



January, 2018

Dear NOVA RPCV Members,

Happy New Year! Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV) is now celebrating our fifth 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 2017, we did the following.

- Organized four General Meetings – thanks to our hosts – Pam and Tim McCarthy, Jean Parcher, and Unitarian Congregation of Fairfax. And thanks to our speakers – Amber Phillips, Khalan Boyer, and Carlos Torres
- Developed a new Nova RPCV Website
<https://northernvirginiarpcvs.peacecorpsconnect.org> (thanks to Sarah Samuel, Erica Brouillette, and Kevin Zimmerman)
- Conducted four trail cleanups (thanks to Erica Brouillette for leading the effort and appreciation for all those who volunteered)
- Hosted a NOVA RPCV booth at the Reston Multicultural Festival (thanks to Erica Brouillette, Steve Cristofar, Sarah Samuel, and Kevin Zimmerman for leading the event and all the volunteers for staffing the booth)
- Supported Lutheran Social Services of the National Capital Region Refugee and Immigrant program by packing 48 Refugee Welcome Kits in July as part of a local Rotary-Peace Corps Partnership Project. Nova RPCV volunteers provided assistance to refugees in sorting donations and driving to appointments.
- Initiated Nova RPCV Speakers Bureau with a survey and coordination (thanks to Dick Pyle for leading this effort)
- Raised funds for Peace Corp Partnership projects by selling Peace Corps calendars (thanks to Steve Cristofar for organizing this)
- Collected winter coats and clothes for the refugees supported by Lutheran Social Services
- Organized a Happy Hour with Affinity Groups – USAID, State Dept, EPA, and Homeland Security

I want to thank the NOVA RPCV Board for all the hard work that they do – they are really tremendous and dedicated. We do have some positions open on the Board and greatly welcome new Board members or Committee leads. If you have an idea of leading an activity – such as Mentoring of RPCVs or Fund Raising or whatever, please volunteer. 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

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.

Website and Membership

During the first quarter of 2017, the NOVA RPCV Board of Directors decided to convert our membership database to a platform that is tied in to the web management software used by National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). Using our membership information collected since the inception of the group and with the active involvement of Sarah Samuel, Erica Brouillette, and Kevin Zimmerman we developed our new website using the SilkStart software platform. The website was introduced during September and all members were invited to create or update a membership profile.

Check out our website and sign up! Go to <https://northernvirginiarpcvs.peacecorpsconnect.org/cpages/home>

We are linked to the NPCA website and we have recommended that all members maintain an NPCA membership (free) from which a member can connect to NOVA RPCV. We have two options for membership in NOVA RPCV – one year free and one year contributing (\$15). As of the end of 2017, we have 69 active members (free or contributing) and 129 expired members. We will be managing the expired memberships by periodic reminders encouraging everyone to renew.

Members who prefer not to join the NPCA but to pay directly to NOVA RPCV, we will collect dues during our Annual meeting this February 11th or you can mail your \$15 to our Treasurer, Lynn Lilienthal, at 11400 Orchard Lane, Reston, VA 20190 (check can be made out to NOVA RPCV).

Community Service Activities

NOVA RPCV volunteers served a total of 408 hours in 2017! 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.

The service project highlight of the year was our Rotary-Peace Corps Partnership Project, the Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party, where we collected needed items for refugees and packed 48 total Refugee Welcome Kits (24 Cleaning Kits and 24 Toiletry Kits). There were 20 volunteers who helped out for a total of 40 hours, which is by far the most hours for one project we've had to date! *(Save the date for our next one: Saturday, April 28.)* Thank you for your service!

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

During the year, Nova RPCV members volunteered more than 81 hours at the Lutheran Social Services for their refugees by sorting donations and driving immigrants to appointments. Thank you go Janna Marchione, Mary Jo Smreker, and Steve Cristofar.

At our November General meeting, we collected more than 160 winter clothing items that were donated to the LSS/NCA office in Hyattsville, MD to be distributed to the refugees. Thanks to all who donated and to Duane Karlen for sorting and delivering the items.

Treasurer's Report

From the financial side, our current balance is \$2,486. 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.

Charitable Gift Giving

In February, we donated \$250 to PC Partnership Project "Philippines/Building Community Resilience to Climate Change Through a Small Island Ridge-to-Reef Approach," sponsored by Virginia PCV A. Sullivan.

In September 2017, we approved a \$250 donation to "Burkino Faso/Kenedougou Child Development Center," sponsored by Virginia PCV D. Angers. However, just before the check was sent, all PCVs were evacuated from that country due to civil unrest, so the donation was not made.

Advocacy Activities

At our May General meeting, we handed out postcards for the attendees to write a quick note about the importance of Peace Corps and request for additional funding to our Senate and House Congressional representatives. Don Boileau delivered the following to the appropriate offices:

Rep Comstock – six cards
Representative Beyer – three cards
Representative Connolly – 16 cards
Senator Kaine – 23 cards
Senator Warner – 24 cards

Plans for 2018

General Meetings

We will continue to have our General Meetings quarterly – February, May, August, and November. This will give us more time to participate in volunteer activities. Our next General Meeting will be on February 11th from 6 to 8pm at the Mosby's house in Fairfax. Our speaker will be Jonathan Pearson.

Volunteer Activities

We have set a date of Saturday April 28th for our next Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party to support the refugees served by LSS/NCA RIS program. 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://northern-virginia-rpcvs-npca.silkstart.com/events>

Speakers Bureau

Plans for the Speakers Bureau in 2018 is to continue to look for a community partner or partners who we can enter into an agreement (Memorandum of Agreement) which results in the utilization of Northern Virginia RPCVs as speakers. Dick Pyle is our lead in this activity.

Charitable Gift Giving

With a healthy reserve in our bank account, we plan to support multiple Peace Corps Partnership projects this year. The criteria for review and approval of projects can be found on our website:

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

Advocacy Activities

Don Boileau is our Northern Virginia Regional Representative for Peace Corps Advocacy activities. The next NPCA Advocacy event is scheduled for March 1, 2018.

Please sign up to participate on Advocacy Day
at <https://advocacy.peacecorpsconnect.org/national-days-of-action/>

Walk for Peace & Peace Expo – Falls Church Rotary Club

The Falls Church Rotary Club's first “Walk for Peace & Peace Expo” benefit will be held on Saturday, March 24, 2018. The event will raise awareness for peace and help fund our community projects that the Falls Church Rotary Club supports, which include student academic scholarships and contributions to local nonprofit organizations. The walk will take place along a scenic 2.2 mile route with a \$20 early bird donation from each walker and will feature peace-related signage along the route. Along with the walk, we will showcase a Peace Expo for attendees to connect directly with organizations and agencies promoting peace through their work. You can learn more about Rotary at rotary.org and the Falls Church Rotary Club at www.fallschurchrotary.org. Please visit the NPCA Affiliate Group, Partnering for Peace, at partneringforpeace.org for more information about the official Rotary-Peace Corps Partnership.

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.

Have a wonderful 2018 – Come out and join us in our activities supporting the 3rd Goal of Peace Corps

Sincerely,

Jean Parcher
President, NOVA RPCV