

Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers  
Annual Report 2015  
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We are now celebrating our third year as the Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteer group. In 2015 we had an exciting year filled with activities and membership growth. We have strengthened our partnership with NPCA and with RPCV-Washington. We received a small grant from the NPCA Education Small Grants to support our Reston Multi-Cultural Festival with materials for improved map boards. We set our priorities for NOVA RPCV for the next few years and expanded our general meetings to include Happy Hours. We have been participating in the planning activities for the Peace Corps 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and with the newly formed NPCA Health Justice Group.

During 2015 we continued to hold General Meetings on the second Sunday of every other month as potlucks at host member's houses. At these General Meetings we normally had a speaker to either present on their Peace Corps experience or a representative from a local non-profit that members could get involved in. We also organized two happy hours, one in conjunction with RPCV-W and the other as a General Meeting. A special thanks to all that hosted the General Meetings.

#### Priority Goal Setting

Per recommendation at our Annual Meeting, we held a brainstorming session for setting our NOVA RPCV priorities during the May 3<sup>rd</sup> General Meeting. Initially we focused on themes for the priorities – Community Service, Third Goal Activities, Advocacy, Supporting PCV's before, during and after service, and Interfacing with International Organizations. All ideas were greatly welcomed. Later the NOVA RPCV Board divided up the activities into the following categories:

- 1) Priorities that we are doing now and will continue
- 2) Priorities that we wish to implement now – awaiting a lead volunteer
- 3) Priorities that NPCA or RPCV –Washington are doing now, that we can join in with – awaiting a NOVA RPCV coordinator or liaison
- 4) Priorities that we can provide information on how you can participate on an individual basis
- 5) Priorities that we will table until we have additional resources

See attached appendix for more details. We continue to support the Community Service activities including the Reston Trail Cleanup, the Reston Multicultural Festival, and Habitat for Humanity Restore. We also continued to sell the Madison, Wisconsin RPCV calendars as a fundraiser and participated in the NPCA Advocacy Activities. The activities that we are moving forward on are – partnering with Interfaith Organizations for food donations, becoming more involved with Rotary International, supporting Paul Coverdell World Wise Schools speakers program, and

providing information on how members can become involved in the Literacy Council of Northern Virginia. At our Annual Meeting scheduled for March 13, 2016 we will review the priorities and solicit additional resources to support the activities important to us.

### National Peace Corps Association

At our first Annual Meeting was held on March 8<sup>th</sup> at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Fairfax, where we had the pleasure to host Glenn Blumhorst, President of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). Glenn provided us with an overview of the NPCA, a recap of the current activities and focus for NPCA in 2015. (See General Meeting minutes from March 8<sup>th</sup>). One big change with NPCA is that they will no longer collect dues. This means that everyone is a member of NPCA! Their fundraising will focus on specific activities. For more information – see the appendix about NPCA's new structure.

During the year various Board members continued to participate in meetings and conference calls with NPCA concerning the planning committee for the Peace Corps 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary –scheduled for September 23,24<sup>th</sup>, 2016. Planning activities will go into full gear in 2016. NOVA RPCV hopes to co-lead an event or two.

In collaboration with the NPCA, we co-hosted the Health Justice Awareness Day Forum in Arlington on August 11<sup>th</sup> where we heard testimony from physicians, returned volunteers, and NPCA about this critical need to provide better health services to volunteers injured in the field or returning with various illnesses. NOVA RPCV continues to participate in meetings and conference calls with NPCA, Peace Corps, and the Health Justice Affinity group.

### Community Service Activities

During the year, we had many community service activities – Glade Trail Cleanup, Habitat for Humanity Restore, and the Reston Multicultural Festival. We also added food donation collections at our General Meetings.

For 2016 we have planned the following additional activities:

- 1) Member survey to solicit opinions on when to hold general meetings, where to hold them, and what would they look like? This survey is targeted for January.
- 2) Co-hosting an event at the Peace Corps 55<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration scheduled for September 23 - 25, 2016
- 3) Continuation of Community Service Events
- 4) Greater Participation with Rotary International

And in order to continue our successful activities and expand into a few more, the NOVA RPCV Board is looking for members to take on some short term positions. Please let us know if you are interested in any of the following:

- 1) Support for our Communications Director – Sarah Samuel
- 2) Representative liaison to the NPCA for the 55th Anniversary Celebration,
- 3) Representative to the Health Justice Advocacy Group,
- 4) Support for the Community Service Activities
- 5) Liaison with the Paul Coverdale World Wise Schools speaker program to maintain a list of NOVA RPCV speakers.
- 6) Liaison with RPCV/W and their mentoring program for newly returned volunteers
- 7) Coordinate donations for PC Partnership projects with PCV's from Northern Virginia

#### Appendix A Officer Positions

President - Jean Parcher

Vice President - Stephen Cristofar

Secretary & Communications Director - Sarah Samuel

Treasurer – Lynn Lilienthal

Community Service Coordinator – Erica Brouillette

Advocacy Coordinator (All of Virginia) – Don Boileau

At Large Member – Duane Karlen

NPCA Mid Atlantic Regional Representative – Randy Adams

#### Appendix B NOVA RPCV Priority Activities

##### **High Priorities that we are doing now and will continue:**

Community Service: Continue roadside cleanup and volunteering at Re-Store in Chantilly

Third Goal: Participate in Reston Multicultural Festival

Sell Madison Wisconsin RPCV Calendars as a Fundraiser

##### **Priorities that we wish to implement now (need some volunteers)**

Partner with Cornerstones (formerly Reston Interfaith). One easy way is to collect food and bring to our general meetings for distribution to Food Pantry in Reston.

Action: At each meeting select an organization or food bank (Cornerstones, Carpenters, Facets, etc.) for members to donate food and other needed items.

Participate in Rotary Partnership service; indicate interest in speaking at Rotary Club meetings (PC and Rotary International have signed a collaborative agreement to promote global development and volunteer service.)

Action: Dick Pyle has volunteered to lead this activity.

**Priorities that NPCA or RPCV -Washington are doing now, that we can join in with – awaiting a NOVA RPCV coordinator or liaison**

Participate in Paul Coverdale World Wise Schools speaker program

Action: Provide members with link to sign up and participate. Request for a member to lead this activity.

Participate in PC Partnership projects with NoVa PCV's and support PCV projects with NoVa Volunteers.

Action: Request for a member to lead this activity.

Mentor new PC applicants and RPCV's after return home. Advise new PCV's on what to expect.

Action: RPCV/Washington already does this. Request for a member to lead this activity.

Participate in NPCA Advocacy Day with the goal of meeting with Virginia Senators and NoVa Reps (Connelly, Comstock, Beyer). Try to meet with all Virginia Reps.

Action: Don Boileau has volunteered to be the Northern Virginia NPCA Advocacy POC-

Explore possibilities for traveling as a group with NPCA "Next Step" travel program and provide service.

Action: Talk to Anne Baker of NPCA about how to organize this for one of our PC countries.

**Priorities that we can provide information on how you can participate on an individual basis**

Work with Literacy Council of Northern Virginia

Action: Steve Cristofar provided a speaker at our November General Meeting

Participate in SERVAS International by hosting people and groups from other countries when they come to area. (Note: SERVAS goal is peace and understanding through travel and hosting.)

Action: Tell members about this and provide them with the website.

## **Priorities to be tabled until we have more resources**

Explore building partnerships with alumni of volunteer groups in other countries, e.g. Japanese, German, British, etc.

Action: *No action proposed.*

Financially support Camp GLOW (Girls Leading Our World) when it has proven HCN support for sustainability

Action: *Table this for future consideration*

Bring camp-age kids from low-income housing in Reston to camp fair at Reston Community Center and explore financial assistance to camp programs.

Action: *Consider for 2016 spring.*