

PEACE CORPS DAY '99

Bringing the World Home to Our Nation's Schools

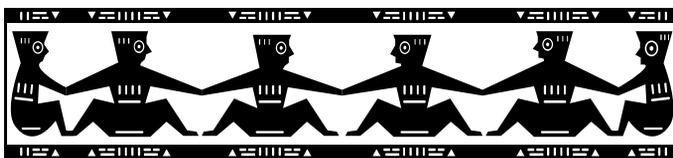
March 2, 1999

HOW FAR ARE YOU WILLING TO GO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

On March 1, 1961, John F. Kennedy sent the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers overseas with many tasks, one of which was to build cultural "bridges." Since that time, those proverbial bridges have flowed with continuous traffic, coming and going. Arriving in-country with offerings in the areas of education, technology, and commerce, the typical Peace Corps Volunteer returns home, arms full, with centuries-old lessons about family, community, and the "necessities" of daily living. This 38-year practice of bridge-building has led to at least one conclusion: there are no one-way streets in an interdependent world.

Peace Corps Day is a time to celebrate service and to share those lessons learned. Volunteers have traveled to distant parts of the world with the desire to make a difference, but the challenge doesn't end when they return to the United States. There are still more bridges to be built in our neighborhoods, our classrooms, and our workplaces. This year's theme, "How Far Are You Willing to Go to Make a Difference?" invites currently serving and returned Peace Corps Volunteers, as well as educators, to inspire young people in their communities.

"How Far Are You Willing to Go to Make a Difference?" isn't a question of miles; it is, rather, a question of commitment to the *practical* idealism that Peace Corps was founded upon. On March 2, 1999, we invite you to join 10,000 educators and returned Peace Corps Volunteers across the country in keeping this spirit of idealism alive. Join us in our 38-year quest to foster friendship and understanding--in our simple and *very* practical task of bridge-building.



IN THIS KIT...

- **PEACE CORPS POSTER**- *On the back of this colorful poster, you'll find lesson plans that educators can use to prepare students for their Peace Corps Day guest speaker.*
- **PC DAY STICKERS**- *Your kit contains 24 colorful Peace Corps stickers. If you do not have enough to give one to each student, please brainstorm about ways to distribute what you have.*
- **PRESS RELEASE**- *Let people in your town share in this special day. See page 4 for details.*
- **ENROLLMENT INFORMATION**- *Make sure that the enclosed World Wise Schools enrollment form is given to the classroom educator so that he/she can join Peace Corps' community of global educators.*

WORLD WISE SCHOOLS An Essential Resource for Global Learning

Peace Corps
World Wise Schools
1111 20th Street, N.W., 2nd floor
Washington, D.C. 20526

(800) 424-8580 ext. 1450
(202) 692-1450

E-mail: <wwsinfo@peacecorps.gov>
Web Site: <www.peacecorps.gov>



What I Took Overseas & What I Brought Back Home



World Map

Two suitcases or backpacks containing items discussed below.

Suitcase A: What I Took Overseas

8 - 12 objects related to your preparations for living in-country, such as clothing, a map, or a language dictionary. Also include items that symbolically refer to your thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears (e.g. "quaking" bowl of jello, party hat, tissues, worry beads, U.S. flag).

Suitcase B: What I Brought Home

8 - 12 objects that most significantly represent your host country and your cross-cultural experience. Some objects may refer to cultural expressions, traditions or values. Others may refer to your work accomplishments (or exasperations) and/or personal achievement (e.g., a photograph of you and your friends or a book you read in your new language). Also include items that refer to your personal or professional redirection. In short, pack your bag with objects related to how life in your host country changed you.

Objectives

- Students will list two cultural characteristics of your country of service.
- Students will identify the skills and attitudes needed for successful cross-cultural experiences.

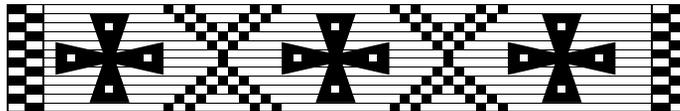
Procedure

1. Briefly introduce yourself. Tell students that you will be talking not only about your country of service and the work you did, but also about how going overseas changed your life. Using a world map, have students locate your country of service. Explain that you have packed two suitcases to help tell your story. The first suitcase represents what you took overseas; the second represents what you brought back.
2. *Suitcase A:* As you prepare to open the suitcase, briefly share a little bit of personal history. Why did you want to join Peace Corps? At what point in your life did you join? What and where was your assignment? Now take items one by one out of Suitcase A. Let each item be a springboard for sharing how you got ready for this overseas experience. In what ways did you prepare physically for living in this new place? In what ways did you prepare mentally and emotionally? Encourage questions and pass around objects.
3. *Suitcase B:* As you prepare to unpack the second suitcase, talk about how the reality of your Peace Corps experience met or didn't meet your expectations. How did living there dispel stereotypes or misconceptions you had? You may want to address some disappointments and frustrations (that's human), but focus on the growth and learning that you ultimately see as positive. Take items one by one from Suitcase B. Again, let each item be a springboard for telling more about your host country, its culture, and what it all meant--and means--for you. Encourage questions.

Wrap-up Ideas

Share with students what you took with you overseas that you left there, such as items, values, or feelings. Why did you leave them behind?

Ask students how they make a difference in their own community. Encourage students to find their own answers to the question "HOW FAR ARE YOU WILLING TO GO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?"



Check Out These Possibilities....

World Wide Web - Peace Corps' website is: <www.peacecorps.gov>. There you can click on "global education" to print out country fact files, even for countries Peace Corps is no longer in. You'll also find the *Handbook for RPCV Speakers and Volunteer Views* there.

Personal Pictures - Interesting photographs can be enlarged at your local copy store. If you have a video camera, you can tape your photographs so they can be seen on a television screen. You can also make slides from photographs.

Flash Cards - Prepare cards ahead of time with words like "transportation," "holidays," "families," "foods," "languages" etc. Ask students to select cards. Together, compare and contrast life in the U.S. with life in your country of service.

Interactivity - Can you pass coins around and compare them to U.S. currency? Can you bring clothes for students to try on? Teach students how to "make" tortillas using clay? What about using a bowl of popcorn as a prop to demonstrate customs around eating? The possibilities are endless.

Artifacts - Clothes, artwork, crafts, school textbooks, posters, newspapers, food packaging, currency, recreation items, and so on, all help students see and feel the stories you share.

Music - Traditional music playing in the background sets a mood. If you don't have any, borrow from friends or a local library.

Children's Books - Read or display books of folktales, short stories, fiction, and pictures. Check the internet, your local bookstore or library.

Anecdotes - Personal observations provide interesting tidbits of information in an entertaining way. Folktales and short stories are also helpful.

Games - Teach a game from your host country or create a game to make the learning of facts fun. For example, find out who can draw the country map outline with their eyes closed. Simulations and role-plays are also useful.

Language - Teach students key words in the languages of your host country. Why not make nametags for students, giving each a special new name?

Brown Bag - Nervous about addressing students? Why not publicize and hold a "brown bag" lunch at your workplace? "Bring the world home" to your co-workers on Peace Corps Day!

Personal Talents - We often forget to tap into our own skills and passions when we prepare a presentation. Can you sing, dance, act, move, tell stories, cook, draw, play an instrument, demonstrate handicrafts, show artistic expression? Go for it!



Presentation Tips

1. **Come prepared:** What equipment, if any, do you need? What do you want students to know and feel when you leave? What do you want to share with them?
2. **Speak to your audience:** Know who the students are, and what they are studying and thinking about. What are the messages the teacher wants reinforced?
3. **Build on what your students already know:** Their experience, awareness and knowledge.
4. **Invite interaction:** Bring objects to pass around. Ask questions. Greet students in another language and encourage them to greet you back in the same manner. Move around the room. Be open to the energies and interests of your class.
5. **Tell your stories and the lessons they have taught you:** Tie them in with the "How Far Are You Willing To Go to Make A Difference" theme where possible.
6. **Share a balanced picture of your host country.**
7. **Have fun!**



MORE ABOUT PEACE CORPS DAY...

PC Day Chair, Richard Riley

For the second consecutive year, **United States Secretary of Education** Richard Riley is the Honorary Chairman for Peace Corps Day. Secretary Riley is a strong proponent of community members and educators working together to improve local schools. He recognizes Peace Corps Day '99 as "important work by the Peace Corps to provide American teachers, students and others with a better understanding of the people, cultures, languages and customs of other countries." Returned Peace Corps Volunteers are encouraged to consider volunteering time in the school they visit throughout the year. See your educator or call the Department of Education at (800) USA-LEARN.

MARCH 2, 1999

EVENTS

- Returned Peace Corps Volunteers will visit thousands of U.S. classrooms.
- Destination series videos will be broadcast to over one million students on "The Classroom Channel."
- Peace Corps Volunteers serving overseas will host events in the cities and villages where they live.
- Volunteers and U.S. students will communicate via long distance telephone calls and video conferences.

Thanks to all RPCV Groups

Peace Corps has worked closely with over 130 returned Peace Corps Volunteer groups throughout the year to coordinate Peace Corps Day. Many returned Volunteers will visit individual classrooms, while others join together to celebrate community-based events such as international storytelling festivals and school-wide programs. While returned Peace Corps Volunteers "bring the world home," currently serving Volunteers will host overseas events to help achieve another Peace Corps goal which is: "to create a better understanding of U.S. citizens among people served." Peace Corps salutes all members of the Peace Corps community who work tirelessly throughout the year to promote peace.

PRESS RELEASE

Your press release is important to help raise awareness among educators that RPCV speakers are a year-round community resource. Don't be shy! Here is how to get the word out:

1. **Print** your name and phone number in the space designated "Contact."
2. **Fill in** the other blanks with the appropriate information.
3. **Mail** the completed form to your local newspaper, no earlier than February 23, 1999. For local newspapers please send it to the assignment or news editor. For large city newspapers, direct the release to the education or metro area editor. If you like, make copies of the press release and send them to local TV and radio stations as well.
4. **Follow up** with a phone call to your newspaper the week before your presentation.
5. **Questions** about press issues? Call the Peace Corps Press Office at (800)424-8580, press 2, then ext. 2230.

We Want To Hear From You!

If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears it, did the tree really fall? Peace Corps wants to know about your great classroom visit and all the things that happen around the country on Peace Corps Day '99.

Send newspaper articles, letters or an e-mail telling us about your experience to:

**Monica Fitzgerald
Peace Corps Day Coordinator
1111 20th St., N.W., 2nd floor
Washington, D.C. 20526**

**E-mail:
<pcday@peacecorps.gov>**