

# West Cascade Peace Corps Association, 2013 Annual Report

## WCPCA's mission

The mission of WCPCA is

*To promote humanitarian and educational programs in connection with accomplishing the third goal of the Peace Corps as mandated by Congress in 1961, "To promote a better understanding of other people on the part of the American people."*

The organization operates as a public charity in accordance with its 501 (c) (3) status with the IRS.

## Introduction

This report summarizes the board's work in 2013 to pursue its mission by serving the membership, reaching out to the general as well as the Peace Corps community in Lane County, and continuing to reorganize its business format.

The 2013 WCPCA board of directors held five board meetings to conduct the organization's business and four potlucks attended by the general membership. A fifth potluck scheduled for December was canceled due to a snow storm and rescheduled in January at which time the 2014 Board of Directors was elected. The October potluck was designated a "general membership meeting" for business purposes. Specifically, members attending voted to amend the bylaws.

The dates and times of board meetings and potlucks were announced in advance in the newsletter, listed on the website's calendar, and open to the full membership as well as those on the emailing list. The major change in the board's working arrangement in 2013 was to depart from a long practice of monthly meetings to meet only as necessary. Five meetings were held in 2013. Fewer meetings meant that the board increasingly relied on email communications to conduct some of its business and for some votes. The constitution permits the board's voting by email.

## Activities for the Lane County RPCV community

The primary socializing activities organized by WCPCA in 2013 were potlucks, book group and discussion group meetings, and a Thai cooking lesson. They are described below.

**Potlucks:** Four potlucks held at members' homes, each with a program, were attended by 30-40 people each. The annual NOM party, organized with the U of O recruiter's office, to celebrate those newly invited to be Peace Corps trainees was held in the Many Nations Longhouse on the U of O campus and attended by approximately 50 people. A fifth potluck, scheduled for December, was canceled due to a snow storm. Juliet Bender and Patty MacAfee were program co-chairs and organized the potlucks.

February 8: A potluck was held at the home of Mary Brooner and John Hannah. Kate Coy (Togo, 2007-2008) described the highlights of her experience as a PCV in a Community Health and Aids Prevention Program.

April 12: Potluck was held at the home of Howard and Marvy Schuman. Elke Richers described her Peace Corps service in Peru, 2010-12.

May 3: NOM party was held to honor those newly nominated as Peace Corps trainees. This was organized in cooperation with Hannah Klausman, U of O Peace Corps recruiter. The event was held in the Many Nations Longhouse on the U of O campus and attended by approximately 50 people.

For the program Megan O'Connor spoke about her training in the Ukraine (2010-2012), Theresa Ring about her housing conditions in Tanzania (2008-2011), and Annie Young-Mathews about her primary and secondary school assignments in Nicaragua (2004-2006).

October 11: A potluck was held at the home of Juliet Bender and Charles Goldsmith. Nancy and Walt Meyer, (Mexico, 2006-2008), described their current work in Mexico to support Stove Team International, a Eugene based nonprofit.

December 6: A potluck was scheduled at the home of Joyce Leader but was canceled due to a snow storm. Maggie Keenan had prepared a slide show of photos contributed by about 15 members to illustrate highlights of their Peace Corps service. The program was used at the January potluck.

**Bookgroup:** The group reads books by Peace Corps authors and meets in members' homes, typically during a month when no potluck is scheduled. It's activities were organized by Patty MacAfee and Juliet Bender.

**Discussion group:** This met once or twice a month at the New Day Bakery in Eugene. Discussion topics varied.

**Thai cooking lesson:** Jeem Peterson (Philippines, 1982-1985, Solomon Islands, 1995-1997) gave a lesson in Thai cooking to about a dozen people. Howard Schuman coordinated the effort. More such evenings are planned.

## **Service activities**

April 9: Approximately 15 WCPCA members and friends volunteered for the clean up crew for Chefs' Night Out, an annual fundraiser of Food for Lane County. James Cloutier organized this evening for WCPCA and also a similar volunteer effort to support FLC's Empty Bowls evening.

September 7: WCPCA members and friends worked as a clean up crew to support the Empty Bowls fundraiser of Food for Lane County.

October 9-11: U of O Street Faire took place and included a Peace Corps booth organized by the U of O Peace Corps recruiter, Laurette Garner. Several WCPCA members volunteered to help staff the booth.

Monthly: In most months a WCPCA crew works one evening at Food for Lane County to package donated food into family size containers for distribution. Dates and times are listed on the website's calendar. Patty MacAfee has organized this activity.

## **Outreach activities**

Through these activities WCPCA members inform the community of their Peace Corps service and the work of WCPCA. They were organized by different people who are identified with the listing of the activities.

January 15: Eight WCPA members took part in panels at South Eugene High School organized by SEHS science teacher, Julia Harvey, to honor Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. on the school's Day of Respect.

July 12-14: WCPA booth at the Oregon Country Fair. Andrew Dempsey-Karp organized this activity.

August 24-25: WCPA participation in the Eugene Celebration in the August 24th parade and with a booth on both days. James Cloutier organized the parade activities and Dorothy Soper organized the booth.

## **Communications and membership maintenance**

Felicia Keeney has been the Communications Coordinator for several years and was responsible for the organization's IT support to maintain a website, a newsletter, and a membership database. Felicia moved from Eugene in December. Throughout the year she worked to train others to assume and carry out her responsibilities. The transition is explained below.

**Website:** WCPA maintains a website of which the URL is [www.westcascadepca.org](http://www.westcascadepca.org). The website lists all current activities and includes a business page on which are posted all of the board meeting minutes and reports for the current year and archives of these documents for past years. Using the website, individuals may join the organization or renew their memberships, see a listing of humanitarian programs funded by WCPA, shop for WCPA products, and read the newsletter. Deb Jones is the webmistress.

During 2013 Deb Jones and Dorothy Soper have streamlined and updated the website so that it will be easier to navigate and less demanding to maintain. Deb and Dorothy know that the font used to list page topics will have to be changed as the website evolves. The current font is in Felicia's handwriting. Suggestions for new fonts are welcome.

**Newsletter:** WCPA published a monthly e-newsletter throughout the year with Deb Jones and Dorothy Soper as coeditors. In January the board adopted a new editorial policy for the newsletter which is quoted below.

*ReConnections serves as a resource to RPCVs and friends in the Eugene and Lane County area through social events, community service projects, and professional development programs that embody the 3rd Goal and spirit of the Peace Corps. The WCPA board reserves the right to choose which activities, projects, and programs will be published. Suggested items may be submitted to [info@westcascadepca.org](mailto:info@westcascadepca.org) for consideration.*

The newsletter is emailed to WCPA members as well as a like number of individuals who are interested in the organization but have not joined. Currently there are approximately 300 names on the email list.

**Emails:** Occasionally emails are sent to the full email list.

**Membership database:** Membership chair, Miriam Aiken, took responsibility for streamlining and maintaining the membership database. She worked with a local firm, NetCorps, to carry out this task.

### **Membership**

Miriam Aiken reported the following membership numbers as of 12/15/13:

36 members who joined as a family group (18 families) (Annual dues are \$22 per family.)

62 individuals (Annual dues are \$15.)

13 PCVs (Free membership)

6 students (Free membership)

12 first year members (Free membership)

Total: 129 members

Of the number above approximately 25 individuals were new to WCPCA in 2013. The total revenue from membership dues in 2013 was \$1,339.26. Dues paid through the website are subject to a small fee to PayPal.

### **Membership directory**

In February the board published a membership directory as a .pdf file which was distributed to the membership by email. This document lists members only and is distributed to members only. New members who join later in the year receive a copy of the directory but are not listed in it until the following year. The directory facilitates contact among members and is a networking tool for the Lane County Peace Corps community.

## **Financial status**

Balance in WCPCA accounts at OCCU, 12/31/13: \$6,306.88

Principal in the Beryl Brinkman Memorial Fund, WCPCA's endowed fund managed by the Oregon Community Foundation, 3/31/13: \$28,893.37. Annual distributions of approximately \$1,100 from this fund may be used only to support humanitarian programs.

Fundraising activities in 2013: Sale of international calendars yielded a profit of \$587. Sale of tee shirts yielded a profit of \$245. Total fundraising profits: \$832.

Primary source of revenue in 2013 was membership dues of \$1,339.

Grants to humanitarian programs: The following grants were made to Peace Corps Partnership projects: Camp Unity West, Ukraine: \$465; Maisha Eflu (A Thousand Lives in KiSwahili through Books for Africa, Kenya: \$1,200. WCPCA also donated \$100 to the Nobel Peace Laureate Project in Eugene to purchase a paver for its walkway. Total granted: \$1,765.

The complete financial statement of 12/31/13 is posted on the website.

## **Survey of interests of those on the mailing list**

In the summer the board distributed an online questionnaire to those on the emailing list to inquire about activities that they would like the organization to undertake. The full report of the outcome of the survey is posted on the business page of the website. Two activities were initiated as a result of the survey's outcome.

The first was the Thai cooking lesson and the invitation for other such activities. The second is the offer by Howard Schuman who volunteered to coordinate a mentoring program for new (and not so new) RPCVs for career development.

Miriam Aiken, John Hannah, and Randall Donohue were responsible for the survey.

### **Fundraising: calendars and tee shirts**

The sale of international calendars and tee shirts was the only fundraising activity in 2013. Last year the board sold only 150 of the 200 calendars ordered and so ordered only 100 to sell this year. The board sold 99 calendars and gave one as a gift.

The board charged \$12 for an individual calendar and \$10 per calendar for purchases of five or more. Most calendars sold at the \$10 price level. Tee shirts are priced at \$20 each. Both items are also sold online through the website with mailing charges added.

The calendars were purchased from the RPCV group of Madison, WI for a total of \$540 or \$5.40 each including postage. Purchase of a lower number carries a higher price.

The calendars' and tee shirts' availability was the subject of several articles in the newsletter but no other sales efforts were undertaken. The NPCA also lists on its website WCPCA as an organization that is selling calendars.

Total receipts for calendar sales were \$1,042; the profit was \$587. For calendars sold online there was a small fee paid to PayPal. Most calendars sold for \$10.

The cost of printing the tee shirts was paid in 2012. All sales now are profit. Approximately a dozen shirts were sold in 2013 for a profit of \$245. Approximately 30 shirts of a broad size range are now in inventory.

Dorothy Soper organized calendar and tee shirt sales.

### **WCPCA donations to humanitarian programs**

WCPCA donated funds to three humanitarian projects in 2013. In May the board donated \$465 to Camp Unity West in Ukraine. One of the program's organizers, Sarah Meher, is from Oregon and contacted the organization to request funds. The program was listed as a Peace Corps Partnership project on the Peace Corps' website.

In October WCPCA donated \$1,200 to Maisha Eifu (A Thousand Lives in KiSwahili), through Books for Africa, which is underway in the Kalawa Division of eastern Kenya. The project director is a PCV from Bend, OR, Amber Gomes. The board designated this program as the recipient of funding from distributions of the Beryl Brinkman Memorial fund. Amber contacted the organization to request funding for the project.

Amber is working to establish libraries in 56 public primary and secondary schools that are participating in a literacy boost inspired by two organizations, Save the Children and World Vision. She's working through the American nonprofit, Books for Africa, which will donate the books but charges shipping costs. Amber has submitted grant proposals to other organizations to raise funds for this purpose. The donation was made directly to Books for Africa since the project had not yet been listed on the Peace Corps website.

In the spring WCPCA donated \$100 to the Nobel Peace Laureate Project in Eugene to purchase a paver for its walkway. The group is creating a section of Alton Baker Park which will be dedicated to American recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Total donations to humanitarian programs in 2013 was \$1,765 of which approximately \$1,100 was received as distributions from the Beryl Brinkman Memorial Fund. All of the organization's donations must be to organizations that have a 501 (c) (3) status with the IRS since WCPCA also has that designation.

## **WCPCA's affiliation with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and the 2013 national conference**

WCPCA renewed its affiliation with NPCA which has been in place since the late 1980s and gives WCPCA a connection to the other 140 affiliates of NPCA as well as the organization's advocacy work. Members of WCPCA may also join or renew their membership through NPCA. The cost is based on the organization's size. WCPCA pays \$100 per year for the affiliation.

Approximately twenty-five WCPCA members maintain their WCPCA membership through the national organization and WCPCA receives several new members through NPCA each year. Often the latter are PCVs just concluding their service. WCPCA follows NPCA's practice of offering a year's free membership to those newly joining. As an affiliate of NPCA, WCPCA must publicize NPCA activities of interest to all RPCV groups.

NPCA organized its annual gathering this year in Boston, June 28-29. The board authorized Dorothy Soper to attend as the WCPCA representative.

## **Other board business**

### **Bylaws amendment**

In the spring the board voted to recommend a change in the bylaws to make them consistent with the 2012 revision to Article VII of the constitution. Proposal: in Article V, Section 4, of the bylaws strike the second part of the sentence. "The Board of Directors meets as the need arises ~~but shall meet at least once a month.~~" The membership voted at the October potluck to approve this change.

### **Regional meeting**

The Pacific Northwest Regional RPCV meeting was held March 1-3 in Boise, Idaho. No one from WCPCA was able to take part. WCPCA is responsible for organizing the 2014 regional meeting.

### **Appointment of new board members**

In April Miriam Aiken resigned as president. In May the board appointed Julia Harvey as president and Howard Schuman as an at large board member.

In February the board voted via email to appoint Bhavani Manheim as an at large member at her request. She resigned from this appointment before attending a board meeting.

Lori Matthew was elected secretary in December, 2012 but resigned in January. The board was unable to fill this position during 2013. Dorothy Soper was the acting secretary.

### **Members of the Board of Directors, 2013**

Presidents: Miriam Aiken and Julia Harvey

Vice President: position unfilled

Secretary: Lori Matthew, resigned in January

Treasurer: Dale Morse

Communications Coordinator: Felicia Kenney

Ex officio: University of Oregon Peace Corps recruiters, Hannah Klausman and Laurette Garner

At large board members: Juliet Bender, James Cloutier, Randall Donohue, Howard Schuman, Dorothy Soper

This report was prepared by Dorothy Soper and approved by the Board of Directors, 1/27/14.