



September 2026 Newsletter

Northern Virginia Returned
Peace Corps Volunteers
(NOVA RPCV)

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Peace Corps Volunteers \(NOVA RPCV\)](#)



Making an Impact!

Thanks for supporting NOVA RPCV!

Your funds helped repair and renew a library at a secondary school in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, creating a welcoming environment for learning and growth, benefiting over 1,000 students

and teachers!



Interested in international service, public service or exploring Peace Corps? Join us on Sept. 15th at Upside on Moore in Arlington

Enjoy a global mix of eateries to satisfy every palate! This is a great opportunity to learn about Peace Corps and connect with fellow RPCVs!

Peace Corps Regional Recruiter Lynare Robbins will share Peace Corps updates and returned Peace Corps Volunteers will be available to share their experiences working in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and other regions of the world in the education, environmental, engineering, community economic development and other sectors. We will share stories and exchange information on life as a Volunteer and cheer on volunteers who are preparing to head overseas.

Location: Upside Food Hall is located just above Rosslyn Metro at 1700 N. Moore Street. Level M2.

Time: 6:30 - 8:30 PM

Parking: Free parking in the building with validation after 6pm. Validate at the desk to your right as you enter the Food Hall.

Look forward to seeing you there!

[REGISTER](#)



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



Fall Potluck Gathering Sunday, September 20th

Join us for our Fall Potluck Gathering on Sunday, September 20th at 5:30 pm! This event will be held in the home of Dick (RPCV Nepal) and Anita Popp in Centreville.

NOVA will welcome Kristin Besch, Peace Corps' Deputy Chief Executive Officer and her husband. Most recently, she served as Senior Advisor in the Peace Corps' Department of Global Operations, where she oversaw strategic initiatives under the agency's "Reimagine Service" pillar. She previously served as Country Director in both Kazakhstan and Sri Lanka, where she was instrumental in reopening the program after a 20-year absence. She has also held senior roles including Acting Associate Director for Global Operations and Acting Regional Director and Chief of Operations for the Office of Post Performance and Support (OPPS).

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



Women's Suffrage History at the Lorton Prison Museum on Sept. 26th!

Join us for a Lorton Prison Museum tour on Saturday, September 26th at the [Workhouse Arts Center](#) in Lorton, VA — a former DC prison (1910–2001) with a striking 91-year history, starting with Teddy Roosevelt's progressive-era reforms, the 1917 suffragist imprisonment (a catalyst for the 19th Amendment), Duke Ellington-led jazz festivals, and decades of incarceration stories spanning the best and worst examples of managing a prison.

Our guide, Elizabeth McGovern Assink (Malawi '94–'96 / UN Volunteer – Bosnia '96–'98), left federal service in 2025 after 25 years that included Peace Corps and State Department service. In retirement, she has become a volunteer Lorton Prison Museum docent. On the tour, she'll highlight the prison's "volunteers" and draw surprising parallels to Peace Corps service and international aid work.

Today the prison is also a comprehensive arts center. The former dormitories are now studios where you can talk with the artists as they work.

Schedule:

Kris brings over 30 years of experience in strategy, program management, and organizational development across public and private sectors. Before returning to the Peace Corps, she directed U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and private-sector projects at DAI, led a regional microfinance network in Egypt, consulted for the high-technology and travel industries, and worked for the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games.

Her career began as a Peace Corps Volunteer teaching math in Eswatini, a role she still calls the best job she's ever had.

We will take the opportunity to mix and mingle while sharing a meal - bring your favorite dish or cuisine from your host country. We encourage you to wear something that represents your country of service.

Location: Home of Dick and Anita Popp in Centreville – address will be emailed before the event.

[REGISTER](#)



Night at the Nats!

Join us on September 25th as the Washington Nationals take on the New York Mets. Purchase your ticket, and join us for a fun night out at the ball park. Be a part of the Parade of Flags by carrying your Peace Corps country of service flags across the field at Nats Park. Bring your family and friends along to take pictures, hear your Peace Corps stories, and take in the sights and smells of baseball.

- **12:00 PM** -- (on your own) you may visit the art studios.
- **3:00 PM** — RPCV Campus walking tour ending at the Cell Block and Suffragist Galleries. Tour will begin at LOVE sign on historical campus quad. If it rains, will still give tour, just more inside.
- **4:30 PM** — Social at **Bunnymen's Brewery, on-campus (not the other regional locations!)**. Plenty of food and seating. Be sure to learn the urban legend.

Cost: \$10/person suggested donation for the museum. The funds support civic education and outreach. The Workhouse is a 501c3 and donations are tax deductible.

Location: 9518 Workhouse Way Lorton, VA 22079

[BUNNYMAN BREWING](#)

Great way to learn about Virginia's history, enjoy beautiful artwork and meet some fellow RPCVs over a fun meal/drink! Hope you will join us!

[REGISTER](#)

3 easy steps:

1. [Purchase your tickets](#)
2. [Sign up to carry a flag](#) (flag bearers arrive at the park at 5:30pm, enter through the ADA entrance next to First Base Gate across from Dacha Beer Garden, get a wristband, and wait in the service tunnel to line up and parade out onto the field).
3. Have fun with family, friends, and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers representing countries around the world!

Nationals Park is located at [1500 South Capitol Street SE, Washington, DC 20003](#).

See you at the park!

[REGISTER](#)

NOVA RPCV Annual JFK Wreath Laying

Annual JFK Wreath Laying with NoVa RPCVs & RPCV/W JFK Gravesite at Arlington Cemetery Friday, November 20th. Meet at the Welcome Center to register at 4:00PM. Ceremony will take place from 4:30PM-5PM at gravesite on the Eve of the 63rd Anniversary of his Passing. Immediately following, we will gather to raise a glass to JFK's legacy at Continental Pool Lounge in Rosslyn.

[REGISTER](#)

Supporting Peace Corps Volunteers

Thank you for supporting NOVA RPCV and PCVs serving overseas!

In 2025 and 2026 NOVA RPCV supported 5 Peace Corps Volunteers from Virginia serving overseas. Below are updates and a new project NOVA RPCV encourages individuals to consider supporting.



Tanzania Library Improvement project

Your generous support transformed a secondary school library in Kilimanjaro, Tanzania, made possible through a Peace Corps Partnership Project grant co-facilitated by Peace Corps Education Volunteer Victoria. Without access to books, reference materials, or a quiet study space, students struggled to strengthen their English skills, explore their curiosity, and prepare for national exams. The transformation repaired and renewed the space, creating a welcoming environment for learning and growth, benefiting over 1,000 students and teachers. A strong library means stronger readers, stronger students, and stronger communities.



Kenya Deaf Education project

We were delighted to hear from Volunteer Audrey Cruey, currently serving in Kenya. Audrey shared the below update on the project.

"Hi all, I hope you're doing well! I'm in the home stretch of service (3ish months to go!), and I'm so happy to hear from you. First of all, thank you for supporting my project! It means the world to me, my students, and my fellow teachers. We were able to take a small step towards creating a more inclusive,



PCV Flora Popenoe taking part in palm oil processing

Ghana Palm Oil Extraction project

Deaf-friendly learning environment for our students, and we greatly appreciate your investment in our school and our students' education!

We wrapped the project in mid-July, when school closed for Term 2. With the grant funds, we were able to purchase and install a desktop computer, printer, and wi-fi system. This technology has allowed teachers to integrate ICT into classroom instruction (via videos, photos, and online learning resources) and create adapted learning materials and assessments to meet our Deaf students' special needs. Furthermore, our students started participating in ICT club, which involves lessons on basic computer etiquette/safety, guided use of digital learning resources, Scratch coding projects, and typing practice. The students were SO excited to finally be able to use the school laptops!"



Kenya Outpatient Rehabilitation Project

From PCV Luke Smith, we learned of the wonderful progress made on the project.

"Over the past eight months, we have implemented the grant to transform my health facility's outpatient department and implement community outreaches. Through partnership with my facility, we have repaired the roofing, redone the falling and leaking ceiling, repainted the entire department to create a more welcoming environment, and brought running water into the facility.

In August NOVA extended support to PCV Flora Popenoe for the Palm Oil Extraction Peace Corps Partnership project. The project proposes creating a small local facility to extract oil from the native palm, an important crop used for both income and household needs. At present, women must either perform all oil extraction by hand at home or cook the fruit and carry hot mixtures long distances to a powered press. Others transport harvested bunches several kilometres to a more efficient plant. These options create safety risks, reduce productivity, and increase costs.

By mechanizing the pressing process and placing cooking vats and the expeller together, the project will improve efficiency and remove the danger of transporting hot materials. A locally manufactured, multi-purpose expeller and separator housed in a low-cost, custom structure will protect the equipment and provide sheltered storage to prevent spoilage of raw fruit and to maintain the quality of finished oil. Establishing a nearby facility will also eliminate transportation expenses and the usage fees charged by outside processors.

Training for the women who will form the cooperative responsible for operating the facility is a central component. As their contribution, community members will provide land, sand, stones, water, and labor. This initiative has been identified as a top development priority for many years due to its potential to transform opportunities for women and their families. The increased income and time saved will support better household nutrition, improved health outcomes, and stronger academic performance for children.

Through surveys, we have seen an over 40% increase in both patient and staff satisfaction with the facility. We are still collecting data on patient use of the facility, but we have so far been seeing an increase in patients since the grant's implementation.

Additionally, through the support of the grant, we were able to conduct three community outreaches to support over 100 community members with health insurance registration, water, sanitation, and hygiene education, and HIV prevention information. This project has been transformative for my community in Siaya, and we are grateful for the support and trust given to us. I have also been able to support my community through a PEPFAR VAST grant which has been used to acquire five new hospital beds, a baby warmer, an oxygen tank, and painting for the outside of the facility.

With this additional grant, we have also done two outreaches with vulnerable populations to increase HIV prevention efforts. We provided 50 young mothers with education on preventing mother-to-child prevention of HIV as well as support with pampers, porridge, and soap. We also did an HIV and TB prevention outreach with over 500 motorcycle drivers and community members which led to 60 receiving HIV testing and counselling and 187 receiving chest x-rays. It has been amazing to see what we have been able to accomplish in two-years to improve health outcomes and well-being in my community. We are so grateful for the support of NoVa RPCV's, and I have attached photos below of our project. I look forward to keeping in touch!"



Gambia Water Supply Enhancement for a Community Garden

In Gambia, the Water Supply Enhancement for a Community Garden project installed a new water tank, float switch, and connection to the existing water infrastructure in the local women's garden. It increased water availability and decreased the amount of time women had to spend on watering using drip irrigation.

The project helped strengthen community capacity. Trainings strengthened concepts related to water conservation and infrastructure maintenance; showed women how to maximize their harvest, create value-added products, and prevent food spoilage and introduced a working example of drip irrigation into the garden, decreasing the amount of time and water needed to care for the crops.

The additional water capacity from the new tank and drip irrigation systems will benefit the women in the garden for many years to come. The training given to the water committee ensures the tank, pump, and solar will continue to be operational.

Furthermore, the water committee expanded existing maintenance fund collection mechanisms to ensure future maintenance needs will be covered.

Training given to all of the women in the garden helped ensure they understand the benefits and necessary maintenance of the drip irrigation system.



Support A Virginia Peace Corps Volunteer's Project in Moldova

NOVA RPCV recently received a request to support a Rural Youth Development Peace Corps Partnership (PCP) project sponsored by a PCV serving in Moldova. As budgetary constraints currently limit NOVA RPCV grants, we wish to encourage individuals who find this project worthwhile to donate individually through the PCP Donation website Peace Corps - [Confident Futures for Rural Youth](#). If you do choose to donate, please consider noting your affiliation to NOVA RPCV.

Peace Corps Volunteer from Virginia Nathaniel L. is working with rural communities in Moldova to help young people prepare for the transition from middle school to continued education and employment.

Confident Futures for Rural Youth will provide practical training identified through a needs assessment of 144 students from seven villages. Topics include money management, career exploration, communication, emotional awareness, and information technology in professional settings. The project will provide at least 57 hours of training while also strengthening local organizations and connections among young people across participating villages.

Fellow RPCVs and friends: consider helping a Virginia Volunteer make this project possible. Every contribution brings the project closer to its goal.

Please share with others in the Peace Corps community who might want to help!

"Be the change you wish to see in the world."

-Mahatma Gandhi



GSEHD



SHAPING THE FUTURE OF NOVA RPCV

This fall, NOVA RPCV will partner with the George Washington University (GWU) Department of Human and Organizational Learning on an organizational development project to help us explore our strengths, challenges, opportunities, and priorities for the future.

A group of Organizational Leadership and Learning (OLL) students will support our initial collaborative inquiry during the fall semester. The team will work with our board, participate in NOVA RPCV events, and engage with members and the broader RPCV community to learn what's working, where we can improve, and what opportunities lie ahead.

We appreciate this unique opportunity to work with the GWU Department of Human and Organizational Learning, chaired by Dr. Shaista Khilji, and look forward to learning from the Organizational Diagnosis and Change Course (HOL 6702) students and their instructor, Dr. Beatriz Coningham. The Department and its [Organizational Leadership and Learning program](#) are part of the GWU Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD).

Watch for opportunities to share your experiences and ideas—and help shape how NOVA RPCV serves, connects, and engages our community in the years ahead.

Please reach out to board members Brenda Dean and Beth Hain, our NOVA RPCV co-leads on this project, at mail@novarpcv.org with your questions or interest in supporting the project.

We hope you'll join the conversation!

Botswana RPCV 50th Year Reunion on Oct. 17th (for RPCVs who served from 1975-1978)

Tony Carroll (Botswana 76-78) is organizing a 50th anniversary reunion of Botswana

Peace Corps News

All Peace Corps Volunteers and staff in Nepal are safe and accounted for. Peace Corps is closely monitoring the situation in Nepal following the devastating flooding. Peace Corps remains in close contact with our team in Nepal and will continue to

RPCVs on October 17 in Arlington. Tony has asked NOVA for help in inviting PCVs who served in Botswana between 1975-78. If you're interested, please contact Tony at tonycarroll77@gmail.com.

CONNECT WITH RPCVs WORLDWIDE: 2026 ALL-RPCV CONFERENCE

October 24–25, 2026 | Virtual | Free

Join Returned Peace Corps Volunteers from around the world for the third annual All-RPCV Conference, hosted by Friends of South Africa and RPCVnexus. This year's theme, "Story Sharing: Life After Service," will explore how RPCVs continue to lead, serve, connect, and grow, after Peace Corps.

NOVA RPCV will be represented by Corey Taylor, our NPCA Liaison, joining RPCV leaders and community members in this global conversation.

Conference discussions will explore:

- Career pathways and transitions after service
- Education and continued growth
- Impactful leadership and public service
- Bridge building, networking, and community connection

The conference is designed for RPCVs at all stages of their post-service journey, with particular opportunities for recently returned Volunteers and RPCV group leaders to exchange experiences, resources, and ideas.

Register for the free virtual conference: [Attending the All-RPCV Conference 2026](#)

Interested in presenting? The organizers are also accepting proposals for speakers, panels, and facilitated sessions through

monitor conditions. Our thoughts are with the people and communities affected.

NPCA shares you may donate to the **Friends of Nepal flood relief campaign**. Learn more about the campaign and [make your donation directly here.](#)"

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: [Pursuing a Congressional Gold Medal for Peace Corps Volunteers](#)

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](#)

August 31:
<https://forms.gle/Y66oMsecLTQEQ37h9>

We hope you'll join Corey and fellow RPCVs from across the globe for a weekend of storytelling, learning, and connection!

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



Join the NOVA RPCV Board of Directors!

We are soliciting applicants for the following positions:

Advocacy Chair: This appointed Board position helps connect our Northern Virginia RPCV community with opportunities to support and strengthen Peace Corps, the Peace Corps community, and the values of international service.

The Advocacy Chair serves as NOVA RPCV's lead point of contact on advocacy-related issues and helps members stay informed and engaged.

Social Chair: The Social Chair plans, promotes, and coordinates social activities that foster connections among Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, former Peace Corps staff, and the broader Peace Corps community.

The Social Chair works collaboratively with the Board and other committee chairs to organize gatherings, networking events, cultural celebrations, and other opportunities that strengthen

member engagement and build an inclusive, welcoming community. This officer helps ensure that members—new and longtime alike—have meaningful opportunities to connect, volunteer, and participate in the life of NOVA RPCV.

Community Service Chair: The Community Service Chair helps coordinate local service activities and advance the Peace Corps Third Goal—sharing host country cultures and experiences with communities in the United States.

This role helps connect RPCVs with meaningful service opportunities while strengthening NOVA RPCV's engagement across Northern Virginia.

Interim Membership Chair: NOVA RPCV is seeking a volunteer to serve as Interim Membership Chair (Data & Systems) while our current Membership Chair is deployed out of state over the next quarter.

This role helps maintain accurate membership records and supports the Board in managing membership data and engagement through our Connect+ system.

Detailed descriptions may be found here: novarpcv.org/about-us/get-involved/

Who:

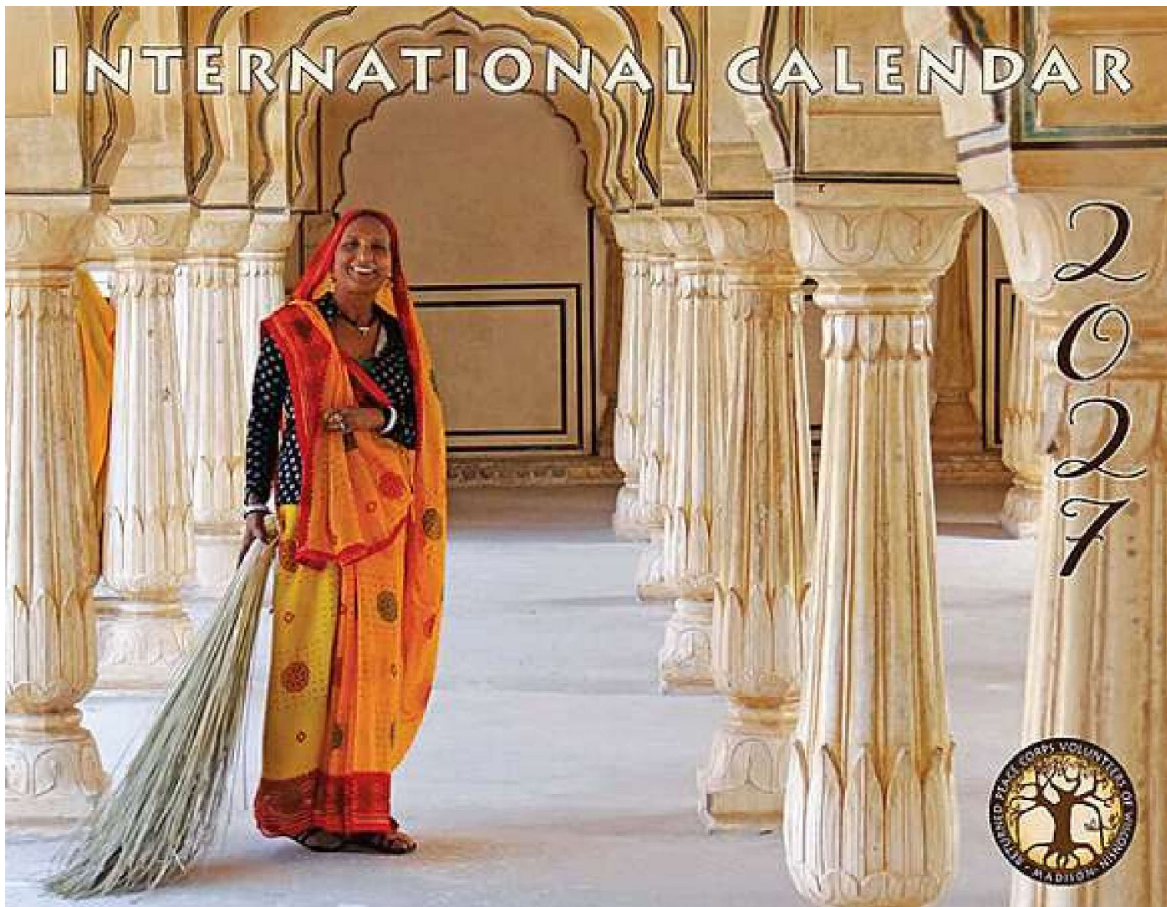
Individuals are not required to live in Northern Virginia, but we ask that you participate regularly in our programs and events, including our quarterly virtual board meetings. Individuals should be RPCVs or former PC Staff.

How:

Send your brief bio and expression of interest (why you would like to serve) to mail@novarpcv.org.

Note: If you would like to support the group in other ways, please submit a general expression of interest (EOI) and share your ideas! Learn more about the board and our work.

If you'd like to support NOVA RPCV in other ways, we welcome general expressions of interest (EOIs) to get involved! Share your ideas or learn more about the board and our ongoing work here: <https://novarpcv.org/team>.



2027 International Calendars Are Here!

Support NOVA RPCV and celebrate the world all year long! The 2027 International Calendars, produced by the RPCVs of Wisconsin, are now available through NOVA RPCV.

Calendars are \$19 each.

How to purchase:

- **Credit card:** Purchase your calendar [here](#).
- **Zelle:** Send \$19 per calendar to treasurer@novarpcv.org. Enter "Treasurer" or "Richard Popp" in the name field and include your name and "2027 Calendar" in the payment note.
- **Cash:** Pay in person at a NOVA RPCV event.

Calendar **delivery will be in person at NOVA RPCV events**—another great reason to come out, connect with fellow RPCVs, and pick up your calendar!

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VOLUNTEERING

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.

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?

* * * * *

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.

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

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



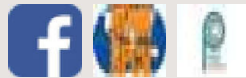
Virginia Volunteer Luke Smith

“Over the past eight months, we have implemented the grant to transform my health facility's outpatient department and implement community outreach. Through surveys, we have seen an over 40% increase in both patient and staff satisfaction with the facility. This project has been transformative for my community in Siaya. We are so grateful for the support of NOVA RPCV.” -- **Kenya Outpatient Rehabilitation Project.**

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.

Join Now



Stay Connected

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