



GCC-RPCV February News Letter

1. Upcoming Events
 2. Message from the Board of Directors
 3. Member Spotlight
-

1. Upcoming Events

February 25th, Saturday – 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

February Reconnect: Trinity African Bar and Grill

Location: 5700 S. Gessner Drive, #J, Phone: [\(713\) 779-5300](tel:7137795300)

Contact person: Ryan Gorczycki, E-mail: gorc0001@umn.edu, Phone: [612-701-5745](tel:6127015745)

March 4th, Sunday – 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Quarterly GCC-RPCV Board Meeting

Location: Please contact Lisa for the address if you are interested in attending the quarterly group board meeting.

Contact person: Lisa Reynolds, E-mail: lbeezette@yahoo.com, Phone: [919-428-3945](tel:9194283945)

March 7th, Wednesday – 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Recently Returned PCV Happy Hour

Location: T.B.A. (check the Facebook page "Houston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers" or contact Kate Simpson below about a week before the event for the location)

Contact person: Kate Simpson, E-mail: katelsimpson@gmail.com, Phone: [713-628-9817](tel:7136289817)

March 17th, Saturday – 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM

RPCV Spanish Language Club

Location: Cafe Express on West Gray

Contact person: Ryan Gorczycki, E-mail: gorc0001@umn.edu, Phone: [612-701-5745](tel:6127015745)

March 30th, Friday – T.B.A.

March Reconnect: Wine Tasting

Location: T.B.A.

Contact person: Tara Smarsh, E-mail: tcs9u@hotmail.com, Phone: [804-432-5391](tel:8044325391)

April 4th, Wednesday – 6:30 PM to 9:30 PM

Recently Returned PCV Happy Hour

Location: T.B.A. (check the Facebook page "Houston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers" or contact Kate Simpson below about a week before the event for the location)

Contact person: Kate Simpson, E-mail: katelsimpson@gmail.com, Phone: [713-628-9817](tel:7136289817)

April - T.B.A.

Annual GCC-RPCV Fundraiser

Location: T.B.A.

Contact person: David Scheinman, E-mail: tanga4@yahoo.com, Phone: [917-855-4119](tel:917-855-4119)

2. Message from the Board of Directors

Donation Made to PCV and Texan Jeramie Heflin's Peace Corps Partnership Project

GCC-RPCV has recently made a \$440 donation in support of Jeramie Heflin's Peace Corps Partnership project to purchase English books for the school in which she serves in the country of Ukraine. \$290 came directly from GCC-RPCV members with a \$150 donation from GCC-RPCV.. The donations will go to support the purchasing of close to 30 textbooks. Thank you to all who donated!

The link to Jeramie's project for more information is:

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=donate.contribute.projDetail&projdesc=343-259>

Two New Board Members Added to the Board of Directors

We are happy to announce that Kate Simpson and Heather Siemert were elected to the Board of Directors for the 2012-2015 term at our January annual membership meeting. We are also happy to announce that board members Stephanie Wilson and Tara Smarsh have renewed their board member term for the 2012-2015 term. Thank you to these four for their willingness to help GCC-RPCV to continue to run efficiently and come up with unique yearly events for members to attend.

Invitation to Participate in the NAFSA 2012 Annual Conference and Expo

Houston's local Peace Corps Recruiter, Erin Curtiss, is inviting our group to participate in potential presentations or a panel on grassroots organizing at the NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2012 Annual Conference and Expo, taking place at the George R. Brown Convention Center from May 27th to June 1. If you have experience in grassroots organizing or international education and are interested in participating please contact Erin at ecurtiss@peacecorps.gov. More specifics will be likely to come as the event gets closer. The NAFSA website is www.nafsa.org. Plenary address speakers include former president of Texas A&M University and U.S. Secretary of State Robert M. Gates and recent Nobel Peace Laureate Leymah Gbowee.

2012 RPCV Calenders Remaining

There are still about 20 RPCV calenders remaining. Proceeds go to fund a PCV partnership project selected for the April annual fundraising event. Calenders are currently being sold for \$10 for one or \$15 for two. Please contact David Scheinman at: E-mail: tanga4@yahoo.com, Phone: [917-855-4119](tel:917-855-4119), for more information.

3. Member Spotlight:

Felicia Coffman, RPCV Suriname, 2004-2007



1) Short description of your Peace Corps Service.

My official title was "Non-Formal Educational Extensionist". This essentially meant that I taught anything that I actually knew how to do and anything anyone was interested in learning. Being a recent college grad, this limited my options to teaching English and begging for money. Therefore, I taught English and grant writing in the Saramaccan village of Gengestone in Suriname, South America. The grant we wrote funded a project to build a Kindergarten school and women's center. I extended for a year as the Peace Corps Volunteer Leader(PCVL) and also taught computer literacy at the Cultural Center Suriname in the capital city, Paramaribo.

2) Fun fact about your host country

Suriname is slightly bigger than the state of Georgia.

Although Suriname is in South America it is actually considered a part of the Caribbean due to cultural and economic ties. Oddly enough the official language is Dutch.



3) Fun fact about your host community

Genge means "bell" in Saramaccans, the local language. Gengestone is named after a massive bell shaped boulder at the riverfront entrance of the village.



4) Most unique part about your Peace Corps service

Having a love/hate relationship with sting rays. One the one hand they made for good eating. On the other, they caused serious injury during the dry season as they lay trapped under the river bed sands left by the receding tide. On the third hand (if that's possible), I believe having photos of a child's injuries from one of these creatures while crossing the river to go to school made all the difference in having our grant funded.

5) What you are up to now

I am now working for the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor Program at Catholic Charities. I am the Independent Living Skills Coordinator for refugee youth aging out of foster care.

** If you are interested in participating in the Member Spotlight for one of our monthly newsletters, please e-mail gccrpcv@gmail.com with your name, country, and years of service. Please also include a response to each of the five questions posted above, along with a photo of you now and a photo of you during your Peace Corps service. We are currently looking for an RPCV for our March newsletter. Thank you in advance for your participation.*