



# Common Ground

Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Winter 2016

## Update: Boise Holiday Parade

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Idaho Returned Peace Corps Volunteers once again walked in the annual Boise Holiday Parade. The city's theme this year was titled "The Magic and Music of Christmas." The parade took place on the morning of November 19th through downtown Boise. In the spirit of Thanksgiving, we are especially thankful for the volunteers that bundled up for this chilly, yet cheerful event. At least ten RPCVs were able to help show off the famous IRPCV taxi along with its colorful, furry friends.

Prior to a minor disappearing-wheel catastrophe, the IRPCV "traveling" Rudolph was a great hit with the crowd. Thank you to those that helped Rudolph get back safe and sound. The "Veterans of Foreign Peace" taxi was one of over 90 organizations that participated in the parade this year. The Boise Holiday Parade Association presents the Boise Holiday Parade each year. The event brings Santa to the Treasure Valley and is filled with marching bands, music and holiday cheer. This family-friendly event is welcome to all.



## Holiday Events

### Seed Collection Volunteer Day

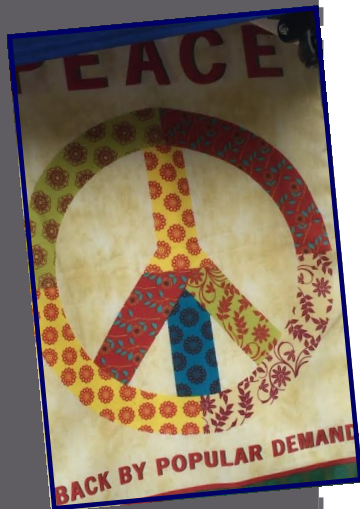
**When:** The morning of December 10th  
**Where:** The meeting place for this event is TBA  
**Contact:** Aviva Braun (301) 802-0956

Please contact Aviva for more details regarding the time and meeting place for this event. Her e-mail is [irpcvservice@gmail.com](mailto:irpcvservice@gmail.com). The Dept. of Fish and Game would like volunteers to sign up online. Participants will help collect sagebrush seeds to be planted on the Table Rock burn scar.

### Annual Holiday Party

**When:** December 3rd @ 6:00 pm  
**Where:** The Bixby home (2563 Old Hickory Way, Boise, ID 83716)  
**Contact:** Mike or Sharon (208) 336-5425

Michael and Sharon Bixby are hosting this year's holiday party at their home in Harris Ranch. Be sure to bring food to share for the potluck. There is also a White Elephant exchange. If you are interested in participating, please bring a wrapped gift. This is always a well-attended event!



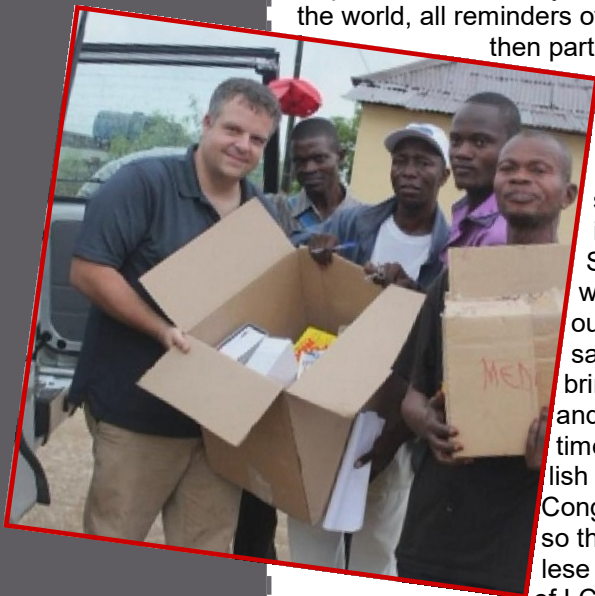
## IRPCV Memberships

Peace Corps service continues long after Volunteers leave their posts. President Kennedy stated that the third goal of the Peace Corps 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. The easiest way for you to meet this goal is to join Idaho RPCVs. Together we can strengthen the understanding of other cultures in the State of Idaho. The 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!

December is IRPCV renewal month. The renewal deadline is December 31st. We hope that all of you renew or join online at [www.idahopeacecorps.com](http://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!

## IRPCV Spotlight: Bruce Smedley

He's one of the newest faces at Lewis-Clark State College, and Assistant Professor of Education, Bryce Smedley, is bringing the charm of the LC Valley to the world, and at the same time, the cultures of the world, right back here to the LC Valley. KLEW News Reporter Kaila Lafferty has more: Bryce Smedley's office is filled with relics from around the world, all reminders of the places he's visited. "Mongolia, Afghanistan, Thailand and then parts of Africa," said Smedley. He began his path to traveling the



world after he studied anthropology in college, and then joined the Peace Corps. So I think serving in Kenya with the United States Peace Corps opened my eyes to working with Africans in language and health literacy, and HIV education," said Smedley. His travels have afforded him knowledge of the importance of culture and has brought that to Lewis-Clark State College. "So that's kind of one of the reasons why I wanted to come to LCSC was to create more opportunities for our teachers here to get more experiences teaching overseas," said Smedley. "Because once they get those experiences they bring those back into the classroom and they bring that diversity and knowledge and different ways of seeing things." Much of his time spent overseas was in an effort to bring books and the English language to the people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. "I had recruited, or sent out information about LCSC and so this year since I've arrived we've been able to get four Congolese students who have come from Africa who have never heard of LCSC until now, learning English and are hopefully going into our

undergraduate program...so in Congo...(Read this entire online article via KLEW News)

## Idaho Foodbank Update



A special thank you to all volunteers that helped with the Idaho Foodbank this year. The last Foodbank Night of 2016 took place on Tuesday, October 25th. Volunteers helped prepare food items for the Backpack Program. Jennifer Rogers worked with the Idaho Foodbank Volunteer Services Team this year to help organize IRPCV efforts. Helping with the Backpack Program proved to be a truly rewarding experience, as participants have donated at least one evening during the months of March, April, May, June, July, August, September and October to help with this endeavor. In its vision of a hunger-free Idaho, the mission of the Idaho Foodbank is to help feed, educate and advocate for Idaho's hungry through a network of community-based partners and to develop efficient solutions to strengthen individuals, families and communities. In 2015, more than 20,000 volunteers dedicated approximately 62,000 hours to helping the Idaho Foodbank provide emergency food assistance. Volunteers typically help sort, repack, and load food donations. (*Information taken from [idahofoodbank.org](http://idahofoodbank.org).*)

## Calendars on sale!

For the last 25 years, the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers in Madison, Wisconsin, have been producing the International Calendar. This is a major IRPCV fundraiser, and 2017 calendars are now on sale. It features countries where Volunteers have served. Proceeds fund Small Grant Projects in Idaho and PCVs from Idaho that are currently serving. Calendars can be purchased at IRPCV meetings. You may also contact Connie Collins ([connie1940@gmail.com](mailto:connie1940@gmail.com)). Calendars are **\$12.00** each. Buy 1-5 for \$12.00 or buy 6-10 at \$10.00 each. Buy 10 and you get one for FREE! (sales tax is included, mailed postage is extra).



## IRPCV Volunteer for the Agency for New Americans

**About ANA:** ANA's mission is to help refugees achieve self-sufficiency in their new lives by providing the skills, education, and support necessary during their resettlement period.

**What we will do to help ANA:** We will help the supply coordinator organize and box donated items for distribution amongst refugee families. Then we will help deliver packages to 1-2 families each! Each individual can decide whether they want to stay and have a conversation with the family, or just drop off and run, based on their individual comfort level.

**When:** This activity is set to occur every 3 months. Next proposed dates are still to come, so stay tuned and look out for e-mails and Facebook posts!

**Get in touch if you're interested:** If you are interested, please RSVP to Aviva. Contact her by phone at 301-802-0956 or e-mail her at [irpcvservice@gmail.com](mailto:irpcvservice@gmail.com) with any questions.

## IRPCV Volunteer at the Learning Lab

**About Learning Lab:** The Learning Lab's mission is to teach and encourage adults who struggle with literacy, and to encourage families to discover the joy of learning. It is a computer-assisted learning center for adults and families with children ages 6 and under. Students in this program receive basic skills instruction including mathematics, reading, writing, spelling, GED preparation and workplace skills. IRPCV is lucky enough to have been invited to work with their student population through one of our co-president's classes!

**Where we come in:** The aim is to come volunteer at each of Lila's classes about once a month. We will start with resume help (though it may be more of a conversation about what they can include on a resume), and build from there. We may eventually do a how-to-use-google maps tutorial. All work at the Learning Lab is one-on-one.

**Where we will work:** The people we will be helping are refugees and those living in the US who are trying to better their lives. The first student group that we will work with are mostly refugees (class located at the Boise Library) and the second student group we will work with is mostly Latino (class located in a Garden City facility).

**Get in touch if you're interested:** We will cap the number of volunteers going at 14, so it'll be first come, first serve. Aviva will need to know who's interested by the week before each event, so she can let Lila plan for our arrival. Please RSVP to Aviva at [irpcvservice@gmail.com](mailto:irpcvservice@gmail.com) or call 301-802-0956 with any questions.

**When:** Two classes were scheduled this Spring. More classes will be scheduled, so be on the lookout!



**\*\*\*IRPCV Bar Night is December 9th at 10  
Barrel Brewing! Come join us at 7 pm\*\*\***





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**We are on Facebook!  
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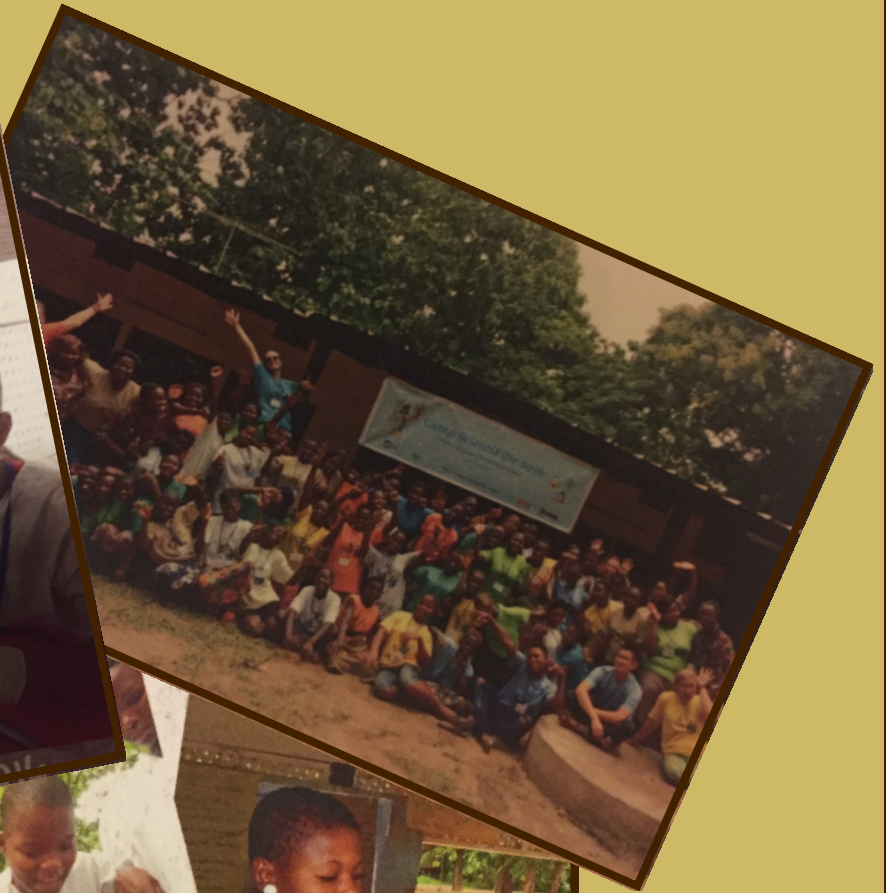
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Idaho RPCVs,  
Without your contributions  
we would not have been  
able to get 48 girls to  
realize their potential.  
Thank You!  
Thy - Temi  
CS 2016 Organizers



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