



RPCVs: Please complete the information requested below and send the release to your local newspaper by Feb. 9, 2004

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: _____
(your name)

Phone: _____
(your phone number)

Peace Corps Commemorates Its 43rd Anniversary During Peace Corps Week—March 1–March 7, 2004

_____, _____
(town) (date)

_____ in _____ will get a firsthand account of life in another
(name of organization or school) (location)
country during Peace Corps Week, thanks to a visit by former Peace Corps volunteer _____.
(former volunteer's name)

Having served in _____ from _____ to _____, _____ will give a
(country of service) (service dates) (former volunteer's name)
presentation about his/her experiences there. Currently a resident of _____,
(former volunteer's hometown)

_____ will visit _____ as part of the Peace Corps Week
(former volunteer's name) (name of host)
celebrations.

From March 1 through March 7, 2004, thousands of former Peace Corps volunteers, representing more than 100 countries of service, will share their overseas experiences in communities around the United States. Through these presentations during Peace Corps Week, former volunteers help raise awareness of the Peace Corps as a resource for U.S. educators who want to incorporate volunteers' stories in the classroom. They also highlight the opportunity to serve as a volunteer and the many benefits of Peace Corps service.

The Peace Corps' global education program, Paul D. Coverdell World Wise Schools, offers a variety of educational materials designed to engage students in grades 3-12 in inquiry about the world. Through the Peace Corps Partnership program, individuals, schools, service organizations, religious groups, and Peace Corps volunteer alumni groups in the United States can get involved in direct and positive ways to address the impact of poverty in the hundreds of communities where Peace Corps volunteers live and work.

"The service that former volunteers perform in their communities to help Americans better understand other peoples and cultures is immeasurable," said Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez. "When former volunteers speak about their Peace Corps experiences, they share their deep understanding of people and cultures around the world. Their unique volunteer service demonstrates the heart of the Peace Corps—the best of America."

Today, more than 7,500 volunteers live and work in more than 70 nations around the globe. Peace Corps volunteers work in such diverse fields as education, health, HIV/AIDS education and awareness, information technology, business development, the environment, and agriculture. For information about joining the Peace Corps, call 1-800-424-8580 (press 1) and speak to a local recruiter. To learn more about Peace Corps Week, call 1-800-424-8580 (press 2, then ext. 1961) or e-mail pccday@peacecorps.gov. Or, visit the Peace Corps website at www.peacecorps.gov.

Writing a Letter to the Editor

Promote your presentation by writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about Peace Corps Week. Contact the paper to learn how it prefers to receive what you plan to submit. Many newspapers have an online form for letters to the editor.

A letter to the editor is more likely to be published if it is in response to an article that has appeared in the paper. However, if your Peace Corps Week event did not get publicity in the paper, that is an opportune time to write a letter to the editor to discuss its lack of coverage. All letters must include your full name, home address, and daytime telephone number for verification. Whether you choose to mail, fax, or e-mail your letter to the editor, remember to keep it brief—300 words or less.

The sample letter below includes ideas and Peace Corps facts that you can incorporate into your own letter. Since any piece the newspaper writes may be about a specific Peace Corps Week event in your area, you should share your thoughts concerning that event as well. And don't forget to mention that you are a returned Volunteer yourself!

Sample Letter to the Editor

March 12, 2004

Dear Editor:

Your recent coverage of the Peace Corps' 43rd anniversary ("Peace Corps Week: Reflections on Diversity, Understanding, and Peace," March 10) was great. I applaud the agency's goal to diversify the Peace Corps so that it more accurately reflects the rich fabric of American culture. It is important that Peace Corps volunteers represent the multicultural ideals of our nation. As the Peace Corps moves into the 21st century, President George W. Bush has challenged the agency to double its number of volunteers over the next four years.

A vast number of people in the world have gained their image of America through meeting Peace Corps volunteers. Peace Corps volunteers promote cross-cultural understanding by integrating themselves into their host communities and forming close bonds with those they serve. From Armenia to Vanuatu, Peace Corps volunteers build bridges across cultures—bridges to tolerance, friendship, and ultimately peace.

During Peace Corps Week, thousands of former Peace Corps volunteers taught Americans, and the world, that they value and respect other people's cultures, helping to eradicate the ignorance that fosters hatred, anger, hostility, and violence. The Peace Corps' promotion of diversity as an integral part of American culture strengthens the American spirit both abroad and here at home.

Sincerely,

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