# July 2026 Newsletter

Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV)

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Events | VA - Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV)




**On June 25th, NOVA RPCV gathered for a lovely concert in Reston by Dogo du Togo, a Togolese band. Come join us for some summer fun!**

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# Upcoming Events

## July 19th Happy Hour at Pink Tiger on the Wharf!

NOVA RPCV invites you to join us for our **Peace Corps Connect Sunday Happy Hour & Dinner** at **Pink Tiger on the Wharf**! Join us **Sunday, July 19 at 6.30PM** for a fun evening filled with good food, drinks, great company and a warm vibe in a beautiful setting at one of DC's top destinations--The DC Wharf!

Pink Tiger presents a playful fusion of Asian fare with Southern Flair, offering a lively menu that is entirely their own. With innovative dishes, artful cocktails, live music, and a splash of nostalgia, every visit to Pink Tiger is a happy (and delicious!) one.

Pink Tiger is also offering our group food & drink happy hour prices, which is unheard of on a weekend!

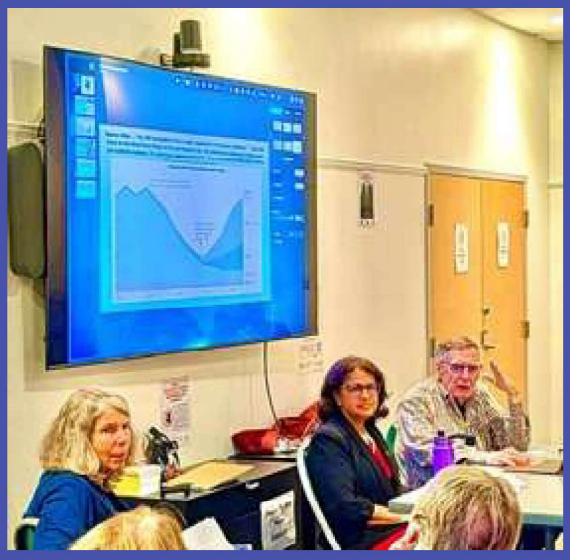
FREE Street Parking on Sundays or Paid Parking Onsite. Waterfront Metro is an 8-minute walk away. Address is 751 Wharf St SW, Washington, DC.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect, share stories, and enjoy a festive evening together. This is open to all RPCVs - you don't need to be registered for the conference to attend. We hope to see you there!

REGISTER



## NOVA RPCV-Led Community Forum "HOT TOPICS" Series



On June 10th, NOVA RPCV led a guided discussion on Immigration at Reston Library. Moderated by former NOVA RPCV President Jean Wintemute and led by Tom Carroll and current NOVA RPCV President Kamana Mathur, the discussion is part of a Community Dialogue Series aimed at bridging the national divide and building community through communication - while making a real effort to understand diverse viewpoints on the topics discussed and exchanging ideas. Due to the strong interest expressed, a second session on Immigration is anticipated and NOVA RPCV plans to lead dialogues on a variety of other topics as well. If you have expertise in health care, international relations, or another "hot topic," please contact rpcvkamana@gmail.com.



## Cheick Hamala Diabate on July 8th at Lake Anne at 7:30 PM

Please join NOVA RPCV as we enjoy a concert by Malian griot and ngoni player Cheick Hamala Diabate (Ngoni is a stringed instrument related to the American banjo.)

Location: 1609 Washington Plaza N, Reston, VA 20190

Park in Washington Plaza, then walk toward Lake Anne




## Other RPCV Events - Building Trust Across Communities

Wear a Peace Corps shirt

Bring a friend

Bring a chair

For more info, please see below link.

**https://restoncommunitycenter.com/event/sunset-concerts-cheick-hamala-diabate-3/**

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## Other RPCV events - Peace Corps Headquarters RPCV Open House on July 17th at 4 PM

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) are invited to visit the Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters building from 4 – 7 PM and learn about the Peace Corps today, including current recruitment and marketing efforts, service opportunities, the Peace Corps' work in 60+ countries, and support for RPCVs. This interactive open house is an opportunity for RPCVs to reconnect with the agency, hear more about recent initiatives, learn what's being done to improve the applicant and Volunteer experience, and explore ways to support the Peace Corps mission in the agency's 65th year. This event will also be an occasion for informal networking and engagement with Peace Corps staff and other RPCVs.

All attendees must pre-register for this event.

## with Jody Olsen & Carol Spahn Thursday, July 16 @ 6PM @ Upside on Moore

RPCVs and friends are invited to a pre-Connect+ Conference event: Building Trust Across Communities Thursday, July 16th at Upside on Moore. Join us for an engaging in-person gathering where former Peace Corps Directors Jody Olsen and Carol Spahn dive into the art of building trust across diverse communities. They will share firsthand stories and ideas connected to their Peace Corps service and beyond. RPCVs and friends are welcome to this special gathering.

This program is presented by RPCVs for the Arts. REGISTER HERE. For more info, contact RPCVsForTheArts@gmail.com.

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## Other RPCV events – RPCV/W Pre-Conference Kick Off

[Peace Corps - Peace Corps Headquarters RPCV Open House]

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## July 17th from 7:30-9 PM!

Join RPCV/W for a fun pre-conference happy hour and hangout – a chance to meet fellow attendees, start making connections and play a game of Peace Corps jeopardy!

REGISTER

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## Peace Corps Connect 2026 – July 18-19, 2026 – register by July 10th

Peace Corps Connect 2026 brings together RPCVs, students, and global changemakers for two days of learning, reflection, and celebration. This year's conference celebrates **65 years of Peace Corps and 250 years of American history**, renewing our shared commitment to

national service and translating it into real collaboration, advocacy, and peacebuilding. For details: **Home | Peace Corps Connect 2026**

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## Strengthening Youth Resiliency on July 30th

On July 30th NOVA RPCV will meet with 15 youth (8th-12th grade) as part of the DC Marion Barry Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) at the City Kids Wilderness Project. The project is a DC-based youth development 501(c)(3) nonprofit that offers seven (7) consecutive years of entirely FREE out-of-school time programs focused on utilizing outdoor spaces and experiences to build social, emotional, leadership, and college and career readiness skills to small cohorts of DC-based middle and high school youth in both the DMV area and Jackson Hole, WY.

NOVA RPCV will facilitate an info session about Peace Corps (ie. history, Service Sectors, Benefits, Peace Corps Prep, Campus Ambassadors, etc.), lead mini exploratory workshops on Peace Corps service countries, and/or other activities to address, "So What's Next - Life After City Kids". Youth will be introduced to a variety of ideas they could explore after graduating high school by participating in the program. Whether it be college, trade school, a gap year, internship, entrepreneurship, or something else, the program aims to help them set a goal, create a plan, and achieve it.

If you're interested in participating on July 30th to help youth build their resiliency and expand their horizons, please register below.

**REGISTER**

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## NEW: RPCV MUSIC CIRCLE NOW FORMING

Calling all musicians and singers or just those interested in music to join a bi-monthly



## Reston Multicultural Festival on Sept. 19th

The Reston Multicultural Festival is a celebration of Reston's diversity and community spirit. This annual event brings together the people of Reston to celebrate our rich medley of cultures. The Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers organization is hosting a booth at the festival to promote friendship & world peace. We've had a booth since 2013!

NOVA RPCV will have a canopy titled 'Map your PC Country and/or Country of ancestry' & 'Take a photo at our Photo Booth' plus information & Peace Corps items (stickers, bookmarks) to promote friendship & world peace. ***NOVA RPCV members, please register for a 2-hour timeslot.***

**Sat 9/19 from 11-6**
Reston Town Square Park, 11900 Market St, Reston, VA 20190, USA

music/drum circle. If interested, contact rpcvkamana@gmail.com.

Please wear cultural clothing from your country of service or a Peace Corps shirt.

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*""“The question is not what you look at, but what you see.”*

*- Henry David Thoreau*



## Thanks to all who attended our Summer Potluck gathering!

it was wonderful to connect with so many friends, welcome new potential members and enjoy delicious dishes from Africa and other continents/countries! We learned about immigration through a dialogue by cultural anthropologist Tom Carroll and NOVA RPCV President Kamana Mathur and we thanked Art Flanagan, NOVA RPCV's Advocacy Chair who is stepping down in late July.

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# Peace Corps News

## House Amendment to Defund the Peace Corps

In late June, the House of Representatives reviewed HR 8595, the FY27 National Security, Department of State, and Related Programs (NSRP) appropriations bill. The Rules Committee

prepared the bill for final House action, including the consideration of dozens of amendments.

On June 25th, the leadership of the House of Representatives announced the cancellation of votes on several bills, including the international affairs appropriations bill (**H.R. 8595**). Debate on the bill was slated to include consideration and a floor vote on Representative Scott Perry's (PA) amendment (#137), which calls for **eliminating all funding for the Peace Corps** in Fiscal Year 2027.

This decision followed a news conference held by members of the House Freedom Caucus, who stated their opposition to advancing legislation until Congress passes the SAVE America Act, regarding voting regulations. The Senate is currently scheduled to be out of town for the next two weeks, and while the House may return to floor work on Monday, it is possible they will be in recess through July 11.

Please continue reaching out to Congress using the action below, as the Perry amendment will still be expected to be debated and voted on when the international appropriations bill is eventually considered.

peacecorpsconnect.org/npca-advocacy/email-congress/

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# New Politics Academy and NPCA Announce Partnership to Support Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Pursuing Public Office

On June 16th, New Politics Academy (NPA) and the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) announced a partnership to support Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) who are continuing their service through public office. NPA works with leaders who have demonstrated a commitment to putting community and country over self, preparing them to run for office and lead effectively once elected.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations reflects a shared belief that the skills and experiences acquired by Peace Corps Volunteers are a strong foundation for public service. Peace Corps service is a rigorous, typically two-year commitment that shapes how returned Volunteers lead, how they listen, and how they show up for their communities. Volunteers partner with local communities to teach in classrooms, work in health centers, boost economic sustainability, and strengthen global relations. This partnership creates a clear path forward for those who return from their service and choose to continue serving through politics.

peacecorpsconnect.org/new-politics-academy-and-npca-announce-partnership-to-support-returned-peace-corps-volunteers-pursuing-public-office/

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# 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



*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!

**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**

Volunteers!

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

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# RPCV/NOVA RPCV is looking for event hosts for this year!

Do you have a house or apartment where you would be willing to host a (small) group for an event such as a potluck? Or do you have access to a reasonably priced rental space (like a condo community room)? If so, please email NOVA RPCV at novarpcv@gmail.com with your contact details and your information on the below info! We would love to hear from you!

**Questions:**

What neighborhood/city are you located in? Is it metro accessible?

What kind of space can you offer?

If the space is for rent, how much would it cost? For what time period?

How many people could you host in your space? (i.e. 10-20, 20-30, 30-40, 40+)

What sort of events would you be interested in hosting?




# Best wishes to Advocacy Chair Art Flanagan!

Advocacy Chair Art Flanagan joined the NOVA RPCV Board of Directors in 2024. Since this time Art has led NOVA RPCV on a variety of advocacy initiatives while liaising with members of Congress, Peace Corps, the National Peace Corps Association and other groups. His history with Peace Corps spans several decades and we wish him well as he steps down from NOVA RPCV.

Asked about his favorite Peace Corps experience, Art shared, “Without a doubt, my work as Peace Corps Director in Romania (1992–1996) was my most challenging yet rewarding post. My job was to revitalize a troubled Mission that only had a handful of Volunteers remaining from the first cadre of Volunteers. During my time in-country, we successfully tripled the number of Volunteers assigned to Romania for Social Work and Health, Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Entrepreneurial Development Banking/Credit and High School-level TESL programs. We reprogrammed the abandoned infant/child program to interact with more appropriate and dynamic partner NGOs; engaged Volunteers to support the creation of the first MSW program in Romania and reprogrammed our Children with AIDS Assistance program so Volunteers worked with progressive orphanages and solid counterparts that assisted Street Children. The 'can do attitude' of Volunteers and staff in Romania was contagious. I have never been more energized by Volunteers and staff. There was no time for me to be tired because I might miss the next wonderful thing that was being created by Peace Corps Romania Volunteers and their counterparts. My staff and I just kept running to keep up with them."

"Mission successes included support for primary and secondary projects including: 1) initiation of the "Camp GLOW Project" (Girls Leading Our World) that proved so effective it was later duplicated in more than 40 Peace Corps Countries; 2) initiation of the Computerization of Secondary Schools which started with a small project grant of 100 computers from two ex-IBM employees to high Schools with Peace Corps TESL Teachers (Within 2 years, the Soros foundation expanded this pilot to all small town high schools); 3) helping to create both Junior Achievement Romania and Special Olympics Romania and 4) starting a famous secondary business project - "A Night at Dracula's Castle" - in Bran, Romania that still operates today."

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## Roots of Service: Planting 65 Trees for 65 Years

To celebrate the 65th anniversary of the Peace Corps, Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers organized a commemorative tree-planting project with the Fairfax County Park Authority’s Invasive Management Area (IMA) program in April. The group wanted to honor the milestone with 65 native trees.

*Kamana Mathur, president of Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers shared:* “Participating in the planting of 65 trees to commemorate 65 years of the Peace Corps was a special experience. The Peace Corps, like a tree, builds deep roots and grows into something that provides fruit for years to come – all over the world. And as the roots of different trees often intermingle and make each other stronger, so do we. The organization is built on the premise, 'Give a man fish, you feed him for a day; teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' Through Peace Corps service, we not only share new ideas and teach innovative methods to our partners in other nations, we learn ourselves. And we form bonds that last a very long time.'

Roots of Service: Planting 65 Trees for 65 Years | Our Stories and Perspectives

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# 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**!** When joining Connect+ you can also become a member of the Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteer group! If you need help to register, please don't hesitate to reach out to mail@novarpcv.org. Why wait?

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**How you can help!**

You can help recruit the next generation of Volunteers by sharing your unique Peace Corps experience and how it continues to impact your life and career. Connect with your local community through service groups, libraries, school activities and social media networks. Your story has the power to inspire the next generation of Peace Corps Volunteers. **Sign up on the RPCV Portal** to be part of Peace Corps' **Global Connections Program** and become part of the network of RPCVs available to share your story with communities in the U.S.

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**Thank You for Your Support – 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**

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