



Dear NOVA RPCV members,

Happy New Year! Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV) is now celebrating our sixth year with increasing membership, active participation in our activities, new website, and partnerships with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). We want to thank you for being members of NOVA RPCV and for participating in our many activities during the year.

For 2019 we already have many great activities planned. So far the following dates and events are already on our calendar:

- 1) National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) Mentor Training – January 12th 10:00 am
- 2) Martin Luther King Voices of Inspiration Gospel Concert - January 20th, Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation 4 pm ([martin-luther-king-celebration](#))
- 3) NOVA RPCV General Meeting and pot luck – Sunday February 10th, 6 pm
- 4) Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party – Saturday February 23rd
- 5) NPCA Advocacy Day of Action in Washington DC – February 28th
- 6) Reston Trail Cleanup – Saturday March 30th

Other activities that are in the planning stage include a tour of the Peace Corps Archives at American University and participation in the Peace Corps Oral History project.

To keep up to date on all our activities, please visit our website at www.novarpcv.org or click [here](#)

Now for a recap of our 2018 activities.

- **Held four General Meetings** with delicious pot luck treats – thanks to our hosts Joyce and Mo Moses, Randy Adams and Mary Jo Smreckar, Jean Parcher, Lynn and Phil Lilienthal and to our speakers Jonathan Pearson (NPCA), Hank Ambrose (NPCA), Jodi Hammer (Peace Corps), and Pat Wand (Peace Corps Oral History Project).
- **Added a new Board position – Social Coordinator** –special thanks to Elaine Staab for volunteering and doing a great job of organizing happy hours, free concert events, hiking events and more. Many of the events were coordinated with RPCV/W members.

- **Expanded the NOVA RPCV website** to include RSVP'ing for events using the calendar and a shorter URL (www.novarpcv.org) thanks to Sarah Samuel.
- **Conducted four trail cleanups** -Thanks to Erica Brouillette for leading the effort and appreciation for all those who volunteered
- **Expanded our NOVA RPCV booth at the Reston Multicultural Festival** to also include a photo booth with props that kids used to advertise #Future Peace Corps Volunteer. Thanks to Erica Brouillette, Sara Holtz, Steve Cristofar, Sarah Samuel, and Kevin Zimmerman for leading the event and all the volunteers for staffing the booth.
- **Supported another successful Refugee Welcome Kits packing party** in April for the Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Region Refugee and Immigrant program. NOVA RPCVs were joined by Rotary International and Herndon Reston Indivisible Immigration Issues Committee. We prepared 55 Refugee Welcome Kits. Thanks to Erica Brouillette. NOVA RPCV volunteers provided assistance to refugees in sorting donations and driving new immigrants to appointments.
- **Raised funds for Peace Corp Partnership projects** by selling Peace Corps calendars Thanks to Janna Marchione for organizing this.
- **Supported several Peace Corps Partnership projects and Global Camps Africa**

I want to thank the NOVA RPCV Board for all the hard work that they do – they are really tremendous and dedicated. We are always looking for new Committee leads and members to lead up activities. We would love to have volunteers for our Speaker Bureau and Mentoring of newly returned RPCV's. We need your ideas and energy. You can contact any of the Board members at novarpcv@gmail.com or myself directly at jwparcher@gmail.com In 2020 we will have several Board positions opening up – please consider serving.

We will continue to support four general meetings a year. We are always looking for speakers and hosts for the meetings. Please contact us at novarpcv@gmail.com to volunteer or provide ideas.

2018 Activities

Website and Membership

Check out our website and sign up! Go to www.novarpcv.org

The website was rolled out in September 2017 and all members were invited to create or update a membership profile. Over the course of 2018 reminder messages were sent out to expired members (people who had not created a membership profile and/or had not selected a membership option) encouraging them to log on to the website and activate or update their accounts.

During the fourth quarter of 2018 we began using the website to advertise events including allowing members to RSVP to the event by logging on and signing up. Our first newsletter was written in December 2018, which focused on the summary of the November General Meeting.

All members can access reports from our quarterly meetings, the annual reports, and treasurer reports on the website at **Who We Are/Documents**. These reports and other information of interest to the membership will be included in Newsletter mailings. Over the coming year we will rely on using the active membership list for disseminating information about NOVA RPCV activities and events. So if you have not created an account on the website, we will not be able to keep you informed of our activities.

Community Service Activities

NOVA RPCV volunteers served a total of 447 hours in 2018! We maintained our commitment to keep the environment green as a Third Goal project by conducting our four Trail Cleanups. Our other Third Goal project, the Reston Multicultural Festival Booth, was a big success again this past year, attracting a multitude of patrons. This year, we introduced another interactive activity, a photo booth for kids. This actually drew a diverse crowd of families and adults alike! Big thank you to Sara Holtz for her fun and popular idea!

Our larger service projects of the year were both Rotary-Peace Corps Partnership projects: the second Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party and the Walk for Peace & Peace Expo. For the packing party, we collected needed items for refugees and packed 55 total Refugee Welcome Kits (25 Cleaning Kits, 25 Toiletry Kits and five Linen Kits) that LSS/NCA brought to their offices in a van. 30 volunteers helped out for a total of 45 hours. *(Save the date for our next one: Saturday, February 23, 2019.)*

For the Walk, we convened people together in the name of peace. Falls Church Rotary hosted an important and inspirational "Walk for Peace & Peace Expo" benefit that raised awareness for peace and helped fund contributions to local nonprofit organizations and community projects that Falls Church Rotary supports. The walk took place along a scenic two-mile route and featured peace-related signage along the route. Along with the walk, we showcased a Peace Expo for attendees to connect directly with organizations promoting peace through their work, including NOVA RPCV. Part of the inspiration came from two speakers discussing their peace work. About 60 people attended this successful project, which was the first event of its kind for Falls Church Rotary. Five NOVA RPCV volunteers gave time during this event, totaling 15 hours. Check out photos from the event here: <https://www.facebook.com/FallsChurchRotary/>.

Thank you for your service!

Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Area (LSS/NCA) Refugee and Immigrant Services (RIS) Program

Several of our members have become certified drivers for LSS/NCA. During the year we have driven refugees and refugee families to health clinics, job fairs, clothing services, banks, and social security administration and local government offices. In certain situations, we have helped new refugees with understanding and moving through the processes at local government offices. We have picked up newly arriving refugees from Dulles airport and taken them to their new home in the US. We have also helped organize household type donations at the local LSS/NCA office.

This work will continue in the future. We also hope to expand our connection with LSS/NCA to assist with various other needs of refugee families.

Treasurer's Report

Our funds come from dues and the sales of Peace Corps calendars. In 2017 our balance at the end of the year was \$2486.86. Currently we have \$2688.62 in the bank not including an outstanding check for \$250.00 written to Peace Corps Partnerships right before the government shutdown. Our goal is to provide up to \$1,000 a year for Peace Corps or Community partnership projects.

Charitable Gift Giving

Two new members were added to the Charitable Gift Committee in 2018.

In 2018 two Peace Corps Partnership projects were approved for NOVA RPCV donations. The \$250 in funding for Armenia – “Digital Literacy to Empower Young Women” - has been sent to the Peace Corps office. The other project in Namibia – “Water Security” - was fully funded before we could process the donation.

The NOVA RPCV Board also approved a donation of \$250 to Global Camps Africa in memory of Ellen Moyer. Ellen helped to host many of the South African Volchellis (camp counselors) when they worked summers here in the DC area.

As of this writing, the Peace Corps office is on furlough due to the government shutdown. Once the PC Partnership is back up & running, additional projects will be considered for NOVARPCV funding.

Advocacy Activities

Several of our members participated in the annual Advocacy Day at Congress and the Health Justice Advocacy day. This resulted in level funding for Peace Corps and for improvements to Peace Corps volunteers medical support during and after Peace Corps. Contacts with Virginia Senators and northern Virginia Representatives by our members were part of the success for these initiatives.

Social Activities

This year NOVA RPCV members have enjoyed various events including a NOVA RPCV and RPCV/W happy hour in Tysons Corner, two Jazz in the Garden events in DC, an evening of Brazilian Music at the Reston Town Center, and a hike on the C&O Canal from Old Angler's Inn.

In the spring we plan to host a wine tasting tour. Many members have also expressed interest in music events at Wolf Trap, art festivals, and hiking at local parks. Please continue to check our website for upcoming events and email us any event ideas or suggestions you might have.

Plans for 2019

Community Service Volunteer Activities 2019

Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party

We have set a date of Saturday, February 23, 2019 for our next Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party to support the refugees served by LSS/NCA's Refugee and Immigrant Services program. Sign up to bring needed refugee items here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044eacab2da0fc1-refugee2>

Walk for Peace & Peace Expo - Falls Church Rotary

Falls Church Rotary's second "Walk for Peace & Peace Expo" benefit will be held in Fall 2019. The event will again raise awareness for peace and help fund the community projects that Falls Church Rotary supports, which include student academic scholarships and contributions to local nonprofit organizations. Stay tuned for updates! You can learn more about Rotary at rotary.org and Falls Church Rotary at www.fallschurchrotary.org. Please visit the NPCA Affiliate Group, Partnering for Peace, at <http://www.partneringforpeace.org/> for more information about the official Rotary-Peace Corps Partnership.

Other Activities

We will continue to participate in Quarterly Trail Cleanups in Reston and have an active presence at the Reston Multicultural Festival in September. For more information and ideas, please contact Erica Brouillette at our email address, novarpcv@gmail.com or check the calendar on our website at

<https://northernvirginiarpcvs.peacecorpsconnect.org/cpages/projects>.

Social Activities 2019

Martin Luther King Celebration

On Sunday, January 20th members are invited to attend an event with sensational gospel singing in a special Voices of Inspiration program sponsored by the Reston Martin Luther King, Jr. Church and hosted by the Northern Virginia Hebrew Congregation (1441 Wiehle Ave., Reston, VA 20191).

The program starts at 4 pm but we recommend arriving a few minutes early so that we may enter and sit together as a group. Following the program, members are also invited to dinner at Cafe Montmartre, a French restaurant in Lake Anne Village Center (1625 Washington Plaza N, Reston, VA 20190). Please rsvp for the event on our website: <https://www.novarpcv.org/events/2019-martin-luther-king-celebration>

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Advocacy 2019

The next NPCA Day of Action is scheduled for February 28th, 2019 in Washington DC at the Capital. These Advocacy Days of Action are very well coordinated with scheduled meetings set up with our Congressional Representatives and Senators. The advocacy topics are focused on specific Peace Corps related issues. The Peace Corps is a non-partisan topic which normally gets a warm welcome from our Congress. Registration for Advocacy Day closes on February 10. To sign up [click here](#).

NOVA RPCV Board

Jean Parcher, President
Steve Cristofar, Vice President
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Sarah Samuel, Membership and Communications
Duane Karlen, Secretary
Erica Brouillette, Community Service
Elaine Staab, Social Committee
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