



Common Ground

Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

Fall 2017

Peace Corps Celebrated 57 Years of Making a Difference

WASHINGTON – In celebration of the Peace Corps’ 57th anniversary on March 1, the agency kicks off Peace Corps Week to commemorate the contributions of volunteers and their communities worldwide. Throughout the week, the Peace Corps community will participate in events that underscore this year’s theme, “Highlighting Home.”



“Peace Corps volunteers develop enduring connections with the people and places where they serve,” said Acting Peace Corps Director Sheila Crowley. “Communities around the globe welcome volunteers into their hearts and homes. This year, Peace Corps Week is about sharing these life-changing experiences and honoring the communities volunteers call home

during their service.”

The Peace Corps will also participate in a special event on February 28 hosted by the African Union honoring America’s connection to global diaspora communities. The event will feature Peace Corps, the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development and International diaspora Engagement Alliance (IdeA).



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Remembering Pat Hughes

Thailand 1971-1974

Patricia Rose (Pat) Hughes - born March 26, 1947 in Salina, Kansas, died December 21, 2017 in Boise after battling esophageal cancer for more than a year.

Pat served in the Peace Corps for 3 years - from 1971 to 1974 in Kanchanaburi, Thailand at Thamaka School where she taught English. She stayed for the extra year so she could finish with her students. She lived with a family for her first year there, but then shared a house on the school grounds with another teacher. Pat went back to visit in the mid 80s and then again in 2007 and 2012, each time welcomed with open arms by her former students and teachers. Her Peace Corps service undoubtedly defined the rest of her life.



Pat was active in the Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, serving on the board, helping to build the “Peace Corps Taxi” that is used in parades, serving on the board of IRPCV and also serving on the board for Friends of Thailand. Her other passion was Common Ground Community Chorus of which she was a member from its beginning in 2000, often serving on the board. The choir’s focus is diversity and human rights.

When Pat passed, the President of Friends of Thailand (FoT) posted: Pat left us in the early hours of December 21, 2017. She was a good friend to so many of us; an active member of her RPCV group in Idaho, a singer and organizer for Common Ground Community Chorus in Boise, and a long-term Friend of Thailand, who served on the original FoT Advisory Board, and later on the FoT Board of Directors. Some of you even heard from her when your FoT membership had lapsed. Oh, Pat. You were the epitome of the saying, “Once a volunteer, always a volunteer.”

Fond memories also came from Pat’s former Thai students: The good relationship between her as my teacher and me as one of her Thai students will never be ended. Our hearts know. RIP. my dearest teacher.”



And this from one of the choir members: She was one of the first people who welcomed me into Common Ground. Rainbows need both rain and light to form. Pat is definitely the light, and our sorrow, the rain. There's a beautiful rainbow shining tonight.

Pat will be sincerely missed but her legacy lives on through her good work, fond memories and her dedicated wife, Trish McKernan.

2018 Bon Voyage

WHEN: May 11th @ 5:00 pm
WHERE: Cassia Park
 4600 W. Camas St.
 Boise, ID 83705

Join us in welcoming newly returned Peace Corps volunteers back to America and help provide a happy send-off to those going away soon! The potluck BBQ will take place at Cassia park on Friday, May 11th. Come chat about the joys and challenges of spreading peace and friendship. Bring a drink and dish to share and a story about how you felt on the airplane en route to your host country or coming back to America. We hope to see you there!

Contact Chloe Ross with questions or to RSVP at rosschloe@hotmail.com

Annual Board Meeting

WHEN: April 8th @ 4:00 pm
WHERE: Yen Ching
 305 N. 9th St.
 Boise, ID 83702

At our annual board meeting we will hold elections for board positions, outline the calendar of events for the rest of the year. We will also review grant proposals and vote on the 2018 grant recipients. We have interest from a few members to join the board but if you are still contemplating participating, see below for details!

Contact Chloe Ross with questions at rosschloe@hotmail.com

Now Seeking Candidates: IRPCV Board

Glen Blumhorst, NPCA president, in his latest letter to NPCA stated the following:

“Affiliate groups are the drivers of change in the Peace Corps community. Acting on our own, we can certainly make a difference in the world. But when we join together, our potential for change-making expands exponentially. So engage with an affiliate group today. If you are already a member of a group, we ask that you find ways to help that group live up to its full potential.”

Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are such an affiliate group and we are asking you not only to join, but to volunteer to serve on the IRPCV Board. The service terms are 2 years. Maybe you have ideas about the direction of IRPCV and its activities? Choose a position where your talents can shine. Present board members will mentor you. Open positions are **President, President-elect, Treasurer/Membership, Education, Secretary, Service Chair** and **Newsletter Editor**. Below are our general responsibilities. If you would like a description of a specific position, contact Chloe Ross at rosschloe@hotmail.com:

- Attend all board and general membership meetings and present report
- Check board-related emails on a regular basis; reply in a timely manner
- Help cover shifts at our Peace Corps promotion table during public events
- Promote IRPCV to RPCVs
- Promote IRPCV to family, friends and the public
- Promote IRPCV annual membership to RPCVs

If you are a former board member, a newly returned RPCV or a long standing-member, please make a commitment to serve today. Contact: Chloe Ross by text/email: rosschloe@hotmail.com or phone: 208-789-7547

Update on Bou, Aviva's Host Brother

It was such an honor to have my brother, Bou, chosen by IRPCV for a grant this past spring. That grant allowed him to attend job training in Genova, Italy for translators and facilitators of new refugees. Bou had the opportunity to be the only refugee in that position! All of his colleagues were Italians. It was such an amazing experience. He truly loved the job and felt like he was really helping people struggling in a new country, just like him.



While he worked this job for several months and seemed to excel at it, it all fell apart when he was attacked by a fellow refugee in his camp, jealous of all of the things Bou had. Bou moved out of the refugee camp and quit his job and went to live with friends in a town nearby. He found a contract job soon after, but about 3 months ago they declined to sign him on again. Unable to find a job in Sanova, he moved to Milan on January 31. Here he is hoping to find greater opportunities since it's a larger city with more tourists. Have I mentioned that Bou speaks seven languages including Italian, French and English? After living on the street for 2 nights, he found his way into a new refugee camp and he is starting anew. The struggle continues, but he is stronger for all of the opportunities he's been afforded. He is eternally grateful to the IRPCV for the support and vote of confidence they have given him by sending him to train for a job he hopes to hold again in the future.

On an encouraging note, he has an assigned lawyer that has helped him present his case for asylum at an immigration court in Genova. He has already had his first round of interviews, conducted all in Italian, and is looking forward to being called in again. This may come as soon as April.



I want to add in my personal thanks to everyone in IRPCV for listening to Bou's story and for supporting him. This man is incredibly important to my husband and I, and while supporting him financially isn't always easy, we wouldn't have it any other way. Thank you for helping us support him and give him as many opportunities as we can from afar.

***- Aviva Braun, IRPCV Service Chair
Senegal, 11-13***

★ IRPCV Seeking Grantees for 2018 ★

Do you belong to a group or know of one in need of money to further promote the goals of Peace Corps and international volunteerism? The IRPCV board is currently accepting applications from local groups in need of a small (\$300) grant to start or finish a meaningful project.

Grant criteria:

- An Idaho group or project working with youth, refugees or immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, women in need, etc.
- A service project of a currently serving Peace Corps Volunteer from Idaho

Application Process:

Send a letter on official letterhead including **1)** Details of the organization of group seeking the grant **2)** A statement of purpose for which the grant money will be used **3)** A signature by an official representative of the group and/or organization. Send the letter to Connie Collins at 512 E. Eagleson Rd., Boise, ID 83705 or email the letter to Connie1940@gmail.com. The deadline for submission is **April 4, 2018**.

IRPCV Member News

We are sad to report that Meg and Dale Stephenson are leaving Boise for Highland Heights, Kentucky where Dale will serve as the Dean of the College of Health Professions at Northern Kentucky University.

Meg and Dale Stephenson have never stopped bringing the world home since their service in Mali, 1986-1988. Whether big or small IRPCV projects Meg and Dale contributed ideas, time and muscle to preparation and presentation. They played major roles in the 2011, Peace Corps 50th Celebration and the grand opening of the Boise International Market in 2014. Meg and Dale often provided us a place for our annual meetings and Christmas parties.

Meg has served (deleted a couple of words) IRPCV as Newsletter Editor and as Secretary for the board. She digitalized and organized all our records and made sure the group stayed current with our non-profit status.

We are sad to see Meg and Dale leave us, but they leave behind a lasting impact and friendships in the Idaho.



Volunteer Drivers Needed!



Are you looking for a way to help Boise's Refugee Community? One major challenge facing this community is a lack of adequate transportation. Boise is trying to address this issue by sponsoring and running a volunteer driver service called GO RIDE. For more information, call 208-345-RIDE. You can also browse the GO RIDE Facebook page or visit www.gorideidaho.org. For additional questions, feel free to reach out to Lila Cabrera (Phone: 208-850-6040).

IRPCV Memberships

Peace Corps service continues long after Volunteers leave their posts. President Kennedy stated Peace Corps third goal is to "strengthen Americans' understanding about the world and its peoples." This is a life-long commitment you made when you joined the Peace Corps and the easiest way for you to carry on the mission is to join Idaho RPCVs. Together we can strengthen the understanding of other cultures in the State of Idaho. Annual dues are a pittance - just \$15 per year (less than a single dinner at a restaurant), so there is no acceptable excuse for not joining us! If you live in Idaho and you served in the Peace Corps join IRPCV!

Thanks to all who have renewed your IRPCV membership. Renew or join online at www.idahopeacecorps.com. You can also mail your annual payment to Connie Collins (512 Eagleson Rd., Boise, ID, 83705). First time IRPCV members can join for 1 year free!



Idaho Food Bank 2018 Volunteer Dates

Welcome Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers to The Idaho Foodbank's Volunteer Site!

Dates to for volunteering for the Foodbank this year are outlined below. Each session starts at 6:30pm and you can follow the log-in instructions below to sign up.

Wednesday, May 16

Tuesday, June 12

Wednesday, July 18

Thursday, August 16

Wednesday, October 17

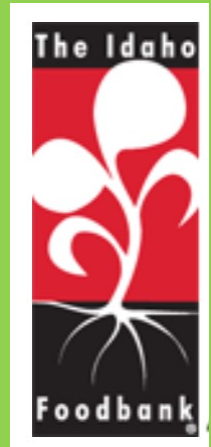
Thursday, November 15

If you have no registered under the online registration system:

- 1) Go to <http://boisepeacecorps.idahofoodbank.volunteerhub.com/>
- 2) Click "sign up" next to your desired shift
- 3) Follow instruction prompts (existing users—sign in; new users—create an account)
- 4) All volunteers must register and sign up no less than 24 hours before the shift

Please note: Adults will be able to electronically sign the release online. Minors will be prompted to print it and will need to have their legal guardian sign it and bring it in when they volunteer.

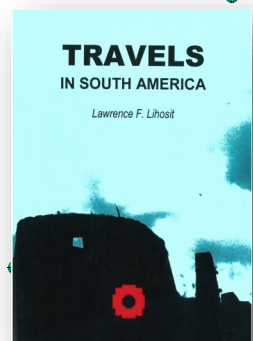
Call Jennifer Rogers if you have questions at 208-484-7511.



Travel Invitation from Lawrence F. Lihosit (Honduras, 1975-1977)

You are cordially invited to travel vicariously with me. Join me and climb into a dark spider infested Moche burial chamber, listen as Indians advise how to apply an Andean hot springs mudpack, run along railroad ties alongside locals carrying heavy packs under the early morning shadow cast by Machu Picchu, avoid vipers and crocodiles while riding the range in flooded Bolivian savannah, hide from the Chilean army, sip mate in a book-filled Buenos Aires apartment with Argentine lawyers, eat homemade pizza with a Uruguayan actress, take a wild taxi ride with traveling musicians-

Travels in South America (Available on Amazon.com books).



Upcoming Social Events

Check Facebook or the most recent email update for details and to RSVP

March

Tuesday, March 13 – ANA February Airport Arrivals, Boise Airport, 10:45 PM

Saturday, March 17 – March for Meals with an ANA family, March 15 orientation required

Saturday, March 24 – Mile Marker 14 Fire Restoration Planting, 9 AM

April

Saturday, April 14th - Snake River Clean-Up at Swan Falls, Time TBD

Saturday, April 21st - Ethnic Food Night @ Sakana Sushi Bar and Grill, 5pm

May

Saturday, May 19th - Bar Night @ 10 Barrel Brewing, 6PM



A New and Exciting Opportunity with the Agency for New Americans!

We are all desperately interested in helping our local refugee population set up new lives and find a place in their new home in Idaho. After spending some time brainstorming with the Volunteer Coordinator, Julie Bayard, at the ANA, a new opportunity has been created and we would love to hear back from you! The program is new and has yet to be named, so for now, let's call it the ANA Community Engagement Program. The premise of the program is to help refugees who have recently arrived in the Boise-area become comfortable in the places they know AND help them break through boundaries into the community. Let's help them become more comfortable within their new home and explore the area, and become familiar participating in new activities! We will do this in partnership with the ANA and the families they serve. The ANA gets calls all the time from different organizations and groups offering tickets to a play or opera, time at the local skating rink, help navigating local hiking trails, etc. What the ANA needs from us are people willing to spend time around town with these interested refugees and rides to and from the activity. We think we can provide this support!

If you are interested in participating in this partnership, please email Aviva at ircvservice@gmail.com or call/text her at 301-802-0956. When you do so, please state your name, your interest, and your email address. At some point, all those interested in this program will need to convene with the ANA Volunteer Coordinator, for a short workshop on how to work with and interact with the refugee families, and so they get to know all of us a little better before they entrust us with them.





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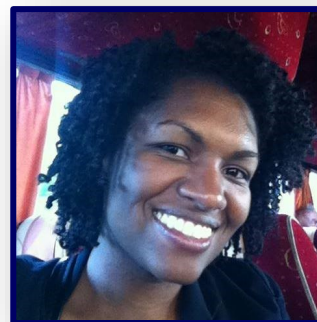
Are you an on-line shopper, especially from Amazon? Did you know that you, your family and friends can have a small percentage of every purchase from Amazon donated to the **IRPCV**?

Just visit www.smile.amazon.com and click "Pick a charity." Search for Idaho Charities and **IRPCV**. Like magic, an Amazon icon will appear on your home tool bar, making it easy for you to click on the icon every time you want to shop Amazon. When you make a purchase, click on the icon and a percentage will go to us, giving us a little more to help us continue our work!



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Peace Corps official merchandise!
Visit the NPCA online store at
peacecorpsconnect.org

We are on Facebook!
Idaho Returned
Peace Corps Volunteers



A graphic of the state of Idaho. The top portion of the state is filled with a blue field containing white stars, and the bottom portion is filled with red and white horizontal stripes, mimicking the US flag. The map has a black outline and a slight 3D effect.

**IDAHO RETURNED
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www.IdahoPeaceCorps.com