



Peace Prints



Peace Corps Houston Summer Newsletter Vol. 29

Fellow RPCVS,

Hope you are enjoying a terrific summer. I've bundled announcements, news, and information for you.

EVENTS

- THE AUGUST RECONNECT WILL BE COMBINED WITH THE SEPTEMBER HAPPY HOUR. Due to Labor Day weekend there will be no reconnect this Friday Aug. 29. Reconnect/Happy Hour details:

Location: Sassafrass 5022 Pinemont DR.

Time: 6 PM

Date: Wednesday September 3.

Amenities: Great selection of beer plus food.

- International Dinner/Fundraiser/ Nomination Party

Last year we combined events and it was a huge success. PC has a new recruiter named Jason Steele who is completing training. Since there were no nominees and many of you were travelling this summer, we decided to hold our event in Oct. or Nov. We expect to choose a date soon.

- **Marsh Mania with Galveston Bay Foundation**

When: Saturday September 27 8:30 - 1pm

What: Help plant native wetland grasses in one of three areas: Anahuac, Seabrook or Galveston. I was thinking we pick the Pine Gulley Park location in Seabrook since that will be the closest area to us. Lunch and tools will be provided, but dress appropriately because it will be wet and muddy.

Organized by Heather Siemert (Fiji).

More information can be found here:

http://galvbay.org/events_marsh.html

If interested, please email heatherjean82@gmail.com by September 18 and we could work on carpooling, etc.

MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES

- NPCA Convention in Nashville, TN June 2014. RPCV Felicia Latson (Surinam) represented us. We'll distribute a report soon. Conference videos: www.peacecorpsconnect.org
- Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Conference (HOBY) Galveston, TX June 2014. I represented us on a panel on US global engagement. There were 200 high school sophomores and five panelists. I was the progressive and held my own against some moderates and conservatives. The kids were really sharp and asked excellent questions.
- Meeting at Senator Cornyn's Houston office to promote continued PC funding. Suzanne Alton (Gabon) our PC Advocate organized a meeting with a Cornyn staffer. RPCVs Richard Smith (India), Jenn Ritchie (Swaziland), and I (Nepal) made a compelling pitch. We were promised 20 minutes but stayed for nearly an hour. Talking points:

QUICK TALKING POINTS FOR PC ADVOCACY

- Eleven African heads of state were taught by PCVs.
- For only \$350 million we field around 7000 PCVs in 65 countries.
- A new Gerald Ford class aircraft carrier (10 will be built) costs \$13 billion. Operational costs for a carrier group – supporting ships – is \$6.5 million a day! PC is a real bargain.
- By improving the quality of life in developing countries, PCVs make it more attractive for people to remain in their home countries. Good point for anti-immigration people.
- Our late Libyan Ambassador, RPCV Christopher Stevens (Morocco), spoke fluent Arabic and was credited with designing the strategies that overthrew Gadhafi. They say, "He knew the street and influenced the elite."

More talking points on request.

RPCV Amanda Stamplis of Literacy Advance of Houston requests people literate in Italian, Vietnamese, and Japanese to translate short documents into English. She also needs people in other languages. Hit her "wish list" below. Contact her directly. Details from Amanda:

Hi David,

It's been a while, but we met back in January when I had first moved to Houston and was embarking on my job search here. I'm pleased to say that I landed a job with Literacy Advance of Houston, which I absolutely LOVE-- Much of the reason being that it keeps me connected to many of the values that carried me to Peace Corps.

I actually have met a handful of RPCVs who volunteer at Literacy Advance as ESL or ABE tutors. Such interesting people come through our doors wanting to help!

One of our current projects includes written translations for our new students. We've had much success finding the help of volunteers within our network, but we're continuing our search for a few key languages. I thought the RPCV network may be able to help, and I'm wondering if you may be able to direct me to the right people (if you know!). Are you familiar with anyone who may be able to provide Italian, Vietnamese, or Japanese translations from English (as a volunteer)? The documents are not lengthy, but we do want them to be professional. You can see our complete language "wish list" [here](#), but we'd also welcome other languages that kind, bilingual folks could provide for student who do not speak any of the mentioned languages on the list.

I appreciate your help. As I said, we've exhausted much of our own network, and I thought it was worth a shot to check into the RPCVs ☐ Many thanks!

*Best regards,
Amanda*

Amanda Stamplis
Wilcrest Program Manager
Literacy Advance of Houston
astamplis@literacyadvance.org

Class Notes – RPCV Comings and Goings

Please send updates for our next newsletter.

- Robert Nagle (Albania) just began a new job teaching creative writing at an HISD middle school. Congratulations.
- Ryan Gorczycki (Madagascar) -- my predecessor as President -- recently graduated from Duke with a Masters in Public Policy. He accepted a nutrition policy job here in Houston at the Medical Center. Welcome home and congratulations.
- Leslie Santamaria (Honduras) joined our governing board in January. Her twins recently turned one and Leslie now works as a cross cultural expert at Chevron.
- Kasia McCormick's son Henry will be a year old already this October.
- My daughter Nina got married in the botanical garden at UC Berkeley on July 19.
- Bill Tilney (Ethiopia) and his wife Maggie just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Bill was in the first PC group that served in Ethiopia, met Emperor Haile Selassie, and was Mayor of El Paso, TX from 1991-93.
- John Shirk (Morocco) was recently released from the VA Hospital after falling in his home last Easter. He is 82 today, happy birthday. We all wish you a very speedy recovery. A few of us visited John and are happy to report he received excellent care.