



SUMMER 2012

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- *PEACE CORPS
A20 GROUP SWEARING-IN
CEREMONY*
- *SUMMER CAMPS:
GIRLES LEADING OUR WORLD
LANGUAGE CAMP
GREEN CAMP*
- *PEACE CORPS
VOLUNTEERS WALK ACROSS
ARMENIA FOR HEALTH
AND ENVIRONMENTAL
AWARENESS*



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Peace Corps and Programs, John F. Kennedy’s Promise 2
Part of President John F. Kennedy’s statement upon signing the Executive Order creating Peace Corps

Letter from the Director 3
A statement about the mission and activities of Peace Corps Armenia

Peace Corps Volunteers Accomplishments 4
Some of the projects Implemented by Volunteers for this quarter

PEACE CORPS MISSION

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.

PEACE CORPS MINISTRY

- 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

ABOUT PEACE CORPS

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps to promote world peace and friendship by challenging Americans to live and work in developing countries. Since then more than 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries.

Volunteers serve for 27 months in their host countries, learning language and culture and living at the same level as the people they serve.

The Peace Corps Armenia program was established in 1992. Since that time over 700 Volunteers have served in villages, towns, and cities around Armenia.

Currently about 90 Volunteers work in the following areas:

- Teaching English as Foreign Language
- Community and Youth Development

Peace Corps is an independent agency of the United States government.

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.

U.S. President John F. Kennedy
March 1, 1961

PEACE CORPS ARMENIA PROJECTS

English Education

- Teaching English
- Teacher professional development
- Resources development

Community & Youth Development

- Organizational Development
- Youth Development
- Camps



LETTER FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Dear Ministers and Staff of the Republic of Armenia, staff of Non-Government Organizations 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 about 90 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

PCV: Kellianne Lauer

Reporting Period: Summer, 2012

Title of Article: Sevan Green Camp—Armenian youth learn about their environment

PCVs involved: Emily Yost, Amy Williams, Morgan Kelly, Hannah Wells, Laura Maas, Colin Sumera, MaryAnn Harty

Third-Party Media Involvement: None

SEVAN GREEN CAMP—ARMENIAN YOUTH LEARN ABOUT THEIR ENVIRONMENT



Sevan, Armenia—Lake Sevan is one of Armenia’s most prized environments. The town of Sevan is also one of the first towns to start a recycling program. However, like most towns of Armenia, Sevan still faces too much litter in its streets and open areas and, overall, a low awareness of environmental issues. It was here that one of this year’s Peace Corps sponsored Green Camps was held.

During the five-day camp, twenty-eight students, six Peace Corps Volunteers, and Armenian camp counselors worked, played, and studied a variety of environ-

mental issues. Highlights of the camp included testing Lake Sevan’s water for turbidity, pH level, and amount of dissolved oxygen. Campers used water testing kits to determine this data and learned what each number meant. Campers also watched a video detailing the environmental problems Lake Sevan is currently facing. Lively discussions of these issues and their solutions followed.

Another highlight of the camp was the games played by the campers and counselors, alike. These games were meant to teach the campers about various environmental issues. During Bird Habitat Relay, campers had to fly between two forests and compete for a decreasing number of trees. If they failed to get a tree, they were “out” and could only get back into the game by telling a counselor a way to help conserve trees. Another favorite, Predator vs. Prey, had the kids searching for and competing for resources to survive while being chased by predators.

The students also did a trash and recycling pick-up at School Number One in Sevan. During this activity, they learned how long it took each item they collected to decompose. Many of the students were shocked by how much time it takes some trash to completely disappear.

The Sevan camp was sponsored by the Sevan Youth Club, which provided counselors and organized the space used for camp activities. The Armenian Green Network



Continuation is on the next page

helped print the camp's necessary materials. Other Green Camps were held this summer in Dsegh with the help of Peace Corps Volunteer, MaryAnn Harty.

Peace Corps Volunteers are hoping to create a "kit-camp" which will contain all the materials necessary to hold mini Green Camps. They will be available at the Peace Corps office for volunteers who wish to hold future camps, afterschool and on weekends, throughout Armenia.

* * *

PCV: Kellianne Lauer

Reporting Period: Summer, 2012

Title of Article: Noyemberyan Community Park Beautification

PCVs involved: Barbara Cassaniti

Third-Party Media Involvement: None

NOYEMBERYAN COMMUNITY PARK BEAUTIFICATION



Noyemberyan, Armenia—After attending the V2 conference held in Yerevan last spring, Barbara Cassaniti and her counterpart, Aida Zurbayan, a representative from Noyemberyan's YWCA, returned to Noyemberyan motivated and ready to recruit and work with local volunteers. They had the perfect project—a small local park that needed cleaning, construction, and a few trash bins.

Like all Peace Corps projects, this one involved a considerable amount of waiting for the pieces to fall into place before it really began.

Cassaniti was beginning to worry about the project's starting so slowly, but one day, a surprise awaited her and her counterpart.

The project site had been cleaned and made ready for the improvements by four local youths. They told Cassaniti that they wanted to help their community and were anxious to begin—and so they started the project.

A group of young Armenian men took the initiative to begin repairs and construction. The sounds of cutting, hammering, and nailing filled the area and soon, new benches, repaired picnic tables, and new lighting soon appeared in the park. Immediately after the construction ended, the painting began, for this, young women joined the process and the work was soon complete. Cassaniti reports that neighbors and community members, passing by, would often stop to lend a hand or offer support to the volunteers. Once the construction and painting were complete, even more community members got involved in the project. City workers helped collect and remove garbage, children from the kindergarten planted flowers, and local students



Continuation is on the next page

made posters to advertise the project. The final action was the placing of six new trashcans next to each picnic table, which will be maintained by the city.

The Noyemberyan YWCA held a volunteer appreciation event for those who contributed to the project. When Cassaniti asked the volunteers if they enjoyed working on the park, the response was a resounding “Ayo!” When asked if they would be willing to volunteer again, the response was equally enthusiastic. In fact, the YWCA youth representative has already approached the Noyemberyan mayor with an idea for a new volunteer project.

This project is truly a success; the park is used daily for card playing and gatherings. It has been kept clean and there has been no abuse or vandalism of the tables, benches, and trash cans. Most of all, this project succeeded because a group of young adults came together to volunteer their time and energy to make their community a better place.

* * *

PCV: Evelyn Helminen

Reporting Period: Summer, 2012

Title of Article: GLOW camp

PCVs involved: Laura Maas, Kim VanKirk, Morgan Kelly, Robyn Burrows, Danelle Wassink, Joel Gillin, Maggie Woznicki

Third-Party Media Involvement: none

GLOW CAMP

Stepanavan, Armenia—From June 16-21, 2012, a leadership camp was held for Armenian girls called Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) in Stepanavan, Armenia, the second largest city in Lori Province of Armenia. A collaboration between the Stepanavan Youth Center and Peace Corps, the camp is intended to teach young females to have self-confidence, think about career and life planning, and become leaders in their communities.



Forty young Armenian women, ages 13-16, came from all regions of Armenia to participate in the overnight, five-day camp. They were led by four Armenian counselors and six American Peace Corps volunteer

team-teachers, including two administrators.

Each day of the camp, the girls learned something new. There were units on self-reflection, the environment, personal development, gender, career planning, health, HIV/AIDS, peer education, and leadership. The theme this year was “Cultures of the World,” so there were also units on cultural awareness and tolerance.

The learning hasn’t ended yet for the girls who attended the camp. Now that they are back in their communities, they are expected to hold peer education workshops, contribute to the GLOW newsletters, and help organize regional seminars during the year for other young men. This is the fifth consecutive year that GLOW camp has been held.

PCV: Tom H Cyrs

Reporting Period: Summer, 2012

Title of Article: *Peace Corps Volunteers Walk across Armenia for Health and Environmental Awareness*

PCVs involved: James Kim, Brian Bokhart, David Stein, Kristen Ellis, Amy Williams, Evelyn Helminen, Tom Cyrs, Kelsey Anderson, John Duffy, Fred Linden, Hannah Wells, Kellianne Lauer, Tamara England-Zelenski

Third-Party Media Involvement: SOSI TV

PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS WALK ACROSS ARMENIA FOR HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

In late June and early July, this summer, there was a small chance that those traveling on major roads in Armenia witnessed one of two groups of 6 Peace Corps Volunteers (PCVs), likely walking in single-file, with large packs on their shoulders, sweating and wearing looks of utter determination or exasperation on their faces. The reason for these odd caravans of volunteers trudging along on the side of the road in the hot Armenian summer was a project called Border 2 Border, now in its second year.



Initially started up, last year by PCVs, Austin Sherwindt, Katie McKillen, and Michael Kim, the project began as an idea to spread health awareness to Armenian children in a grassroots, hands-on fashion, reaching a high number of kids while allowing the volunteers to see a great deal of the country, in the process. Troubled by community health issues in rural Armenia, such as a close to 70% incidence rate of smoking among men and high incidences of diseases that can be prevented through a healthy diet and exercise such as heart disease and type II Diabetes, PCVs began developing a campaign for greater awareness among Armenian youth.

The project grew into a long hike, or “marathon,” for health awareness beginning at Armenia’s respective northern and southern borders and ending in the central city of Yeghegnadzor. Along the way, teams of volunteers taught lessons on healthy lifestyles in the communities where they stopped, contacting countless children, organizations, and unsuspecting passersby, as well, with the simple mission of walking and teaching. Keeping with the tradition of that simple mission, this summer’s Border 2 Border teams also added on environmental lessons to the curriculum (environment is another troubling issue in rural Armenia), and extended the duration of the hike slightly from 17 days to 20 so that more communities could be reached.

As this summer’s walk came to a close on July 6, in Yeghegnadzor, the two teams of Volunteers had collectively walked 600 kilometers, taught in 18 villages and towns, and reached upwards of 750 Armenian children with lessons on nutrition and exercise, anti-smoking and prevention of alcohol abuse, and environmental awareness in communities large and small, from the border village of Lehvaz (population 600) to the bustling regional capital of Vanadzor in Lori Marz.

For many of the PCVs doing the hiking and teaching this summer, a favorite aspect of the project was working with all of the children in different communities.

Continuation is on the next page

“I think the most fun I had was working with the kids. The walking wasn’t so bad either,” said PCV James Kim, a member of the northern team, who helped organize the project. “They now have an increased knowledge of keeping themselves healthy and doing their part for the environment.”

Another aspect of the project positive to both the PCV’s and the Armenians involved was that at each of the 18 communities taught in, the hikers worked with a partner organization, such as a local school or local youth NGO, as well as team teachers to help translate and teach the lessons. The team teachers were usually staff from the organization or local students. Their help proved invaluable to the walkers, and through working with them, the volunteers were able to pass on the lessons and skills necessary for these staff members to teach the lessons in the future.

“Because we did this project, the hope is that they now realize that these issues may be more important than they thought, plus we were walking across the country, which helps strengthen the message,” said Kim.

Many of the volunteers who walked also enjoyed forming new friendships with Armenian teachers and the members of different local organizations along the route.

“We worked with Armenian translators who were generally high school or college students eager to use their English skills, and they were terrific: smart, warm, eager, engaging, and skilled. Working with them was one of the very best parts of project for me,” said Tamara England-Zelenski, who walked with the southern team.

For the three-week duration of the hike, the PCVs worked with a wide variety of schools and NGOs, including Youth Bank, the Federation of Youth Clubs in Armenia (FYCA), and the YMCA of Armenia. For these partnerships, as well as the help of countless other individuals, schools, and teachers, the volunteers were very grateful.

As for the future of Border 2 Border, this summer’s walkers are hopeful that the project will continue to grow, and that more communities will become involved.

“I hope it keeps going because a lot of the places we visited, this summer, were remote, where PCVs and projects like this wouldn’t normally be. We can continue to reach communities like these and so it’s a great project to continue,” said Kim.



PCV: Evelyn Helminen

Reporting Period: Summer, 2012

Title of Article: New Peace Corps Volunteers Sworn In for Service

PCVs involved: All

Third-Party Media Involvement: Who was there?

NEW PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS SWORN IN FOR SERVICE



Yerevan, Armenia—On August 7, 2012, at the Yerevan State Puppet Theatre in Yerevan, 42 new Peace Corps Volunteers and two Peace Corps Response Volunteers (PCRVs) were sworn in for service in Armenia by the U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, Bruce Donahue.

After 11 weeks of intensive cultural training, language training, and technical training, the trainees-turned-volunteers are now ready to move to various regions in Ar-

menia to begin their two years of service as English teachers, and Community and Youth Development volunteers. As Peace Corps director David Lillie remarked, “All of us are so excited to see what [they] are about to achieve.” The ceremony included songs, skits and speeches by the American volunteers, all delivered in Armenian, to an audience of over 250 people. Representatives from government ministries and international and local organizations, as well as Armenian host families, current and future counterparts, and current Peace Corps volunteers attended the event.

Meewa Mull and Trevor Allen, as representatives of this twentieth group of Volunteers in Armenia, gave their reflections of the past 11 weeks. They talked about trying new foods, learning the language, and living with Armenian host families.

Mikeita Burkes and her Armenian host sister Anush did a song and dance number to the song “Welcome to Armenia.”

Then there was a performance of the famous Armenian Folk Tale “Qaj Nazar” or “The Brave Nazar.”

Finally, a choir of volunteers sang “Im Chinari Yare” by Komitas, and the hymn of Yerevan, the song “Erebuni – Yerevan,” accompanied by Peace Corps volunteer Brian Bokhart on the piano.

Peace Corps has had Volunteers in Armenia since 1992. There are now approximately 80 Peace Corps Volunteers working in schools, colleges, universities and non-governmental organizations throughout Armenia.

Continuation is on the next page

The two Peace Corps Response Volunteers (Wesley McCann and Van Khanh Bui) will be working in Yerevan for the next year, and in September, four more PCRVs will be joining Peace Corps Armenia.

The ceremony was streamed live—you can see the recorded version here (<http://www.ustream.tv/channel/a-20>). You can also view an edited video of the ceremony on the Peace Corps Armenia YouTube channel here (<http://www.youtube.com/pcarmeniav>).

* * *

PCV: Tom H Cyrs

Reporting Period: Summer, 2012

Title of Article: Children Gain Language Skills, Lasting Memories at Summer English Camp

PCVs involved: Kelsey Anderson, Sam Dolgin-Gardner, Marisa Valdez, Morgan Kelly, Caroline Lucas, Ashley Ellis, Ashley Ambuehl, Stephanie Conrad, Danelle Wassink, Tom Cyrs

Third-Party Media Involvement: N/A

CHILDREN GAIN LANGUAGE SKILLS, LASTING MEMORIES AT SUMMER ENGLISH CAMP



ARMAVIR, ARMENIA— This summer, children from six different villages in Armenia’s Armavir region had the opportunity to take part in a highly interactive and innovative language learning experience. As part of a two-year program that aims to increase dramatically the English language skills of high-school aged students in the region, Children of Armenia Fund (COAF) implemented its first-ever English camp over a two week period from July 2 through the 13.

While the camp did not involve staying overnight in cabins or singing around bonfires, it did involve two hours of language instruction each day, along with countless hours of games, interactive activities, and sports with Armenian volunteers and American Peace Corps volunteers working as counselors. A total of 11 PCVs worked at the camp as counselors, giving the students a chance to be around native speakers almost all the time during the two weeks that the camp took place. Among other things, Volunteers at the camp taught the students new grammar concepts, took them out on scavenger hunts, learned songs with them, and played American sports, such as dodge ball and basketball with them. For many of the students attending, the experience was unlike any opportunity they had had before.

Continuation is on the next page

“This was my first camp... These ten days were very interesting and exciting for me. The contact with American volunteers improved my English. These volunteers organized different games which were very pleasant and wonderful,” was one of many posts written by students on their school blog and on the project’s Facebook page during the camp.

During all of the camp’s activities, English was the chief language being spoken, thus giving the students a truly immersive experience. Students, at times, even faced small punishments, such as having to buy the rest of the class ice cream, if they used too much Armenian.

“In their regular English classes during the school year, they still break into Armenian, but this experience was getting them to really rely on it [English]. It built their confidence with English speaking.” said Kelsey Anderson, a PCV in Armavir Marz who worked as a counselor and also helped organize the volunteer involvement at the camp. Along with daily lessons and activities in English, on several days students also had the opportunity to hear guest speakers from various businesses and organizations in Armenia. Representatives from the American University of Armenia, British Council, Asian Development Bank, UNICEF-Armenia, VivaCell MTS, TEDx, ACCELS/Flex Program, and Austrian Airlines all came to meet the children and share with them their own experiences learning English.

The six villages involved in the camp were Armavir’s Arteni, Dalarik, Karakert, Lernagog, Miasnikian and Shenik. About 15 children, ages 14 to 16, attended from each village, and the villages were grouped into twos (for a total of 3 groups) for their daily instruction and activities. This also gave the students the unique opportunity to spend time with peers from neighboring villages which, despite their relative proximity, is a rarity in the region.

“Having the villages paired together brought them closer together and gave the students the chance to make new friends and build relationships they otherwise wouldn’t have,” said Anderson.

The COAF English camp was part of COAF’s English Access Micro-Scholarship Program (EAMP), which began last fall and will culminate in a second English camp, next summer. The two-year program involves regular, year-round language instruction from Armenian and native-speaking English teachers, cultural events and celebrations, and the two-week immersive camps in the summer. Additional contributors to the project include the U.S. Peace Corps and the U.S. Embassy in Armenia.



This journal is not intended to cover all volunteer activities, and 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 010-513.511.

Graphic design services provided by Mariam Arzumanyan, PR Coordinator and PCV Evelyn Helminen

No portion of the contents may be reproduced without prior express permission of the Peace Corps office.

Photos are provide by Peace Corps volunteers



CONTACT INFO

US Peace Corps | 33 Charents Street | Yerevan 0025 | Republic of Armenia

Phone[37410] 513 500

Fax[37410] 557 991

E-mailpcarmenia@am.peacecorps.gov

Website<http://armenia.peacecorps.gov>