playing.

Though Tumi was barely 20, she was mourned in multiple communities on two continents. Her classmates at Mills College in California were outraged, and spoke out about violence against women. Tebohos colleagues at NYU held a memorial service. But there were literally hundreds of people, all the same people who now came to her brothers wedding, who had attended her funeral in Pretoria. They had known her as a child. They knew the family. In African solidarity, they knew how to mourn a child.

It was powerful. The wedding, breathtakingly lovely and public, was book ended by the familys private grief. It was palpable, unspoken. You had only to look in eyes of any family member. The incredible strength of that family, choosing to celebrate joy amidst sorrow, was awesome.

So what have we here?

So what have we here? Two murders. Two continents. Two women in their prime. Loved and valued by their families and communities.

What we have here is violence against women. The murders are linked to the AIDS pandemic not that either woman was HIV positive but that violence against women / refusal to wear condoms / assertion of the right to have sex, without love, with multiple partners is a part of cultures here and in the US that is SCREAMING at us.

Too often the screams are muffled. In too many places rape is condoned. Sex, so beautiful, so powerful, is somehow too close in the brain to anger, violence, rejection, desire to hurt, even destroy another.

In combination, the murders exhaust me. They are much harder to reconcile than the death of my brother, from a disease. They remind me that the death of orphan Dintle was related to her rape, at age 9, by another shepherd boy, albeit a 7th grader / classmate. In that case too, the chief refused to prosecute, saying both children were under-age.

So perhaps having my head and heart back here with this violence is part of what prevents me from returning to my old life. As I have powerful and moving experiences, I change, and it takes a bit of time to find out in what ways I have changed. What I want to do next?

Is it acceptable simply to grieve? To howl at injustice? To write poetry? To spend a year with the small children who have witnessed atrocities? To try to comprehend violence?

So though these aren't good answers, they are my answers of the moment to your questions, When will you be home? What will you do next? And with apologies, they account for my longer than usual pause between public letters.

As I moved out of the village of Mt. Moorosi, neighbors said to me, and I say to you, Tsumaea ka Khotso. Go in peace.



Alter Boys
By PCV Kaye Thompson

I feel encouraged today. The Alter Boys have done it for me. Four days ago I was approached by four good-looking young men, asking me if I might be able to help them with a chicken project. I said "yes" and asked them to return when they had a skeleton outline of what they needed. The next day they were at my door, having done their research. These men are high school students and alter boys at the St. Rose Mission church. We have met 3 days in a row and have a Partnership Grant ready for print. I was approached 8 months ago by another community with this exact same request, and have yet to get their outline of needs and estimates. This is an experience I have had with several other communities. Even with the big "Yes, I want to help you get what you want", the lack of follow through is the norm. These guys, the 18 year old Alter Boys, ran around each day, making phone calls, visiting the Agriculture Office, speaking to experts in their villages, and gathered all the information we needed. It is these exceptions, and exceptional people, that keep the hope and optimism going. And to put the frosting on the cake, I got to talk to them about HIV/AIDS. I asked these faithful Catholics their ideas about condoms and they laughed, saying "HIV doesn't know if you are a Christian or not, so you had better use a condom". I really love these guys!



PCV Life

Hey all you ALP PCVs out there!! It's CONTEST TIME!!

Would you like to win a DVD Player for your library? **Three** libraries will be awarded a DVD player and 5 DVDs covering life skills topics.

Here's how you can win:

Turn in **two** essays: one from a library user (student or community member) and one from a librarian (teacher librarian or principal).

Librarian Composition: What impact has the library had on your school or community?
Library User Composition: What impact has the library had on you personally?

Criteria:

Your library must be an African Library Project Library (Libraries in the 2010 container are not eligible, Pepi!!)

Your library must have a television accessible with a power source

Compositions are due by October 15th and should be turned into the Maseru box in the VRC with Becky's name on the envelope.

Contact Becky 58016350 or Anne Marie 58578363

FOL Grants

The next round of FOL Grants will be evaluated for approval on the 9th of August. Please place the grant applications in the Committees box in the VRC or give them to your VAC representative. The next opportunity for VAC FOL Grants will be in November.

Remember each grant is a maximum of R500 per quarter per volunteer. You must turn in your photos, receipts and thank you notes before you will be approved for your next FOL Grant. There is an application attached to the Khotso. If you have any questions, please call Anne Marie Jackson at 5857 8363 or Kevin Malone at 5913 5491.

The VAC reps:

- Mokhotlong: Rachel Franklin
- Butha Buthe: Kevin Malone-Co-Chair
- Leribe: Tarsha Veiga
- Berea: Merrill Nosler
- Maseru: Jackie Tipsword
- Mafeteng: Anne Marie Jackson—Co-Chair
- Mohale’s Hoek : Alyssa Souza
- Quthing : Clare Dreyfus
- Qacha’s Nek: Becky Chown
- Thaba Tseka: Rebecca Reilly

Friends of Lesotho Grant Application Form

FOL funds are sent from the US by a network of returned volunteers and other Friends of Lesotho. FOL grants have a maximum disbursement of R500 per quarter per volunteer and are for all projects that do not consist of HIV/AIDS work (See HIV/AIDS committee.) The application requires that you describe your project, its beneficiaries, a **detailed** estimate of the cost of materials and the intended follow-up actions.

If your application is approved you will receive a check and be **required** to return receipts, any left-over money, 2 photos, and a thank you note that will be sent to FOL in the states. These thank you notes are a way of ensuring continuing funding and are required. Place receipts and thank you notes in committee box and place digital photos in the VAC folder under FOL Grant Photos. Completed forms should be sent to Peace Corps office addressed to FOL, given to a VAC member, put in the committee box in the IRC, or brought to the quarterly VAC meeting. Please feel free to use the back of the application form to complete any questions at length. Please include your full name as it appears on your bank account.

PCV Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Item	Unit Price	Quantity	Total
			Project Total

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1) Project Description: _____

2) Project Beneficiaries: _____

3) Community Contributions (additional funding, time, space, etc.): _____

4) Intended follow-up action. Also include any other comments here: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

AFRICAN LIBRARY PROJECT APPLICATION 2009 Arriving 2010

Guidelines for Peace Corps Volunteers in Africa (Version 6 revised March 2009)

Introduction:

The African Library Project acknowledges you as a Peace Corps volunteer for your contribution in developing African communities. We share your commitment to make a difference in the world.

While we are also actively developing libraries in Botswana, Swaziland, and Malawi, it is only in Lesotho that we are working with the Peace Corps. We are expanding into other countries as our U.S. capacity permits.

Requirements:

African Library Project provides support to African schools/communities who meet the following requirements:

- ◇ **Local sponsorship** - A mix of teachers, students and/or community leaders are committed to sponsoring a library through a library committee.
- ◇ **Facilities** - There is a **clean, dry, secure** area with adequate shelving to display the books, and with easy access to borrowers. This can even be a couple of bookshelves in each classroom which is recommended for primary schools.
- ◇ **Leadership** - One or more people can be counted on to organize the books into a library and to train others to maintain and operate the library.
- ◇ **Borrowers** - There is a community of beginning, intermediate and/or advanced English language readers who will actively use the library.

How to Explore a Partnership:

African Library Project is committed to creating sustainable libraries and is not just a source of books. If you meet the above criteria, we will welcome you as our on-the-ground-partner in establishing or improving a small library. We have folks on this end who have been through what you are going through now and understand your challenges. Using evaluations and questionnaires, we follow up with our libraries to document a project's strengths and weaknesses. We will share our librarians' best practices so that you do not have to re-invent the wheel.

1. Name of school or community where library will be located. What is the address of the school? Contact information of local person(s) responsible for library.
2. An informal description of your school or community and any supporting materials that you have available (e.g., personal stories, digital pictures) so we can promote book donations specifically for your community. Your book drive organizer will use this description to help educate book donors about life in Lesotho.
3. Whom will the library serve, e.g., school, community, clinic? How many readers do you expect, e.g., number of students and teachers at school, number of community members that could access the library?
4. Where in the school or community will the library be located? Will it be in a separate room or building or will you have a small library in each classroom?
5. Who in the community will actively support and staff the library? What are their names and what roles will they play in managing/developing the library? Who will be on the library committee?
6. Include at least 3 letters from local leaders who have committed to participate in the development of the library. These stakeholders may include: chiefs or government officials, school principals, teachers, students, parents, or other interested citizens. Choose carefully as these people will become the core of your library committee and continue the work after your COS. Try to include both men and women.

The purpose of these letters is to help your community own the library project by thinking through how they will **actively help** to develop and manage the library. **Please refer to the African Library Project's Action Plan (attached at end of application) to make community members aware of things they will be responsible for in starting a library.**

- 1.
2. Each letter should specify how the person plans to contribute to the library project. The application should be emailed to Becky Banton, African Library Project's Field Coordinator at beckybanton@yahoo.com. The letters may be sent to Becky Banton via email or standard mail to: PCV Becky Banton, PO Box 554, Maseru 100, Lesotho, or you may place the letters in the VRC Maseru Box.
7. What kinds of books would be most useful? How many? Be explicit about the reading levels and types of books desired, e.g., Sweet Valley High, Harry Potter, Junie B. Jones, Dr.

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Seuss, to give your book drive organizer examples of appropriate reading levels. (Refer to the types of books below that we can collect. Please remember, African Library Project's intent is to build libraries not provide classroom sets of textbooks for schools. However, a handful of textbooks in different subjects MAY be available depending on the donor.)

Most book drive organizers will send gently used, English language, soft cover books. Most of our books are for readers from preschool age through eighth grade reading levels. A typical ALP book drive will usually provide the following type of books:

PRESCHOOL (ECCD Center):

- ◇ Baby Board Books
- ◇ Children's picture books
- ◇ BIG books

If you are receiving books for a PRIMARY SCHOOL, you can expect:

- ◇ Baby Board Books
- ◇ Children's picture books
- ◇ Children's fiction and non-fiction
- ◇ Early readers
- ◇ BIG books
- ◇ Teacher books for school libraries
- ◇ Children's dictionaries/Picture Dictionaries
- ◇ Encyclopedias less than 15 years old
- ◇ Children's Encyclopedia/Picture Encyclopedia
- ◇ Children's thesauruses
- ◇ Paperback textbooks in math, English, geography, health, and science at appropriate level (Kindergarten to 6th grade)
- ◇ Books with universal themes (friendships, animals, love)
- ◇ Children's Health Books
- ◇ Accurate up-to-date atlases
- ◇ Books about Africa or African Americans
- ◇ Brain teasers, flash cards, educational games and puzzles

If you are receiving books for a SECONDARY or HIGH SCHOOL, you can expect:

- ◇ Juvenile literature
- ◇ Children's fiction and non-fiction
- ◇ Teacher books for school libraries
- ◇ Dictionaries
- ◇ Encyclopedias less than 15 years old
- ◇ Accurate up-to-date atlases
- ◇ Thesauruses
- ◇ Math books from 6th grade up, including Algebra, Geometry, and Pre-Calculus, English books (focusing on grammar or comprehension), Geography books, Health books, Science books including general science, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics books at appropriate levels
- ◇ Books with universal themes (friendships, animals, love)
- ◇ Books like Chicken Soup for the Soul (inspiring stories with life skills lessons)
- ◇ Books about Africa or African Americans
- ◇ Brain teasers, flash cards, educational games and puzzles

If you are donation to a COMMUNITY LIBRARY:

- ◇ Any of the books listed for preschools, primary schools, or high schools
- ◇ Agriculture
- ◇ Animal husbandry
- ◇ Gardening
- ◇ Health
- ◇ Business
- ◇ Current events
- ◇ Ecology
- ◇ National Geographic, less than 5 years old
- ◇ Books about African or African Americans

8. The African Library Project needs help from PCVs. Please contact friends, family, your elementary or high school, churches, etc from the United States who might be interested in organizing a book drive for your new library. The donors should be willing to collect approximately 1,000 books and \$500 for domestic and international shipping costs. Please supply the name, email address, mailing address and phone numbers of potential donors to Becky. Finding your own donor in the US is the best way to guarantee your school or community receives books from the African Library Project. However, if you are not successful in your attempt to secure a book drive, the African Library Project can help with finding a book drive organizer.
9. With your application please submit digital photos of the prospective library. You MUST include a photo of the room or rooms where the library will be located. Other photos of students and community members are highly recommended. Photos of Lesotho and your community could be included as well. Please email photos to beckyban-ton@yahoo.com.
10. PCV contact information in Africa (name, location, postal address, email, phone if any, etc.)
11. PCV COS date.

What to Expect:

After your application, photos, and 3 letters from community members are turned into Becky, the likely sequence of events are:

- ◇ Your application will be evaluated and any follow-up questions will need to be answered.
- ◇ You will develop a plan to start the library and will organize a library committee to help you fine-tune and implement the plan.
- ◇ We will send you an excellent book, Setting Up and Running A School Library. This is published by the VSO (British equivalent of the Peace Corps) specifically to help volunteers organize libraries in developing countries.
- ◇ The contact information of your potential book drive organizer in the US will be forwarded to the African Library Project. Please ask your book drive organizer to first read the *book drive guidelines* in the *How to Help* section of the African Library Project website (www.africanlibraryproject.org), then contact Chris Bradshaw, Founder and President of African Library Project at chris@africanlibraryproject.org.
- ◇ We will send between 250-1000 books, depending on the size of your reader population.
- ◇ The books will be shipped in large containers with all the libraries for Lesotho shipped together at the same time. All books will be mailed by the book drive organizer to our shipping agent in New Orleans, LA. Then the books will be loaded onto a container and shipped to Durban, South Africa. They will come by train from Durban to Maseru.
- ◇ Your school or community is responsible for getting the books from Maseru to the library location in your area. Once the books have arrived, you will have THREE weeks to pick them up from Maseru. Do NOT rely on Peace Corps for transport.
- ◇ Deadline for applications to Becky is September 1, 2009.
- ◇ Deadline for donors to ship books to the container is November 20, 2009.
- ◇ The expected arrival date of the container to Lesotho is March 2010.

How You Can Help Us:

The best way to help is, of course, to create a small, sustainable library in your community. We understand your access to internet service is probably limited, but please complete our application and evaluation procedures to the best of your ability as they are crucial to our overall success. The all-volunteer African Library Project is still young, and we welcome your ideas and feedback.

We look forward to hearing from you.

African Library Project's Library Action Plan

What is a Library Action Plan? This is a planning tool for Peace Corps Volunteers to use in starting or improving a library in partnership with the African Library Project.

Why do this? Sustainability! We want you to think through the important issues before you start so that you can plan for success. A successful library needs community and school-wide support and this tool has been designed to help your library committee think through the steps in the development of a library.

Who should do this? The PCV and the library committee should create the plan together. (Suggested committee is 3-5 people from the community of library users representing different

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stakeholders. Examples: for a school library, teachers, administrators, librarian, students, PTA members. For a community library: students, teachers, school administrators, librarian, village leaders/chief, men and women.)

When? This plan should happen after you have been approved by the African Library Project and before your books arrive.

How? Think about what works best for your group. You might meet at your new library site for a series of meetings. That way, you can modify members of your committee as needed.

Tips for working on the Library Action Plan:

1. Have fun together! The tone you set will reverberate throughout the library.
2. Break up the plan into small chunks to work on over a series of meetings
3. Actively encourage everyone to participate during the meeting.
4. Record your decisions on this form.
5. Take the parts of this form that are useful to you and leave the rest.
6. At the end of each meeting, use these questions to help improve the quality of your meetings:
 - a) Were you able to contribute? If not, why not?
 - b) How well did we work together as a group?
 - c) Is there anyone else we should ask to be on this committee?

Create a library committee

About the library committee:

- ◇ What skills do we need in our library committee? (transport, building shelves, organization of books, raising money for supplies, organize inventory system, leadership, publicity)
- ◇ Will there be officers for the committee? If so, who?
- ◇ Who will handle our finances?
- ◇ How often will we need to meet?
- ◇ How will decisions be made?
- ◇ **What would our ideal library look like?**
- ◇ **Who will our library serve? (# of people, school, community)**
- ◇ Create a timetable of when things will be completed.
- ◇ Create a list of job responsibilities and who will be responsible for those responsibilities.

**If your library is placed at a school, but will also serve the community, then one member of the community and one person from the school should be on the library committee.

Building and space requirements:

- ◇ Where will the library be located?
 - ◇ Classroom libraries, small set of books in each classroom (recommended for primary)
 - ◇ Separate room for the library
 - ◇ How accessible is this room to the school or community library users?
 - ◇ Is the room secured?
 - ◇ Is the room dry?
- ◇ What kind of furniture will we need?
 - ◇ Shelves, chairs, table, carpet
- ◇ How will we get/make the furniture?
- ◇ What can we use that we already have? (old, broken desks, wood and cinder blocks-Basotho call them bricks)
- ◇ Do we have funds to obtain the furniture?
 - ◇ If no, how will we raise money? (See resources available at end)

Library Staff:

- ◇ Who will manage the books and be responsible for their security and organization?
- ◇ Will we have a librarian? If so, who?
- ◇ An assistant? Who?
- ◇ How will these people be trained?
- ◇ What are librarian's responsibilities?



- ◇ Create job description
- ◇ Cleaning
- ◇ Organizing
- ◇ Re-shelving
- ◇ Checking out
- ◇ Dusting

Will this person be paid, and if so, how will the funds be supplied?

- ◇ Librarians are paid through school fees
- ◇ Ask the community council or the DA, district administrator, to fund a librarian.
- ◇ Membership fees: for example: R5 per person per year, or 50 lisente per day. R10 per family per year. (pick a price that fits your community) All proceeds go to pay the librarian.
- ◇ If at a secondary or high school, schools could reduce or waive school fees for a student if parent/guardian works as the librarian.
- ◇ If community library, hold a pitso to get ideas from community to find solutions to hire librarian.
- ◇ If school library, hold a parent-teacher meeting to get idea from parents and teachers.

Organization: (VSO book page 47)

What system will you use to organize the books?

- ◇ Coloured-coded stickers
 - ◇ By subject (Fiction, Science, Social Studies, Maths, English)
 - ◇ By reading level (upper and lower primary)
- ◇ dewey decimal (not recommended AT ALL),
- ◇ true, not-true, reference, adult

Record keeping:

What system will we use to track our books?

- ◇ When we acquire new books? (ex. Accession register)
- ◇ When we loan books?
- ◇ Visitor's log
- ◇ Peace Corps requires library usage numbers in the trimester report. African Library Project requires reporting.

Expenses

What expenses can we expect and how will we pay them?

- ◇ What kinds of supplies will we need (stickers, posters, poster boards, paint, labels, boxes, tape, exercise book (notebook) for recording keeping, stamp, etc.) and how much will they cost?
- ◇ How will we raise the money to pay our expenses?
 - ◇ Could expenses be paid from membership fees, late fees.
 - ◇ Hold fundraisers: concert, raffle, wearing private (students come to school without uniform and pay)
 - ◇ Solicit donations

User policies:

- ◇ Will we charge a fee for users? (membership fees)
- ◇ Will we loan books to users?
 - ◇ How long is check out period?
 - ◇ Who will be able to check out books? (Will Standard 1, 2, 3 students be able to check out books?)
 - ◇ Will there be a wait period before books are checked out so that users get used to books and the expectations in the library? (maybe a couple of months)
- ◇ Will we charge late fees if users do not return books on time?
- ◇ What will we do about damaged/lost books?
 - ◇ Students and parents can sign contract acknowledging repayment for lost or damaged book.
- ◇ Who will keep track of the library's funds? How will they report about library finances to our committee?
- ◇ Rules or expectations for library should be posted on wall of library.

- ◇ User conduct in library

Library hours and operations:

- ◇ Thinking about our user population, when is the ideal time for users to use the library? (For school libraries, remember teachers using it for reference and possible library classes during the day. Also, if teachers don't show up, could the students visit the library?)
- ◇ For school libraries, will regular library visits be included in the class schedule? (ex. Regularly scheduled class visits for story time, research, pleasure reading, etc.) If so, when?
- ◇ Will the library be open during school breaks? On Saturdays?
- ◇ Post hours when library is open and be consistent.

Library Usage: (VSO book page 5, 92-97, 99, 101-106)

- ◇ How do we get people using the library?
 - ◇ Most African libraries find that getting the library set up is the easy part. The difficult part is getting people in to use the library. Some ideas that you could consider are scheduling classes to visit the library, story times, contests (drawing, reading, writing), workshops for teachers and students on how to use the library, local elder storytelling, culture corner, guest speakers, dramas, cultural activities, etc.
- ◇ What activities will our library offer to encourage usage?
 - ◇ How will these be scheduled and conducted?
 - ◇ Who will be responsible to make sure each happens?
 - ◇ How will we communicate with the users what is happening at the library?

Evaluation:

- ◇ How will we measure our success?
 - ◇ Tracking the number of users that visit the library (Visitor's log)
 - ◇ Tracking the number of books that get checked out?
 - ◇ Gender and age of users?
 - ◇ How will we get feedback from our users?
 - ◇ How often would the library committee, Peace Corps, and Lesotho's Liaison to the African Library Project like to get a report and receive recommendations?

Resources:

Setting Up and Running A School Library by Nicola Baird – excellent technical how-to manual available from PC Lesotho Education Officer.

Friends of Lesotho – nonprofit organization of Lesotho RPCVs whose mission is to help PCVs currently serving by providing scholarships and small grants of R500 per quarter for projects. Have funded book shelves and library supplies.

Peace Corps OPSI – provides funding for community-initiated projects coordinated by PCVs by connecting private sector donors with community-based projects. For project and fund inquiries, email: pcpp@peacecorps.gov or write: Peace Corps, OPSI, 1111 20th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20526.



PCV Life

Hunting Springbok
by PCV Gwen Kehr

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		7	9		11
2										8	12	
3						9			10			
4						11						
5		13			14					21		15
6					12				13			
		14	17				15				22	
16						17			18			
		19		18	19		20	20		21		
22	23		23									
24							25					

Across

1. During your service you will face at least one
2. Rome's government, initially
3. an old familiar saying
4. take notice, abbr.
5. relating to a governor, especially the race
6. reason and good sense part of Freudian subconscious
7. in soccer, as in hockey, you don't want this stat to be high
8. Annie, get yours
9. southern state (abbr.)
10. brand of comfy shoes every stereotypical PCV owns
11. one of Lesotho's programs
12. expression said out of frustration
13. Gore or Franken
14. eight in Spain
15. went at a leisurely gait
16. bucket _____
17. plural prefix in Sesotho
18. to possess
19. yes, in Zulu
20. "___ worries"
21. the part of Freudian subconscious
22. West coast state (abbr)
23. "one ___ apple spoils the bunch"
24. cow in Sesotho
25. waver, as from a blow

Down

1. one of Lesotho's largest rivers
2. nocturnal-biting insect
3. a mineral spring
4. type of boat
5. Honest _____
6. Courtney Love's initials, literally
7. extended or arranged in a line
8. one who works with likoaneana here
9. one might hope to do this gracefully
10. the Queen's first name
11. place you can get a pint
12. you! (Sesotho)
13. plunder
14. World Vision, the Sierra Club or CARE, for example
15. boy, in Scotland
16. to support or to bet on
17. something with magical power
18. Scout and Jem's famous reclusive neighbor
19. after the end of regulation
20. "___ Love" campaign
21. animosity
22. to finish
23. what a doc might have you say

PCV Life



The Department of State will be conducting the Foreign Service Officers Test on October 3, 2009 at the Peace Corps Lesotho office in Maseru. If you are interested in appearing for the exam, please register yourself at <http://careers.state.gov/officer/register.html> as soon as possible. Only the first 4 applicants will get Lesotho as their centre and the rest will have to go to Johannesburg.



FROM: Jody K. Olsen, Acting Director
SUBJECT: United We Serve

I invite you to join President Obama's summer service initiative—United We Serve—a call to all Americans to join a volunteer effort this summer and be part of building a new foundation for America, one community at a time.

United We Serve starts June 22 and runs through the National Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11. Since his inauguration, the President has called on all Americans to serve their communities and be a part of building a better future for our country.

To kick off United We Serve, I am asking you to join me in supporting the FED FEEDS FAMILIES food drive. Our much needed contributions will go far to sustain food shelters in the District of Columbia.

I do not think that any of us needs additional incentive to serve—we do that everyday by supporting our Volunteers in the field—but, a bit of team spirit can be a fun way to inspire involvement. A friendly competition among HQ floors will be held during each of the three collection periods for the food drive. Winners will be announced at the conclusion of each collection period.

1. Monday, June 22 - Friday, June 26
2. Monday, June 29 - Friday, July 31
3. Monday, August 3 - Friday, August 28

Starting the week of June 22, you will find a food collection box near your floor's elevators. This is a head-to-head competition of nine teams, with each floor, including the 5th floor of the L Street building, functioning as a team.

OPM is coordinating the FED FEEDS FAMILIES food drive this summer and is hoping to collect one million pounds of food. I know we can make a huge contribution to this total. If you have any questions about the food drive, please contact Garry Stanberry at gstanberry@peacecorps.gov or extension 1195.

For more information and to get involved with United We Serve, visit www.serve.gov, and to learn about our agency's commitment to this initiative, visit www.peacecorps.gov/unitedweserve.

Volunteers in Namibia Use Text Messaging for Health Education July 22, 2009

Innovative project provides answers on many health issues, including HIV/AIDS

WASHINGTON, D.C., July 22, 2009 – Health Education Response (HER), software developed by Peace Corps Volunteers Rashid Khan of Phoenix, Ariz., and Jennifer Moore of Gillette, Wyo., has revolutionized health education in Namibia. HER utilizes software designed to provide health information through mobile phone-based SMS, also known as text messaging, permitting the program to operate nationwide.

The HER program distributes health information through pre-written content on major topics, and also forwards user questions to a pool of Peace Corps Volunteers prepared to field a wide array of health-related inquiries including topics related to HIV/AIDS and birth control. In June 2009, the system exchanged 2,382 SMSs with 325 unique clients.

Peace Corps acting Director Jody K. Olsen said, "The Health Education Response program is a great example of Peace Corps Volunteers who are working with local partners to find creative solutions to solve local problems. It is a wonderful innovation to harness widely available technology in the fight against HIV/AIDS."

The program launched in February as a completely automated database consisting of only pre-written content and a listing of ARV clinics. The program later expanded to allow callers the option to speak with a "real live person" who is knowledgeable on a broad range of health subjects.

Said Peace Corps/Namibia Director Hannah Baldwin, "The beauty of the system is that it permits people to ask questions they would not ask directly, and provides excellent information in a non-threatening way."

Currently, HER is staffed by 11 Peace Corps Volunteers and a counselor from Childline/Lifeline, a



*From the PC Director
&
General Peace Corps
News*

non-profit counseling hotline that fields user questions. The program is constantly being updated as conversations with Volunteers are tracked and analyzed, and common discussion themes and keywords are identified.

Khan explained, “We can track down to the occurrence how often a theme, such as condoms, HIV, or pregnancy is brought up. This data can be assembled into reports that can be used to create other programs. Other organizations are also taking an interest in this initiative. We’ve managed to secure the support of MTC, Namibia’s largest mobile phone provider, who will be providing us no-cost service,”

Peace Corps Launches YouTube Channel
July 13, 2009

Visuals provide inside view of Peace Corps Volunteer projects, history

Washington, D.C., July 13, 2009 – Peace Corps acting Director Jody K. Olsen announced the launch of the new Peace Corps channel on YouTube: www.youtube.com/peacecorps. The channel provides a stunning visual look into the work of Peace Corps Volunteers projects around the world. The channel also provides a visual glimpse into the history of the agency and its founders, including President John F. Kennedy and Sargent Shriver.

“The YouTube channel is an excellent resource for anyone considering Peace Corps service to better understand what Peace Corps service is really like on the ground,” said acting Director Olsen.

The Peace Corps/YouTube channel launched with 45 videos about the Peace Corps and the agency’s current projects around the world. More will be added on an ongoing basis. Currently featured on the site is a video entitled, “Peace Corps: Our legacy at Home and Abroad.” The clip incorporates pictures, films, and interviews depicting the work of Volunteers serving since its founding in 1961 up to today in different areas of the world.

In its first week the Peace Corps channel welcomed nearly 1,000 views, and viewership continues to grow rapidly every day.

In addition to YouTube, the agency is leveraging social media technology through Twitter (twitter.com/peacecorps), and will soon have a presence on both Facebook and Flickr. These sites supplement the newly redesigned Peace Corps website (www.peacecorps.gov), that draws over eight million visitors a year. Peace Corps’ information on these sites is intended to inform and recruit the next generation of Volunteers.

General Peace Corps News



Remote VRC effectiveness questionnaire

Remote Volunteer Resource Centers are not funded by Peace Corps Headquarters. The CD and AO at their discretion save the money required from the post budget to provide you with the VRCs. This money would have been spent for post administration purposes or sent back to HQ as unspent money if they had not made this decision for your benefit. To help them justify to HQ any further expenditure on setting up more remote VRCs, we would like your feedback on the effectiveness of the current ones. Please take some time to fill out the following survey and send it to the post IT Specialist before August 1, 2009.

PCV Name: _____

1. Name(s) of remote VRCs accessible to you:

- Mophales Hoek
- Qachas Nek
- Thaba Tseka
- Mokhotlong

2. How often do you visit the remote VRC?

- _____ times a week
- _____ times a month
- Never get a chance

3. Are you able to access Internet with your personal Vodacom SIM card (with data time loaded) inserted in the modem every time you visit the VRC? If not, what is the hit rate? (Eg. Every 3rd or 4th time I visit the VRC, the VCL network is down and I have to wait up to 1 hour)

4. Do you feel the remote VRC is a value added service the post is providing you?

- Yes
- No

5. Would you like to see more remote VRCs set up in future? If yes where else do you want them?



Attachment