November 2026 Newsletter

Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV)

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Thank You for Your Support - Let's Keep Growing!

As Thanksgiving approaches, we give thanks for this community and consider how we can build stronger connections—within our chapter and across differences. We're excited to share that our community is growing—and it's all thanks to you.

Thank you to everyone who supported NOVA RPCV over the past year!

As we look ahead, 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 NOVA RPCV

1. via Connect+ (Note: Connect+ account required; Choose NOVA RPCV as your affiliate; annual fees will be requested upon joining NOVA RPCV) or
2. via a Zelle payment. List "treasurer@novarpcv.org" as the recipient. Please list "Treasurer" or "Richard Popp" in the name fields. Please note your name and whether this is your annual dues payment and/or a donation.

- NOVA RPCV membership is just $25/year.

Donations

Donations may be made via Zelle or NOVA RPCV's Connect+ site:

1. Visit Memberships & Donations | VA - Northern Virginia Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NOVA RPCV)
2. Click "Select Membership" under the "Donations" section
3. Click "Proceed to Pay" then "Proceed to Billing Information" and enter your preferred amount (Note: $10 will be added by default—just factor this into your total.)
4. The listed timeframe is a system default; your donation will be processed as a one-time gift.

Please help us spread the word—invite fellow RPCVs to join, give, and stay connected.

We look forward to a vibrant year ahead as we continue to champion the Peace Corps mission together!

With gratitude,

The NOVA RPCV Board



NOVA RPCV MEMBER BENEFITS

Connect

Become part of one of the nation's most active regional Peace Corps communities.

- Quarterly gatherings
- Cultural events
- Potlucks
- Networking
- Friendships

Continue Your Service

Stay connected to the Peace Corps mission through:

- Third Goal programming
- Community service
- Advocacy
- Grants supporting currently serving Volunteers

Learn

Exclusive opportunities to hear from:

- Peace Corps leaders
- Returned Volunteers

- Authors
- International experts
- Fellow RPCVs

Give Back

Help support:

- Peace Corps Partnership projects
- Community development grants
- Local educational outreach
- Cultural exchange activities

Lead

Members can:

- Serve on committees
- Host events
- Mentor prospective Volunteers
- Join the Board
- Shape the future of NOVA RPCV

Stay Informed

Receive:

- Monthly newsletters
- Event announcements
- Peace Corps advocacy updates
- Volunteer opportunities
- Local RPCV news



Corps de la Paix Benin Recipes One Can Enjoy at Home!

As a Peace Corps Volunteer in Benin, back in the late ‘90s, I enjoyed an array of West African dishes, with flavors, scents, and textures that have left an indelible mark. Some of those dishes can be recreated in the U.S.; others may take a bit more effort. Here are two dishes you should try at home. For the African RPCVs, this is an opportunity for nostalgic cooking. For those RPCVs who served in other regions, let this be a fun education.

Note: these recipes are from the book, “ Cookin ’ in Benin, a Peace Corps Cookbook .” Follow the link to learn more!

Corey Quinlan Taylor - (Benin – 97/99)

Sauce d’Arachide (Peanut Sauce)

3 Tbs. oil – preferably peanut oil, but veggie works 1 small can tomato paste

1/2 tsp piment (chili) powder 1 tsp salt

1 Maggi cube (Bouillon cube) – beef or chicken 1/2 cup water

1/2 cup peanut butter 1/2 cup onion

Sauté tomato paste, piment, salt, onion, and Maggi cube in oil for several minutes, stirring often. Add peanut butter and water and bring to a boil. In Benin, this was serve over rice or pilé (pounded yam) with fried Wagasi (also spelled as “Wagashi” – a cheese made by Fulani tribe women), beef, fish, etc. However, in the States, serve this peanut sauce with rice and veggies; or chicken, oxtails, white fish, or even pasta.

West African Beef Stew

1 kg beef, cubed (ask for ‘filet’ or ‘cuisse’) 4 Tbs margarine (or butter)

1 1/2 cups chopped onion 2 Tbs flour

3 Tbs. curry 1/4 cup peanut butter

2 tsp salt 5 cloves garlic, minced or écrasé

ground cayenne pepper to taste 3 whole piments (red or green)

- 1 1/2 cups coconut milk (buy canned in Cotonou) 1 cup water

Several fried sweet potato chunks (find a street vendor) Several whole okra, tops trimmed

Brown the beef in the margarine. Remove from frying pan and add onions. Sauté onions and garlic until they are golden in color and then add flour, curry, salt, cayenne pepper, and peanut butter. Slowly add the coconut milk and water to the mixture. Stir until thickened. Add meat and the three whole peppers and simmer, covered, until the beef is tender (about 2 hours). About 20 minutes before cooking time is finished, add the okra and fried sweet potatoes. Serve over rice.



Interested in volunteering with NOVA? Have a great idea you would love to share? Curious about serving on the Board or organizing an event? We're listening!

Please feel free to contact us at mail@novarpcv.org and we would be happy to chat. We're listening and would love to hear from you!



Join NOVA RPCV for Asia After Dark!

Friday, November 6, 2026 | 5–9 p.m.
National Museum of Asian Art, 1050 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, DC 20560

Celebrate Diwali with food from the Indian diaspora, live performances, crafts, diya coloring, rangoli decorating with Kulture Khazana, and a view of the museum lit up after sunset.

Meet NOVA RPCV by the food vendors on the West Building Plaza. Come enjoy the festivities together or explore at your own pace.

Please **register with NOVA RPCV** so we know who is coming. You can include your phone number and email address if you would like us to contact you to help the group connect during the event.

Museum admission is free. **The NOVA RPCV RSVP is separate from the museum's Eventbrite registration.** The museum recommends Eventbrite registration, but entry remains first-come, first-served based on capacity.

Eventbrite link:
https://www.eventbrite.com/e/asia-after-dark-diwali-festival-tickets-2001238735931?aff=ebdssbdestsearch



NOVA RPCV Quarterly Gathering:

Giving Thanks, Building Bridges, and Looking Ahead

Sunday, November 8, 2026 | 12:30–3:00 p.m., Immigrant Food Ballston, 4245 Fairfax Drive, Arlington, VA

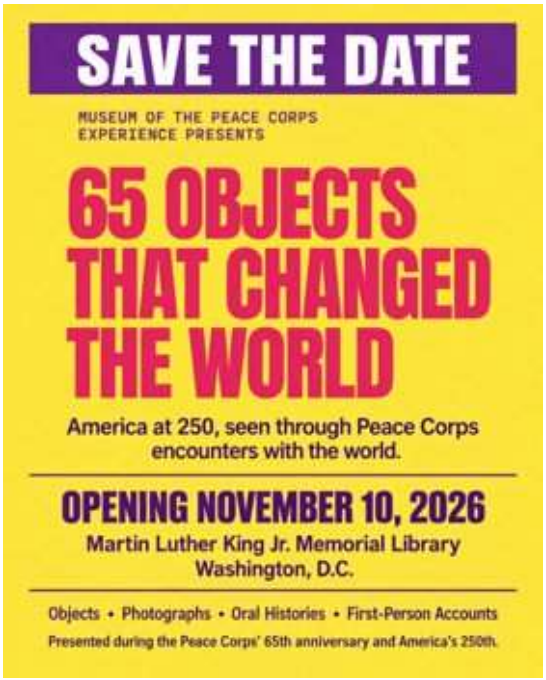
As Thanksgiving approaches, join NOVA RPCV to share food, give thanks for this community, and consider how we can build stronger connections—within our chapter and across differences.

We will welcome a representative of the Braver Angels for a conversation about practical skills for working more effectively across divides. We'll also hear from George Washington University Organizational Leadership and Learning student consultants, who will share preliminary findings from their interviews and survey of the NOVA RPCV community.

Come ready to share and hear about how to shape our community! We welcome your perspectives on what brings members together and how NOVA RPCV can best serve and support our community.

All RPCVs, potential volunteers, and friends of Peace Corps are welcome! We'll gather at 12:30pm in Immigrant Food's private dining room located at 4245 N. Fairfax Drive in Ballston, just across from the Ballston Metro stop on the Orange Line. After lunch, we'll hear from our guest speakers. Please register ahead of time, and be sure to check out Immigrant Food's gastroadvocacy mission, engagement menu, and international menu.

Please Register!



Other RPCV events

65 Objects That Changed the World Opening Night Celebration

November 10 @ 4:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library
901 G Street NW, Washington, D.C.

Join the **Museum of the Peace Corps Experience** at Washington, D.C.'s **Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Library** for the opening of *65 Objects That Changed the World*, the museum's landmark exhibition marking 65 years of Peace Corps history through the objects and stories of cross-cultural encounters.

4:30–5:30 PM Explore the exhibit. Free and open to all Nov. 10, 2026 – Mar. 7, 2027.
5:30–7:00 PM Celebrate with the Museum community at an opening reception with drinks and hors d'oeuvres.
7:00-9:00 PM Attend premiere of Diamond Rivers Reborn, followed by a conversation and audience Q&A with the filmmaker and featured subject.



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.

Continental Pool Lounge. 1911 N Fort Myer Dr, Arlington, VA 22209. Tel. (703) 465-7675. Happy-hour food and drink specials are available daily from 4-7 p.m.

https://www.rosslynva.org/go/continental-modern-pool-lounge

REGISTER

Attendance at the reception and film premiere require registration. Registrants' $50 contribution directly supports the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience. To register for the reception and film: Register



Past Events

ALL-RPCV Conference 2026

What does a "Post Peace Corps Life" mean exactly? More than 20 RPCV group leaders, and RPCV participants worldwide, rallied online to discuss this, and share what teams and individuals are accomplishing within our community to support those in country and at home.

The All-RPCV Conference, hosted by the Friends of South Africa and partnered by RPCVnexus, assembled on Saturday Oct. 24th and Sunday Oct. 25th, to celebrate post-Peace Corps life, welcome recently returned RPCVs, and to spotlight how groups and individuals continue serving and inspiring change.

"This conference is centered on celebrating the amazing work RPCVs do after service and create space for people to connect—especially helping recently returned Volunteers plug into local RPCV groups," wrote RPCVnexus Co-Founder, Executive Director Jonathan Keenan.

During the events, Conference participants convened in virtual breakout rooms to discuss topics such as: "Personal Professional Development," "Post-Service Connections," "Locality Group Breakout Rooms;" "Humor: Storytelling and Social Change," hosted by Keynote Speaker Chris Blackwood (RPCV Morocco); "Entrepreneurship," and "Unconventional Career Panels."

RPCV group leaders also discussed operational takeaways, such as ways of encouraging sustainability in volunteer leadership, shared data practices, practical approaches to fundraising, and rotating events to bring RPCVs together.

Informally, participants networked, laughed, shared tales from their service, and were reaffirmed of the sororal and fraternal nature of the Peace Corps community.

"If I am an advocate for anything, it is to move. As far as you can, as much as you can. Across the ocean, or simply across the river."

--late chef, author, and storyteller Anthony Bourdain



PCV Request to Support Panama Earthquake Relief

Hello, My name is Malvika Shrimali from Ashburn, Loudoun County and I am a current Peace Corps Volunteer in southern Panama, just outside Sona, Veraguas. I'm sure you have heard by now of the three earthquakes that have hit the southern part of Panama: one M7.7 in the district of Los Santos, and two M6.6 and M6.3 in the southern peninsula of Veraguas where Sona is located. **I'm writing to ask for your network's help in raising money for the victims of these earthquakes, including the communities of five Panama PCVs.**

The district of Sona is home to 27,000 people, but getting aid out to the rural towns has been incredibly difficult as some roads have collapsed or are extremely hard to reach due to treacherous conditions.

My friend Molly, an RPCV who lived not far from me in Sona, has organized a GoFundMe to donate to the firefighters of Sona, who are going to rural communities beyond their jurisdiction to provide aid such as food, water, diapers, and blankets.

Please share this message with the NOVA RPCV network to help us raise funds for our communities and neighbors. All money goes directly to grassroots aid efforts. I've attached a picture of the firefighters who came to my town this morning, so you can see the life-saving work they're doing. We appreciate any and all help, including in spreading the word!

Help Soná, Veraguas Recover:
https://gofund.me/81f46de15
Other incredible orgs providing aid:
https://gowaved.org/es/
https://www.proecoazuero.org/

Thank you,
Malvika Shrimali

Peace Corps News

Peace Corps achieves historic milestone of 250,000 volunteers since 1961

Cambodia's latest cohort includes the agency's 250,000th volunteer

WASHINGTON – In the 250th year of the United States, the Peace Corps achieved the historic milestone of placing its 250,000th Peace Corps volunteer into service with the latest Cambodia cohort, sworn in today. Chargé d'Affaires of U.S. Embassy Phnom Penh Aleks Zittle presided over the swearing-in ceremony of the 27 new Peace Corps volunteers.

The education volunteers will teach in primary and secondary schools and teacher training centers throughout Cambodia for the next two years. The new Cambodia volunteers join more than 3,400 Peace Corps volunteers currently serving in 60 countries worldwide.

Acting Peace Corps Director Christopher Landau congratulated the historic cohort of Volunteers, saying, "It's fitting that the Peace Corps reached this milestone during America's 250th anniversary year. From the agency's earliest days 65 years ago, Peace Corps volunteers have embodied American values, leadership and goodwill in communities around the world. Wherever their service brings them, volunteers gain valuable skills while also delivering meaningful results for their host country partners. I want to thank and celebrate this historic cohort of volunteers for putting their personal passion, purpose, and skills to work for America and the world."

For more details: Peace Corps - Peace Corps achieves historic milestone of 250,000 volunteers since 1961

Concurrent House and Senate Resolutions to Honor Peace Corps Service

This year, Congress can honor the nearly 250,000 volunteers who have served since 1961. RPCV Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) and Delegate Amata Radewagen (R-American Samoa) have introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives (H.Con.Res.119, "Honoring the 65th Anniversary of the Peace Corps"). Senator Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Senator Thom Tillis (R-NC) have introduced a concurrent resolution in the Senate. Together, the concurrent resolutions:

1. Celebrate the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps;
2. Honor the nearly 250,000 individuals who have served as Peace Corps volunteers for their dedication to peace, friendship, and community-driven development; and
3. Commend the Peace Corps' enduring mission to put purpose, passion, and skills to work for America and the world.

For more details, see peacecorpsconnect.org/npca-advocacy/email-congress/

Recognize Peace Corps Volunteers with a Congressional Gold Medal!

Take Action to Support the Peace Corps in Congress. The Peace Corps celebrated its 65th anniversary — a perfect time to honor its legacy and Volunteers with a Congressional Gold Medal, the highest civilian honor from Congress. Legislation introduced in the House of Representatives proposes recognition for the nearly 250,000 Peace Corps Volunteers who served from August 1961 through December 31, 2026.

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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

Please 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.



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!



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.

Peace Corps - Serve Online Through Peace Corps Virtual Service Pilot

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

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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.



Thank you note from Virginia PCV Audrey Cruey

Dear NOVA RPCV,

I hope you all are doing well! Our team of teachers and students at Sega Special School for the Deaf would like to thank you for supporting our Desktop Computer and Printer Procurement PCPP Grant this spring. With the funds, we were able to purchase and install a desktop computer, printer, and wi-fi system. This technology enables our teachers to design adapted learning materials and assessments and integrate ICT into classroom instruction. We are grateful for your assistance as we take one small step towards creating a more inclusive, Deaf-friendly learning environment for our students.

Attached to this email is a thank-you video from one of our grade 7 students. Also, be on the lookout for a thank-you card arriving in your mailbox soon!

Once again, thank you for your support. It truly means the world to us!

With love and gratitude,
Audrey Cruey
Deaf Educator, Peace Corps Kenya (2024-2026)

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



Stay Connected

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

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mail@novarpcv.org