



Common Ground

IDAHO RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS

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LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear fellow RPCVs,

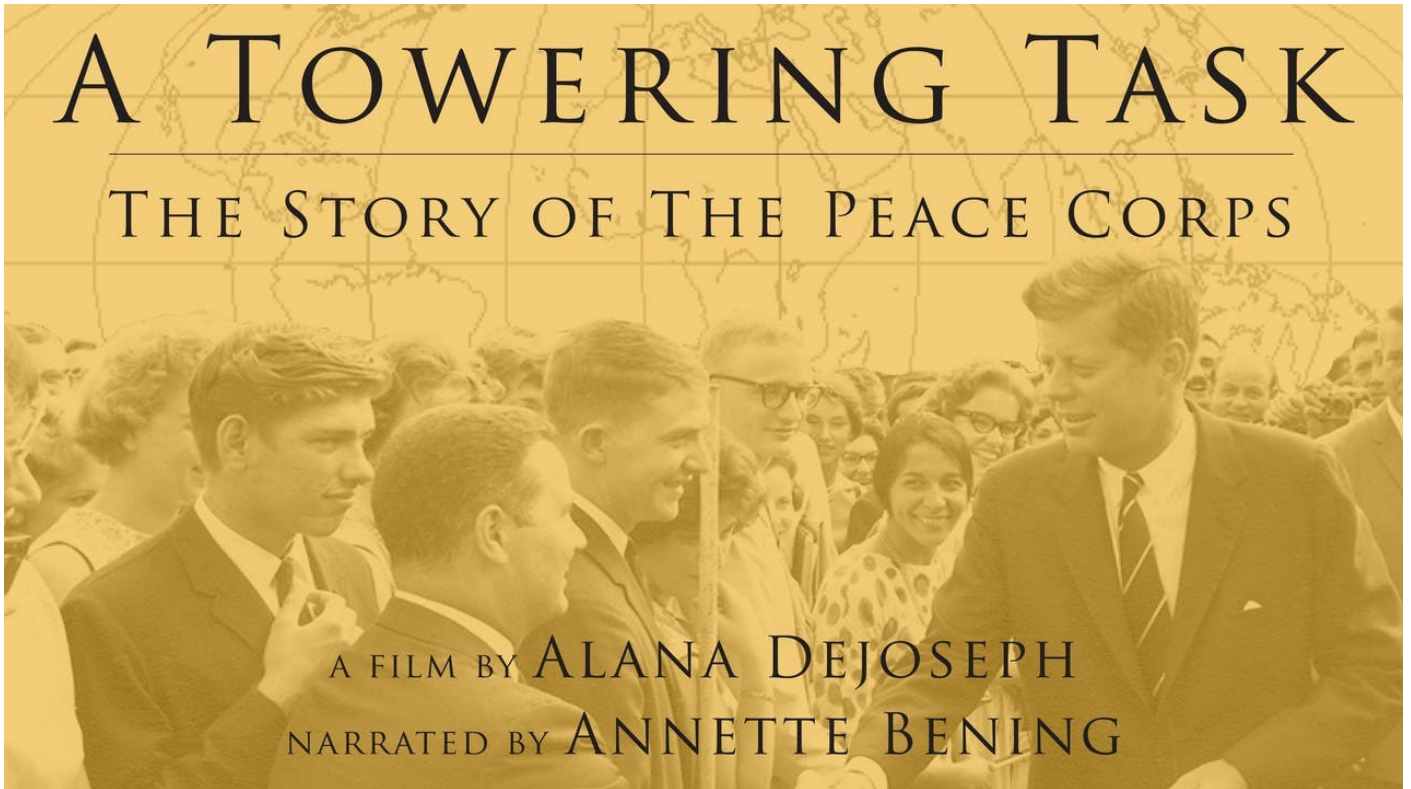
I used to belong to the Portland RPCV group a number of years ago, back when I was an Oregonian for a bit. I still get messages from the group and notifications on social media. In recent days, I've seen members of that group organizing around the protests in the city, working to come together much like the veteran's groups did to support protestors. It makes me proud to see them taking action, and sad that they need to.

We've been lucky here in Idaho. Our protests have been - for the most part - peaceful. And we have very diverse political opinions both inside the state and inside this organization. I'm glad we live in a country where - again, for the most part - we're free to express those opinions. If you're like many of us, the heightened stress these days is nearly palpable for such a wide variety of reasons.

So while we've been fairly quiet as a group over the last few months, we're hoping to change that. Starting in August we're restarting our First Friday gatherings, only this time, virtually. Lila Cabrera, our Service Chair, will be organizing these Zoom meetings. At this time, keep an eye on our Facebook page for more information and a coming invite. We hope to socialize some as well as discuss a few topics as a larger group around what we can do here in Idaho during these historic times.

In other news, I'd like to share that we now have 175 members, which is a good number for us. Our finances are good with \$3,500 still in the bank after our recent donation of \$2,000 to help local refugee families. At our most recent board meeting, we approved a new spend of \$600 to purchase \$100 worth of produce from six different refugee farming families working at the Global Garden. The produce will then be donated to the food bank. As you can imagine, These families are struggling as they generally sell their produce at farmer's markets, which are currently not operating.

Thank you all for your service, commitment to the Third Goal, and stay safe out there. James Watson



*In A Towering Task, director **Alana DeJoseph**, herself a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (RPCV), and writer Shana Kelly want to make sure we all know the history of the organization, what its mission has been for almost 60 years, and most importantly, that the Peace Corps still exists today.*

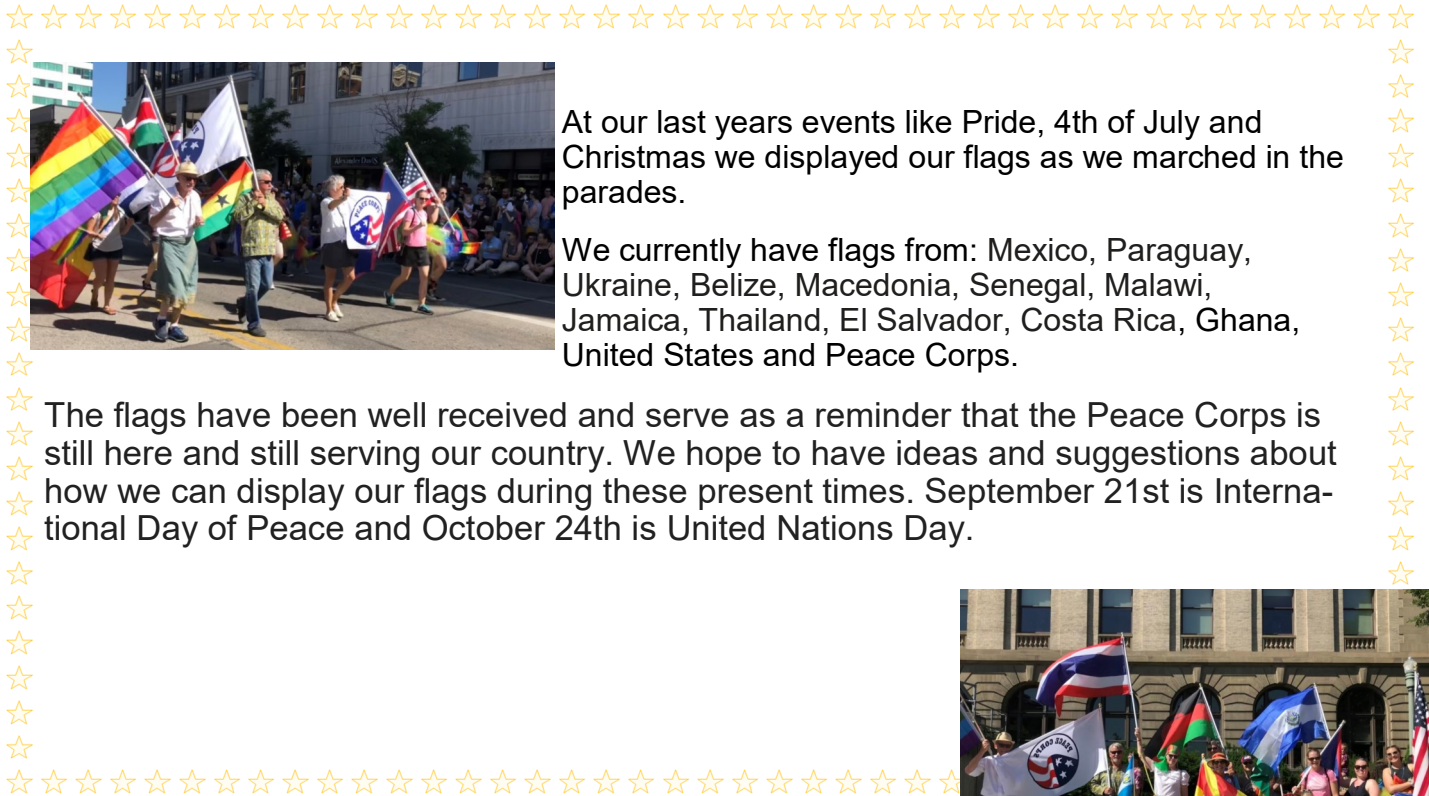
You can rent the film for 72 hours at a cost of \$10.00. It is available at Flicks, Boise.

It was an honest look at the history of the Peace Corps up until the present time. It was produced prior to the evacuation of over 7,000 volunteers due to the Covid-19 virus.

Notable Returned Peace Corps Volunteers.

As the life of Congressman John Lewis was celebrated recently, it was pointed out that his wife Lillian Miles Lewis who died in 2012 was an RPCV who served in Yaba, Nigeria. She was known to have a life long interest in Africa. She went on to live a life of service as an educator and was active in a variety of local organizations. In later years, she served as her husband's most trusted adviser.





At our last years events like Pride, 4th of July and Christmas we displayed our flags as we marched in the parades.

We currently have flags from: Mexico, Paraguay, Ukraine, Belize, Macedonia, Senegal, Malawi, Jamaica, Thailand, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Ghana, United States and Peace Corps.

The flags have been well received and serve as a reminder that the Peace Corps is still here and still serving our country. We hope to have ideas and suggestions about how we can display our flags during these present times. September 21st is International Day of Peace and October 24th is United Nations Day.



Staying in Touch in the Covid 19 era.

Virtual 10 Year Reunion for Bots 9 (Botswana)



When you read this article, **Mary** (Botswana 2010-2012) and **Chuck McGee** (Botswana 2010-2012); Albania (2014-2015) will have been reminiscing with fellow Bots 9 RPCVs on the South Carolina coast for their ten year reunion. Thanks to Covid and travel restrictions, the in-person reunion was replaced with a Zoom meeting. Twenty-five of the group of 40 met online for a two hour session where we were able to hear and see local skylines, pets, kids and each other in a wonderful get together. (no one had a bookshelf behind them but we all still read). For we older folk, it was great to see young families and future PC volunteers, granted twenty years down the road. It was gratifying to hear of travel, work experience and how life had changed in the last ten years. Many younger volunteers are working for non-profit or governmental agencies like USAID and International Refugee Committee. Many of their efforts are focused on refugee resettlement to include our own Idaho RPCV **Mark Homco**, who works for the Agency for New Americans. The meeting was scheduled by one of our group who informally led the discussion and insured all had a chance to participate. Our two –hour session allowed for people to join or leave as schedules allowed and there were never more than fifteen people online at a time. It was so good to see everyone and share our stories. Overall consensus was it was so successful, we plan to do it again in September! Mary McGee

Peace Corps 2021 Calendars

The 2021 Peace Corps calendars are now available! As always, the calendars feature beautiful photos taken in host countries, past and present, and an amazing array of holidays and commemoration days from around the world.

Consider buying 2 or 3 for gift giving or just because. This is our biggest fundraiser for the year and all proceeds go to the organization's grant program.

The prices are:

1-3 = \$13 each

4 or more = \$11 each

If you need one mailed, postage for one is \$2.50



You can also contact a board member to make special arrangements for a pick-up. Each board member has committed to selling at least 10.

If you wish to pay using PayPal or your credit card, please calculate what your order total is and pay using the "Donation" page and then send an email to irpcvtreasurer@gmail.com to confirm the order and your address if you wish the calendar to be mailed.

Contact Steve Randolph with any questions at irpcvtreasurer@gmail.com

Global Gardens



Global Gardens' began as a community garden program in 2004 after garden pioneer Patty Haller heard about the success of refugee community gardens in other cities. She teamed up with several community partners, including Ahavath Beth Israel Synagogue, and Hillview United Methodist Church, to offer families a place to grow some food. There are now community garden spaces for about 1300 individuals annually and farmer training and land access for about 40 individuals

A special thank you to Bethany Martinez for the amazing work she has done as the regional Peace Corps recruiter. Bethany is now moving on to follow her dream of being a nurse. Bethany will remain part of our Idaho RPCV group Peace Corps will not hire a recruiter located in Boise at the present time in order to expand other programs.

When Bethany is replaced, our new recruiter will be based in Portland but will not start until the end of September or the beginning of October.



Miranda Deighton who is based in Salt Lake City will be our interim recruiter. Miranda may be contacted at mdeighton@peacecorps.gov.

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!

Upcoming Events



Virtual First Friday - Beginning in August. Zoom call hosted by Lila Cabrera, our Service Chair
Watch our Facebook page for further information.

Be prepared to socialize and discuss our future activities here in Idaho.



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Summer Reads from RPCV's

There have been numerous books written about the Peace Corps experience. Here are a few suggestions;

The Mountain School– Three years Learning as a Peace Corps Teacher in Lesotho, Africa by Greg Alder (2013).

River Town: Two on the Yangtze by Peter Hessler. (2006)

The Village of Waiting by George Packer (2001)

Going to Mexico by Dave Greigor (2017)

