

January 2, 2017

Dear NOVA RPCV Members,

Happy New Year! Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV) is now celebrating our fourth year with increasing membership, active participation in our activities, 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. In 2016 we had:

- Five General Meetings (thanks to our hosts – (Jean Parcher (January), Ann DeLong (May), Ann Baker (July), Don Boileau (September), and the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Fairfax (March)).
- Four trail cleanups (thanks to Erica Brouillette for leading the effort and appreciation for all those that volunteered)
- Volunteer support and participation in the Peace Corps 55th Anniversary and Connect Conference
- NOVA RPCV booth at the Reston Multicultural Festival (thanks to Kevin Zimmerman for leading the event while many of our members were in DC for the 55th Anniversary)
- Established the Charitable Gift Giving Committee and contributed to a Peace Corps Partnership project in Moldova for improving access to Emergency Services
- Sold out of the 50 Peace Corps calendars to raise funds for Peace Corp Partnership projects (thanks to Steve Cristofar for organizing this)

I want to thank the NOVA RPCV Board for all the hard work that they do – they are really tremendous and hard working. A big shout out goes to Sarah Samuel for her extensive communication activities; Erica Brouillette for spearheading the Community Service activities; Steve Cristofar for handling the sale of the calendars and the Charitable Gift Giving Committee (with support from Ann DeLong and Andrea George); Lynn Lilienthal for keeping track of our budget and dues; Don Boileau for his work as the Advocacy Coordinator for Virginia; and Duane Karlen, Erica Brouillette, and Stephanie Arnold for serving as our liaisons with NPCA for the 55th Anniversary and Connect Conference.

Sadly, we lost a valuable member of our Peace Corps community, Steve Clapp, on December 1st in Culpepper, VA. Steve was a Returned PC Volunteer in Nigeria; author of several books, including "Fixing the Food System;" member of NOVA RPCV; Vice President of Friends of Nigeria; and a wonderful photographer. He will be greatly missed. For more information about Steve's books and life, please visit the site <https://steveclapp.wordpress.com/>.

Community Service Activities

During the year, our community service activities focused on the quarterly Old Trail Drive and Natural Areas Trail Cleanup, Reston Multicultural Festival Booth, and the Peace Corps 55th Anniversary and Connect Conference. We've tracked 407 volunteer hours in 2016. Thank you all for service!

Treasurer's Report

From the financial side, our current balance is \$2,012. Thanks to your dues contributions and to the sale of the RPCV Calendars, we are now able to support on a regular basis Peace Corps Partnership projects with guidance from our Charitable Gift Giving Committee.

We will continue to collect dues. For those that normally pay dues through NPCA, they will still collect for us. For those who prefer to pay directly, we collected dues at our annual meeting or you can contact our Treasurer at NOVARPCV@gmail.com.

Advocacy Activities

Members participated in the National Peace Corps Association Advocacy Days in March and again in September by lobbying members of Congress to support health care reforms and an increased budget to meet the demands of countries and applicants.

Plans for 2017

General Meetings

We have decided to reduce our General Meetings to once a quarter – Feb, May, August, and November. This will give us more time to participate in volunteer activities. Our next General Meeting will be on February 12th from 6 to 8pm at the Unitarian

Volunteer Activities

In 2017, we plan to expand our participation in supporting refugees in the Northern Virginia area (you will hear more about this at our February 12th Annual Meeting). 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.

Charitable Gift Giving

With a healthy reserve in our bank account that we plan to use to support multiple Peace Corps Partnership projects this year. For more information, please contact Steve Cristofar at scristofar2@verizon.net

NOVA RPCV Website

We have applied for a grant from NPCA to help finance the costs of developing our NOVA RPCV website under the NPCA Silk Start framework. We are looking for volunteers to help develop the site and to maintain it. If you are interested, please contact Sarah Samuel at slsamuel77@verizon.net

Advocacy Activities

Don Boileau is our Northern Virginia Regional Representative for Peace Corps Advocacy activities. There are plans for a Washington DC Advocacy Day in early March. Other activities may include asking RPCVs to write letters to the editors of their local newspapers. For more information, please contact dmboileau@verizon.net

Happy Hours with Affinity RPCV Groups

Based on our new friendships with several Affinity RPCV groups in the area (USAID, State Department, EPA, and others) and our continuing partnership with RPCV Washington, we hope to plan some joint happy hours. We hope you can attend and use these events to network. Thanks to Randy Adams for his support.

Rotary International

Peace Corps has officially partnered with Rotary International. NOVA RPCV would like to engage this partnership by involving the Falls Church Rotary Club in our pending refugee support efforts. Currently Erica Brouillette is the President of the Falls Church Rotary Club and with her energy, enthusiasm, and contacts we can expand our resources to provide ongoing support to refugees in the area. Erica welcomes your ideas. You can learn more about Rotary at rotary.org and the Falls Church Rotary Club at fallschurchrotary.org.

Additional Activities and Volunteer Opportunities

Our NOVA RPCV Board is open to suggestions for activities – such as hosting a dinner at a local restaurant as a fundraiser, supporting a local nonprofit by providing meals or donations, or a fun night of Trivial Pursuit or Bingo. We need your ideas and your energy. Please feel free to contact me, Jean Parcher, at jwparcher@gmail.com with your ideas and energy.

May 2017 be a wonderful year for us all.

Sincerely,
Jean Parcher
President of NOVA RPCV