

## COMMITTEE FOR A MUSEUM OF THE PEACE CORPS EXPERIENCE

# Strategic Plan

March 20, 2018

**"For every young American who participates in the Peace Corps—who works in a foreign land—will know that he or she is sharing in the great common task of bringing to man that decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace." President John F. Kennedy, March 1, 1961. Executive Order to create the Peace Corps**

## Introduction

Since President John F. Kennedy introduced the Peace Corps almost sixty years ago more than 220,000 American women and men of all ages have served in a variety of assignments in 140 countries. While working in cross-cultural environments, volunteers acquire records of their experiences and come home with numerous stories and artifacts from their service abroad. The purpose of the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience is to extend the reach of Peace Corps beyond those international host communities and the volunteers themselves by exhibiting their artifacts and telling their stories to far-reaching audiences. Ultimately the goal is to inspire in others deeper cultural understanding.

## Section 1 Executive Summary

The Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience was founded by returned Peace Corps volunteers in 1999 in Portland, Oregon. As a 501(c)3 private, non-profit organization with an established record of artifact acquisition, professional exhibits and modest fundraising, the Committee expanded its focus to the national level in 2016 in conjunction with Peace Corps' 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. That effort attracted twelve dedicated Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) from across the country who comprise a core planning group, volunteering their time and expertise and contributing financially to the Museum.

The Museum has attracted the support of the National Peace Corps Association, the Oregon Historical Society and 47 individual donors in 2017.

An affiliate group of the National Peace Corps Association, the Committee embraces all three Peace Corps goals:

1. To help the people of interested countries meet their need for trained men and women.
2. To help promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the peoples served.
3. To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

As an institutional member of the American Alliance of Museums, the Museum preserves and exhibits artifacts, records and shares Peace Corps stories and educates viewers, all in compliance with the highest standards of museum management.

This plan outlines the steps by which the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience plans to broaden the Museum audience, increase use of social media, initially raise \$250,000 and design virtual exhibits as the Committee continues to acquire artifacts and stories and seeks a site for the physical museum.

## **Section 2            Vision and Mission**

### **Vision**

The Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience envisions connecting people worldwide and inspiring service and peace, showing that our common humanity is more fundamental than the cultures and ideas that separate us.

### **Mission**

The Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience collects and preserves artifacts and stories from Peace Corps volunteers who served in communities across the globe. The Museum promotes cultural understanding through education and encourages research on the impact of Peace Corps. The Museum's virtual and physical exhibits inspire visitors to serve - wherever they live, however they can.

## **Section 3            Developing the Museum Plan**

In developing its strategic plan, the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience met in a planning retreat in August 2017 prior to Peace Corps Connect in Denver. Committee members used appreciative inquiry analysis to determine the project's strengths, opportunities, aspirations and results (SOAR).

### Greatest Strengths

- Strong and supportive interest by National Peace Corps Association
- Strong stakeholder emotional attachment to the Peace Corps legacy
- Broad base of committed and influential stakeholders
- Variety of backgrounds and abilities of supporters
- Shared and common experience base of supporters
- Committee membership includes museum, library, fundraising and advancement professionals
- 220,000 RPCVs

### Best Opportunities

- Contribute to the public celebration of Peace Corps' 60<sup>th</sup> year
- Reinforce and promote the Peace Corps and its mission
- Provide tools for RPCVs to fulfill the Third Goal of Peace Corps
- Formalize and enhance partnerships with existing agencies; e.g. American University, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Smithsonian Institution, etc.
- Provide educational services and content to foster global understanding

### Viable Aspirations

- Establish a physical site in or near Washington, D.C.
- Create and maintain a virtual collection accessible via the Internet
- Manage a comprehensive website to inform and engage supporters
- Develop and foster funding opportunities associated with physical and virtual galleries
- Engage many RPCVs, solicit community support and advocacy
- Design and conduct public programming aligned with the museum's collections and mission, independently and with partners

### Measurable Results

- Record of generated revenue in excess of annual expenditures
- Create and manage an endowment
- Demonstrate a diverse donor base, increasing in number every year
- Engage collaborators and form productive partnerships
- Collect data about public access to the website and virtual collections

## **Section 4            Strategic Initiatives**

The Museum's progress depends on four (4) strategic initiatives with associated goals, each addressed by a subcommittee. (See Operating Plan for details)

1. **Operations** - Plan and coordinate the overall organizational and operating structure of the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience (CMPCE) and facilitate all components of its operation to support the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience.
  - a. Oversee the final compilation of the Strategic Plan
  - b. Determine Subcommittee Operating Structure for Museum project
  - c. Develop a Business Plan and create a start-up and first year operating Budget
  - d. Define stakeholders with input from all subcommittees
  - e. Recruit and select new volunteers for subcommittee assignments
  - f. Coordinate the formation of Board of Directors
  - g. Revise the Bylaws
  
2. **Collections** - Create a collection management plan for artifacts and archives to be included in both physical and digital form; including definitions of items to be collected, and developing policies and procedures for accessioning and cataloging
  - a. Conduct environmental scan
  - b. Create and document a process for donations of artifacts
  - c. Create the MPCE's scope of collection
  - d. Study and pre-accession existing donations (In Portland)
  
3. **Fundraising and Marketing** – Design a program that generates \$250,000 in funding over the next twelve months through the use of targeted fundraising and grant-writing techniques, including systematic electronic marketing efforts and website redesign. Plan and implement promotion to the general public, Peace Corps and donor communities.
  - a. Generate initial \$100,000 from fundraising efforts
  - b. Generate \$150,000 in grant funds
  - c. Develop advisory committee of 6-10 people – December 2018
  - d. Develop and implement robust marketing plan
  
4. **Web and Virtual Museum** - Design, manage and maintain the CMPCE website and plan and develop a digital component for the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience [MPCE].
  - a. Upgrade donation web pages
  - b. Migrate CMPCE Website to SilkStart, refresh, redesign
  - c. Identify and implement third party system for collection database and virtual exhibits and integrate into Silkstart

## **Section 5            Financial Plan**

The Museum's initial and ongoing Financial Plan charts a course from 2017 to 2019 and onward. See separate document. [Business Plan being compiled]

## **Section 6            Marketing Plan**

Americans serving abroad live in diverse cultures and their experiences can be leveraged to broaden cultural and geographic understanding. While the Peace Corps receives widespread support and recognition as a concept and organizational operation, there is not currently a unified single source for collecting artifacts and documenting the experiences of returned and active volunteers. The Museum of the Peace Corps Experience will fill that gap.

The Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience Marketing Plan outlines details for promoting public awareness and support, including timelines benchmarking progress associated with the Business Plan.

### **Partnerships and Collaborators**

The Museum recognizes numerous collections comprising two-dimensional assets of Peace Corps content, including:

- John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, Massachusetts
- Peace Corps Community Archives at American University, Washington DC
- Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Collection

These collections along with other national, regional and local libraries and museums with relevant materials will be invited to partner with the MPCE, incorporate digital materials into the Museum's databank and to link to the Museum's website.

### **Who will participate?**

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) will be invited to deposit in the Museum physical items (for example. textiles, art, household items, memorabilia, etc.) as well as photographs, videos, and recorded stories that directly relate to their experience during active service. In addition, former Peace Corps staff and family of RPCVs who have died in service will be invited to share artifacts, documents and stories.

Specific partnerships and collaborations with individuals and organizations that can be pursued:

- Universities offering Masters International degrees and Paul Coverdell Peace Corps Fellows programs
- 220,000 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and staff
- 4,000 State and local historical societies
- 3,000 American museums
- 1,400 College/University libraries, archives and museums

1,200 Public library special collections and archives  
 120 University presses  
 20 Independent research libraries

## **Communications activities – 2018**

**Website** Update and refresh website (March 2018)

**Facebook** Develop a Facebook presence (March 2018)

**Twitter** Establish regular messages (March 2018)

**Press Releases** to journals, newspapers, media outlets and professional organizations (March 2018)

**Represent CMPCE** at professional organization meetings (June 2018)

- American Library Association
- American Historical Association
- National Peace Corps Association
- Alliance of American Museums
- State archives and historical associations
- Society of American Archivists with 5,000 individual and institutional members
- Art Libraries Society

### **E-mails to**

- NPCA members and affiliate groups quarterly (beginning March 2018)
- One professional organization monthly (beginning June 2018)

**Refine logo** (March 2018)

See Operating Plan for more details.

## **Section 7 Conclusion**

The Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience is dramatically expanding its activities in 2018. Momentum built during the August 2017 planning retreat in Denver when twelve RPCVs committed to carrying out all aspects of building a virtual and physical museum. They formulated four strategic initiatives which became the road map for activities in 2018. Goals for the year cover every aspect of a museum start-up and range from designing a new logo and website

to finding a secure and stable environment for existing artifacts to launching pilot virtual exhibits to establishing a Board of Directors to securing paid staff.

Paramount was the need to raise funds. In the final five months of 2017 when fundraising efforts got underway, revenue from donations increased four-fold. Members succeeded in increasing the number of donors ten-fold; from four donors in January 2017 to 47 by December 31, including seven Charter Members (\$1,000) and 27 First Friends (\$100).

The Committee is committed to expanding the visibility of Peace Corps stories and artifacts first by collecting and preserving them and second by creating virtual and physical exhibits through which viewers can themselves encounter and understand [or participate in] a bit of the Peace Corps experience. Preservation and education go hand-in-hand as the Museum expands its depth of collections and its outreach to audiences.

The focus in early 2018 is to secure \$250,000 from foundations, corporations and individual donors for start-up costs to:

- Contract a professional consultant to plan and help implement the management structure and fundraising strategy
- Select and license a digital content management system
- Select personnel to
  - solicit and acquire artifacts, processing them in accordance with AAM standards
  - create digital copies of artifacts from the collections and design virtual experiences associated with them
  - redesign, expand and maintain the website

**“We hope to build a world in which men and women may share more of the world’s bounties and less of its suffering, and in which nations will offer one another support and respect.” President Lyndon B. Johnson, 1965. Letter to Peace Corps Volunteers.**

The Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience is a 501(c)(3) private nonprofit corporation not affiliated with the U.S. Peace Corps and not acting on behalf of the U. S. Peace Corps.