



## An Affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association

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## March, 2022

### UPCOMING EVENTS

<b>Pedals for Progress Collection</b> May 14th Garden City	<b>Panel Discussions/ Presentations</b> Various Dates/Venues
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### **Our New Co-leader**

Darcy Neill has taken on the role as the new co-leader of our group. She has an extensive background of service, including as a PCV in Gabon and Senegal, as well as being Country Director in several posts. She is currently on an interim assignment in Jordan and will introduce herself in more detail in our next issue.



Our appreciation to Jennifer Monahan (Kenya '86-'89) our first co-leader, along with Art Dobrin (Kenya '65-'67). Jennifer helped us to affiliate and establish ourselves as a group over 20 years ago.

### **UPCOMING EVENT**

#### **Pedals for Progress:**

Our yearly service project for Pedals for Progress and Sewing Peace will be on:

- Saturday, May 14, 2022 from 11 am to 2 pm
- Ethical Humanist Society
- 38 Old Country Road, Garden City NY.

This will be our 18th collection for Pedals. Over the years we have collected a total of 1668 bicycles, 261 sewing machines and enough money to help cover shipping costs.

Coordinators for this event are Bette Williams Bass (Ethiopia '66-'69) and Kathy Williams Ging, (Peru '71-'73).

Lyn Dobrin (Kenya '65-'67) is our excellent publicist and secured the Ethical Humanist site for our collection.

For those not familiar with the organization, Pedals for Progress and Sewing Peace is a non profit organization whose mission is to supply economic development aid by recycling bicycles and sewing machines in the U.S. and shipping them to the people of the developing world.

Please consider joining us this year. The collection is from 11 am to 2 pm, but if volunteering, please arrive by 10:45. We will have snacks and water!

If you can't come that day, have no bike or sewing machine to donate, please consider a monetary donation. Pedals needs \$20 with each donation to help with shipping costs. (It was a \$10 donation for many years, but costs have been increasing)

Contact Bette at 516-606-1400 or Kathy at 631-549-4873

## RPCVS--UKRAINE

LI-RPCVs Cristina and Tom O'Keeffe, as well as Lauren Tuzzolino, served in Ukraine. Below are observations from Cristina and Lauren regarding the current situation.



### From LI-RPCV Cristina O'Keeffe:

My husband, Tom, and I served from 2003-05 in the U.S. Peace Corps in Ukraine. We lived in Lviv and were blessed to call a city with so much beauty and history our home. I want to impart the beauty, the strong character, the passion for life, education and family that Ukrainians exhibit. I also want to share some resources that may help others truly understand how terribly cruel and destructive this assault on innocent people is, an invasion built on a "distorted view of the past." - Dr Björn Alexander Düben, London School of Economics

To learn more about WHO the Ukrainian people are and their ongoing resilience, view the documentary "Winter on Fire" free now on Netflix. <https://bgr.com/entertainment/netflixs-winter-on-fire-ukraine-doc-is-now-free-for-everyone-to-watch/>

WHAT can you do? Make sure our lawmakers know where you stand. Please sign this petition or write your own letter to the powers that be: [https://www.congressweb.com/NPCA/78?fbclid=IwAR3i\\_Z6HiiomZ8\\_J-ysQDcNq6-qj4AQWnmqQNG7eP5FS1Xqz5LF-XZ7oMS4#/78/](https://www.congressweb.com/NPCA/78?fbclid=IwAR3i_Z6HiiomZ8_J-ysQDcNq6-qj4AQWnmqQNG7eP5FS1Xqz5LF-XZ7oMS4#/78/)

WHERE can we donate? Here are some vetted organizations organized by service area: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CdrWLAkEaOMV7fBbIWzHsgHmFz8s1GM6e\\_7a57oc3ug/edit?fbclid=IwAR1b3-4Gw7efOV\\_IVsjc6GMnncje5Vblq9185imHWz6yBKPbQ88O58jOumQ](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CdrWLAkEaOMV7fBbIWzHsgHmFz8s1GM6e_7a57oc3ug/edit?fbclid=IwAR1b3-4Gw7efOV_IVsjc6GMnncje5Vblq9185imHWz6yBKPbQ88O58jOumQ)

Tom's former site, the Ukrainian Catholic a university, is a bastion of leadership in the west of Ukraine. I highly recommend donating to their cause: <https://ucufoundation.org/donate/>

WHY should we care? This is an opinion piece but I felt it had a powerful message about the impact of Putin's

actions. <https://www.discoursemagazine.com/politics/2022/02/18/why-americans-should-care-about-ukraine/>

HOW can we share the positive message about Ukraine? I am making this post public so it can be shared. The story of Ukrainian resilience and tenacity is a heroic one. Keep praying for the people of Ukraine, for world leaders and for the citizens of Russia who are slowly being cut off from real news sources and getting a distorted view of this invasion. <https://www.axios.com/putin-tests-limits-internet-truth-lockdown-cb45dd16-1b35-4ce7-88c8-8ad46be9e574.html>

#StopPutinNOW #SlavaUkraini #ukraine #peacecorpsthirddgoal

### From LI-RPCV Lauren Tuzzolino

Ukraine, '06-'08

Hello, Long Island RPCVs, I'm sorry we're reconnecting under such tragic circumstances. I've tried to share with you some of the experiences and interactions I've had with Ukrainians over the last few weeks and during my service, but there's so much to capture to do them justice. I hope you are staying safe and healthy. I am writing this on the 18<sup>th</sup> day (March 13) of the war in Ukraine after Russia launched a full-scale invasion on its peaceful neighbor Ukraine on February 24, 2022. As a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer in Ukraine and still close to Ukrainians, it's been hard to keep track of time in the U.S. because my head and heart are in Ukraine right now – checking hourly for updates; checking in daily with my former students, colleagues, and host families; finding ways to provide any means of support through money or just by reaching out and listening; and worrying. The distractions that come with hopping on a work call or trying to finish a presentation have been helpful, but the stark contrast that *life* is still going on in some places while it has come to a halt and even been taken away in countries like Ukraine is unsettling. It's unfathomable that it's already been 18 days that Ukrainians have had to endure this terror and suffering, yet it has also felt like the longest 18 days—but how must Ukrainians living in bomb shelters or preparing their homes, under shelling and airstrikes, and devastated by the destruction and loss of life be getting by each day, hour, and minute?

When I lived in country, I cherished my time there. I loved studying the language, experiencing their rich culture and beautiful traditions, and building relationships with Ukrainians. I'd watch Ukrainians work hard to keep their homes immaculate and their land harvest bountiful. I observed it was a tough life for Ukrainians, but they always seemed to take any opportunity to celebrate—a holiday, birthday, [Saint] *Name Day*, or simply having a guest drop by—and toast to life and love throughout the meal (with customary shots of liquor), generously sharing their harvest with an outsider like me and thoughtfully including me in their lives. Ukrainians have faced a long history of oppression. I remember when I was living with my training host family, they left a lit candle in the window for Holodomor Remembrance Day in memory of the millions of victims killed during the

Holodomor (*death by starvation*) caused by Stalin's policies in 1932-1933. Now in present day, here they are again, defending themselves from an aggressive, oppressive, and cruel force, fighting for their survival, land, and independence. In the days leading up to the invasion as the Russian military presence increased on the borders, I observed through social media posts by Ukrainians like my host sister and former students—now all in their 20s and 30s—that people seemed to be going about their daily lives. I was confused and concerned since the U.S. had already evacuated Americans, but I thought, 'Okay, they [Ukrainians] don't seem worried...,' and then everything changed within hours.

My former colleague, Ira (pronounced *ee-ra*; short for *Iryna*) was on her way to school when I texted her about the explosions and fires in Kyiv. She said she didn't have a television to hear any news and would call when she arrived to open school for the children. She arrived to find a note from the headmaster that the school would be closed. Ira called me and seemed to be in shock trying to figure out what she would do—wait for any children to arrive or start preparing to take her work belongings for what might be to come in the days ahead.

Reaching out to my other Ukrainian friends and "family,"—some are living outside of Ukraine painfully worried about their family and friends in country, but most are still in country living in the western regions, which has not been hit as hard as the eastern regions bordering Russia and the southern regions of Ukraine—overall responses seemed consistent: shock, horror, fear, and anger at the invasion; pride for their leadership, land, country, and army; and also, gratitude and appreciation for support. My training site was in the Chernihiv region that shares a border with Belarus which has been under heavy shelling and airstrikes. I keep checking with my host sister, Yulia, to see how their village is doing with Russian troops in the area, and she had last assured me that it was still "calm" and "quiet" there.

During my conversations with Ukrainian friends, emotions vary by day and by person. They have shared feelings of sadness and helplessness for their friends and loved ones living in the cities hit hardest, like Mariupol, cut off from food, water, electricity, and communication, and under constant shelling. Lately, I've observed and heard from Ukrainians about their growing anger for what continues to happen and their own calls to action in defending their country and people, even from a former student who is now a mom of two and doctor. As a doctor, she is not permitted to leave the country and she fears for her children, so she must decide whether to have someone else take her two-year-old and five-year-old boys to leave the country. Ukrainians have shared that they feel alone in this war as their requests to "close the sky" and receive more aircrafts have not come to fruition. At the same time, I also hear Ukrainians say, "We'll be fine, I'm sure, our army is doing incredible things, so our mission is to support them and keep calm," and "We're more united than ever." A common Ukrainian phrase is, "Vse bude dobre" – *everything will be okay* – which I've also been told in the last few weeks, even amidst all these atrocities.

Social media has played a key role in allowing these connections and quick check-ins with Ukrainians and following their updates. One former student, Vika, reached out

about whether I could share her resume for remote work opportunities because so many Ukrainians are now without jobs. Vika abruptly left Kyiv to stay with her parents for safety in the west. However, she urgently wanted to determine where she would live and find work next, but she was worried about leaving her parents. Out of curiosity, I asked Vika how old she was now because she had grown into such a successful and independent woman. She said, “26 – I was twelve when you taught me,” and she’s still as motivated and polite now as she was back then in the sixth and seventh forms (grades). As we spoke to discuss her options and potential job connections, we got lost in catching up for a few minutes and forgot the reason we had been brought together for the call. She told me it gave her something to be “excited” about and look forward to. Now Vika has safely reached Poland and her parents are in a remote location in western Ukraine.

Another former student, Katia, started sharing updates and videos about her having access to a commercial kitchen in Kyiv, showing trays of delicious giant croissants and car trunks full of bulk prepped meal containers being delivered to older adults who are still in Kyiv. She said that most families with young children left, but older adults and “those ready to fight” remain in Kyiv. Katia and her friends have been risking their lives to help feed others and they’ve been at it for the last week regularly documenting their progress (averaging 150-200 meal portions per day) and thoughtfully thanking those donating to their efforts. Katia spreads hope for those trying to hang on—each day, hour, and minute—and she’s now become my *teacher* and *hero*. I told her that my family was now part of her fan club.

Finally, I’d be remiss if I did not include an update about one of my host moms, Mama Olena, at my main volunteer site, a quaint town in western Ukraine. She played a key role during my time in Ukraine. We lost touch for a few years as my Ukrainian language skills dwindled. I got her phone number from her grandson, also a former student, through Instagram and put together my *script*, remembering more and more Ukrainian words and phrases necessary to express support, and Mama Olena and I were reunited. Of course, I called concerned, and of course, her first question was [in Ukrainian]: Lauren, we want to know, are you “odna” (one) or “dvi” (two)?—her simple way of asking if I was single or married—*typical*; followed by whether I remembered her cooking—*always*; and when I would be back to visit because she still had some of my things. That was on the first day of the invasion. By our most recent call, her tone had changed, closer to the concerned one of mine on the first day. Mama Olena said, “Whatever has to be.”

For Mama Olena, Vika, Katia, Ira, Yulia, Sofiia, and all Ukrainians: I hope the answer to *whatever has to be* is peace, safety, healing, rebuilding, love—and freedom and territorial integrity as rightfully belongs to Ukrainians. “Slava Ukraini!” / Glory to Ukraine! “Heroyam slava!” / Glory to the heroes!



Lauren (in blue sweater) with Ukrainian family and friends



Lauren's suggestions for donations:

- [Razom](#) - means "together" in Ukrainian, and is constantly recommended by other Ukrainian-Americans and Ukrainian-Canadians I know; is based out of NY and is providing emergency response services getting humanitarian and medical aid to Ukrainians.
- [Revived Soldiers Ukraine](#) - also highly recommended for humanitarian and medical aid (at this time, it seems not just to focus on soldiers, but to all Ukrainians since I follow their updates on Instagram, for example delivering ambulances to areas getting hit the worst, and they are in emergency response mode.

## ANNUAL REQUEST FOR 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. Otherwise, you can (please) just send your

- \$15 check, made out to RPCVs of Long Island
- mail 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 serving.

### The Opening Word Program

At our Fall Gathering, we discussed possibilities for our annual charitable contribution. With no Peace Corps volunteers in the field, we looked to local charities that help the immigrant population on Long Island. Kathy Williams-Ging suggested The Opening Word Program. For more than 25 years the program has been educating women on Long Island. It was originally started as an ESL program, and has expanded to include basic computer skills and career readiness classes. It also added GED and citizenship classes. Over 6000 women from Central and South America, Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe have studied at the three sites in Amityville, Huntington Station and Wyandanch. We decided to donate \$500 to the program, and to ask that it be used to help defray the citizenship fees for a student.

### OUR FACEBOOK PAGE and WEBSITE

Have you been following our Facebook page where we are posting information about members of RPCVs of LI and other items we think are of interest to people who have served in the Peace Corps?

Check out the site <https://www.facebook.com/LIRPCV> (Hit Ctrl and click to open) and read about recent LI-RPCV events, as well as items of interest to the Peace Corps community.

We hope that you will "like" the page and also send us news about what you've been up to.

Call or email Lyn Dobrin (Kenya '65-'67) if you have question or items of interest you would like her to post: 516-997-8545; [lyndobrin@gmail.com](mailto:lyndobrin@gmail.com)

Our group's website is on the NPCA Silkstart platform.

We keep the website updated with news and upcoming events.

Check it out: <https://rpcvsoflongisland.peacecorpsconnect.org>



## RECENT EVENTS

We were able to gather for three pandemic-safe events in the past few months:

### **Summer Picnic**

In August, Mary Watros (Dominican Republic '85-'87) and her wife, Laura Lustbader, hosted a wonderful outdoor gathering in their beautiful yard in Huntington Station. Lyn Dobrin, (Kenya '65-'67) our Media Coordinator who been an outstanding publicist, arranged for a Newsday reporter to interview several of us virtually and for a photographer to join our gathering.

The event and our group were highlighted in the "Act 2" section of Newsday on Sunday, September 5th.

Arthur and Lynn Dobrin with a photo of themselves during their service in Kisli, Kenya from 1965 to 1967

Bette Williams Bass with a photo from her service in Ethiopia from 1966 to 1969

Mary Myers-Bruckenstein who taught in Ethiopia from 1968 to 1970



## Northport Cow Harbor Day Parade

On September 19, 2021, a beautiful warm Sunday, the RPCVs of LI were in Northport, participating in the annual Cow Harbor Day Parade.

We proudly marched behind our banner and U.S. and country flags. The reception by parade watchers was enthusiastic. This is a wonderful way to accomplish Peace Corps third goal!

There was a good turnout, and we hope that more of us will join in this year.

A big Thank You to all who marched!

Family and friends are always welcome and add to the festivities. It is a nice walk of a little over a mile.

We have marched in this event for many years, missing only two- one due to a Nor'easter, the other due to Covid.

The parade is held the 3rd Sunday in September as part of Cow Harbor weekend.

We will send details in our July newsletter. We hope you will participate. In the past there have been years when only a few people came, and we'd like to have at least 15 marchers. Help us continue a lovely tradition.



September, 2021

Dylan and Mason Gasiewski

Mason has been one of our most enthusiastic participants since his parents, Christina and Chris, pushed him in a carriage.

We are pleased that Dylan has also joined his big brother!

## Photos of past parades





### **Fall Gathering in Eastport**

On November 7th, we were happy to meet again for a pot-luck meal in Eastport at the home of Linda Restaino-Merola (Philippines '67-'69) and her husband, Lou Merola. As always, lots of food, good spirits, along with ideas for our group's future. This event is also our annual business meeting.

### **OUR PROJECTS**

Many of us continue to be involved in international and domestic projects:



LI-RPCV member, Bradley Broder (Kenya '99-'01) is the co-founder of the Kenya Education Fund

Help KEF enroll 200 students in 9th grade this year!

*Due to the Covid pandemic, we received more applications for high school scholarships than ever before.*

January 31st was the deadline for students to apply for KEF high school scholarships. We are completely overwhelmed by the amount of applications that have come into our office in the

past few weeks.

Covid-19 has hit Kenyans very hard economically. With the new school year set to begin in April, more Kenyan families than ever lack the resources to pay school fees for their children. It is extremely difficult to look at the amount of applications we received - reading each student's personal story - and not want to do everything we can to provide an education for as many students as possible.

We can't let schooling end after 8th grade for these children. We are looking to you to help us give them a chance at a bright and successful future. Please take one moment to read the words of a current KEF student and one of our sponsoring families.

If you would like to sponsor a promising girl or boy for 4-years of boarding school (grades 9-12), [click here](#) for more information. **For just \$2.80/day (\$84/mo) your sponsorship provides room, board, textbooks, uniforms, shoes, a safe learning environment, sanitary pads, calculator and career-readiness workshops.**

If you cannot make that commitment but would like to help this effort by [donating to KEF](#) we will combine all the funds that come in this month to create as many new scholarships as possible. We will keep you updated on our progress.

Thank you so much for your consideration and generosity.

KEF Co-founders Bradley Broder & Dominic Muasya



**Our scholars are doctors in training---Lucy Mmbwanga (16 Years old, Form 3)**

**In 2019, Lucy applied and received a KEF scholarship to join Nginda Girls Secondary School located in Muranga County on the slopes of Mt. Kenya. “My**

*parents had nothing to offer me,” she recalls. The KEF provided her with a full 4-year scholarship and school supplies such as dictionaries, a calculator, and more. She could not imagine her parents being able to afford any of it. “The KEF gave me a light to brighten my path,” she now reflects. Since joining Nginda Girls School, Lucy has had the opportunity to meet many students from other ethnic backgrounds in Kenya. She values this diversity of cultures and languages and intends to use the experience to help her cope with different people in her future life. “I can now differentiate between different values and identify the kinds of people that can help me grow,” she says.*

Lucy aspires to become a doctor. She understands what it means to be vulnerable and would like to help other people live their best lives. She enjoys the mentoring program that the KEF provides her and other scholars during the school holidays, where she gets to bond with other scholars from around the country.

[Donate](#)



We are proud to support the education of a Kenyan student. It is gratifying to know that we can help a Kenyan children get a quality education. We get letters and updates from the children and KEF and can see their progress. Whenever anyone has approached us about how to support effective programs overseas, we always recommend Kenya Education Fund.

*Arthur and Lyn Dobrin, Westbury, NY, KEF sponsors since 2007*

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Kenya Education Fund  
360 East 72nd Street C-3405  
New York, NY 10021

Kenya Education Fund, Inc.  
is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in the USA  
Donations are tax-deductible where permitted by the IRS.  
Tax ID: 54-2056227



### **Hope Children's Fund**

**Larry Hohler**, who is very supportive of our RPCV group, is a co-founder of the Hope Children's Fund. He and his wife Yvette have made several trips to Kenya to visit the Home. Some of us have sponsored children there. If you would like to help, please contact Larry at [hohlerj@aol.com](mailto:hohlerj@aol.com)

Incorporated in 2003, Hope Children's Fund is a New York State Licensed 501(C)3 that provides for the physical and emotional needs of some of the most vulnerable AIDS affected orphans who were living on the streets of Meru, Kenya. Its goal is to furnish the food, clothing, shelter and medical care that will enable these children to be enrolled in local schools. At the Jerusha Mwiraria Hope Children's Fund Home we expect to provide these children with the tools that will help them to become productive adults.



Dr. Gatwiri

## **A doctor who was, herself, reborn....**

By Larry Hohler

The best gift Yvette and I ever received over the holidays was an email that arrived from Doreen Gatwiri in Kenya.

“Hello, Merry Christmas and Happy New year, as well. My Christmas was good. I have already settled in at the hospital in Maua. (Near Meru in Eastern Kenya). This is the third week of my residency. The training is going well and a lot of work, but I am holding on. We have even night shifts, one per week. I am currently working with the pediatric and the newborn unit.”

We met Doreen when we opened the Hope Children’s Home in 2005. She was nine years old, and recovering from malnutrition and abandonment. With regular meals, TLC, and the opportunity to attend school, she blossomed. Nine years later, Doreen was accepted in the Pre-Med program at Jomo Kenyatta University in Nairobi. Financial help from a doctor in California enabled her to attend. Dr. Gatwiri was about to begin her residency in Ob/Gyn when the pandemic shut down her program. She was forced to sit out until late last year. For a time, Doreen was forced to sustain herself by selling chickens in a local market. Life in Kenya is returning to normal, and Doreen began her residency just before Christmas. Dr. Gatwiri is not typical of the 86 orphans we now provide for, but her hard work and dedication are an inspiration to them all.



Island Harvest Food Bank

**Ronnie Nachemin** (Ecuador '67-'69) has been volunteering for Island Harvest-food bank for Nassau, Suffolk for 6 years dealing with food insecurity. "We can do food stamp (SNAP) applications over the phones, plus we have an umbrella of info for so many other services to help.

Please pass this number along: 631-873-4775 X207.

There is available info for pantries, baby needs, rent help, gas/oil help etc. "

## NPCA ADVOCACY/PEACE CORPS/RPCV NEWS



**Bette Bass, our very committed and hard-working Advocacy Coordinator**



**The Peace Corps is 61!**

**The Peace Corps commemorated its 61st anniversary with a week long virtual celebration, Peace Corps Week, from February 27 to March 5. On March 3, in honor of the anniversary, CEO and Acting Peace Corps Director Carol Spahn addressed NPCA and others in the Peace Corps community at the virtual event, The Peace Corps Reimagined: A keynote Address and Forum.**

**Included were three breakout sessions focused on reimagining service, advancing equity and delivering quality. Recordings of the address and breakout sessions are available at [peacecorps.gov](https://peacecorps.gov)**

**Peace Corps Volunteers will be returning to service overseas in March! The first groups will partner with communities in Zambia and the Dominican Republic. The Peace Corps is set to return to over 20 countries in the near future. During the pandemic, Peace Corps offices world wide have been open and in country staff has continued to work to prepare for the safe return of Volunteers. There have been**



several virtual Peace Corps programs implemented during this time, and many evacuated Peace Corps Volunteers participated in Covid vaccination efforts.

On March 3 we kicked off our 18th season of advocacy in support of the Peace Corps. Our key priority: passing the Peace Corps Reauthorization Act. Congressional meetings are being organized, and op-eds are being published. Now is the time to get involved.

Our Days of Advocacy began with a virtual kickoff on Thursday, March 3. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, former Peace Corps staff, invited Volunteers, and other supporters came together to hear remarks by Peace Corps champions in Congress including RPCV Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA), Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA), and Sen. Robert Menendez (D-NJ). Advocacy leaders discussed the crucial work for improvements and reforms that will ensure that Volunteers are returning to a stronger, better, and well-resourced Peace Corps. Our highest legislative priority is to pass the [Peace Corps Reauthorization Act](#), the most sweeping Peace Corps legislation in decades.

It's not too late to get involved in our National Days of Advocacy. A stronger and better Peace Corps begins with you!

Our Days of Advocacy Agenda will continue taking shape as developments occur in the weeks and months ahead.

- Comprehensive Peace Corps Legislation in both the Senate and House of Representatives
- Passage of the Peace Corps Reauthorization Act is NPCA's top legislative priority in 2022.

In the House of Representatives, returned Volunteer Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA) and Rep. Garret Graves (R-LA) introduced the [Peace Corps Reauthorization Act \(H.R. 1456\)](#) in 2021. Last fall, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed [this amended version](#) of the legislation by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 44 to 4.

In the Senate, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Robert Menendez (D-NJ), is expected to introduce similar legislation in March 2022.

#### Peace Corps Funding in the Senate and House of Representatives

Unfortunately, and for a seventh consecutive year, Congress is taking final votes on a Fiscal Year 2022 spending plan that will include flat funding for the Peace Corps. The House approved the massive spending package on March 9, 2022, and a Senate vote is imminent.

The next budget year, FY 2023, begins in October 2022. For that, President Biden's budget is expected to be presented in the next few weeks.

As with years past, we anticipate mobilizing our community in the coming weeks to urge lawmakers to sign House and Senate “Dear Colleague” letters supporting robust funding for the Peace Corps in FY 2023. Stay connected to NPCA advocacy for action related to these letters.

We are hoping to set up virtual district meetings with the four Long Island Representatives within the next few weeks. If you would like to participate , please contact Bette Williams Bass, our Advocacy Coordinator at [bettembass@gmail.com](mailto:bettembass@gmail.com). These meetings can be very productive, and we will have at least two virtual planning meetings beforehand, with an agenda and talking points, so even if you have not participated in a meeting in the past, you will be prepared. Meetings typically last around 20 minutes, and may be with staff members rather than the Representative.

### HAPPY RETIREMENT TO ANNE BAKER

A shout out to Anne Baker (Fiji '85-87), Vice President of the National Peace Corps Association. Anne is retiring after 25 years with the NPCA.

Anne has been a friend of the RPCVs of LI for many years. When visiting family on Long Island she has come to our bike collections and spent time with several of us. In her role as Vice President, she has helped us maneuver through many issues involved in our affiliation with the NPCA.

In 2015, when our own Mary Myers Bruckenstein’s daughter Berhane Daba was awarded the Harris Wofford Global Citizen Award, Anne was with her and her entourage both in Berkeley CA and Washington, DC., making everything run smoothly.

On March 1, coinciding with Peace Corps Day, the NPCA celebrated Anne’s service.

It was a virtual celebration including both live and video messages of love and appreciation for Anne, including moving appreciations from Glenn Blumhorst (Guatemala '88-'91), President and CEO of the NPCA, and Jonathan Pearson (Micronesia '87-'89), NPCA Advocacy Director.



Happy Retirement to Anne!



As returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs), your stories are essential to achieving the Third Goal by helping to build relationships, spark curiosity about the world, and inspire service through storytelling. Today, we are excited to launch the new Peace Corps' Approach to Ethical Storytelling toolkit for returned Volunteers. [Review the toolkit and craft your story.](#)

Ethical storytelling is the practice of sharing stories in a way that centers mutual respect while considering the power dynamics inherent in any story. The Peace Corps' Approach to Ethical Storytelling toolkit is designed to help us explore how our stories are told. We encourage you to review the toolkit, which includes both a video and accompanying workbook that tie ethical storytelling practices to the Peace Corps approach to intercultural competence, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The toolkit is one of several ways in which we are asking all members of the Peace Corps network to create more equitable and inclusive storytelling practices. While this toolkit is designed specifically for RPCVs, we look forward to expanding our knowledge and tools in this area to include Volunteers, staff, and host country partners. The agency's [draft strategic plan](#) includes a roadmap to help us thoughtfully consider which stories we tell, how they are told, and who has access to our stories. Additionally, the agency is investigating new ways to elevate the stories of our host communities. We will pilot this new approach in a limited number of countries this year, and look forward to expanding this approach with additional countries in the future."

This is part of our larger work to expand the reach and impact of our Global Connections program, which includes the program previously known as Speakers Match, to connect communities in the United States with current and returned Peace Corps Volunteers. We know that when RPCVs share their service journeys, they introduce learners to new cultures and open their future to new possibilities. [Sign up to participate in Global Connections now.](#)

We know that RPCVs continue to meet the moment here at home and in communities around the world, using the skills and experiences gained during service to foster world peace and friendship. We can't wait to hear your stories.

In service,  
Office of Third Goal and Returned Volunteer Services P.S. You will soon be able to sign up to receive email notifications about new stories posted to the Peace Corps

website from your country of service. Once available, you can edit your preferences for receiving these stories, and all email correspondence from Peace Corps, in the [RPCV Portal](#).

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## GLOBAL REENTRY NEWS



The war of aggression against Ukraine reinforces the need for a Peace Corps promoting world peace. Especially as Volunteers prepare to return overseas in March.

Dear Peace Corps Friends and Family,

With the shocking events unfolding in Ukraine, our hearts go out to colleagues and friends and former students in Ukraine. Calling for an end to the war of aggression, NPCA has [issued a statement](#) that includes ways you can take action to support Ukrainians in harm's way.

We are also reminded of the troubled world in which the creation of a Peace Corps was heralded as an American and international call to peaceful global engagement and cooperation.

Our community also celebrates the Peace Corps announcement that Volunteers will return to service in March. The Agency made that official this week, confirming that the first groups of Volunteers are set to work with communities in Zambia and the Dominican Republic. These groups will include Volunteers who were evacuated in 2020 because of COVID-19, individuals who were training for service when they were evacuated, and new two-year Volunteers. In total, the agency has issued invitations for Volunteers to return to service in 24 countries.

We have a great newsletter for you this month. Please take a moment to scroll

through the list of March career services events and useful resources, including an excellent podcast series premiere of discussions with RPCVs in Foreign Service careers as well as an announcement about a State Department funding opportunity.

As always, don't hesitate to reach out to the Global Reentry program to let us know how we can support you.

In service,



Dan Baker  
Global Reentry Program Director

## Ready to write for your local news outlets about why Peace Corps matters? We can help.

As part of National Days of Advocacy, in March and April we're leading a campaign to submit opinion pieces to local or regional newspapers across the country. Last September, a campaign around Peace Corps' 60th anniversary saw more than 40 op-eds published, reaching more than 2 million people. Writers are now lining up to prepare and submit op-eds — from North Carolina to Hawai'i, from Illinois to California. In March, the first Peace Corps Volunteers are preparing to return to service in communities overseas. Mark this historic moment and [contact us](#) to participate in our nationwide op-ed campaign.

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