



**rpcv/w**

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers  
of Washington, DC

## **2008 – 2009 ANNUAL REPORT**

(August 2008 – July 2009)

**RPCV/W Board – August 2008 – July 2009:**

President – Jim Gore (Bolivia 2003-2005)

Vice President – Molly Mattessich (Mali 2002-2004)

Secretary – Joe Ford (Zambia 1994-1996)

Treasurer – Jeff Lovelace (Bolivia)

Membership Director – Bea Tijerina (Ghana 1997-1999, Zambia 2006)

New Members Director – Elizabeth Olson (Burkina Faso 2005-2007)

Communications Director – RaeJean Stokes (Ukraine 2003-2005)

Web Director – Pei-Zei Lin (Burkina Faso 2004-2006)

Programs Director – Trish Calamari (Uzbekistan 2004-2005)

Special Events Director – Tamar Schiffman (Uzbekistan/Ukraine 2001-2003)

Social Activities Director – Corey Taylor (Benin)

Community Service Director – Jessica Benton Cooney (El Salvador 2004-2006)

Development Director – Lindsey Johnson (Philippines 2005-2006)

## LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear RPCV/W Members,

The Board of Directors of the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, DC (RPCV/W) is proud to present this 2008-2009 annual report to its membership.

RPCV/W is run by an all-volunteer Board of Directors, elected once yearly, and comprised of President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Directors of Membership, New Members, Special Events, Social, Communications, Website, Programs, and Community Service. We, your Board of Directors, are proud about the accomplishments of RPCV/W over this last year and excited about what is yet to come through this organization.

The RPCV/W board meets monthly throughout the year to plan the overall direction of the organization and maintain its infrastructure which includes: an annual Board Planning Retreat, a quarterly newsletter: *RPCV/W News*, monthly social events, monthly Treasurer reports, Program events such as movie screenings and lectures, special events including the Annual Cherry Blossom Picnic, Speaking engagements to support Peace Corps' Third Goal, Community Service Activities, New Member Outreach, Peace Corps Partnership Project Sponsorship, an Annual Holiday Party, merchandise sales, an Annual Meeting and Picnic, and management of the RPCV/W website and listserv. The Board also addresses collaborative opportunities with members such as the NPCA, the Peace Corps and the local community.

The organization remains financially secure and reliably engaged in its mission of service to members and the community.

Having finished my third year as President of RPCV/W, I am thankful for the opportunity to have played a part in our success over this period. When I arrived, RPCV/W was in a difficult situation as an organization, and I leave this position knowing that the hard work of your Board and you the membership has brought RPCV/W back to life. As new leaders take over at the helm of RPCV/W, I am excited to see what the next generation of our organization has to offer. As a final sendoff, I'd like you to join me in applauding the work of your Board of Directors. These Directors volunteer not just their time and energy, but also their enthusiasm, their initiative, and most importantly, their dedicated work in support of you, our membership.

Lastly, I would like to thank each and every one of you for giving this Board the opportunity to serve you, our community, in bringing the reality of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Goal of Peace Corps into the lives of the greater Washington DC community.

On behalf of the RPCV/W Board of Directors, I am proud to present this overview, which is testament to the vitality of the organization.

Regards,

James Gore

President - RPCV/W

*Agribusiness Volunteer*

*Bolivia (2003-2005)*

## **2009 PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURAL PARADE**

Members of The Peace Corps Community marched in the 2009 Presidential Inaugural Parade on January 20, 2009 when Barack Obama was elected President of the United States.

RPCV/W, in collaboration with the National Peace Corps Association, submitted a proposal to the 2009 Presidential Inaugural Committee in October of 2008 to request that the Peace Corps Community march in the Inaugural Parade. Out of 10,000 groups that made the request, we were selected. Over 800 people entered their names in a lottery and 200 were chosen randomly to represent over 80 countries of service. Participants gathered on buses that morning and spent the Inauguration Day trying to stay warm while waiting to march. We all carried flags of the Peace Corps Countries of service and made a banner (designed by Noble Pursuits) to celebrate the Peace Corps Community's 50 years of existence (in 2011).

Marchers included Senator Harris Wofford (a strong proponent of Peace Corps for years), Jodi Olsen (Acting Director of Peace Corps), Kevin Quigley (President of NPCA), Rajeev Goyal (MorePeaceCorps), the RPCVw Board Members, and many others including current Peace Corps Volunteers who flew in from Honduras and returned volunteers from as far away as Hawaii and Washington State.

All agreed that a highlight of the day was walking past the Presidential Viewing Station when President and Mrs. Obama waved to our group.

Many blog links and photos from this event can be found on the National Peace Corps Association Facebook fanpage and the Peace Corps Connect Inauguration group.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The membership goals for the year (August 2008 – July 2009) were to roll out the 50 by 50 Membership Campaign. The campaign goals are to increase membership by 50 each year leading up to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Peace Corps. This was voted on at the end of the 2007/2008 year and instituted early this year. We also developed the Membership Committee to oversee the campaign. This committee consisted of the Membership Director, New Member Director, Treasurer and the Vice President. The committee met to develop the campaign goals, construct a clear message to be delivered to the Peace Corps community and determine the best mode of reaching non-members.

The committee discussed reasons why RPCVs should join and came up with these membership benefits:

- Free admission to members-only events, from interesting seminars to talks with guest speakers, fun social gatherings to community service activities, rewarding memberships to networking events
- Access to posting on our Listserv that reaches a targeted audience of over 2,000 internationally minded and service-minded people
- Discounts on ticket prices for our Holiday party and Annual picnic
- Connections to members of one of the largest and most dynamic group of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers in the world
- A searchable membership directory - to help you find and make new contacts

Some of the challenges faced included losing the New Members director who had to resign mid-year, increased work schedules and travel for the other committee members who were not able to keep up the momentum of the committee, and the change in the NPCA website and database system which led to a delay in receiving membership data.

Throughout the year we have maintained a steady membership between 380 – 420 individual memberships and 100 – 120 recently returned members. During the holiday party and the annual

meeting we also saw a spike in new memberships and renewals. The inauguration was also a big boost for membership. Almost 25 new members joined in the weeks leading up to the march and about 25 members renewed. In order to be selected in the lottery to march, RPCVs had to be a member of NPCA and many also joined RPCV/w.

Membership as of July 2009

- Paying members: 402
- Recently returned (free): 106
- Non-members: 1,793

The membership director also worked closely with the web director to continue to iron out kinks with the membership database.

During the transition meeting with the outgoing membership director and the incoming membership director for the 2009-2010 year, it was decided to move forward with the objective of cleaning the database. There are many duplicate records with some members receiving expiration messages for one record while maintaining a current membership with another record. The membership committee will be reengaged and assist with this task.

## **TREASURER**

Our treasurer, Jeff Lovelace did a fantastic job in keeping RPCVW's finances balanced during the fiscal year 2008-2009. RPCV/W started the fiscal year with an opening balance of \$2502.17. RPCV/W had total revenue of \$16,742.36, and total expenses of \$13,531.65, with a closing balance of \$5,770.95 (opening balance plus total revenues less total expenses, and including investments). For more detailed information, please see the attachment A at the end of this report.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE:**

During fiscal year 2008-2009, our Director of Community Service Jessica Benton Cooney facilitated and publicized the following community service activities for the RPCV/W community.

November, 2008:

- Food and Friends: 10 volunteers for two hour shift
- Habitat for Humanity: 10 volunteers for a Saturday shift
- Trash Pick up: Three volunteers for pick up near potomac river

January, 2009: Painting: 8-10 volunteers for MLK day painted bilingual school in Adams Morgan

March, 2009 Peace Corps Week: 12 volunteers shared PC experiences and cultural norms with middle school classes

May, 2009: Wreath Laying: coordinated with PC HQ annual wreath laying: organized buying of wreath, speakers, programs, volunteers, and HH

## **SPECIAL EVENTS:**

As our Special Events Director, Tamar Schiffman coordinated and facilitated the following Special Events with great success:

Movie Screening (October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

RPCV/W hosted a screening of the documentary "Swing State Ohio" at Busboys and Poets. The documentary was made by RPCV Jed Wolfington and followed the last 30 days of the 2004 election in Ohio. Nearly 75 RPCVs and their friends attended the screening. It was followed by a Q&A session with

Mr. Wolfington, and Barbara Harris, an RPCV who had run for office in Ohio in 2004. The turnout was a mix of older volunteers and RPCVs working in international policy.

Annual Holiday Party (December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

Held at the Josephine Butler House, The RPCV/W Holiday Party was a huge success. About 250 RPCVs attend the event. It was a mix of volunteers of all ages, including Kennedy era volunteers. There was food, drinks and DJ dancing. We also had a silent auction and a 50/50 raffle.

Annual Picnic (July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Held at the Capital Yacht Club, the turnout was great - over 200 people came, many of whom became members. Kyle was the caterer and we featured face painting for kids. We had a nice diverse turn out with lots of families, kids and older members.

## **PROGRAMS:**

Our Programs Director, Trish Calamari was very busy during this fiscal year, as you can see from the following programs that she coordinated and facilitated with great success:

Chowdown at Oriental East-Silver Spring, MD (October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

Number of attendees: 12

Issue or Topic: China

Education/Advocacy: Education-To experience a tradition Chinese Dim-Sum meal

Communication with Members:-RPCV/w Listserv

Film Screening and Director's Q & A of War Dance at Bloombars (November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

Number of attendees: 25

Issue and Topic: Uganga, Civil War, Child Soldiers

Education or Advocacy: hosted screening and director's Q and A of an Academy Award Nominated Documentary about students at the Patongo Refugee Camp, who go on to compete and win a major national music competition

Funds Raised: \$325 for the Patongo Scholarship Fund, money functioned as an honorarium

Communication with Members: RPCV/w Listservs and Facebook Invite.

Chowdown-Russian Orthodox New Year at Domku, Washington, DC (January 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Number of attendees: 3

Issues and topic: Observance of Russian Orthodox New Year, and a venue owned by an RPCV who served in Eastern Europe

Education and Advocacy: Education (see issues and topics)

Communication with Members: RPCV/w Listserv

Chowdown-Restaurant Week Edition : Lima, Washington, DC (February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Number of attendees: 10

Issues and Topic: Latin American Culture

Education and Advocacy: Education-exposure to Latin American cuisine.

Chowdown-Cinco de Mayo Edition: Haydees, Washington, DC (May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Number of attendees: 20

Issues and Topic: Latin American History and Culture

Education and Advocacy: Education-exposure to Latin American cuisine.

Policy and a Pint-Social Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa: Red Derby, Washington, DC (June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Number of attendees: 35

Issues and Topic: Social Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa

Education and Advocacy: Social Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

Our New Members Director Elizabeth organized the following activities:

Biking trip along the C & O Canal (October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

New Members Thanksgiving Pot-Luck Dinner (November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008)

Elizabeth opened her house to about 40 RPCVs to share a wonderful Thanksgiving spread. She was a fantastic hostess and made everyone feel at home. Many attendees were RPCVs who had just finished their Peace Corps service within the last couple of months, and were very impressed at the wonderful welcome. They left with their tummies full and hearts content.

New members brunch at the Banana Café (March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

About 25 people attended this event. Jessica and Tamar talked about membership and the upcoming elections for the RPCV/W Board.

### **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES:**

Our Social Activities Director, Corey Taylor, kept himself quite busy in fiscal year 2008-2009. He not only organized several happy hours, and other events, but also took on the additional responsibility of assisting in the organization of the Presidential Inauguration Parade. Following are the social activities that took place in 2008-2009:

Monthly Happy Hours (July 2008-June 2009)

John F. Kennedy Wreath-Laying Ceremony and Social Gathering (May 2009)

Happy Hour Celebrating Contributions of Gay/Lesbian/Bi-Sexual/Trans-Gender Peace Corps Community (June 2009)

Annual Cherry Blossom Festival (March 2009)

Inauguration Parade (January 2009)

Pre-Inauguration Parade Happy Hour (January 2009)

RPCVW Canoe Outing on the Potomac River (July 2008)

Peace Corps Career Fair Happy Hour (Approx. April/May 2008)

Peace Corps Wiki Happy Hour (Spring 2008)

Participation in More Peace Corps Rally (June 2009)

## **COMMUNICATIONS**

During the 2008-2009 fiscal year, RaeJean did an amazing job in keeping the Washington area Peace Corps community informed of all events that took place in the DC area. She sent out a weekly listserv to about 1500 people in the DC metro area, and she managed to develop 4 quarterly newsletters which covered a variety of events and issues focused on the RPCV/W community.

## **WEB DEVELOPMENT**

Our web director, Pei-Zei Lin kept the RPCV/W website current, up and running and with no glitches. She did a fantastic job. Together with Bea, our membership director, Pei made sure that the web based membership database was current. She also created an RPCV/W facebook page in order to reach out to additional members/people.

**(Financial Statement on the following page)**



**ATTACHMENT A - Financial statement**

**Date range covered: From: 07/30/2008 to:07/30/2009**

<b>Opening balance</b>		<b>\$ 2502.17</b>
Dues	\$ 6667.27	
Donations (Restricted for Peace Corps Partnership)	\$ n/a	
Donations (unRestricted)	\$ n/a	
Events	\$ 9369.89	
Investing Income	\$ 9.20	
Merchandise sales	\$ 681.00	
<b>Other:</b>	<b>\$ 15.00</b>	
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$ 16,742.36</b>	
<b>EXPENSES:</b>		
Newsletter	<b>n/a</b>	
Other Mailings and Postage	\$ n/a	
Affiliation Fee	\$400.00	
Peace Corps Partnership	\$ n/a	
Events	\$ 9501.93	
Website	\$ 2543.40	
Merchandise expense	\$	
Board Retreat	\$ 658.85	
other	\$ 427.47	
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$ 13,531.65</b>	
Closing Balance (opening balance plus total revenues less total expenses) Includes Investments.		\$ 5,770.95