



Peace Corps Connect – Shawnee, PA
Affiliate Group Network Annual Meeting (AGNAM)

August 25, 2018

The Shawnee Institute
 Shawnee on Delaware, PA

1. Call to Order – *Maricarmen Smith-Martinez, Affiliate Group Network Coordinator (AGN-C)*

Welcome and introduction: The Meeting was called to order at 1:20 PM ET by Maricarmen Smith-Martinez. She expressed appreciation for the opportunity to have served as the AGN-C to represent the Affiliate Group Network on the NPCA Board of Directors for two terms. The AGN provides a driving force for enhancing the affiliate groups' work and for liaising with NPCA.

2. Affiliate Group Network Introductions – *Various*

Participants introduced themselves by name and Affiliate Group(s) representation. NPCA Staff and Board Directors were also introduced.

3. Member Group Voting Delegates – *Maricarmen Smith-Martinez, AGN-C*

The AGN-C noted that, at present, 180 groups constitute the AGN, and the number is continually growing. There are three types of groups: geographic groups; county of service groups; and affinity groups (i.e., cause-driven or workplace affinity groups). The overall purpose of the AGN is to connect and engage the affiliate group community. The AGN-C directed official voting delegates to sign in for their groups and encouraged others to sign in on a separate list of non-official attendees. To establish the eligible voters list, Anne Baker announced that 36 affiliate groups were officially represented with a voting delegate.

Establish Eligible Voters List: 36 eligible voters

1. Gloria Levin (Amigos de Bolivia y Peru)
2. Teni-ola Ogunjobi (Atlanta Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers)
3. Chad Ryerson (Federal Emergency Management Agency RPCV Affinity Group)
4. Chad Ryerson (Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, DC)
5. Tony Agnello (Friends of Afghanistan)
6. Tony Agnello (Peace Corps Alliance for Intercultural Understanding)
7. Jay Sztuk (Friends of Fiji)
8. Sarah Morrison (Friends of Liberia)
9. Keith Beck (Friends of Micronesia)
10. Tim Resch (Friends of Morocco)
11. Greg Jones (Friends of Nigeria)
12. Jac Conaway (Friends of the Eastern Caribbean)
13. Anne Kaiser (Friends of Togo)
14. Sally Waley (Heart of Texas Peace Corps Association)

15. Katy Hansen (Iowa Peace Corps Association)
16. Kirsty Morgan (Kansas City Area Peace Corps Association)
17. Kendra LeSar (Louisiana Peace Corps Association)
18. Nicola Dino (Museum of the Peace Corps Experience)
19. Ivan Browning (North Carolina Peace Corps Association)
20. Lila Holzman (Northern California Peace Corps Association)
21. Elaine Staab (Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers)
22. Valerie Kurka (Peace Corps Community for Refugees)
23. Carol Belanger (Peace Corps Friends of DR Congo)
24. Jeanette Gottlieb (Peace Corps Iran Association)
25. Jeanette Gottlieb (Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Northeastern New York)
26. Kate Schachter (Returned Peace Corps Volunteers for Environmental Action)
27. Kathy Williams Ging (Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Long Island)
28. Christie Musa (Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of New Jersey)
29. Robert Nolan (New York City Peace Corps Association)
30. Martin Havlovic (Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Wisconsin-Madison)
31. Alexandra Smith (Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Buffalo, NY)
32. Kristina Owens (Rochester Returned Peace Corps Volunteers)
33. Patrick Kelley (RPCV Alliance for Ukraine)
34. Evelyn Ganzglass (RPCV Oral History Archive Project)
35. Fran Bowman (Sacramento Valley Returned Peace Corps Volunteers)
36. Scott King (West Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Group)

Approval of 2017 minutes: The motion to approve the minutes of the 2017 AGNAM, which had been circulated electronically in advance, was made by Katy Hanson, seconded by Kristina Owen, approved by a unanimous vote, and carried.

4. NPCA Leadership Town Hall – Glenn Blumhorst, NPCA President

President Glenn Blumhorst began his presentation with warm appreciation to Maricarmen for her very able leadership as AGN-C for four years. He then revealed that Maricarmen would, pending the approval of the NPCA Board at its meeting on August 26, serve a one-year term as Chair of the NPCA Board. Blumhorst then acknowledged the 23 years of service to NPCA from Vice President Anne Baker, including her engagement as the primary point of contact between NPCA and affiliate groups. He next introduced Elizabeth (Ella) Dowell, who joined the NPCA staff two years ago to roll out the organization's technical support initiative, known as the Community Builder Platform.

Glenn then outlined the three NPCA pillars—(1) Building a bigger, better Peace Corps; (2) Supporting Affiliate Groups and RPCVs; and (3) Enhancing Community Impact—and expanded on developments and achievements in each area.

NPCA Pillars

- **Advocacy:** Bigger, better Peace Corps

Glenn acknowledged the fruitful outcome of the NPCA community's advocacy mobilization, in an environment of significant budget cuts, resulting in two years of level funding for the Peace Corps. A full budget of \$410 million is expected for FY2019. NPCA has also supported Health Justice for PCVs, a group that has been advocating for more Congressional action to address the needs of PCVs and RPCVs with health complications from their Peace Corps service. One provision for which they advocate is an increase in compensation (from GS-7 to GS-11) that RPCVs receive while recovering from service-related sickness or injury. While the provision was removed from Sam Farr and Nick Castle Peace Corps Reform Act, Glenn hopes remaining legislative proposals will be passed soon. He emphasized the critical role that affiliate groups can play in bringing about change through political advocacy and encouraged each group to include an advocacy coordinator as a member of the group's Board of Directors.

- **Community:** Supporting Affiliate Groups and RPCVs

Pointing to the rapid growth of affiliate groups recently, currently numbering 180, Glenn characterized that number as more indicative of quality than quantity. Not only have new groups formed, but existing groups have notably strengthened. "Affiliate groups are the heart and soul of our community," he stated with conviction.

- **Impact:** Community Impact

NPCA's Community Fund initiative was built upon an earlier, successful effort by three affiliate groups who partnered with NPCA to raise funds to address the Ebola crisis in Africa. Close to \$100,000 was raised, and the model developed for the Ebola initiative has formed the basis for mobilizing resources from the NPCA community for addressing other RPCV-initiated projects, via the NPCA Community Fund.

Tim Resch pointed to unaffiliated groups, such as Peace Corps Writers, who are independent of NPCA though they share goals and values. He asked how NPCA might better link with such groups to be more directly in NPCA's orbit. Glenn indicated that NPCA reached out to Peace Corps Writers to encourage the affiliation. Peace Corps Worldwide, which includes Peace Corps Writers, has since become an NPCA affiliate group and is referenced on NPCA's website. Glenn asked the community to inform NPCA of other such groups that could be invited into the AGN.

Glenn noted that NPCA had dropped affiliate group dues to make it a more open and attractive organization. An annual report is required from all affiliate groups. He singled out NorCal PCA's annual report as an excellent example for other groups to emulate.

Helene Dudley described Partnering for Peace, a new affiliate group, which builds on the expansive network of Rotary Clubs. She explained that Rotary Clubs have funds available for international projects. At a recent Rotary conference, almost 1,000 RPCVs approached the Partnering for Peace booth. Helene encouraged existing groups to partner with their local Rotary Club, as a means of raising funds for supporting RPCV projects. To increase Peace Corps visibility, she also suggested that groups consider nominating high achieving RPCVs for lifetime merit alumni awards at their colleges and universities. She noted that Glenn was named recently by his alma mater, the University of Missouri, for an alumni award. Helene and Pat Wand are both available to assist in getting meritorious RPCV alumni recognized for these awards.

NPCA now has two partners, microloans and Water Charity, but is desirous of adding more to the organization’s toolbox.

5. Community Builder Platform – Elizabeth (Ella) Dowell, NPCA Community Technology Systems Coordinator

Ella Dowell gave a presentation on NPCA’s Community Building Platform (powered by SilkStart), an all-inclusive, online group management system customized specifically for NPCA’s affiliate groups, and the other benefits of NPCA’s Affiliate Pro Plan. Afterwards, several group leaders gave their testimonials and she answered questions.

6. World Café Sessions: Cause Initiatives and Opportunities to Bolster Groups – Various

To provide an opportunity for group leaders to learn directly from NPCA and Peace Corps about recent initiatives, projects, and campaigns, the group divided into smaller segments that focused on announcements about specific topics:

- Cause Initiatives
 - World Health Run
 - Advocacy
 - Oral History Project
- Opportunities to Bolster Your Group
 - Advocacy: Media
 - Community: Peace Corps Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Service
 - Impact: Community Fund

Following the roundtables, facilitators from each group shared a discussion summary, including lessons learned from affiliate group experiences or interesting ideas from the discussion. The topics discussed, as well as the summary presentation, are presented below.

7. Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing – Maricarmen Smith-Martinez, AGN-C

To provide an opportunity for Affiliate Group leaders to collaborate with other groups and share challenges, best practices, and lessons learned, the AGN-C facilitated an open forum discussion.

AGN Benefits	AGB Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legal Advisor ● Insurance ● Board Room for Problem Solving ● Financial Advisors (Pro-bono) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AGNAM ● Zoom ● SilkStart ● Data sharing ● Webinars ● Ruppe Award ● Shared Calendar (on website)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Community Fund Campaign ● Branded Merchandise ● Email by geography or COS ● In Memoriam listing
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Expectations of Affiliate Groups for NPCA

- **Communicate** often and effectively
 - **Share** and **learn** best practices
 - Communicate cultivated knowledge
 - Pass along NPCA info
 - Announce events
 - **Convey** needs
 - Communicate projects, initiatives, reports, ideas, and calls to action
 - Assign linkages
- Practice Peace Corps Ideals
 - **Promote** the 3rd goal
 - Through events and action
 - Help advocate with members of Congress
 - Written charter
 - **Identify** new potential members
 - Funds management and accountability
 - Collect member data
 - **Support** advocacy efforts
 - Be organized
 - **Understand** their purpose
- Be, and build the **community**
 - Be actively **engaged** with members, and the community as a whole
 - Reach out to RPCVs to create community
 - Especially newly returned volunteers
 - E.g., Connect all New York State groups, or all majority Muslim nation groups
 - Create inclusive environments for members
 - Identify potential new members
 - Connect volunteers
 - “Power in numbers”
 - Support prospective, returned, and current volunteers
 - **Connect** with like groups
 - Host Regular Meetings
 - Participate in NPCA activities
 - Advocate for projects like the Day of Action

Expectations of NPCA for Affiliate Groups

- **Support, guide, & strengthen** groups
 - **Advocate & connect** groups
 - Connect RPCV's & PCA's to affiliate groups
 - Connect country-specific groups to COS'ing PCVs and country directors
 - **Provide** tools & resources for affiliate groups
 - **Provide** opportunities to share, advocate, & learn
 - Guide on how to **lobby** for the Peace Corps
 - **Promote** values representative of the NPCA and affiliate groups in a public forum
 - Support initiatives
 - Structure opportunities for marches and advocacy
 - Promote Rotary-Peace Corps partnership
 - **Empower** groups to formalize structural processes
 - Assist leader development
 - Address common advocacy issues
 - Support individual volunteers
 - Reaffiliate every 2 years
- **Serve** as a group council & build a **network**
 - **Foster** membership growth
 - Help find missing members
 - **Connect & foster communication** between groups, their members, & the NPCA
 - Focus on struggling groups
 - Have a strong **social media** presence
 - **Report** good work comprehensively (both locally and internationally)
 - Actively promote partnerships
 - Create a larger nationwide **presence**
 - Share ideas and information
 - Promote skills for networking at events (conferences, marches, etc.)
 - Update groups on central issues
 - Communicate with geographic groups when activities or events are taking place in that area
 - Speaker's bureau online for schools, university, etc. (vet, provide info, etc.)
- **Be a resource**
 - Assist with **legal** and **financial** advice
 - Identify grant opportunities
 - Help with 501k's
 - Assist in writing proposals
 - Be a **source** of knowledge on all things **technical**
 - Support affiliate groups with SilkStart (pivotal link between groups and NPCA)
 - Offer training on Zoom
 - Serve as an example of responsibility with resources

- Help articulate global issues
- Process dues in a timely manner
- Collect new member data
- Help find lost members by subscribing to Lexus Nexus

9. Capacity-Building Series Planning – Maricarmen Smith-Martinez, AGN-C

- RPCV-Madison, Wisconsin: Marty Havlovic
 - The group provides support to the NPCA Affiliate Group Network through a grant generated by proceeds from the long-standing International Calendar project. The objective of the grant is to support and enhance opportunities for capacity-building of affiliate groups.

10. Conclusion – Maricarmen Smith-Martinez, AGN-C

The AGN-C thanked all AGNAM participants for their engagement and acknowledged the NPCA Vice President Anne Baker for her support of the AGN.

10. Adjournment – Maricarmen Smith-Martinez, AGN-C

The meeting was adjourned by Maricarmen Smith-Martinez at 5:00 PM ET.

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to Gloria Levin for capturing meeting minutes. Thanks also to Peace Corps Connect 2018 conference hosts—The Shawnee Inn—as well as all presenters, facilitators, note takers, volunteers, and NPCA Staff and Board.

World Café Discussions – Cause Initiatives and Opportunities to Bolster Groups	
<p><i>Cause Initiative:</i> World Health Run</p> <p><i>Facilitators:</i> Mary Owen <i>NPCA Board Director—Upper Midwest; Chicago Area Peace Corps Association</i> Benjamin Todd <i>World Health Run</i></p>	<p>Topics Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The second annual World Health Run (WHR) will be held April 6, 2019, the day before World Health Day. The 5K run/walk event gives affiliate groups an opportunity to raise money for health-related projects (locally or abroad) and raise awareness about health equity issues globally. ● WHR is seeking affiliate groups willing to host local races in their cities. Last year, runs were held in Chicago, Senegal and elsewhere. If groups can sign up 25 runners by December and 100 runners by early 2019, WHR will handle all permit costs and logistical tasks. Groups of runners who do not meet the minimum threshold can organize their own local runs and individuals can hold their own "virtual run." ● All runners/walkers can sign up at WorldHealthRun.org to receive a T-shirt and running bib. NPCA and Rotary are both WHR partners and will receive a portion of proceeds. <p>Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Questions? Email Mary Owen: mary@worldhealthrun.org ● Follow up on Facebook: Facebook.com/WorldHealthRun
<p><i>Cause Initiative:</i> Advocacy</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Jonathan Pearson <i>NPCA Advocacy Director</i></p>	<p>Topics Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Annual Group Sign-on Letter to the President (POTUS letter): Participants acknowledged familiarity with the annual NPCA affiliate group sign-on letter to the president regarding Peace Corps funding. Jonathan shared a copy of this year's letter, which asks the president for a slight increase in Peace Corps funding and urges more support for RPCVs who come home with service-related illness/injuries, and reminded groups of the deadline. ● Advocacy Coordinators: Affiliate groups confirmed whether or not their group had an advocacy coordinator. Shared the description of responsibilities for this position and noted that most current groups are geographic groups, but we want to work to expand country group advocacy coordinators. Urged leaders to help us find and build our advocacy coordinator network. ● Share Your Stories: Noted the importance of our RPCV stories, in regards to advocacy, and noted that we like to include updated information about group activities and RPCV profiles as part of our

	<p>state resources for advocacy. Asked attendees to share updated activities and profiles.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 2019 National Day of Action: Gave an overview of our National Day of Action, the primary annual NPCA advocacy event on Capitol Hill, which is planned for February 28th, 2019. Reminded participants that in addition to Capitol Hill activity we want all to organize events around the country on/near that date.
<p><i>Cause Initiative:</i> Oral History</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Evelyn Ganzglass <i>Oral History Project</i></p>	<p>Topics Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mission of the RPCV Oral History Archive Project (OHAP) is to interview returned Peace Corps Volunteers and staff about their intercultural service experiences for inclusion in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum (part of National Archives) ● What oral history interviews cover: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual's background and motivation to join the Peace Corps; the selection, training and overseas volunteer experience; interpersonal experiences; and reflections of service impact on Peace Corps goals. ● How the interviewing process works: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RPCV's interview each other following project guidelines. ● Ways in which leaders of affiliates can support OHAP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Urge members to be interviewed through newsletters, websites, listservs: link to OHAP website ○ Urge members to become interviewers; designate affiliate interviewers ○ Provide opportunities for people to be interviewed at meetings/reunions/story slams ○ Buy a recorder that can be used by interviewers to record interviews ○ Contribute to the Phyllis Noble Memorial Oral History Fund to digitize analog recordings to make them more easily accessible to the public
<p><i>Advocacy:</i> Media</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Mike Kiernan <i>NPCA Media Consultant</i></p>	<p>Topics Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reiterated Patrick Fine’s message in the opening plenary—the ideals and vision of the Peace Corps face greater threats today than at any other time since the Peace Corps was established. ● Explored with members of each group possible interest in generating media in their communities about issues of concern to many RPCVs, such as the current plight of immigrants and refugees

	<p>in their communities or the recent government cutbacks in programs to protect the environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interest in pursuing this topic among roughly half of the people in each group, with a few RPCVs saying that they felt that their RPCV group was not established to address cause-related issues and that such a role was more appropriate for other groups. This topic really needed more time for each group to explore and debate. But a number of RPCVs seemed receptive to the idea that more of NPCA's 180 affiliates should consider playing a larger role in seeking to address issues that threaten to undermine the basic ideals of the Peace Corps.
<p><i>Community:</i> Peace Corps Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services</p> <p><i>Facilitator:</i> Keith Honda <i>Director of PC 3G/RVS</i></p>	<p>Topics Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relationship between NPCA and PCVs in field <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPCA members are involved in supporting PCVs in the field via the Peace Corps Partnership Program and via partnership agreements with Rotary Club International ● Is NPCA introduced to PCVs who are closing their service? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NPCA is the subject of an email sent to PCVs closing their service. The email mentions both regional RPCV and country of service RPCV groups. ○ NPCA is featured as a resource in the Peace Corps Close of Service Training Manual Session 8. Session 8 discusses readjustment to life back in the U.S.A. NPCA appears eight times. ● Mentor programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ RPCV/W model ● Resources and training for affiliate group mentor programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ PC Archives – info on website; surveys; audit reports, OMB etc. <p>Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Questions? Email Keith Honda: khonda@peacecorps.gov.
<p><i>Impact:</i> NPCA Community Fund</p> <p><i>Facilitators:</i> Kemi Tignor <i>NPCA Director of Development</i></p> <p>Teena Curry</p>	<p>Topics Discussed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NPCA established the Community Fund in 2015 to be NPCA's fundraising and grantmaking vehicle that supports the projects, programs and initiatives of both Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs) and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs). ● The Community Fund increasingly supplements the Peace Corps' support for PCVs; primarily through the Peace Corps Partnership program; enabling more PCVs to access funds for small-scale projects in their communities.

<i>NPCA Consultant</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Community Fund also creates opportunities for RPCVs to re-engage for shorter periods by undertaking special development projects.● Making additional resources available to PCVs and RPCVs exponentially increases the impact of our community by enabling more individuals to develop and implement beneficial projects. <p>Contact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Questions about the Community Fund can be directed to NPCA staff at communityfund@peacecorpsconnect.org.
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