



Dear NOVA RPCV members,

Happy New Year! Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV) is now celebrating our seventh year with growing membership, active participation in many activities, and partnership 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 2020 we already have many great activities planned. So far the following dates and events are already on our calendar at <https://www.novarpcv.org/events>

- 1) Winter Solstice Potluck – January 11th 6 pm
- 2) NOVA RPCV General Meeting and pot luck – Sunday February 23rd, 6 pm
- 3) Refugee Welcome Kits packing party – Saturday February 22nd
- 4) NPCA Advocacy Day on the Hill – March 5th
- 5) Reston Trail Cleanup – Saturday March 28th
- 6) Reston Multi-Cultural Festival – September date TBD
- 7) Reston Community Center viewing of Towering Task and panel discussion with the producer Alana DeJoseph – November 17th
- 8) Ongoing interviews for Peace Corps Oral History project

To keep up to date on all our activities, please visit our website at www.novarpcv.org or click <https://www.novarpcv.org/cpages/home>

I want to thank the NOVA RPCV Board for all the hard work that they do – they are really tremendous and dedicated. And welcome our new Board members – Debbie Pinkney and Charlaine Loriston. Actually Debbie was one of our founding Board members seven years ago. We are open to new committee members to lead up 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. In 2020 we will have the President and the Secretary 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.

And a special thanks to Sarah Samuel, the email and Facebook face of our NOVA RPCV. She not only keeps us all informed of activities, manages the website, answers our NOVA RPCV emails, but also tracks active and non-active members.

Nova RPCV Board Activities 2019

Website and Membership

At the beginning of 2019 we began publishing all events on our SilkStart website. During 2019 we advertised 27 events available to members including both NOVA RPCV sponsored events and events sponsored by external organizations. In addition to advertising on our website, we posted information about events on our Facebook group page (NOVA RPCVs).

When events are created for our group, we implemented the option to advertise those events on the NPCA Events Calendar and to share the event with other Affiliate Groups that are also on the SilkStart platform.

At the end of 2019 we had 80 active members in our membership database. During 2019 there were 16 new members. Also during 2019 we modified our membership plans to change Free Membership to First Year Free membership. Once a member has joined for Free, on renewal only Contributing Membership \$15 is available.

To support the Affiliate Group SilkStart administrators NPCA created a Community Building Platform Admins Group where administrators can ask questions and seek help with technical questions associated with the SilkStart platform that we have converted to.

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

Treasurer's Report

We had \$2688.62 at the beginning of the year and \$1838.36 at end of the year. The majority of our funds were spent on the Peace Corps Partnerships for Peace Corps volunteers with roots from Virginia.

Third Goal Activities

General Meeting Potlucks

Shared delicious food and experiences in our four quarterly general meeting and potluck

gatherings with invited speakers. The speakers included Valerie Kurka from the Peace Corps Refugee Affiliate group, Eric Goplerud from the Fairfax County Faith Alliance for Climate Solutions (FACS), Mira Mendick, Refugee Community Liaison Coordinator from the Lutheran Social Services North Capital Area Refugee Resettlement Program, and Debbie Pinkney on the status of Peace Corps today in Lesotho and Cameroon from a staff perspective. And a great appreciation to the Lilienthal's for hosting several of the meetings.

Kennedy Center Peace Corps Reach Activity

As part of the inaugural opening of the Kennedy Center Reach campus, the Peace Corps was highlighted with the premier showing of the movie *A Towering Task*, produced by Alana DeJoseph, and a show room of Peace Corps interactive activities on September 22nd. Nova RPCV participated by hosting two booths: interactive maps where participants placed colored pins to show where they served in the Peace Corps, or lived overseas, or were born overseas; and Peace Corps photo booth with frames saying "Future Peace Corps Volunteer" and "Global Citizen".

Reston Multicultural Festival

For our fifth year, Nova RPCV participated in the Reston Multicultural Festival on September 28th. Our activities were similar to the Kennedy Center Reach booths – interactive maps and photo booths. Our booth location was next to the swearing in ceremony for new citizens.

Peace Corps Oral History Project

In 2019 Nova RPCV purchased a Zoom recorder and received training in conducting Peace Corps Oral History interviews for the Kennedy Library. The Peace Corps Oral History project is a NPCA project with collaboration from affiliate groups. Randy Adams and Charlaine Loriston are our leads who oversee our interviewers, of which we currently have 6 trained. Please email novarpcv@gmail.com if interested in being interviewed.

RPCV/W Returned Volunteer Mentor Program

Nova RPCV members received training in how to become mentors to recently returned Peace Corps Volunteers. Randy Adams shared his excellent resources from his many years participating in this program as both a mentor and a trainer. Currently the trained mentors are working with RPCV/W to receive names of mentorees.

Community Service Activities

NOVA RPCV volunteers served a total of 575 hours in 2019! We maintained our commitment to keep the environment green as a Third Goal project by conducting our four Trail Cleanups.

Our larger service project of the year was with Rotary-Peace Corps Partnership projects in support of the third Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party. For the packing party, we collected needed items for refugees and packed 55 total Refugee Welcome Kits (25 Cleaning Kits and 25 Toiletry Kits, and five Linen Kits) that LSS/NCA brought to their offices in a van. 50 volunteers helped out for a total of 45 hours. (Save the date for our next one: Saturday, February 22, 2020.)

Thank you for your service!

Charitable Gift Giving

In 2019, the Charitable Giving Committee recommended, and the Board approved, donations to three PC Partnership projects sponsored by serving PCVs from Virginia, as follows

\$250 for new classrooms in Liberia, approved in March,

\$250 for library development in Indonesia, also in March,

\$500 for a solar power water supply in The Gambia, in May.

NPCA activities

Two Nova RPCV Board members, Duane Karlen and Don Boileau, attended the very moving Peace Corps and NPCA ceremony held on May 10 to honor the 303 PCVs who have died in service since 1962. A guest of honor at the ceremony was Donna Mack, who along with her daughter Chelsea, has formed an organization to honor fallen PCVs in honor of her son Jeremiah, who died in Niger in 1997

Advocacy Activities

Several of our members participated in the annual Advocacy Day at Congress. This resulted in level funding for Peace Corps at \$415 million. This funding amount has been the same for the last 5 years. In 2020 National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) will request an increase to \$450 million. Contacts with Virginia Senators and northern Virginia Representatives by our members were part of the success for these initiatives. Additionally

members of Nova RPCV reached out to our representatives to support Peace Corps when 110 House representatives voted to eliminate the Peace Corps on June 11, 2019.

Social Events

Several social events were planned by our social events coordinator, Elaine Staab. In January 2019 several members participated in a Martin Lutheran King Celebration and group dinner in Reston, VA. In April NOVA RPCV members toured the Peace Corps Archives at American University. In June members joined RPCV/W Hikes for a hike in Harper's Ferry and then visited Bureau Vineyards for a presentation on climate change. In Late summer there was also a hike at Riverbend State Park.

Plans for 2020

Community Service Volunteer Activities 2020

Refugee Welcome Kits Packing Party

We have set a date of Saturday, February 22, 2020, 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: signupgenius.com/go/10C044EACAB2DA0FC1-refugee3.

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 2020

To start 2020 NOVA RPCV hosted a Winter Solstice Party at the home of member Sara Holtz. Turnout was greater than expected and members enjoyed conversations and our bingo ice-breaker. We appreciate Sara's continuing efforts to support our group and her community outreach. Moving further into the year we are looking forward to more social gatherings and hiking trips. Since Elaine will be most likely assuming the position as secretary on our NOVA RPCV Board we will be looking for a new social events coordinator

who would be interested in organizing future social events. Please contact us if you are interested.

Advocacy 2020

The next NPCA Day of Action is scheduled for March 5th, 2020 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. And Peace Corps is a non-partisan topic which normally gets a warm welcome from our Congress. To sign up [click here](#)

NOVARPCV Board

Jean Wintemute, President

Stephen Cristofar, Vice President

Duane Karlen, Secretary

Lynn Lilienthal, Treasurer

Sarah Samuel, Communications and Membership Director

Erica Brouillette, Community Services Director

Elaine Staab, Social Events Coordinator

Don Boileau, Advocacy

Mary Jo Smrekar, Refugee Liaison

Debra Pinkney, At Large

Charlaine Loriston, Peace Corps Oral History Project