

National Peace Corps Association (NPCA)  
Group Leaders Forum (GLF)  
June 26, 2010; Washington, DC

Accompanying Power Point slides:

<http://peacecorpsconnect.org/sites/default/files/NPCAGLF2010PPT.pdf>

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 11:15 a.m. by Kate Schachter, Group Leader Forum (GLF) Coordinator, who presided over the meeting.

**Establish eligible voters list:** Eligibility of voters and a quorum were established, totaling 42 member groups: At that time, 32 groups were represented on-site and 10 were represented by a Skype connection, all having been authorized to cast a vote for one or more member groups.

The following on-site voters were authorized to represent one or more member groups:

Marielsie Avila-Negrón (Senegal/Gambia); Rob Bartel (Fiji); Ben Bellows (Ecuador); Arianne Burger (Colorado); Myron Fountain (NC-Raleigh/Durham); Jill Fox (Nebraska); Geraldine Gillio (New Jersey); Arlene Goldberg (Hampton Roads, VA); Barry Hillenbrand (Ethiopia/Eritrea); Joe Hindman (West Cascade); Veneeth Iyengar (Louisiana); Darryl Johnson (Thailand); Lynn Juhl (Malaysia); Jon Keeton (Korea); Paula Larson (Philadelphia); Gloria Levin (Bolivia/Peru); Sarah McMeans (Philippines); Adam Meier (China); Jennifer Monahan (Long Island, NY); Peggy Murrah (Sierra Leone); Alan Olson (Uganda); Kristina Owens (Washington, DC); Pat Reilly (Liberia); Tim Resch (Morocco); Meg Rice (Guatemala); Kate Schachter (Wisconsin-Madison); Joby Taylor (Shriver Peaceworker Program); Patricia Wand (Colombia); Jon Weintraub (Eastern Caribbean); Ariel Wyckoff (Mongolia); Frank Yates (Central Missouri and Ghana)

Eligible voters by telephone, presenting themselves as representing a member group, were: Bruce Anderson (Charlotte, NC); Julie Ceigler (Atlanta); Bonnie Drenik (Heart of Texas); Mike Goodkind (Nigeria); Catherine Hung (NorCal); Geraldine Kennedy (Los Angeles); Mike Learned (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual); Bernadette Myron (First Coast - Florida); Bill Tilney (Gulf Coast - Texas); Roger Weiss (Dominican Republic)

However, because of the poor connection in the meeting room, the telephone participants had great difficulty following the proceedings or participating. They were promised detailed minutes of the meeting; consequently, many dropped off the call over the course of the meeting.

**Approval of Minutes from 2009 GLF Meeting:** In a motion made by Arlene Goldberg (Hampton Roads, VA) and seconded by Jon Weintraub (Eastern Caribbean), the minutes of the 2009 GLF meeting were accepted without corrections, by unanimous vote. (See: <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/member-groups/#glf>)

**Updates and Discussion Relative to NPCA Member Groups:** Anne Baker introduced herself as NPCA's Vice President and staff liaison to member groups. She thanked Kate Schachter,

current GLF Coordinator; Ben Bellows, outgoing GLF Coordinator; and Gloria Levin, recording minutes for this meeting.

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Anne Baker): Immediately preceding this GLF meeting was NPCA's Annual Meeting, which included a comprehensive review of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration, and ideas will be shared in the afternoon session, following the GLF. Anne Baker stated that the celebration "belongs" to everyone – PC; NPCA; member groups; etc. However, it will drive NPCA's agenda over the next 18 months. To inform and coordinate the multiplicity of events, NPCA will maintain online a master calendar; until that is up later this year, member groups should report their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary-related events to NPCA's 50<sup>th</sup> Coordinator, Natalie Hall ([50thcoordinator@peacecorpsconnect.org](mailto:50thcoordinator@peacecorpsconnect.org)), and to our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Intern, Emily Primack ([membintern@peacecorpsconnect.org](mailto:membintern@peacecorpsconnect.org)). As for events coordinated by Peace Corps itself, Peace Corps will (only) announce those events for which contractual agreements have been signed, but expects the full slate of dates and events to be posted by the end of September.

The official kickoff will be October 13-14, 2010 at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, with students planning an event to take place at 2 a.m., exactly 50 years after President Kennedy challenged students to serve overseas. March 1 (2011), customarily viewed as the birthday of the PC, will involve house parties (on the model used by the MorePC campaign) around the world. David Magnani reported an event on March 5, 2011 at the JFK Library in Boston, coordinated by PC, and a summer festival will be held in Boston. Just announced Thursday is the inclusion of PC as one of 3 major themes of the 2011 Smithsonian Institution's Folklife Festival on the Washington, DC Mall, between June 30 and July 11. The other main events in Washington, DC will be held September 22-25, 2011. Generally, they will include an advocacy day (Thursday); a community service day (Friday); country of service activities (open for Saturday); a reception, symposium on the future of PC and a gala (Saturday evening); gathering at Arlington Cemetery and noontime march of flags across the Memorial Bridge (both organized by RPCV/W) to an event on the Mall (Sunday). Outside of NPCA, a reunion for former PC staff (Friday evening) is being organized by Ken Hill. NPCA has developed a series of toolkits for use by member groups, including advice for planning group reunions, concerts, exhibits, cocktail nights, fundraising, and partnering with universities. (See <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/resources/peace-corps-50th-anniversary/>)

NPCA's New Look (Molly Mattessich and Erica Burman): NPCA will soon unveil a "new look," including a new NPCA logo, tagline, and an improved Web platform for communication. Currently, NPCA has several different websites, each with a different look and branding, which have not shown NPCA in its best light. By bringing all of the disparate sites together, streamlining the content, unifying the "look" and focusing the message about why people should join the national Returned Peace Corps Volunteer community, NPCA believes that the new site will be significantly easier to use and compelling to prospective members. In addition, all information pertaining to the 50th Anniversary will be consolidated onto one website. This will be discussed in more detail in the afternoon session. The new NPCA website launches next week and the 50th Anniversary website will launch in August, according to Molly Mattessich.

New Membership Options (Emily Bello): Out of 200,000 RPCVs, NPCA currently has only 4,700 paid members, while 18,000 subscribe to the e-newsletter and over 20,000 are registered on NPCA's website. To generate more commitment within the community and attract more new (paid) members, NPCA's Board approved a new membership structure and two new NPCA membership options which member groups can also choose to adopt or not. (To date, 33 member groups have chosen to adopt these new options.) First, any RPCV who has never been a member of NPCA is now eligible for a free, one-year membership. Second, any currently serving PCV can activate a free membership for two years, by registering online from the field. (Recently returned PCVs will continue to be eligible to receive the free year of membership upon completing their service.) A new category for engagement in the NPCA community has been created – Associate – for individuals who create profiles on the PC Connect social network, representing a demonstrated interest, sufficient to have an (unpaid) affiliation with NPCA. Not being members, Associates cannot vote in NPCA elections or have other rights of membership, according to NPCA's bylaws. However, information obtained from the profiles can be used by NPCA to promote more active engagement, including paid membership. By these changes, NPCA hopes to take advantage of the increased interest among RPCVs to be generated by the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and convert these persons into paid members. The other two levels of engagement in NPCA remain the same – paid members (at \$35) and Director's Circle (\$1,000 minimum or equivalent in-kind expertise).

Member groups should inform NPCA of their decisions about opting in or out of either of the two new membership options.

Arlene Goldberg, expecting an increase in membership for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, asked if a discounted registration fee will be offered to paid members for anniversary events. Anne Baker did not foresee an overall registration charge for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary weekend, outside of tickets for the gala and perhaps individual member group activities.

Discussion ensued about improvements in relations between PC and NPCA with regard to PC informing the PCV/staff community about NPCA. Anne Baker was invited to present at PC's most recent overseas staff training. PC is now purchasing a subscription to *WorldView* magazine for each serving PCV; *PC Times* (distributed to PCVs in the field) is running a 4-part series on NPCA and member groups, starting with the current issue pertaining to NPCA's mentoring program; Welcome Booklets provided to pre-trainees will routinely include a template description of NPCA as an available resource; and PC's website includes a link to NPCA (<http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=resources.returned.staycon.npca> and <http://www.peacecorps.gov/engage>).

Tim Resch asked about the ongoing problem of PC providing NPCA with information on COSing volunteers who sign the privacy waiver. Anne Baker explained that the waiver must be signed while still a PCV, before COS, but few names are appearing on the list provided by PC. A copy of the Privacy Act Release Form (PARF) is provided on NPCA's website: [http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/sites/default/files/HometownnerCOSPARF\\_JUL07.pdf](http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/sites/default/files/HometownnerCOSPARF_JUL07.pdf)

Privacy Policy Updates and Sharing of Data (Anne Baker): At the 2009 GLF meeting, a recommendation was made to revise the privacy policy related to data sharing by devising a middle option for member groups. Currently, an affiliate group member's choices are only to agree or disagree to have their data shared. The added (middle) option allows a group member to agree that their data can be shared, but only within NPCA. This middle (third) option will be implemented with the expected migration by NPCA to a single database by Fall 2010.

Member groups who have not instituted a data sharing agreement with NPCA but choose to do so now are encouraged to download the agreement form and follow the instructions. Access the form from <http://community.peacecorpsconnect.org/group/groupleadersforum>. Individual contact information data will only be released to member groups that have established a formal, signed data sharing agreement with NPCA.

**Group Best Practices Presentations:** See accompanying slides at <http://peacecorpsconnect.org/sites/default/files/NPCAGLF2010PPT.pdf>

RPCVs of Wisconsin-Madison (Kate Schachter): The group's focus is on major fundraising initiatives, through its International Calendars and "We All" posters (<http://www.rpcvmadison.org/>). Success is due to several factors. 1) Don't give up. In the first year, they only sold 500 calendars of 1,000 printed. In the most recent year, they sold 33,000 copies and in 2011, they anticipate they will have sold \$1 million of calendars, not counting proceeds earned by other NPCA member groups who purchase at discount in bulk. 2) Invest in the project. As the effort grew, they supplemented their huge volunteer contingent with paid staff, beginning with a business manager, and they now also employ a customer service coordinator, a graphic artist and most recently, a webmaster. 3) Involve as many people as you can; not everyone can attend monthly meetings, but still want to help. They plan their group activities (voting on photographs, packing parties, calendar unveiling potluck, etc.) as fun events. 4) Be generous. The group discounts deeply so other groups can also do effective fund-raising. The funds raised are donated to several recipients, primary of which is \$70,000 to the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP). Approximately \$15,000 is spent on worthy projects recommended by their members, in PC countries or in the U.S, and \$10,000 has been donated to NPCA to support group building activities for member groups (meeting expenses, webinars, etc.). A newer product, the "We All" posters, utilize photos from prior calendars and depict commonalities among countries. They were originally intended for schools only, but are being bought by other institutions for broader applications. A third (and final) set of posters is forthcoming. These projects combine a source of fundraising with the production of educational tools, thus focusing on Peace Corp's Third Goal, informing the public about multiculturalism.

RPCVs of Colorado (Arianne Burger): This member group (<http://www.rpcvcolorado.org>) focuses on providing technical assistance to serving PCVs via a partnership with a Colorado-based NGO – Trees, Water & People (<http://www.treeswaterpeople.org>) – which serves countries through appropriate, sustainable technology. The group facilitated a linkage between the NGO and PC, and will provide financial assistance to a program in which TWP will train PCVs and their counterparts to build smoke-free stoves. The project is being piloted in El Salvador, with the hope that it can be replicated in other countries. Three regional workshops

will be conducted. Once the PCV projects get underway, the PCV can submit grant applications to the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) and other organizations, thus leveraging the initial training workshop investment.

Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (Sarah McMeans): Founded in 1983 but not as a typical “Friends of ...” group, the Foundation (<http://rpcvphilippines.org/>) has a narrow focus -- fundraising for college scholarships for promising Filipino students. Since 1983, they have funded 120 scholarships, with 50 students currently being supported. The scholarship application is online, and 8-10 students are selected each year to attend Filipino colleges. Each recipient is guaranteed support through the 4-year duration of his/her course of study. The scholarships include all tuition and also covers some living costs. Funds are raised through semi-annual newsletter mailings to the 800-name mailing list; the newsletter includes scholars’ essays. Approximately 8,000 PCVs served in the Philippines, so more outreach is needed to find the missing. The Foundation’s all-volunteer Board primarily operates from the U.S., with the volunteer assistance of an unpaid Filipino Vice President for Operations based in Manila and some part-time paid clerical assistance. Program graduates have formed an alumni association in which mentoring and community service are encouraged. Although proud of having sustained this effort for 25 years, the group is now considering new ways of fundraising.

Friends of Sierra Leone (Peggy Murrah). This best practice is related to the group’s (<http://www.fosalone.org/>) sustained efforts to return PC to Sierra Leone after a 16-year absence, due to the protracted Civil War in the country. They learned to be nice but persistent in lobbying for the reinstatement of a PC program in Sierra Leone. The first step is to determine the appropriateness of a return. If PC has conducted a re-entry assessment and can be obtained, that (internal) document is very helpful. Next is the support of the Ambassadors from the host national country to the U.S. and from the U.S. Ambassador. They identified NGOs in Sierra Leone who had left but since returned; those organizations’ re-entry assessments also are useful. Key people in the Congress were identified, and a letter writing campaign was conducted to reach key Representatives and Senators, capitalizing on any personal relationships of their own members with Congresspersons. Contacts were made with the relevant Congressional Committees in both Houses of Congress. They persistently communicated with PC/Washington, including letters and phone calls, and including to their PC Desk Officer who was helpful. Personal contacts with PC staff and with Congress should be sustained as long as necessary. After years of hard work, they were successful, and thirty-nine PCVs are now in training in Sierra Leone.

North Carolina Peace Corps Association (Myron Fountain). This group (<http://www.rtpnet.org/ncpca/>) focuses on the Third Goal and fundraising to achieve that mission. Each year, during Peace Corps Week, the group awards a Peace Prize to a nonprofit organization (typically) located in North Carolina whose annual operating budget does not exceed \$500,000. Consideration is given to organizations who pursue PC-like goals related to peace and cultural understanding. The group’s fundraising also supports Peace Corps Partnership Program projects, and the group hosts networking events among RPCVs and for meeting PCV candidates.

RPCV-New Jersey (Geraldine Gillio). In this group (<http://rpcv-nj.org>), a special fundraising

committee operates to provide financial support to the Peace Corps Partnership Program and to local causes. They initially solicited donations via a phone bank campaign staffed by volunteers but have since turned to soliciting donations via snail mail. (An insufficient number of volunteers and the loss of the phone bank were the reasons for this change.) The tactic used successfully is to indicate in the annual reach-out letter that one can avoid being solicited by telephone if a donation is received by a fixed date. The reach out letter and deadline are timed so that the group has a good estimate of the money it will have raised by January. Half of the money donated comes from persons without a PC connection. PC calendars are given as a bonus to donors over \$50, and to \$25 donors who win a lottery. In funding PCPP projects, they give preference to proposals from New Jersey PCVs, which average \$1,000-1,500 per PCPP grant made. Other grants have been made to non-PC organizations including \$500 to Oxfam/Haiti and smaller amounts to local organizations (e.g., refugee resettlement). They not only made a donation to Pedals for Progress, but also nominated P4P founder Dave Schweidenback for the Shriver Award, that he won in 1997.

Added at the meeting: Friends of Eastern Caribbean (Jon Weintraub). Asked to “think small,” relative to the foregoing projects, the specific circumstance of the Eastern Caribbean group (<http://friendsofec.org/>) was cited, e.g., PCVs have served on nine different islands, with little to connect them to each other. They are especially proud of their website which includes links to newspapers covering each of the islands and are accessed by clicking the country’s flag. They provide mini-grants to PCVs (maximum grant of \$300 per project which “can buy a lot”), with the hope that PCVs receiving grants will become active in the group upon return home. Members traveling in the region are asked to visit funded sites to monitor the use of the funds and report back to the member group.

Kate Schachter noted that these Best Practices were submitted in response to her request; she encourages groups to respond to similar requests for information and ideas in the future.

### **Other Business:**

Gloria Levin inquired about the status of the plan to initiate direct payment of membership dues to affiliate groups’ banks, an item that has long been promised. Anne Baker stated that NPCA would like to be removed from the middle, rebating member dues. However, certain technological changes and challenges still impede progress on this step. Although no date has been set for the changeover, Anne Baker noted technological improvements are underway, with a target date later in 2010. Member groups were encouraged to promptly rebate dues owed to NPCA. Some groups, especially those who have changed treasurers recently, have been very remiss in rebating collected NPCA dues to NPCA. Anne Baker suggested that NPCA’s monthly email reminders of automatic deposits made into member groups’ bank accounts be a reminder to check with the groups’ Treasurers to assure that any pending rebates are sent to NPCA at that time.

### **Announcements:**

MSNBC will be airing a documentary that depicts the return of PC to Sierra Leone. Peggy Murrah will alert the group to the specifics when known.

The schedule for the post-lunch session was announced to start at 1:30 pm, to include presentations and discussions of NPCA's New Look and 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary plans.

All proceeds from the sale of international calendars at today's meetings, a total of \$240, were donated to NPCA.

**Adjournment:** David Magnani moved and Geraldine Gillio seconded a motion, unanimously approved, to adjourn the meeting, at 12:35 pm.

Recorder: Gloria Levin, Group Leader

Tasks for Groups:

- Inform NPCA of 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary events for inclusion in master calendar
- Inform NPCA if member group elects to participate in new member options
- Submit signed data sharing agreement to NPCA, if member group chooses to participate
- Promptly pay membership rebates to NPCA; regularly check with group Treasurers to determine if any member dues for NPCA are pending