



March 2026 Newsletter

Northern Virginia Returned Peace
Corps Volunteers

NoVa RPCVs | Facebook

novarpcv.org

Donate

Live feed | Northern Virginia Returned Peace
Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV)



Celebrating Peace Corps!

In 2026, the Peace Corps celebrates its 65th anniversary, marking over six decades of international service since President John F. Kennedy established the agency on March 1, 1961. The milestone year coincides with America's 250th anniversary, featuring major events like the Peace Corps Connect conference in Washington, D.C. on July 18–19, 2026, and potential awarding of the Congressional Gold Medal to volunteers.

On February 27th, NOVA RPCV joined two other Virginia RPCV groups at Virginia's General Assembly in Richmond. Delegates JJ Singh (Bolivia) and Amy Laufer (Jamaica) recognized Volunteers for their service and the Assembly introduced [Joint House Resolution 178](#) which expressed the General Assembly's admiration for Peace Corps' contributions to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

On March 3, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recognized the 65th anniversary of the Peace Corps and the many Peace Corps alumni who reside in Fairfax County. Over 30 RPCVs who served in Benin, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Korea, Malawi, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Togo and Venezuela listened as the Board expressed their appreciation for Peace Corps volunteers and read a proclamation recognizing March 1 as Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Day/Peace Corps Day. On March 6th, NOVA RPCV Advocacy Chair Art Flanagan joined NPCA as they closed out Peace Corps Week with a Friday literature drop to all congressional offices, urging House members to sign the Garamendi-Radewagen letter (and also co-sponsor the Gold Medal legislation).

Please join us in celebrating Peace Corps' 65th Anniversary!



NOVA RPCV Celebrates Peace Corps' 65th anniversary at the Virginia General Assembly!

On Feb. 27th, the House of Delegates unanimously adopted a resolution commending Peace Corps on its 65th anniversary and thanking Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from Virginia for their service at home and abroad. Delegates JJ Singh and Amy Laufer invited over 30 returned Volunteers from NOVA RPCV and other groups to stand and be recognized for their service and Volunteers also met with Delegates Holly Seibold and Gretchen Bulova. Sen. Saddam Azlan Salim introduced [Joint House Resolution 178](#) which was presented to Peace Corps representatives as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for the agency's contributions to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

To date over 9,000 volunteers have served from Virginia and in 2025, the Commonwealth sent the second highest

number of Peace Corps volunteers abroad with 178 volunteers. A video of the February 27, 2026 meeting is available [here](#) (Recognition by Del. JJ Singh starts at 11:07:45). For meeting participants, you may upload your photos [here](#). NOVA RPCV extends our appreciation to Delegates Singh, Laufer, Seibold, Bulova & their staff; Sen Salim; Joe Shaffner & Jonathan Pearson of NPCA and all those RPCVs who participated!

The RPCVs who attended served from 1967 to 2025 in Benin, Bolivia, British Honduras (Belize), Burkina Faso, Chad, China, Costa Rica, Dominica, El Salvador, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Georgia, Guatemala, Hungary, Kosovo, Liberia, Micronesia, Morocco, Namibia, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Suriname, Thailand, Togo, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Zaire (DRC).



Welcome new NOVA RPCV Board members!

Thank you to all who participated in the 2026 NOVA RPCV Board elections.

At the time of the election, NOVA RPCV had **101 members in good standing**. Under our by-laws, quorum is 25% of membership — **25 members**. We received **23 online votes with attestations** and **5 on-site votes for 28 votes**, surpassing quorum and ensuring a valid election.

The positions of President and Secretary were uncontested. All votes cast supported the candidates. We are pleased to announce:



Thank You for Your Service – Celebrating Lisa & Rachel

NOVA RPCV thanks Lisa Martin (President) and Rachel Howard (Secretary) for their dedicated service to NOVA RPCV. Their leadership, organization, and commitment to building community have strengthened our group and expanded opportunities for connection, Third Goal engagement, and celebration of Peace Corps values here in Northern Virginia. We are deeply grateful for their time, energy, and heart.

- President: Kamana Mathur
- Secretary: Brenda Dean

In addition, Hailey Sorrell has been appointed as Third Goal Chair.

We are grateful to all members who participated in the process and to those who expressed interest in serving. Your engagement reflects the vitality of our Northern Virginia Peace Corps community.



Dinner with Peace Corps Senior Advisor Paul Shea

Thanks to everyone who joined us for our Feb. 6th mixer event with Peace Corps senior advisor Paul Shea (a fellow Native San Diegan!). Paul gave us an update on Peace Corps entering its 65th year with growing numbers of PCVs in the field including a return to Palau! Everyone also enjoyed a wide selection of food and drink from various eateries at Upside on Moore—a new food hall in Rosslyn.



Celebrating the Lunar New Year with special guest NPCA's new CEO Carla Brown

On Feb. 20th, NOVA RPCV celebrated the Lunar New Year—Year of the Fire Horse—with the NPCA's new, first woman, first person of color President & CEO @Carla Brown-Ndiaye (Comoro Islands 92-94). We enjoyed a delicious array of food—Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, etc. at the Pop Up District Food Hall in Eden Center!



NOVA RPCV celebrates Peace Corps with Fairfax County!

On March 3, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recognized the 65th anniversary of the Peace Corps and the many Peace Corps alumni who reside in Fairfax County. Over 30 RPCVs who served in Benin, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Korea, Malawi, Morocco, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Senegal, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, Togo, Venezuela listened as the Board expressed their appreciation for Peace Corps volunteers and read a proclamation recognizing March 1 as Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Day/Peace Corps Day.

A video of the March 3, 2026 Board meeting is available [here](#) (Peace Corps proclamation starts at 25:06). For meeting participants, you may upload your photos [here](#). Our thanks to Chair Jeff McKay, Supervisor Dalia Palchick (Providence) & Supervisor Walter Alcorn (Hunter Mill) and their staff for the proclamation and to Representative Walkinshaw who recently co-sponsored HR 5521 PC Congressional Gold Medal and placed his proclamation of Peace Corps' 65th anniversary into the Congressional Record. For a copy of the Congressional Record, please submit a request [here](#) no later than March 20, 2026.



Third Goal activities



In February NOVA RPCV supported Peace Corps' Third Goal "To help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans." NOVA RPCV participated in International Night at Woodson High School and Annandale High School and attended Blooming Traditions - a Lunar New Year Showcase of music and dance from China, Korea, Mongolia & Indonesia.



Celebrating Peace Corps with RPCVnexus at the Library of Congress!

On March 5th, NOVA RPCV joined RPCVnexus at the stunning Library of Congress to celebrate Peace Corps Week! It was a great opportunity to meet RPCVs from across the DMV! Please check out RPCVnexus and their upcoming events [here](#).



March 1 Winter Potluck Gathering

On March 1, NOVA RPCV welcomed members to its quarterly potluck gathering. At the gathering, Chuck Hobbie (Korea 68-71) shared fascinating tales from his memoir *The Time of the Monkey, Rooster, and Dog: A Peace Corps Volunteer's Years in Korea* (2011) about service, discovery, and change set against a pivotal moment in history.



St. Patrick's Day Parade on March 7th!

The Alexandria St. Patrick's Day Parade is the largest and most established in the region. Organized by the Ballyshaners, this festive parade features marching bands, community groups, and cultural celebration in historic Old Town. While this is not a NOVA RPCV-hosted event, members are encouraged to attend and enjoy the festivities. If a group plans to attend, we can coordinate a casual meet-up point.

Event website with parade route:

[Ballyshaners](#)

Meeting time/location:

Saturday, March 7, 2026
12:15 PM
Old Town Alexandria

Peace Corps News

Encourage lawmakers to sign FY 2027 Annual Funding Letter by March 11th!

Peace Corps' [FY 2027 Annual Funding letter](#) is circulating now! Please reach out to your networks to encourage them to have lawmakers sign the letter by March 11th.

Ever since 1961, often amid uncertainty, division, and conflict, the nearly 250,000 citizens who have served in the Peace Corps have consistently represented fellow citizens around the world and here at home with a standard that is emblematic of the very best that our nation has to offer.

Because of this, RPCV Congressman **John Garamendi** (D-CA) and Delegate **Amata Radewagen** (R-American Samoa) are urging their colleagues to sign a letter to leaders of the House Appropriations Committee, requesting \$479 million for the Peace Corps in Fiscal Year 2027. This would reverse a funding cut from \$430 million to \$410 million imposed during the current fiscal year and renew a similar funding level requested in last year's House letter.

* * * * *

On February 3, 2026, the House of Representatives passed the Senate Amendment to H.R. 7148, the Consolidated Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY 2026). The funding package includes appropriations for the Peace Corps and other international programs.

While the Trump administration had proposed level funding of \$430.5 million for the Peace Corps, both the House and Senate settled on a five percent, \$20 million reduction in funding for the current fiscal year, which runs through September 30th. This funding level for the agency's operations is nearly equal to the \$410 million allotted in 2016, which represents less than 0.1% of the total U.S. federal budget.

Peace Corps launches Tech Corps initiative

On Feb. 20th, the Peace Corps announced Tech Corps, a new initiative to recruit, train and deploy skilled Americans to support the adoption of artificial intelligence in Peace Corps host countries participating in the American AI Exports Program. Tech Corps volunteers will work with host country community partners to harness American AI to solve real-world grassroots problems in key sectors including agriculture, education, health, and economic development. Tech Corps volunteers can serve overseas for 12-27-month in-person assignments or through a virtual placement. For those serving overseas, the Peace Corps provides housing, healthcare, a living stipend, and a volunteer service award upon the completion of service. For more information, please visit: [Peace Corps - Tech Corps](#).

Peace Corps Events

Peace Corps Connect 2026 - July 18-19, 2026 - Info and ticket details [here](#)



RPCVs for the Arts at the DC Film Society's 33rd Annual Oscars Watch Party, "And the Winner Is..."

Sunday, March 15 from 5 – 11 PM

Arlington Cinema & Draffhouse

Tix: \$15/\$20

Join RPCVs for the Arts on the Red Carpet at the DC Film Society's 33rd Annual Oscars Watch Party, "And the Winner Is..."—the next best thing to being there!

Meet us Sunday, March 15, 2026 at the Arlington Cinema & Draffhouse (2903 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA). Watch the Oscars LIVE on the big screen, with a Red Carpet pre-show at 6:00 PM and the broadcast at 7:00 PM.

For info, please visit link to event on Peace Corps Connect [here](#).

and the link to event on Facebook [here](#).

For more details & tickets:
arlingtondraffhouse.com



Sunday Supper Uzbek Style!

Celebrate Navruz/Nowruz the start of Spring with traditional Uzbek dishes! We have invited RPCVs who have served in Uzbekistan to share their own stories of this Central Asian culture. Enjoy a special Sunday Supper Uzbek Style on Sunday, March 22 at 5:00 PM at Rus Uz Restaurant in Ballston. It's bound to be a fun time and the restaurant comes highly recommended!

Rus Uz offers an eclectic, yet welcoming dining space inspired by a traditional Uzbek home, complete with artwork and collectibles from Uzbekistan and beyond. The atmosphere is warm, vibrant, and designed for connection.

Please join us for what is sure to be a memorable night of delicious food, conversation, and community. For more information, please visit novarpcv.org/sunday-supper-uzbek-style/.

Rus Uz is located at 1000 North Randolph St. Arlington VA 22201 near Ballston Metro. Please confirm your attendance, so we can save you a place at the table.

We look forward to seeing you there!

[REGISTER](#)



Cherry Blossom Celebration at Mosaic

Date: April 11, 2026 | Time: 1:00 pm – 2:30 pm

Join NOVA RPCVs at Mosaic District as we celebrate the National Cherry Blossom Festival! We will gather for a day of spring celebration, international friendship, and community connection. Mosaic also hosts its “Art Blooms” festival in partnership with the Cherry Blossom Festival, featuring art installations and cultural programming. This is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate global friendship and the spirit of cultural exchange central to Peace Corps service.

Event address:

Mosaic District
2910 District Ave
Merrifield, VA 22031

For more information, please visit:
novarpcv.org/april-11th-cherry-blossom-celebration-at-mosaic/

Meeting time/location:

Meet at 1 p.m. in front of “JINYA Ramen” in the park, across from Target Parking Deck.

[REGISTER](#)



Holi Festival of Colors Celebration at Mosaic

Date: April 25, 2026 | Time: 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm

Join NOVA RPCVs at the Mosaic District as we celebrate Holi -- the vibrant "Festival of Colors" -- marking the arrival of spring! In partnership with RASA, this lively event invites our community to gather for an evening of authentic Indian flavors, music, dancing and festivities.

This celebration is a wonderful opportunity to honor the spirit of cultural exchange and global friendship. Whether you served in South Asia or simply appreciate the beauty of international traditions, come reconnect with fellow volunteers as we enjoy the sights and sounds of this joyous cultural milestone.

The event is free to the public and offers a fantastic chance to experience the diversity and community spirit that defines our global Peace Corps family.

Event address:

Mosaic District (Strawberry Park)
2905 District Ave
Merrifield, VA 22031

For more information, please visit:
novarpcv.org/holi-festival-of-colors-celebration-at-mosaic-on-april-25/

Meeting time and location:

Meet at 4:45 PM outside of the target building in mosaic, next to RASA restaurant.

[REGISTER](#)



Volunteer Opps!

Do you love to share stories? Wear your traditional outfits from when you served overseas? If so, please sign up with Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS).

FCPS is seeking speakers from our NOVA RPCV community interested in sharing their experience and in-depth understanding of the communities where they served. This will “promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans” -- Peace Corps’ Third Goal.

Opportunities include showcasing your Peace Corps experience and the country/region you served during a cultural heritage night or perhaps giving a short presentation on various topics (i.e. how you used foreign language overseas; ancient Mali; knowledge of a particular region; information on a subject you're comfortable addressing -- environmental protection, civic education, etc). Please share your info and proposed topics in this form [Returned Peace Corps Volunteers - Third Goal Opportunities](#) (only shared with FCPS staff). FCPS will contact you.

Thank you for sharing your Peace Corps experience with Fairfax County Public School students!

* * * * *

NOVA RPCV Board Volunteer Activity Coordinator!

The Board is seeking a part-time volunteer Activity Coordinator to assist the Board with coordinating various activities. The individual would:

- Track monthly events
- Explore creating a group calendar
- Liaise with event coordinators to obtain event info
- Follow up with event coordinators to provide participant lists
- Obtain photos/help to draft write ups of event
- Other ad hoc support for activities

This is a Volunteer position with a possible extension after the initial 3-month period. If you're interested, please share your Expression of Interest to novarpcv@gmail.com by March 15, 2026.

* * * * *

Virtual service and other opportunities!

For those who are nearing retirement or have time, please do consider Peace Corps virtual service or Peace Corps response.

[Peace Corps - Serve Online Through Peace Corps Virtual Service Pilot](#)

[Peace Corps - Short Term, Skilled Volunteering with Peace Corps Response](#)

.....

"Peace requires the simple but powerful recognition that what we have in common as human beings is more important and crucial than what divides us."

-Sargent Shriver

Recognize Peace Corps Volunteers—past and present—with a Congressional Gold Medal!

Take Action to Support the Peace Corps in Congress. The Peace Corps is approaching its 65th anniversary — a perfect time to honor its legacy and Volunteers with a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor from Congress.

Just prior to the government shutdown, a bill was introduced to Congress. The bipartisan Peace Corps Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2025 (H.R. 5521) would award the Congressional Gold Medal to all Peace Corps Volunteers, past and present, recognizing over six decades of global impact and partnership. This initiative not only honors history, it also reinvigorates America's commitment to national service. The Peace Corps needs more Volunteers, and this recognition helps elevate awareness, pride, and recruitment for our next generation of grassroots ambassadors and peacemakers.

Peace Corps family, if you can, please send a message to your Representative urging them to cosponsor H.R. 5521: [Recognize Peace Corps Volunteers with a Congressional Gold Medal | National Peace Corps Association](#)

Before sending a message, you can read the full bill text here: [Text - H.R.5521 - 119th Congress \(2025-2026\): Peace Corps Volunteers Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2025 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

Thank you for honoring Peace Corps so we may continue to inspire and engage new Volunteers!

.....



2026 International Calendars – courtesy of RPCVs of Wisconsin now available at NOVA RPCV!

Purchase your 2026 Calendars here!

\$12.00 each, pay here for credit card transactions or pay cash in person!

Credit card transaction can be made [here](#). Cash is always acceptable!

Delivered in person, we hope to see you at one of our events!

* * * * *

Join Peace Corps Connect+!

NOVA RPCV has hundreds of members but only a handful have registered on Connect+. We need your help to encourage all our members to register! Connect+ is the brand-new virtual village for the entire Peace Corps community. Reconnect with fellow RPCVs; build your personal & professional network; contribute to conversations, join a group, find the latest news and network with the global Peace Corps community. We are stronger together!

It's a great way to connect/network and **it's free for the first year!** When joining Connect+ you can also become a member of the Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteer group for free (for the first year)! If you need help to register, please don't hesitate to reach out to mail@novarpcv.org. Why wait?



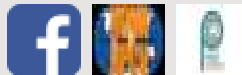
"As a Rural Public Health Education Peace Corps Volunteer in the Andes of Central Ecuador, my fondest memories are of teaching health education in the schools, I taught from Pre-K to grade 12-Quite a challenge as I had to teach in both Quichua and Spanish! As a direct result of seeing the impact of education on the lives of the youth in my village, I decided to go into education as my career post Peace Corps in order to have a greater impact on the youth of our country. It is due to my Peace Corps teaching experiences that I'm the teacher I am today!"

-- Rachel Howard

Thank You for a Great Year – Let's Keep Growing!

We invite you to join or renew your membership or make a one-time donation to help us continue building a strong, connected Peace Corps community in Northern Virginia.

[Donate Now](#)



Stay Connected

[Live feed | VA - Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers \(NOVA RPCV\)](#)

[Unsubscribe](#)

Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers
mail@novarpcv.org