



## An Affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association

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**We are looking for a Volunteer to take over the position of Membership on our Long Island RPCV Board**

## July 2021

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## **FACEBOOK PAGE /PEACE CORPS CONNECT PAGE**

Please log onto and like our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/LIRPCV>. It contains information about our members, photos and activities, as well as NPCA and Peace Corps news. Call or email **Lyn Dobrin** (Kenya '65-'67) if you have questions or items of interest you would like her to post: 516-997-8545; [lyndobrin@gmail.com](mailto:lyndobrin@gmail.com)  
Also please view our Peace Corps Connect page:  
<https://rpcvsoflongisland.peacecorpsconnect.org>

## **RECENT EVENTS**

### **PEDALS FOR PROGRESS COLLECTION**

The RPCVs of Long Island held their 17<sup>th</sup> bicycle collection for Pedals for Progress on May 15, 2021. **Kathy Williams-Ging** and **Bette Bass** coordinated the collection and **Brian Richardson** secured the site at United Church of Christ in Middle Island. **Lyn Dobrin** sent out publicity for the event. Pedals for Progress also boosted their Facebook post to reach more people.

It felt wonderful to gather in person on a beautiful Spring day after such an isolating year. The totals were less than we were hoping but, with some items stored during the pandemic, we were able to give Pedals 57 bicycles and 34 sewing machines. We also collected \$1860 to help defray shipping costs.

Our volunteers included **Kathy, Bette, and Brian along with Tim Ging, Linda and Lou Merola, Mary Watros, Laura Lustbader, Michael Kretschmann, Mary Bruckenstein, Jack Larsen** and 2 local boy scouts.

Our totals collected over the years are 1668 bicycles and 261 sewing machines. A special thank you to **Tim Ging** who collects, processes and stores bicycles throughout the year!



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### SUMMER PICNIC IN HUNTINGTON STATION

Mary Watros and Laura Lustbader have offered their home and beautiful garden for a summer pot-luck gathering.

**Saturday, August 14th, 1 p.m.**

78 East Park Drive, Huntington Station

631-673-7184; mwatros21@aol.com

More details will be in the reminder e-mail

### COW HARBOR PARADE AND CELEBRATION--NORTHPORT

(Thank you to the members who responded that they plan to attend this year's Cow Harbor Day Parade in Northport on Sunday, September 19th. As of this writing we have the minimum number of marchers that I said we would need; however, I hope more of you will decide to join us. Registration is not yet available but I will commit our group when it is.)

- **Sunday, September 19th**
- Join us as we march behind our RPCV-LI banner in an old-fashioned Main Street parade, followed by harbor-front activities. We have always received an enthusiastic welcome from the spectators and our fellow marchers
- Families and friends are welcome and encouraged to march with us!

The staging area is at the Laurel Avenue--William Brosnan School; signs there will direct you to the gathering spot for our group; plan to be there by 11:15 a.m. Leave yourself time to park since there are some street closures. Directions will be included in the reminder e-mail



Photos from previous parade

### FALL GATHERING IN EASTPORT

Enjoy the beautiful fall season out East!

- **Date to be determined; it will be a Sunday afternoon in October or November**
- Home of Lou and **Linda Restaino-Merola**, 113 Overture Place, Eastport
- Please R.S.V.P. to Linda at LRM1980@aol.com or call/text 516-242-2041
- If you would like to bring something, suggestions are a dessert, wine or a buffet dish
- Family and friends are welcome!
- Directions and a specific date will be in an email

## REMEMBERING FRANKLYN DUNNE

One of our founding members, **Franklyn Dunne**, died this past April. Franklyn will be remembered for his generosity of spirit, curiosity about others, his love of books and music, his championship swimming and his outgoing personality.

**Lyn Dobrin**, our Media Coordinator, wrote the following and submitted it to local newspapers:

### **Honoring a Humanitarian**

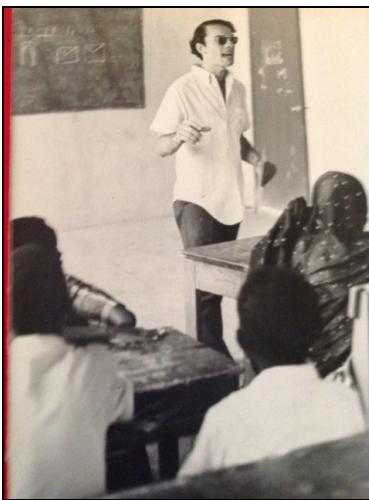
by Lyn Dobrin

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Long Island have made a donation to the organization FM4 Paso Libre in memory of one of its longtime members, Franklyn Dunne, who died in April 2021, at age 76. Originally from Rockville Centre, Franklyn had served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Somalia, teaching English in the late 1960s. In 2006 he had married Alma del Villar and they relocated to Mexico, occasionally returning to Long Island and visiting their Peace Corps friends.

“Franklyn was very moved by the plight of refugees in his home city of Guadalajara and mentioned his support of the organization FM4 Paso Libre,” says Eastport resident Linda Restaino-Merola, chair of RPCV-LI, who had served in the Peace Corps in the Philippines. FM4 Paso Libre is a non-profit dedicated to the defense and promotion of human rights of migrants and refugees in western Mexico. “Donating to FM4 Paso Libre is an appropriate way to honor our beloved Franklyn,” says Restaino-Merola.

Bill Reed of Westbury, who served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Lesotho, Africa, says “Our mission is to use the knowledge and skills we learned as Peace Corps Volunteers to help Americans understand the people and cultures of other countries.”

For more information about RPCVs-LI, email [LRM1980@aol.com](mailto:LRM1980@aol.com)



Franklyn in Somalia 1968



Franklyn and Alma in Mexico

**Also of interest is this interview several years ago of Franklyn by Lyn:**

Meet Franklyn Dunne

Somalia 1968 to 1970

Franklyn lives in Tlajomulco de Zuniga, which is a small town adjacent to Guadalajara, Jalisco, México, with his wife Alma Del Villar. For many years he lived In Sea Cliff and later in Coram, both on Long Island.

**Why did you join the Peace Corps?**

I joined Peace Corps rather than be drafted to serve in Vietnam. I also was always interested in other cultures and countries. And I had a prior personal history of service, having spent several spring breaks in Appalachia.

**Why did you choose the country you served in?** Somalia was not my first choice (it was Colombia) but I saw that it had a coastline and I thought I would like to live by the sea. I did not. I lived far inland in the town of Belet Wein, about a ten-hour drive from the coast.

**What was your work in the Peace Corps?**

In Somalia I was a teacher of English. **Did you learn a language? How fluent were you?** I learned to speak Somali with some degree of fluency. I had excellent language informers both during training and also in-country. At that time Somali was not yet a written language.

**What surprised you most about your experience?**

Every day was a surprise... to wake up in Africa each morning...to find that I loved the near-desert environment... to learn that one could read by moonlight.

**What are you most proud of about your Peace Corps experience?**

I was most proud of something that grew out of a teaching experience. I had instituted a morning program of calisthenics for my male students and after some days was approached by a group of female students who demanded that they be given the calisthenics classes as well. Somalia is a strictly Muslim country and I never dreamed that the girls would want to participate.

**What did you miss most when overseas?**

I am a native New Yorker and I missed most the continuous stimulation of a big city. However in time I came to appreciate the opportunity for reflection that life at a slower pace offered.

**Have you returned to your Peace Corps country?**

I have not been back to Somalia. All of the volunteers were evacuated after a coup. I had to leave without saying goodbye to students, colleagues or friends. It was a wound that I lived with for many years, one that I was unconscious of until meeting with some Somali refugee students in Sweden many years later. They had been settled in a small town in the Arctic Circle and were learning Swedish. They begged me to accompany them to their classroom where I met their teacher. Something about the parallelism of the experience made me break down in tears and I realized that I was finally saying goodbye.

**After the PC, when you returned to the US, what did you do? Work? Family?**

After Peace Corps I worked in International business and traveled extensively. I retired some years ago, moved to Mexico to be near my wife's family.

## MEMBER PROFILE

**Eric Sussman** recently joined our Long Island group.

He describes his experience:

"I served in the Peace Corps from 1968 to 1970 in the Marshall Islands, at that time a trust territory of the United Nations administered by the United States. It was a pretty unusual assignment. My location was Enejet Islet, in Mili Atoll where I taught 30 kids English as a second language. There were a total of 120 people on the islet only 2 miles long and 300-400 yards wide, about 15-20 thatch huts and loads of breadfruit and coconut trees. "

We all have had different assignments and experiences so it is always interesting to learn the details of how and where others served.

## HOPE CHILDREN'S FUND UPDATE

(An email was recently sent inviting people to attend the Gala; this writing is a further description of the organization)

From **Larry Hohler**, a founding member of the Fund:

"Hope Children's Fund is holding our fourth annual 'Passion for Education' Gala at the Wading River East Wind Inn on July 24th. Dealing with the pandemic has made fundraising difficult, and created a disruption of goods and services that have resulted in the increasing cost of running our orphanage. Joe Kirima Rwito, our founder, died last year. We were deeply saddened by his loss, and concerned about how we would find a new director with the skills needed to run the Home. We were relieved when Joe's widow, Veronica, an elementary schoolteacher, stepped up and with the help of a bright young woman who grew up with us, took over the care of our children. They have been successful in keeping everyone safe from the virus, and making sure they have enough to eat...our kids will be getting up in the middle of the night to Skype with us at the Gala. We will also be seeing Dr. Doreen Gatwiri, who came to us as a starving street child when we opened the Home in 2005. She is waiting to hear where she will be assigned to an ObGyn Residency before she can fully practice her profession and will be in Meru for our event...Check out our website at [www.hopechildrenshome.org](http://www.hopechildrenshome.org)

Some ways you can help:

Child Mentor	\$365	Child Mentorship for 1 year
Food Sponsor	\$210	Food for one week to feed 89 children at the Home
Bed Sponsor	\$100	New bed/mattress for the children

"Your support of our efforts on behalf of some of the world's most vulnerable children is greatly appreciated. As a 100% volunteer organization, on behalf of the Children of the Jerusha Mwiraria Home we THANK YOU."

(donations are 100% tax deductible)

## LI-RPCV DUES

There is no longer a yearly membership fees for NPCA (National Peace Corps Association). Any one can now join for free. However, NPCA does encourage contributions which will be used to fund projects. People who send donations to NPCA will be called "Project Partners."

All returned PC volunteers will automatically become members of NPCA. To continue receiving *Worldview* magazine, a person would have to be a Project Partner or have given another type of donation.

They will still process the \$15 membership fee to join the Long Island affiliate if you choose to send your dues through the national organization. We receive notification when you do so.

Otherwise, you can (please) just send your \$15 check, made out to "RPCVs of Long Island," to Kathy Williams-Ging, 2 Prospect Drive South, Huntington Station, NY 11746 Our local dues are used to support projects that are most relevant to our members. Examples include helping to fund, libraries, school construction and playgrounds where Long Island PCVs are currently (or will be) serving.

## **ADVOCACY/PEACE CORPS NEWS**

This spring we have been working on several advocacy issues, including Peace Corps funding and the Reauthorization of the Peace Corps Bill (HR 1456).

HR 1456 Peace Corps Reauthorization Bill introduced by John Garamendi(D -CA):

There are currently 100 cosponsors. Thomas Suozzi is the only Long Island Representative to cosponsor this so far. If you are one of his constituents, please contact his office to thank him. For those with one of the other Long Island representatives, please contact them asking them to become a cosponsor.

### **Funding:**

The House Appropriations Committee advanced the State/Foreign Operations spending package that includes a \$20 million increase for the Peace Corps! That's a 5 percent increase in funding for the Peace Corps for Fiscal Year 2022.

### **Meetings:**

During this spring, our Advocacy Coordinator, **Bette Williams Bass** (Ethiopia '66-'69) participated in Virtual meetings with the staff of both Senator Schumer and Senator Gillibrand. Representatives from 5 of the 6 New York NPCA affiliate groups participated. Both meetings were productive.

We are still hoping to have virtual district meeting with the Long Island House Representatives, and we need your participation! Once again, if you are interested in participating in a virtual meeting, please contact Bette at [bettembass@gmail.com](mailto:bettembass@gmail.com).

We prepare and have a "script" that will help during the meetings.

### Future Activities:

- As we prepare for the next six months, the biggest moment will come in conjunction with NPCA's [60th anniversary celebration](#) (September 23 –25), marking 60 years since President Kennedy signed the Peace Corps Act into law!
- Normally, NPCA advocacy would organize a Capitol Hill advocacy day in conjunction with this anniversary. But, as with most 2021 anniversary activities, we are planning for a virtual advocacy program on Wednesday, September 22nd (September 22nd was the exact date when the president signed the Peace Corps Act into law)
- **We seek your input!** Imagine that we might have a multi-hour afternoon/evening on September 22nd to promote and advance NPCA advocacy. Imagine that we might have a menu of offerings that members of our community could pick and choose from during a multi-hour period. **What would you like to see included that could enhance, expand, diversify, improve and advance NPCA advocacy? Please contact Bette, who will forward your suggestions to NPCA.**

We hope you and your families are well and that you will join us for an upcoming event!

Linda and Bette