

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF PEACE CORPS

On March 1, 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship and appointed Sargent Shriver as its first director.

Five decades later, hundreds of former Peace Corps Volunteers are living, working, studying and raising families in Lane County. They have served in every decade since Roger Hamilton and other members of the first Peace Corps group shook President Kennedy's hand before boarding a prop plane for Ghana.

Read more about Roger and others in our community who are among the 200,000+ Peace Corps Volunteers who have served in 139 countries over the last 50 years.

KEITH SHELDON & KEVIN YOUNG

Burkina Faso, 1984 - 1986

I met my husband Kevin in Burkina Faso. We were posted in the same village, had a large garden, and raised chickens and rabbits together. My house was mud brick with no running water in a town without electricity. I was trained in appropriate technology and worked in the Young Farmer's Education Program. Kevin taught advanced level English at the Charles Lwanga School. We both learned to speak French and Djula.

Women in our village walked many kilometers to find fuel wood. I taught them to build fuel efficient cookstoves out of fermented mud, clay and manure. Each cook pot rested on three rocks and had its own snug hearth enclosing the fire, with a tiny door for "three sticks." In turn, the village women taught me how to dance to the balafon music that drew folks out of their homes on full moon nights.

Our shared Peace Corps experience has kept our marriage strong. We continue to speak the languages we learned and the values we formed are firm. We have a deep appreciation of cultural diversity and a commitment to challenge oppression.

On returning to the U.S., Keith and Kevin purchased 14 acres in Fall Creek and established a certified organic farm. They home schooled their children for many years, then relocated to Eugene. Keith is a Juvenile Counselor in Probation Supervision at Lane County Youth Services. Kevin teaches GED at Lane Community College, with years of experience mentoring youth on probation.



ROGER HAMILTON *Ghana, 1961 - 1962*

I was a member of the very first Peace Corps group. We shook President Kennedy's hand at the White House before boarding a prop plane headed for Ghana. It re-fueled in the Azores and Dakar, Senegal, before landing in Accra. We taught secondary school students in a remote part of the country, traveling over 100 miles on a dirt road through a rainforest.

I married a fellow volunteer, Carol, at a service performed by the Anglican Bishop with a reception at the residence of the U.S. Ambassador. There was a young boy who had nowhere to live, who helped around the house. I helped him attend university in the U.S. and have kept in touch with him for nearly 50 years. He is now a successful businessman.



In our first year in Ghana, Carol became pregnant. We flew back to D.C. and welcomed our son Stephen. No one else in our group was pregnant, so I believe that makes Stephen – a U.S. forest service archaeologist living in Eugene – the first Peace Corps baby. When Stephen was born we settled in D.C. and I worked for Bill Moyers, who was Associate Director of Public Affairs then Deputy Director of the Peace Corps. Bill at that time was a hard charging and highly idealistic proponent of the Peace Corps program. I helped with his recruiting effort by lecturing at universities across the country.

Roger is a senior energy and public policy analyst with the Climate Leadership Initiative of the Resource Innovations Group in Eugene. He served as Klamath County Commissioner, advisor on energy and watersheds to

Governor Kitzhaber, and Oregon Public Utility Commissioner. Roger and Carol Armstrong were divorced in 1969 but remained close as parents of their two children. Carol taught school in California, and in recent years moved to Eugene to be close to her children and grandchildren. Carol passed away in September 2010.

OREGON PEACE CORPS FACTS

The first baby born to Peace Corps Volunteers lives in Eugene, Oregon (Stephen Hamilton).

The youngest person to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer lives in Eugene, Oregon (Chuck Kalnbach).

Oregon ranks no. 4 in the nation in 2010 for producing Peace Corps Volunteers (per capita).

Five Oregon schools rank in the top 12 nationwide in 2010 for number of undergraduate alumni volunteers.

Roseburg, Oregon, ranks no. 6 in the nation for producing Peace Corps volunteers (per capita).

Portland, Oregon, ranks no. 10 nationwide in 2010 for total volunteers from a metropolitan area.

There are over 50 current or retired teachers in Eugene area schools who served in Peace Corps.

There are approximately 150 members of the West Cascade Peace Corps Association, founded in Eugene in 1980.



KITTY PIERCY
Ethiopia, 1964 - 1966

I served in Asmara, Ethiopia (now in Eritrea). I taught English, poetry and art at Halle Selassie Secondary School, went on a medical safari, volunteered in a TB center, and worked with lepers. I had a library in my home and there was a revolution beginning in the streets. I hitchhiked along the coast of Africa, through Nigeria, Dahomey (now Benin), Togo, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast (now Côte d'Ivoire). I visited the ancient ruins of Lalebela, Axum, and the Queen of Sheba Bath. My Peace Corps service made me a citizen of the world with great appreciation of other cultures and people. It was a great adventure for a girl who had never traveled. My husband David served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Iran.

Kitty is Mayor of Eugene.

JIM BEYER
Panama, 1967 - 1969



Jim worked in rural community development, in the rainforest, on the Caribbean side of Panama. "The memories are numerous of unique difficulties working with community members in a roadless area, with no electricity or modern tools. We spent days sawing and milling all of the lumber to build an

entire school. We mixed cement by hand for school floors. I especially remember digging wells, lowering ourselves into a hole, sometimes as deep as 15 feet, to stand in water and muck and dig like crazy. Panamanians like to make games out of work. We competed with each other to see who could fill the bucket the fastest. My biggest role was simply being a catalyst for change. Communities knew how to organize themselves and they had the technical skills. What they lacked was the impetus to start a project, how to reach out for outside help, and how to stay focused on completion." Jim worked for 27 years for the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, an agency devoted to helping students and families finance higher education. He is now retired.

CHERYL REINHART
Guinea-Conakry, 1989 - 1990

Cheryl was on a team of three Peace Corps Volunteers trained to work with local women on gardening, development of cooperatives, and agroforestry. They were the first PCVs in their region and called themselves "The Guinea Pigs." During training they were coached to spend the first six months at their site getting to know the community and its needs, in preparation for launching projects using readily available local materials. Within days of their arrival, community members made it clear that what they needed was a motorized irrigation pump and other expensive items. Cheryl says, "the idea of 'grassroots development' didn't sound as good to the villagers as it did to us." Near the end of Cheryl's service there was civil war in nearby Liberia. Cheryl's village was inundated with refugees. Cheryl and her sister own and manage Sweet Life Patisserie in Eugene. She is married and has three children.



ROBERT THOMPSON
Honduras, 1973 - 1975



Robert taught mechanical engineering at the National University of Honduras, which stimulated his love for teaching. "It provided me with an invaluable cultural perspective and sensitivity as well as knowledge of Spanish which is useful to me today in Eugene with our growing Latino population." Robert has spoken to high school student groups about the benefits of Peace Corps service. He has been a math and engineering instructor at Lane Community College since 1978 and currently directs Lane's Math Resource Center. His wife is a local glass artist and their two daughters attend the University of Oregon.

JULIA HARVEY
Tonga, 1990 - 1992

Julia taught science in the Kingdom of Tonga. She says this challenged the stereotype of U.S. women found in the popular media. "I remember the simple living. We ate seasonally. We could not always count on electricity or running water. There were no computers, cell phones, digital cameras. I remember waiting for the day that the rainy season would start, knowing that our cisterns would fill up again. I remember eating the best mangos in the world. There were no problems of hunger or homelessness because people took care of their extended families. An indelible memory involves food. I decided to eat healthy and cook some taro leaves with eggs for dinner. When I ate my healthy meal, my mouth began to burn. I learned that taro leaves are edible but *giant* taro leaves contain oxalic acid, which causes burning known as *fi fisi* -- a Tongan word that I will never forget." Julia has been teaching science at South Eugene High School for 12 years.



NANCY AND WALT MEYER
Mexico, 2006 - 2008

Nancy and Walt worked at a government research and development center for electrochemistry and environmental engineering, in Queretaro, three hours northwest of Mexico City. Walt did projects with graduate students and environmental engineers. Nancy taught English to graduate students and center employees. They shared major life events — baptisms, weddings, birthday celebrations, graduations, funerals — and made lifelong friends. Back in Eugene, Walt returned to work at an



environmental engineering consulting firm and Nancy teaches English at Downtown Languages.

CHRIS CHAPLIN
Kazakhstan, 2007 - 2009



Chris taught English (TEFL) at Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda State University. "I tried not to view my assignment in terms of tangible accomplishments as much as forging relationships, mutual understanding, and trust. In addition to teaching English, I helped establish a small library at the

university, taught baseball, organized a healthy lifestyles conference for orphaned children and college students, and helped translate a major screenplay into Kazakh. One of my proudest moments was when I taught baseball to a group of 5th graders at summer camp. They remembered all the rules and were anxious to play again when I came back the next summer. I was also proud when several of my university students overcame their fear and served admirably as interpreters for Peace Corps presenters at our healthy lifestyles conference. This was an important step for them since many were planning to pursue jobs as translators and interpreters." Chris is pursuing a dual degree in Conflict Resolution and Law at the University of Oregon.

CASSADY WALTERS
Mali, 2008 - 2010

As a Health Education volunteer, Cassady had a weekly radio show that reached 30,000 listeners. It aired in Bambara, the local language. She says: "I became a source for community members, particularly women, to approach on all health topics, specifically malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, and family planning... And a white woman speaking fluent Bambara was certainly a novelty." How did Peace Corps influence her life? "I learned so much, I made such good friends, I was challenged in such profound ways... I think about food differently, religion differently, love and marriage, my body, my house, my family... I learned I do not want to work in international development, but that I love learning languages and that learning a language is the best way to get to know a culture." Cassady was a political consultant in the 2010 election cycle and is currently studying Arabic at the University of Oregon, with plans for further study in Jordan.





JENNIFER & DEREK SNELLING

Solomon Islands, 1995 - 1997

Jennifer and Derek set up a distance learning center for rural children unable to finish school. Local teachers ran the center after they left. Jennifer says, "I remember the days spent making coconut soup on the beach with the local women, the adventure of riding on a cargo ship across the open ocean, and hiking through a mangrove swamp to get to a remote village. The adventure of it all will never leave me. My time in Peace Corps influences my life every single day — in my ability to make the best of a situation, in the way I interact with people who see the world differently from myself, and in that I always know that I have friends around the world." Jennifer is a freelance writer for The Register-Guard and the University of Oregon. Derek practices law with Shlesinger & deVilleneuve Attorneys, P.C.

SPIKE GILDEA

Nepal, 1983 - 1985



Spike was trained in Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL). It was challenging to get his students to speak English in so short a time in a village where nobody else spoke English. He says his more important contribution was exposing students and friends to a completely different way of being, especially surrounding a willingness to make mistakes in public. He says, "I made lots of them myself and I accepted them from my students." Following Peace Corps, Spike became Night Manager at the Dairy Queen near the University of Oregon, then entered Oregon's MA program. He says education looked great compared to the fast food industry. Spike has conducted fieldwork on isolated tribes in Venezuela, in the jungles of Brazil, and in Guyana, and written and lectured on the 15 related languages in the region. Spike taught at Rice University and is currently an Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Oregon. In his lectures he uses examples from his Peace Corps experience to illustrate "how good intentions do not protect Americans (like my younger self) from radiating that unique combination of ignorance and arrogance."

In my district in Tanzania, volunteers helped HIV positive people access free medication. They also supported secondary education, helped with agriculture, and taught women to make cookers that were affordable and environmentally friendly. At my mother's funeral, they dressed in traditional fabric called *khanga* and participated in our rituals like immediate family.

MARKO MWIPOPO

Kiswahili Instructor, University of Oregon



CHUCK KALNBACH

Lesotho, 1977

Chuck was 12 years old and his sister was 14 when their parents joined Peace Corps. His older brothers stayed home. Chuck's mom had been an elementary school teacher in Michigan. In Lesotho, she worked at a national teacher training center. Chuck's dad had an agriculture degree from Michigan State. In Lesotho, he taught farmers about root storage, root cellars, and how to grow alfalfa for cows. Chuck grew up in a small farming community in Michigan, with no minorities. In their small village in Lesotho, the Kalnbachs were the only minorities. Chuck says the experience fundamentally changed the way he viewed the world. Chuck is a Senior Instructor of Leadership and Communication at the University of Oregon's Lindquist College of Business.

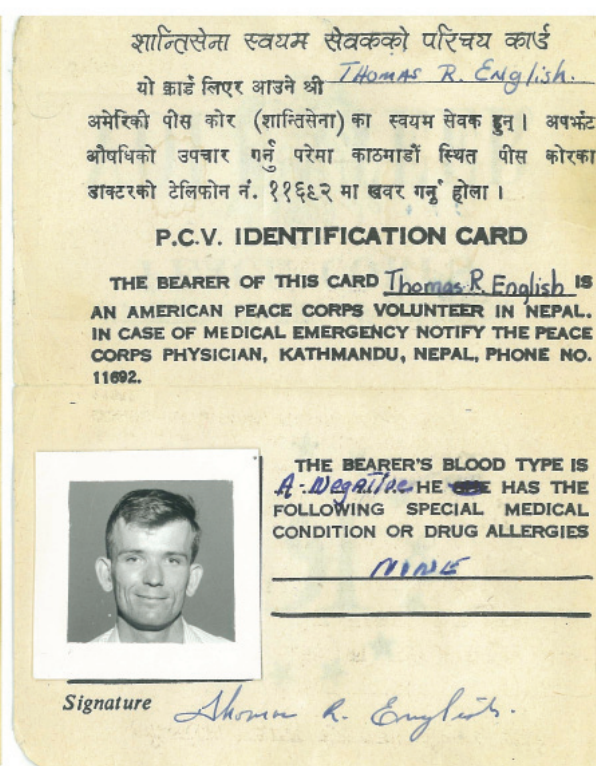
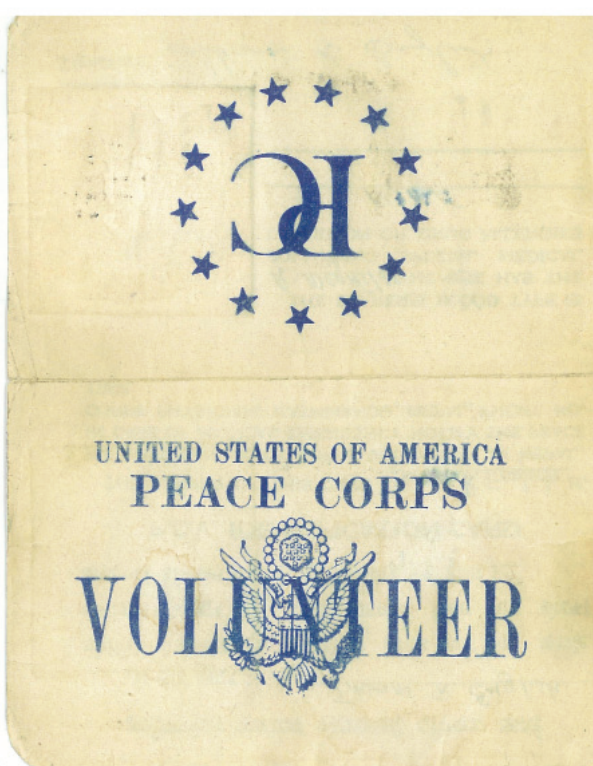


TOM ENGLISH

Nepal, 1966 - 1969



Tom's Peace Corps site was cut off during monsoon season. He was the first and last volunteer to serve there. He built the first area high school and conducted the first local census of education needs. This determined where bridges would be built so that children could get to school. His Peace Corps experience made a big impact on how he has lived his life — doing his best to make the world a better place. Tom is a Deacon at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, a Chaplain at the Lane County Jail, and Chairman of the Board of Sponsors, Inc., a nonprofit organization helping those released from prison. He is active in Rotary which gives him an opportunity to continue his service to the world at large.



GEORGE JEFFCOTT

India, 1966 - 1969

George worked in a small village agricultural program for two years, then joined Peace Corps staff in Bombay (now Mumbai). What did he accomplish? "Fortunately, I was assigned to a village that eagerly took up the new hybrid crops and cultivation methods I was sent to introduce. Some farmers increased their yield by about 200%. What I really accomplished was learning how to live in a world free of electricity, plumbing, and motorized vehicles. It taught me that what we own does not define who we are and that consumption is not the road to happiness. This lesson guides me today."

George returned to the U.S. just days before Neil Armstrong walked on the moon. He set up title insurance companies around Oregon, but says job satisfaction was more important than money, so pursued teaching. George retired in 2004 after 27 years at Monroe and Spencer Butte middle schools, North Eugene High School, and the University of Oregon. He serves on the board of the North Eugene Retirement Association, is Vice President of Lane County Master Gardeners, and works with the City of Eugene's Huckleberry Patrol, a volunteer-driven graffiti abatement effort.



JOYCE LEADER

Associate Director, Zaire, 1976 - 1979
Desk Officer for Southern Africa, 1979 - 1981

Joyce began work for Peace Corps in Zaire (now Democratic Republic of Congo) in 1976. She was responsible for 140 education volunteers and later moved to Washington D.C. to serve as Desk Officer for Southern Africa. Afterwards, she spent more than 20 years with the Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer specializing in Africa and refugee affairs. Among her diplomatic positions were U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Guinea, Consul General in Marseille, France, and Director of the Office of Refugee Assistance to Asia and the Near East.

She says: "My most challenging post was Deputy Chief of Mission in Rwanda during the three years leading up to the 1994 genocide. ABC's Frontline has an interview with me on its website for its 'Ghosts of Rwanda' show that recounts some of my experiences with that tragedy.

"It is interesting that the motives Volunteers give for joining Peace Corps have not changed much over the years. Volunteers still want to get to know other cultures and do something worthwhile for others. They continue to say they get more out of their service than they are able to give. Many continue to work overseas or enter humanitarian professions in the U.S."

In the Foreign Service, Joyce also served as Deputy Director of the Office of Refugee and Migration Affairs at the U.S. Mission in Geneva, Deputy Director of the Office of West African Affairs, and held positions at the U.S. embassies in Nigeria and Burkina Faso. Joyce lives in Eugene and retains her interest in African affairs, having returned recently from a consulting assignment in Southern Sudan.

**Join us in remembering
Sargent Shriver and
Celebrating the 50th Anniversary
of the Peace Corps!**

TUESDAY MARCH 1, 2011

<p>NOON RALLY BROADWAY PLAZA WILLAMETTE & BROADWAY NOON - 1 P.M. <i>Dance to Samba Ja • Win Prizes • Eat Cake</i></p>	<p>EVENING PARTY COZMIC PIZZA 8th & CHARNELTON 7 P.M. - 11 P.M. • \$10 ENTRY FEE <i>Brazilian music by Macaco Velho Latin American music by Casera</i></p>
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**PEACE CORPS
50 IN EUGENE**
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This supplement is produced by the West Cascade Peace Corps Association, a Lane County-based nonprofit organization founded in 1980 by returned Peace Corps Volunteers as a means of staying connected and carrying out the Peace Corps' third goal: to promote world peace by strengthening Americans' understanding of the world and its peoples. WCPCA funds charitable and educational projects that support the goals and ideals of the Peace Corps.

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Maggie Keenan

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