

2011

ANNUAL REPORT

PEACE CORPS ARMENIA



PEACE CORPS' 50th ANNIVERSARY

This year, the Peace Corps turns 50 years old, tracing its roots to President John F. Kennedy who signed an executive order creating the independent agency in 1961. Since then, over 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 countries, devoted to community development and world peace and friendship. In Armenia, Peace Corps staff and Volunteers have marked the 50th anniversary with events around the country, celebrating past contributions and inspiring future community leaders.



1961-2011

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Peace Corps . Armenia

TO LEAN MORE ABOUT PEACE CORPS ARMENIA VISIT OUR WEBSITE: <http://armenia.peacecorps.gov>

A LETTER FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR



Dear Ministers and Staff of the Republic of Armenia, staff of Non-Government Organizations, stakeholders and Volunteers: I am pleased to report that Peace Corps Volunteers and their Armenian counterparts have been working very hard over the last year to improve schools, non-government organizations, and businesses. I hope you will enjoy reading this report which highlights some stories of their successes. Currently 94 Volunteers serve across the country, largely in rural communities where they work with

schools teaching English, leading environmental and health clubs, and working with local NGOs and businesses. They strengthen nongovernmental organizations and help to expand the range of community services

Peace Corps wants to thank our partners and other stakeholders especially the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Nature Protection, the Ministry of Healthcare, the Ministry of Economy, and the Ministry of Sport and Youth. Thank you for your support of our programs. We would also like to thank the many teachers, school directors, community leaders, and host families that give so generously of their time to make these Americans feel welcomed and at home in Armenia.

Respectfully,

David Lillie
Country Director
United States Peace Corps, Armenia



**“Ask not what your country can do for you.
Ask what you can do for your country.”**

**“One person can make a difference and
every person should try.”**

**“All of us do not have equal talent, but all of us
should have an equal opportunity to develop
our talents.”**

Kennedy's Promise

We will only send abroad Americans who are wanted by the host country, who have a real job to do, and who are qualified to do that job. Programs will be developed with care, and after full negotiation, in order to make sure that the Peace Corps is wanted and will contribute to the welfare of the other people. Our Peace Corps is not designed as an instrument of diplomacy or propaganda or ideological conflict. It is designed to permit our people to exercise more fully their responsibilities in the great common cause of world development.

**JOHN F. KENNEDY
MARCH 1, 1961**

PEACE CORPS

Background

Peace Corps in Armenia began in 1992 at the invitation of the Republic of Armenia when 39 Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Armenia. Since then, over 730 Volunteers have served throughout Armenia, working with communities to improve English Education, Community and Business Development, and Health and Environmental Education. In secondary projects, Volunteers focus on HIV/AIDS education, Women in Development activities, information and communications technology, and youth development. Their objective is to strengthen the skills and capacity of the communities, partners, and individuals with whom they work so that one day the Volunteers will work themselves out of a job.

In Armenia today, there are nearly 100 Peace Corps Volunteers. Volunteers live with Armenian families and intensively study the Armenian language, learn about the culture and history, and get technical training to adapt their skills and experience to the needs of their new Armenian communities where they will live and work for two years. In addition to sharing their skills with Armenians and collaboratively working on development projects, Volunteers focus on increasing mutual understanding between Armenians and Americans, such as linking together American and Armenian school children through communications.

Volunteers are paid a small stipend to cover their living expenses. They live in the same communities as those with whom they work, and they travel only by public transportation. While they do not get rich financially, they are rewarded with the satisfaction of sharing their skills and gaining life-long friends and memories.

In a recent training about volunteerism, one of the Armenian participants said:

“Step by step the Peace Corps Volunteers changed our thinking that one can do something for the community without any financial interest and expectations. If a person who crossed thousands of kilometers came to serve in your community on a volunteer basis, you must do the same and serve your own community.”

The Peace Corps Mission

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship.

The Peace Corps' mission has three goals:

1. Helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women.
2. Helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of the Armenian peoples served.
3. Helping promote a better understanding of Armenians on the part of Americans.

PMEACE CORPS ARMENIA PROJECTS

Community and Business Development (CBD)

- NGO capacity building
- Small and medium enterprise development
- Business and IT training for students of local colleges and other community members

English Education (TEFL)

- Teaching English
- Teacher professional development
- Resource development
- Community development projects

Community Health Education [CHE]

- Preventive health education
- Nutrition training
- HIV/AIDS awareness
- Health resources development

Environmental education [EE]

- Environmental agencies development
- Creation of resource centers
- Environmental educational camps

INITIATIVES:

Peace Corps Volunteers work on a variety of initiatives in Armenia:

Gender and Development - Volunteers train community and NGO members on gender analysis and organize Girls Leading Our World and Boys' Leadership camps.

Information and Communication Technologies - Volunteers train Armenian counterparts and students in using IT and have established internet access sites and computer centers.

HIV/AIDS Education – Volunteers and their counterparts raise HIV/AIDS awareness in the communities through various activities, developing cultural-sensitive curriculum, and collaborating with national and international organizations on HIV/AIDS education and prevention.

Youth Development - Volunteers organize various youth camps & other activities with local partners for environmental awareness, healthy lifestyles, sports, leadership, and career development.

The Health and Environmental Education Programs will phase out in 2012 after a lengthy and successful program in Armenia, but PC Volunteers continue their work through initiatives like: HIV/AIDS education, Youth programs, Summer camps, clubs and other activities and events.

To apply for a Volunteer in your school; organization or an institution:

Fill out the Peace Corps Volunteer application form at anytime at: <http://armenia.peacecorps.gov>

Provide a clear explanation in the application why you want to have a Volunteer, what job the Volunteer is going to do, and how many hours the Volunteer is going to work.

For more details on applying for a Peace Corps Volunteer you can contact the Peace Corps Office in Yerevan.

(see the contact information on the back cover).



TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (TEFL)

Nearly 50 TEFL Volunteers support the Ministry of Education in its efforts to increase the quality of English education through formal and non-formal approaches. TEFL Volunteers are assigned to secondary schools, universities, and regional centers of the National Institute of Education (NIE) for pre-and in-service teacher training. They team teach with Armenian teachers, conduct after school English clubs, organize teacher training workshops, and develop or enrich English resource centers with computers, books, and other resources. They also work on various development projects to enhance the capacity of the communities in which they serve.

TEFL Volunteers serve in two focus areas:

- 1) English teaching in various educational institutions
- 2) English teacher training.



TEFL-overall goal

Thirty-nine Volunteers partner with local organizations, businesses, and municipalities to expand opportunities in effective use of communication, business and organizational skills while developing beneficial networks. These Volunteers have benefited over 4,700 individuals.

Achievements in 2011

- Thousands of students demonstrating improvements in reading, writing, speaking and listening skills from English lessons: 643 students participated in the International Writing Olympics; 1,179 students improved their test scores and showed better results on exams; 1,145 students demonstrated better critical thinking skills. Additionally, many students increased their chances to participate in exchange programs, such as FLEX, UGrad, and the Muskie programs, through Volunteer-led lessons that focused on completing applications and writing essays, interview skills, and cultural studies.
- Organizing extra-curricular activities for students, including computer training, bird watching, photography, sports and games, as well as drama and choir.
- Conducting teacher-training workshops in collaboration with the National Institute of Education which included lesson observation with feedback, team-teaching, and teacher participation in conferences and seminars.
Partnering with the Microsoft Innovation, a group of TEFL Volunteers developed an online teacher-training course for Armenian TEFL teachers.
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COMMUNITY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (CBD)

About 40 Community and Business Development Volunteers collaborate with local organizations, businesses, and municipalities to enrich and transfer skills to their staff. Volunteers design and conduct trainings, provide guidance, conduct assessments, and develop civic-education programs. Further, they carry out IT and organizational-development workshops, and provide staff development opportunities for local service providers. Information and communications technology has become a greater priority for rural communities, and CBD Volunteers are of assistance to businesses, schools, IT centers and diverse community groups. Volunteers also engage in secondary projects ranging from summer youth camps to development projects based on community priorities.

CBD Volunteers serve in three focus areas:

- 1) Small-enterprise development
- 2) NGO development
- 3) IT development. Volunteers come from a range of backgrounds and experience



CBD-overall goal

Thirty-nine Volunteers partner with local organizations, businesses, and municipalities to expand opportunities in effective use of communication, business and organizational skills while developing beneficial networks. These Volunteers have benefited over 4,700 individuals.

Achievements in 2011

- Leading or supporting trainings on: interpretation of project contracts, requests for proposals, revision of press releases and mass communications, and design of newsletters for donors and target audiences.
- Consulting on project design, fundraising, project implementation, customer service, time management, marketing, and business planning, among other fields.
- Teaching classes in business English for the tourism industry.
- Working with groups of women who own or want to start their own businesses.
- Training on project design and management for youth leaders from twenty communities. Skills covered were needs assessment, program design, and budgeting and implementation techniques.
- Teaching computer teachers from rural schools the basics of web design.
- Training on MS Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Dream Weaver, Internet, Search Engines.

COMMUNITY & HEALTH EDUCATION (CHE)

CHE PC Volunteers were primarily assigned to secondary schools, local health NGOs, and special schools to support the Ministry of Education and Science and Ministry of Health in providing education in the areas of preventive care, healthy behaviors, and awareness. Some Volunteers work with people with disabilities and students with special education needs. As part of their primary assignment, some Volunteers team teach health classes with Armenian teachers at schools; develop and acquire health-related resources in Armenia; and assist organizations to build capacity and to enhance sustainability. PC Armenia continues its work in the Health sector through the HIV/AIDS Education and Youth Development Initiatives.



CHE-overall goal:

Volunteers helped improve community health and well being by increased awareness and preventive health measures through social organization, skill development and behavioral-change initiatives.

Achievements in 2011:

- Conducting various health-related educational activities for different age groups and educational levels. Health-related educational activities included formal classes, after-school clubs, seminars, lectures, and various summer camp sessions around the topics of personal hygiene, dental hygiene, smoking prevention, nutrition, among others.
- Organizing “Border 2 Border,” a marathon walk across Armenia by 12 Volunteers in an effort to raise awareness of healthy lifestyles among Armenian youth. Two teams of six Volunteers walked from opposite ends of the country and taught lessons en route in select towns and villages.
- Helping to launch an SMS Information Hotline project with the Armenian Red Cross, promoting HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention through SMS text messaging for free courtesy of partnerships with VivaCell and Orange. And leading 60 information sessions on HIV/AIDS to over 1,300 individuals.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (EE)

EE Volunteers are assigned to schools and local community organizations both in urban and rural communities with the mission of increasing public awareness and involvement in environmental issues in Armenia. They are also involved in youth development and Volunteerism promotion projects, and creating environmental awareness materials. They organize and run after-school environmental clubs, teacher trainings, bird-watching groups, trash clean-up events, water-monitoring groups, and events dedicated to Earth Day and other environmental holidays. And Volunteers play a key role in planning and organizing environmental education summer camps. PC Armenia continues its work in the Environmental field through the initiatives.



EE-overall goal

Volunteers helped strengthen the capacity of teachers, schools, NGOs and community organizations to increase environmental awareness, realize local environmental initiatives, and to reduce environmental problems.

Achievements in 2011:

- Assisting local teachers in organizing and implementing environmental education activities and extra-curricular clubs in secondary schools to complement the curricula.
- Working with community schools and local NGOs to support five “green” environmental summer camps.

PCVs' Project Accomplishments

BORDER2BORDER THE FIRST ARMENIAN MARATHON FOR CHILDREN'S HEALTH

In June of 2011, twelve Peace Corps Volunteers embarked on an unforgettable journey across Armenia to bring health education to the country's rural youth. According to the World Health Organization, non-communicable diseases account for over 80% of deaths in Armenia. Cardiovascular diseases are the leading cause, accounting for 54% of total deaths, and tobacco consumption is still on the rise, varying between 64.2% and 69.4% among men in the 24 – 65 years age group. After observing firsthand the health conditions of Armenia's population and how certain trends were being picked up by the youth, Peace Corps Volunteers from across the country came together to take an innovative approach towards raising awareness about health education. The project, known as Border2Border or "B2B", was a pan-Armenian walk that coupled health education with leading by example. Spearheaded by the volunteers, the project team worked alongside the Armenian Red Cross Society to develop informational materials and interactive learning methods focused on proper nutrition, exercise, and the avoidance of cigarettes and alcohol. Peace Corps Volunteers raised the funds for the project and mobilized both communities and their youth, all the while preparing mentally and physically for the challenges that awaited them.

On June 4th, six volunteers started walking south from the Armenian-Georgian border while six others started north from the Armenian-Iranian border. Over the following 17 days, the teams traversed five of Armenia's ten 'Marzes' (states) towards the midpoint of Yeghegnadzor, each team walking its own 290 kilometers over mountains and through communities. While ten of these days were primarily hiking, the other days were devoted to organizing seminars and teaching Armenian youth about the health.

-Written by PCV Austin Sherwindt

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS IN ARMENIA USE TEXT MESSAGING FOR HIV/AIDS EDUCATION AND PREVENTION



Washington, D.C., November 4, 2011 – Peace Corps volunteers Lisa Conder of Englewood, Fla., and Ashley Ottewell of Belleville, Mich., spearheaded the launch of the "SMS Information Hotline," a nationwide program in Armenia that promotes HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention through mobile-phone-based SMS text messaging.

"The SMS Information Hotline provides potentially life-saving information that users may not be able to get otherwise," said Conder, who had the idea to start the Hotline in 2009 after learning about a similar Peace Corps project in Namibia. "In Armenia, HIV/AIDS is

sometimes referred to as a hidden epidemic. There is a general low awareness about HIV/AIDS and a lack of prevention programs and resources. People often avoid seeking testing, counseling, and treatment because of the stigma and social taboos associated with it."

"Having a text messaging HIV/AIDS information hotline is a perfect way to make important information accessible and empower people to make healthy lifestyle choices," said Ottewell.

Starting Oct. 21, 2011, community members have been able to send anonymous HIV/AIDS related questions through text messaging. They receive answers within 24 hours from Armenian Red Cross Society volunteers trained by the Armenia Ministry of Health's National Center for AIDS Prevention. The

Hotline is a resource accessible to the general public, including those in rural areas who might have limited access to accurate HIV/AIDS information.

The creation, implementation, and a national information campaign on the SMS Information Hotline is funded through the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) Volunteer Activities Support and Training (VAST) grant available to Peace Corps volunteers working in collaboration with local partners.

The SMS Information Hotline is implemented in cooperation with the Armenian Red Cross Society, Armenian mobile operators, the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Armenia, and Peace Corps staff and volunteers, including recently returned Peace Corps volunteers Nicholas Hutchings of Baltimore, Md., and Brent Hines of Belton, Texas.

- Written by PC Washington, D.C Press Office

BIO SAND FILTERS BRING CLEAN WATER TO VILLAGE



Tucked away in the southeast corner of Armenia sits the tiny and isolated village of Nerkin Khndzoresk. Recent water testing completed by the Goris Water Organization indicated an excess of harmful bacteria in the community's water supply. With the aid of Water Charity, a U.S.-based non-profit organization, local Peace Corps Volunteer, Katie McKillen, helped find the much-needed resources to construct three BioSand filters to improve water quality in the village.

Founded nearly 30 years ago as a strategic bulwark for its larger sister-village of Khndzoresk, the community of 320 residents has since suffered a dearth of resources, leading to an aging infrastructure absent of much needed improvements. In particular, the poor states of the village's water supply and drainage systems have been negatively impacting the public health of the people and their livestock. 2009 statistics from the local health post revealed that over 50% of the Nerkin community suffered from some type of infectious disease throughout the year. Outbreaks of giardia, shigella, hepatitis A, and dysentery are believed to have been caused by the drinking water.

Using locally available materials, BioSand filters work using a slow sand-filtration process in which unclean water is piped into the filter where it passes through layers of sand and gravel. As organisms, such as bacteria, viruses, and parasites, travel through the sand, they collide with and stick to sand particles. These filters are proven to remove 90% to 95% of organic contaminants from untreated water and are effective across a broad range of harmful pathogens.

After the construction of the filters in Nerkin Khndzoresk, the local Goris Water Organizations retested the purified water and approved it as safe for drinking, observing a bacteria concentration of less than 5%.

The Vice Principal and School Engineer were amazed by the construction of the filter, stating, "I didn't understand how something so simple could actually help clean our water. Now it makes sense, it's just like a river." The success of the project provided the community members, especially the youth, with further hope for their community. One mother stated, "It's great that they can see that they can make a change and be creative. These are the skills that we need to teach our children to continue to slowly improve our village."

Founded in 2008, Water Charity is on a mission to meet the needs of communities where quick and inexpensive solutions can be implemented to increase access to water or improve water sanitation practices. Working with Peace Corps Volunteers and their communities, Water Charity has funded the implementation of approximately 650 projects in 60 countries where volunteers are active. For example, in cooperation with Peace Corps Senegal, Water Charity is partnering with volunteers to implement a *52 Pumps in 52 Weeks* program, where Peace Corps Volunteers will work alongside community members to build one new water pump every week for one year in the Kolda and Kaolack regions of Senegal.

Averill Strasser, Chief Operating Officer of Water Charity, states, "Our organization is trying to fill the gap where low-budget and time-critical water projects make a big impact on the community. We are able to cut out much of the 'red tape' of larger aid organizations and turn around funding for these projects in one to two months". Mr. Strasser served as a Peace Corps Volunteer, himself, as a Professor of Engineering at the University of San Andres in La Paz, Bolivia, from 1966 to 1968. During that time, he led numerous development projects into the interior of Bolivia, building water systems and sanitary facilities using student and community resources.

About Water Charity

Water Charity is a nonprofit corporation directed toward improving the human rights and dignity of individuals throughout the world by providing them with resources that impact upon their health and wellbeing. Water Charity's "Appropriate Projects" initiative enables instant deployment of resources to do small but critical water and sanitation projects. For more information, please visit their website at <http://appropriateprojects.com/>.

-Written by PCV Austin Sherwindt

VOLUNTEERS LEAD SPELLING BEES IN SYUNIK MARZ



SYUNIK MARZ, ARMENIA (November / December 2011) – During the final weeks of autumn, Armenian youth from across Syunik Marz traveled and competed in local English spelling competitions in the towns of Sisian, Goris, Kapan, and Meghri. Each year, Peace Corps Volunteers from the Syunik region organize competitions for youth in the 7th through 12th forms to practice and hone their English spelling skills. This is one of the few events each year that allow Armenian children to demonstrate their knowledge of the English language. In total, 168 Armenian children from 33 different communities participated in the local spelling bees.

Similar to the contests organized in American schools, students from each grade are given a list of words to study and memorize. During the competition, the students take turns spelling words from the list. If a student spells the word correctly, he moves on to the next round; if not, he is eliminated from the competition. From the local contests organized in Syunik's main towns, the first- and second-place students of each form – 48 children in total – will advance to a regional event held during the spring.

During the events, Peace Corps Volunteers were recruited to serve as judges and recorders, and to help with registration and other logistics. A total of 26 volunteers collaborated to organize and implement these four events. Certificates of participation and small prizes were donated by the British Council and the American Councils for the first, second, and third place winners. Matt Oakley, the volunteer who organized the Kapan event, shared the following, "I was very pleased by the village turnout and how many new schools we were able to include this year. The competition was very successful in my eyes, which was confirmed by the positive feedback from parents, teachers, and school directors."

-Written by PCV Austin Sherwindt

PEACE CORPS BRINGS TECH TO VILLAGE SCHOOLS WITH THE "TAKING TECH AROUND" PROGRAM

It's a cold and grey Saturday afternoon at the end of November in the village of Karnut, 8 kilometers from the city of Gyumri in Shirak Marz, Armenia. Most children in the village are at home staying warm by a cast iron stove burning cow dung. But at the marginally-heated village school, bundled in their winter coats, twenty middle- and high-school students are huddled around laptops, learning how to create Word documents in Armenian. For many students, this is the first time they've gotten to use a computer. For all of them, it's the first time they've had any hands-on instruction in basic computer skills. The laptops, teachers and curriculum are part of the "Taking Tech Around" program, which brings a mobile computer lab to village schools near Gyumri.

Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) Darryn Glenn, wearing a North Face parka and Wool hat, walks between the desks, answering questions and offering students advice. "Metzatar aistergh" he says, speaking Armenian with the kids, "Capital letter here." Before he joined the Peace Corps, Mr. Glenn worked in IT at Merrill Lynch. Now, he works with the Gyumri Development Center (GDC), an NGO focused on small business development and teaching technology skills. Mr. Glenn conceived the Taking Tech Around program at a Peace Corps conference, where another PCV presented the idea of a computer summer camp. "I thought, 'why don't I just do that during the school year?'" said Mr. Glenn.

The project was funded by a USAID Small Projects Assistance (SPA) grant, which provided funds for eight laptop computers. Mr. Glenn wrote the curriculum, which his Armenian counterpart, GDC head Aida Khachatryan, translated. GDC provided the connections with the village schools, transportation and teachers for the three-year lifespan of the program. And after that? "Well, maybe I'll get another Peace Corps Volunteer" says Ms. Khachatryan.



- Written by PCV Samuel Dolgin-Gardner

CHEMISTRY AND BIOLOGY LABORATORY CONSTRUCTED



VERISHEN, ARMENIA (November 2011) – In a previously worn and barren room, students attending the secondary school in the village of Verishen now have a place to learn hands-on chemistry and biology skills. The school, originally constructed in 1921 to accommodate 800 pupils, today houses only 270. The limited school budget has prohibited upkeep of the entire building, leaving many of the facility's seven wings unused and exposed. The Verishen community and local volunteer, Hedley Bond, collaborated to rehabilitate one of the school's unused rooms into an interactive science center, utilizing both of Peace Corps' funding platforms – the Small Project Assistance (SPA) initiative and Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) – and the aid of the regional government.

With the lack of efficient heating systems, many of the used rooms in the school are on the building's south-facing side to avoid the harshness of the winter climate that sweeps in from the mountains north of the village. Though considerably colder during the winter months, the new laboratory is situated in one of the northern-facing rooms in one of the school's used wings. In the unused wings of the school, the hallways are in poor condition and there is neither heat nor power, thus making it a more economical trade-off to focus on the north-facing room.

To restore the room to working order, Bond and his counterpart, senior science teacher, Zarik Hakobyan, applied for a SPA grant, which is funded by USAID's Armenian office. Over the summer, local laborers brought running water to the laboratory, installed new windows and doors, constructed a fume hood for ventilation during experiments, renovated the floor and walls, and added power outlets and ceiling lights. For the room's refurbishment, Bond bolstered funds donated from the regional government with those solicited through a PCPP grant, a mechanism by which individuals can directly support Peace Corps Volunteers' initiatives. The combined amount was used to purchase furniture (6 cupboards, 16 chairs, 4 benches, 8 stools, 8 student tables, 16 student chairs, and a computer table), curtains, a computer, and an overhead projector. The majority of the furniture was sourced locally.

The school held an opening ceremony for the laboratory on November 5, with the attendance of students, teachers, community members, and representatives from the local and regional governments.

Bond, who holds a Ph.D. in Biology, states, "It was very gratifying to see the younger kids clustered around the new displays. Having Zarik's physics laboratory next door has been a big bonus; we stored a lot of the teaching material there during renovation; we connected her sink up for little added cost during the renovation; and we have plans to do more joint physics, chemistry, and biology displays in the hallway in the months to come."

In his opening speech at the opening ceremony, Matvey Ghazaryan, the school's principal stated,

"For prospective projects in the educational development sphere in Armenia, the greatest value is considered to be the knowledge of an Armenian child. Any step taken by a school is targeted at solving that problem. On behalf of the school and the whole faculty, let me express my gratitude to the whole Peace Corps Staff, who found Mr. Hedley Bond and Zarik Hakobyan's project urgent and aligned with our current needs. As a result of this, we now have the laboratory. Thank you to all the organizations that made this project possible and good luck to the new lab in its future journey".

Meri Arakelyan, the Peace Corps' Regional Manager for Vayots Dzor and Syunik marzes, said, "We were, of course, right to support the project and I am sure the laboratory will serve its purpose and provide valuable knowledge to students. The Peace Corps will always support and cooperate with organizations and schools as long as Volunteers, counterparts and communities have the will and desire to collaborate together. I am thrilled to be given the opportunity to be present at the opening of this beautiful and knowledge-reinforcing lab."

-Written by PCV Austin Sherwindt

About Peace Corps

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA SERZH SARGSYAN

I highly value the productive activity of the Peace Corps after the restoration of the Independence of Armenia, and the invaluable investment of about 700 Peace Corps Volunteers. I am happy that in numerous towns and villages of Armenia, the Peace Corps volunteers and their work are recalled with warm and deep feeling of gratitude. The implemented activity of the Peace Corps in Armenia is another important link in the consolidation of friendly relations in the American-Armenian relations.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

During its time in Armenia, Peace Corps has accomplished several important projects. While cooperating with different ministries and communities, these projects have promoted the progress of our country in the sectors of education, health, and social welfare.

Cooperating with the Ministry of Education and Science since 1992, the Peace Corps has made significant input in the process of educational reforms with the aim of promoting the improvement of English language curricula, as well as creating new possibilities for study. The Volunteers work in Teacher Training Centers, public schools, and higher educational institutions. The outcome of Peace Corps' accomplishments is our desire for boundless cooperation and mutual support.-

Remarks from Armen Ashotyan
Minister of Education and Science

MINISTRY OF SPORT AND YOUTH AFFAIRS

The Ministry of Sport and Youth is aware of the dedicated work that Peace Corps Armenia achieves through its Volunteers in the sectors of Community and Business Development, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Environmental Education, and Community Health Education. We are not only aware, but we cooperate and we are committed to cooperating with your organization to realize the ultimate results of understanding, friendship and strong relations between the Armenian and American nations.

We especially appreciate that Armenian youth are given the opportunity to get involved in civil society and community life with the assistance of Peace Corps. After the adoption of the new law "On Volunteerism," the flow of volunteers to organizations will grow even more.

Armen Papyan,
Head of Department of Youth Policy

The document is translated from Armenian.

Peace Corps Ministry Partners are:

- Ministry of Education and Science
- Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs
- Ministry of Territorial Administration
- Ministry of Diaspora
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs

VOLUNTEER THOUGHTS

- Every culture has fascinating aspects as well as characteristics that someone, somewhere, will not agree with or want to adjust to. The old adage “when in Rome, do as the Romans do” should be kept in mind during your adaptation. With very few exceptions, I have really enjoyed “doing as the Armenians do.” Peace Corps volunteers in Armenia play a very important role in working with host country nationals to strengthen the country’s capacities in business, education, the environment and health care. If you maintain a positive, open attitude and remind yourself of why you came here, then you need not ever doubt whether or not you are making a difference.

-A14 Mark Dietzen

- The most rewarding part of my Peace Corps service is the relationships I’m building with my students, neighbors, and community. I know my service is successful when my students invite me to go dancing with them at the local disco or my neighbors invite me over for dinner. The technical skills and knowledge we bring to our communities are certainly important, but the greatest impact we can make is to bring encouragement, enthusiasm and hope to the people around us.

-A14 Sarah Snowbarger



- One of the brightest characteristics of Armenians, their hospitality, will help remind you of your value to this country and of your safety at your site. In a world where power and strength are revered, both the Peace Corps organization and Armenia need more people with your message of peace and love.

-A14 Sarah Zaenger

- Peace Corps service changes everything. You face your own life with a new clarity and you hopefully come to accept your host country as home overtime. This new place I never thought about suddenly became my home, the people became my entire world, and my identity started to incorporate Armenia into its core. Peace Corps service opens your eyes to opportunities in international development work, diplomacy, and community service.

-A17 Zoë Armstrong

- Every day I learn something new about myself or about the people of Armenia. I always try to remember that our backgrounds are different, but our needs are not.

-A17 Shannon Priddy

- You will find that Armenia is a special country, and that your time here will be fascinating. You will make your experience your own. Your attitude will determine how you perceive the differences and difficulties here. And with a positive outlook you can have such a wonderful time.

-A17 Robby Robinett

This journal is not intended to cover all volunteer activities, and it merely represents a snapshot of Peace Corps Armenia's in-country programs and activities.

For more information about Peace Corps Armenia, its activities, its Volunteers, its programs or related information, please contact Mariam Arzumanyan at 010-524-450.



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