

CONNECTICUT RPCV

Newsletter—January 2016

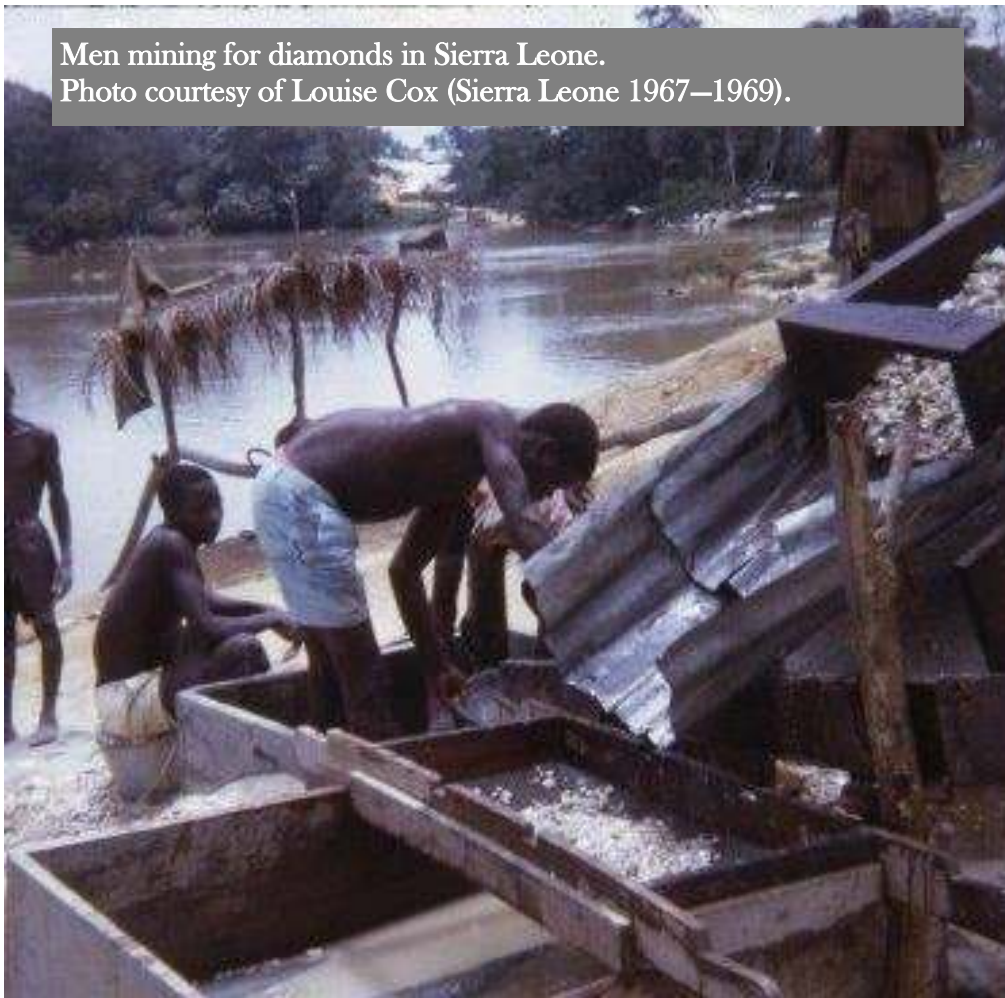


Peace Corps

CONTENTS

- Upcoming events
 - Darien Book Aid.....Page 2
 - Board Meeting and Potluck Dinner.....Page 3
 - Hole in the Wall Gang Camp.....Page 3
 - Community Service Day.....Page 4
- 2015 Holiday Party photos.....Page 5
- IRIS Run for Refugees 5K.....Page 6
- BikeTrex touring company.....Page 6
- Volunteer opportunity with IICONN.....Page 7
- NPCA Benevolent Fund.....Page 8
- Peace Corps stuff.....Page 9
- 2016 Peace Corps budget.....Page 10
- Miscellaneous.....Page 11–12
- Membership.....Page 13

Men mining for diamonds in Sierra Leone.
Photo courtesy of Louise Cox (Sierra Leone 1967–1969).



UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, January 9, 2016

[DARIEN BOOK AID](#)

Sunday, January 17, 2016

[BOARD MEETING & POTLUCK DINNER](#)

Saturday, January 30, 2016

[COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY](#)

Saturday, July 2, 2016

[HOLE IN THE WALL GANG CAMP](#)

CTRPCV Officers

President: Terese Maineri

TMaineri@yahoo.com

Vice-President: Bryan Garcia

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Treasurer: Mike Hilton

Mjhilt@comcast.net

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Newsletter: Jonathan Rosario (interim)

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Maureenshanley@hotmail.com

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DARIEN BOOK AID PLAN

If you can make it, please RSVP to Maureen Shanley at 203-775-9222 or MaureenShanley@hotmail.com.

Darien Book Aid is a non-profit, all volunteer organization dedicated to fostering peace and friendship through the distribution of free books. Approximately 60% of DBA's shipments fulfill requests from current PC Volunteers. DBA needs volunteers to pack boxes, select books to ship, sort books and much more. As Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, you know how much of an impact educational materials can have on a community.

You can also bring books! Frequently requested books include:

- * Preschool to teen levels, fiction and non-fiction
- * Classics - and simplified classics
- * Dictionaries in English, Spanish, French and picture dictionaries
- * Encyclopedias/other information on CD-ROM (PC format)
- * English readers and grammar books
- * Crafts & how-to books
- * Health, "Where There is No Doctor" type books
- * Science
- * Agriculture, vegetable gardening, beekeeping, animal husbandry
- * Ecology and environment
- * Books in Spanish or French for native speakers in all subjects
- * Paperback editions of recent novels (mysteries, fiction, etc.)
- * National Geographic - no more than 5 years old
- * Textbooks (not older than 10 years) with up-to-date content are accepted

For more information about Darien Book Aid, you can visit their website at <http://dba.darien.org/>. If you are interested in volunteering individually, you can call 203-655-2777 or email darienbookaid@yahoo.com.

DATE: Saturday, January 9, 2016

ADDRESS: 1926 Post Road, Darien, CT

*** If you attend any of our events, please make sure to take photos to share on our website! You can send photos with a short description to president@ctrpcv.org***

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POTLUCK DINNER

Join the CTRPCV group on **Sunday, January 17, 2016** for our board meeting immediately followed by a potluck dinner at the Connecticut Forest and Parks Association building located at 16 Meriden Road in Rockfall, CT 06481. The CTRPCV board meeting will take place 2 PM to 4 PM followed by a potluck dinner from 4 PM to 5:30 PM. You are welcome to join for either just the meeting, just the potluck dinner, or both. The choice is yours.

All are invited to attend: RPCVs, current Peace Corps Volunteers home on vacation, Peace Corps invitees, Peace Corps applicants, anyone considering applying, etc. You are all more than welcome to attend and check us out!

Questions? Please leave us a message on Facebook or email us at President@ctrpcv.org.



a seriousfun camp



On Saturday, July 2, 2016 we will be volunteering our time at the [Hole In The Wall Gang Camp](#) in Ashford, CT. Since 1988 the camp has served as a non-profit residential summer camp and year-round center for children coping with cancer and other life-threatening diseases. All of the camp's services are free of charge. This unique camp, created by Paul Newman and his friends, provides a sense of normalcy for children who may have missed out on aspects of their childhood.

We will help to change bed linens (about 150 beds) for the campers who will arrive the following day. It will truly be a rewarding project and well worth our time and efforts.

If you are interested in attending, or would like more information, please contact Lois Fucci at lafj@att.net.

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CONNECTICUT QUEST *for* PEACE



WHAT: Packing Boxes for Poor in Nicaragua

WHEN: Saturday, January 30th

TIME: 10 am - 1 pm

WHERE: William Evans Painting Co., 394 Main St., Bridgeport, CT 06604

SPONSOR: Maureen Shanley

ATTIRE: Please dress in layers since there is very little heat in the warehouse.

CT Quest for Peace is a faith-based non-profit organization that provides humanitarian aid to the poor of Nicaragua through a variety of educational, healthcare, arts and microfinance initiatives. CTRPCV has been asked to help with the Humanitarian Cargo Aid program. This vital program helps Nicaraguan families overcome generational poverty and it is the backbone of CT Quest's work in Nicaragua since the donated cargo shipments do triple service. Cargo shipments provide quality goods to the poor, creates funding for community programs, and builds relationships between you and the people of Nicaragua.

Peace Corps Volunteers in Nicaragua are also being helped because a major PC project is teaching English as a second language. We have collected and sent children and teen level reading materials that are being used in English Libraries that not only university and high school students can use, but they are also open to the community at large. A fun fact is that these libraries allow books to be taken home, which is not the way libraries in Nicaragua operate. Much to the surprise of the Nicaraguans who are running the libraries, the books are actually being returned. Who knows, maybe we will start a new trend in how libraries are run in Central America!

CTRPCV has been asked to repack boxes that will be shipped to Nicaragua. We will meet at Bill's warehouse and work from 10 AM until 1 PM. Bill will have all the packing supplies, but you might want to bring your favorite tape dispenser (gum) like I do. Everyone is welcome to come and lend a helping hand.

Please contact Maureen Shanley at 203-775-9222 or maureenshanley@hotmail.com to let her know if you are able to help with this project. When she is at the warehouse you can call her cell: 203-788-0163.

For information about CT Quest for Peace go to www.nicaragua-quest-for-peace.org/. If you want to bring donations, CT Quest is always looking for SUMMER clothing, school supplies for children, books in Spanish, wheel chairs, kitchen utensils, and bed linens. A list can be found on our website.

We meet at William Evans Painting Co., 394 Main St., Bridgeport, CT 06604. Just follow the signs to the Port Jefferson Ferry. At the entrance (black iron gates), take a right and we are the second building on the left.

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Our annual Holiday Party, held on Sunday, December 6, at the home of Joan and Jeff Leonard, was a huge success!! Delicious food was eaten, raffle prizes were won, and a great time was had by all. Thank you to all of you who were able to join us on this special day. A big thank you to Jonathan Pearson, the NPCA Advocacy Director, who was able to join us from Washington D.C.

A HUGE thank you must go out to Maureen Shanley for organizing this event, and to Joan and Jeff Leonard for hosting us in their lovely home. As they say in Paraguay “aguyje” (Thank you in Guarani)!



(at left) Kim Nucifora smiles for the camera. Say cheese!
Photo courtesy of David Stoloff

(at right) Jonathan Rosario, Geri Mezzoni, and Mike Hilton pretend not to notice the camera.



(above) RPCVs listen attentively to Maureen Shanley.
Photo courtesy of David Stoloff

(below) Maureen Shanley speaking to all attendees.
Photo courtesy of David Stoloff



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The Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services (IRIS) will hold their 9th Annual Run for Refugees 5K on the morning of Super Bowl Sunday, February 7, 2016. Last year, over 900 runners and walkers kicked off their Super Bowl festivities early with a

brisk run/walk through scenic East Rock Park in New Haven. Come for exercise, fun, and to support a great cause. The event includes a post-race party at the Wilber Cross High School gym with live music, international food, and an awards ceremony.

The mission of IRIS is to help refugees and other displaced people establish new lives, regain hope, and contribute to the vitality of Connecticut's communities. Through the generous support of our donors, IRIS meets refugees' housing, food and other basic needs, provides cultural orientation, education, health & wellness, and immigration legal services, and offers onsite English language training and job preparation and placement. To learn more about IRIS or to register, sponsor or volunteer for the Run for Refugees, please visit www.irisct.org.



Below is an email we received recently from CTRPCV supporter Dan Rossano:

I wanted to share some exciting news! I've officially started up a bike touring company called BikeTrex! We're based out of northern Connecticut and plan to lead bike trips all around the New England area to start, then eventually expand to other states and ride international trips!

Why choose us?!

Because we're awesome! I've been riding with groups for over 3 years and have lots of experience. We know where to find the best views, the best restaurants and pubs, and the many hidden treasures of each area we tour. And our leaders are qualified, medically trained, and professional. Get out of the city get out of the house and come enjoy being outside!

Please help me by sharing this information with your friends and family. Sign up for our mailing list for all the latest news and updates. Our first tour starts in May 2016 from Monroe, CT!

Please visit our website: <http://www.ridebiketrex.com/>

Thanks!
Dan

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Volunteer opportunity in Bridgeport

The International Institute of Connecticut (IICONN) is a non-profit, non-sectarian agency dedicated to helping foreign-born persons achieve self-sufficiency. Their services include

refugee resettlement, English and citizenship classes, counseling, translation/interpretation services and legal assistance. IICONN advocates for fair and equitable treatment of immigrants, refugees and others, and works to increase public awareness of the contributions of foreign-born persons to American culture and values.



IICONN is looking for volunteers to become mentors to our refugee client one day a week for one hour. When a refugee arrives in Bridgeport, they often come with nothing and know no one. A mentor would be a liaison between the client and the Bridgeport community. Mentors can do a variety of activities with their mentee. They may bring refugees grocery shopping, they may cook a meal together or they may just do something fun to build a friendship.

For more information, please visit the IICONN website at www.iiconn.org/.



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Chances are, if you served as a Peace Corps Volunteer, you came home in good health and—possibly with assistance from the NPCA—quickly moved on to a job or a graduate school program. While the vast majority of us lead healthy and productive lives following our service, some experience health issues that can challenge us in life’s transitions after our Volunteer service. Other Peace Corps community members may reach out to the NPCA or one of our affiliate groups seeking assistance for a personal life-altering situation, in hopes that fellow alums might be able to offer support.

That’s why the NPCA has designed **the new Peace Corps Community Fund to include a Benevolent Fund** that will help our community members in such circumstances. [Your support for the Community Fund will help Returned Peace Corps Volunteers \(RPCVs\) in need.](#) It’s as simple as that.

The Benevolent Fund allows the NPCA to create a safe community and network of support for RPCVs and former staff facing special circumstances. This network can be lifesaving. Last year, we reached out to the community on behalf of Malaysia RPCV Norm Sapoznik, who was in need of a transplant kidney. Another Malaysia RPCV, Ann McAvoy, responded to the appeal and dipped into her personal resources to fly across the country to [donate her kidney](#). In cases such as this, the Benevolent Fund will support the selfless efforts of individual RPCVs and strengthen the bonds among our alumni. [You can help make this possible with a generous gift to the Peace Corps Community Fund.](#)

In recent years, the formation of the NPCA affiliate group “Health Justice for Peace Corps Volunteers” has brought to light the personal, medical, and financial challenges some individuals in our community are facing. A San Francisco RPCV who struggles with an illness from his Peace Corps service is in need of some basic home-healthcare assistance but cannot afford the support based on limited income and high medical bills; a Philadelphia area RPCV fears he and his family will lose their home as he faces a heart transplant stemming from a disease he’s believed to have incurred during his service; in Boston, The *Boston Globe* reports on a local RPCV, injured in a motorcycle accident in Africa, who is homeless. As organizations such as the Wounded Warriors Project (for military veterans) and the American Foreign Service Protective Association (for foreign service officers) seek to assist members of their respective communities, the time has come for the Peace Corps community to harness the energy and empathy of *our* community to provide similar support for RPCVs and former staff in need.

I invite you now to lend a helping hand for RPCVs who exhaust their resources and have nowhere else to go. Please support the Benevolent Fund with [a tax-deductible gift of \\$50, \\$100 or more](#) to help the NPCA continue building networks of support and advocating on behalf of RPCVs in need.

I hope you’ll take a moment right now to respond. Our Peace Corps community needs your support.

In service,
Glenn Blumhorst
President & CEO
RPCV Guatemala 1988-91

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Peace Corps

PEACE CORPS WEEK CHALLENGE

Group
Challenge:
What does
JOY
look like in
your host
country?



Deadline March 13



Part 2



Bridging Cultural Divide



Malawi Chief Justice



PC Morocco is Happy

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DELIVERED!

the largest budget
in Peace Corps history



On December 18, President Obama signed into law a Fiscal Year 2016 spending package that includes **\$410 million for the Peace Corps, the largest dollar figure for the agency in its 54 year history!** And it's all thanks to the collaborative efforts of our Peace Corps champions on Capitol Hill, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and our Peace Corps community.

Three months ago, the Peace Corps was slated to receive just under \$380 million, the same budget for the third year in a row. In fact, **we at the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) were told by some to put any requests for higher funding off until next year. Instead, with your help, we doubled our efforts.** We were regularly told by members of Congress and their staffs that the most important voice to bring to the table is the voice of the constituent. That's exactly what NPCA did. With the help of so many of our advocates, here's just some of what we did over the past three months:

- We coordinated 60 district office meetings, providing our advocates with briefing materials and key talking points
- We held Capitol Hill meetings with dozens of key members of the Senate and House Appropriations Committees
- We hosted and co-organized a Capitol Hill briefing promoting Peace Corps' role in women and girls empowerment through education
- We invested in software that allowed our community to send over 2,700 messages to Congress easily and effectively, to urge \$410 million for the Peace Corps

And it worked! Together, we secured an additional \$30.5 million for the Peace Corps in 2016. Your next steps?

[Follow this link to use our new software and thank your lawmakers](#) for being strong supporters of the Peace Corps. If you want a bigger and better Peace Corps, we need a bigger and better NPCA. Make a contribution of \$50, of \$100, of whatever you can. When we come together as a community, every little bit counts. When we collectively raise our voice to Congress, historical things happen!

Cheers to YOU!

In service,

Glenn Blumhorst
President & CEO
RPCV Guatemala 1988-91

[Donate Today](#)

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MISCELLANEOUS

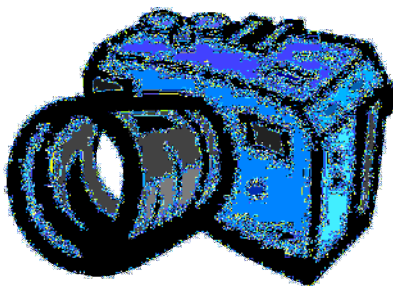
Have an event or community service idea?
Let's make it happen!!

Share your ideas with us and let's make your ideas come to life. We can help spread the word through our social media platforms and the monthly newsletter. Events can be as simple as "Let's meet up at [restaurant name] on [date]". Email us at president@ctrpcv.org.



CALL FOR PHOTOS!!!

We are redesigning and updating our website and we need your help! If you have any photos from your service or from any of our past CTRPCV events, and wouldn't mind sharing them with us, please send them to our email address, president@ctrpcv.org. For each photo, please attach a description of the photo's contents and yourself. Please include your name, country and years of service along with who/what is shown in the photo and a caption for the photo.



Peace Corps Response (PCR) provides qualified professionals the opportunity to serve in rewarding, short-term assignments, in various programs around the world. When you serve as a PCR Volunteer, you bring your skills and experience to projects in places where you are needed most. PCR is recruiting talented Volunteers to serve in a wide range of positions and countries including Georgia, the Philippines and Vanuatu. Opportunities are available in all six program areas and selected applicants can be in the field as early as January.

If you are interested in learning more about Peace Corps Response, please visit <http://www.peacecorps.gov/volunteer/response/> or send an email to pcresponse@peacecorps.gov to schedule an informational interview with your local Peace Corps recruiter.

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MISCELLANEOUS



We
Need
Your
Help
Please

HELP WANTED at CTRPCV!

We currently have openings for the following positions:

SECRETARY: Takes notes at board meetings three to four times a year.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Designs, updates, and sends monthly newsletter to our members.

FUNDRAISER: Devises ways to replenish our CTRPCV Community Service Fund. All ideas are welcome.

SOCIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR: Hosts/plans restaurant outings, pot-luck dinners, etc.

We are updating our website and need your help! We will be debuting a new section of our website called 'CTRPCV Profiles' in which we will briefly share our members' stories. If you would like to take part, please fill out the questionnaire below and email your responses, along with photos from your service that you would like to have published on our website, to president@ctrpcv.org.

CTRPCV Profiles

Who are you (please include name, country of service, years of service and anything else you want to add)?

Why did you choose to serve as a Peace Corps Volunteer?

What did you do as a Peace Corps Volunteer?

Can you share your favorite memory from service?

How has serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer affected your life?

What advice do you have for prospective Peace Corps Volunteers?

Do you have anything else you would like to share with our readers related to you or your PC service (stories, poems, quotes, etc.)?

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Member-at-Large: Maureen Shanley

Maureenshanley@hotmail.com

CONTACT US

E-MAIL: President@ctrpcv.org

POST MAIL: CTRPCV, P.O. Box
1803, Hartford, CT 06144

[Official website](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[LinkedIn](#)



CTRPCV needs more PAID MEMBERS \$\$\$

If you are interested in participating in the above-mentioned CTRPCV events, please also consider joining our group. [Click here to join and/or pay your annual membership fees!](#) You can also update your contact information, if necessary, on the same page. (** Our website is currently down. If you would like to join and/or pay your annual CTRPCV membership fees, please go to the NPCA's website at www.peacecorpsconnect.org. Login/Register at the top right of the page. Once logged in, you can choose to pay your CTRPCV membership dues only or make a donation to NPCA as well; the choice is yours**)

Please also consider joining the Connecticut Returned Peace Corps Volunteers Facebook group at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/37593849149/>.

WHY someone should join CTRPCV?

- A chance to break bread with people who are not only like you, but also LIKE you.
- Connect with an RPCV who might just be your neighbor!
- Ability to receive CTRPCV Directory so you can request help with your favorite community service project.
- If you are newly returned RPCV... we will LISTEN to your story because we too have been there! RPCVs are FAMILY. We never tire of hearing your stories, frustrations, what you miss and what you are finding strange about your return.
- Help an RPCV find a new job through the Mentor program. Mentor new RPCVs and help them navigate their transition.
- Help support PCVs and/or CTRPCVs through the CTRPCV Community Service Grant Program.
- Keep in the PCV loop, know about short-term stints if you are interested.
- Find opportunities to continue to serve locally or overseas.
- Find someone who: has kids the same age as yours; others who have married host country nationals.
- Let others know about YOUR art, social, sport or local community service project.
- Spread the GOOD WORD about the Peace Corps.
- We want to add a page to our website that would offer FREE ADVERTISING for CTRPCV members who own a business. Please let us know if you have a business that you would like to have posed on our website.

FYI: Your dues pay our expenses, e.g. room rental for meetings, supplies for potluck meetings, group NPCA membership dues, state filing fees, communication costs (postage, paper, internet costs), etc.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Saturday, January 9, 2016
[DARIEN BOOK AID](#)

Sunday, January 17, 2016
[BOARD MEETING & POTLUCK DINNER](#)

Saturday, January 30, 2016
[COMMUNITY SERVICE DAY](#)

Saturday, July 2, 2016
[HOLE IN THE WALL GANG CAMP](#)

CTRPCV Officers

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