



Central Missouri Returned Peace Corps Volunteers

Local Roots, Global Connections.

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT

Greetings everyone!

Historically the organization has released its annual report according to our fiscal year, and not the calendar year. We decided to change that this past year, so that the annual report reflects the true calendar year. The result, we didn't put out an annual report for the partial year in 2021 and we are getting this 2022 annual report out much earlier than years past. Therefore, while this is the 2022 report, I will also include some information from May-December of 2021 as well.

At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 we kept extremely busy as an organization, offering over 30 engagement efforts within our communities. We slowed the pace just a bit in 2021 and 2022, but nonetheless, we have done some important work and I have been continually inspired by so many members in this group. As I speak with many of you all, I am struck by the number of people who find ways, large and small, to donate their time and resources to strengthen the lives of others around them. We will channel that energy into our 2023 activities to continue fulfilling our mission. I feel honored to help lead the Central Missouri Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, along with our Board of Directors. **A very big note of appreciation goes to Frank Yates, Ashlee Christiansen, Trevor Harris, Steve Olson, Jenifer Pilz, and Jere Gilles for your continued work on the Board. You are the backbone to this organization!** And thank you to all of you for helping this organization, and our communities, thrive.

ERIN ROBINSON

*Board President
Botswana, 2006-2008*

VISION, MISSION, & GOALS

Vision. The vision of the Central Missouri Returned Peace Corps Volunteers is to create a space for the Peace Corps community in mid-Missouri.

Mission. Our mission is to connect people in the Peace Corps community with one another and to foster Peace Corps ideals in the broader community.

Goal 1. Provide RPCVs in Central Missouri with networking opportunities.

Objective 1.1. Build awareness of the organization on behalf of RPCVs in mid-Missouri.

Objective 1.2. Create opportunities for members to connect with one another.

Objective 1.3. Create opportunities for members to connect with the community.

Objective 1.4. Create opportunities for members to connect with the broader Peace Corps community.

Goal 2. Provide education about international service and diverse cultures.

Objective 2.1. Engage with media outlets to facilitate public education.

Objective 2.2. Coordinate, sponsor, and participate in educational events.

Objective 2.3. Provide public speakers with experience in international service and skill in another language.

Goal 3. Act as a resource for individuals before and during their Peace Corps service.

Objective 3.1. Engage in advocacy efforts to support Peace Corps interests.

Objective 3.2. Assist in recruitment for the Peace Corps.

Objective 3.3. Provide resources for current Peace Corps Volunteers.

MEET THE BOARD



ERIN ROBINSON

President
Botswana, 2006-2008



JERE GILLES

Vice President
Chad, 1972-1974



TREVOR HARRIS

Secretary &
2022 Calendars
Zambia, 2008-2010



STEVE OLSON

Outreach &
Speaker's Bureau
Guatemala, 1995-1997



FRANK YATES

Treasurer, Webmaster,
& Membership Chair
Ghana, 1973-1976



JENIFER PILZ

3rd Goal Film Festival
Mali, 1992-1994



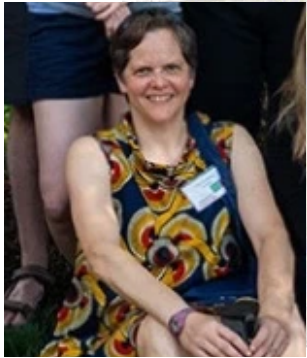
ASHLEE CHRISTIANSEN

Loaves & Fishes
Coordinator, Social Chair
Zambia, 2008-2011

The Board meets 4-5 times/year to plan and coordinate events throughout the year. Each member brings their individual experience, passion, and personality onto the Board. If you are interested in becoming more involved, reach out to inquire! We are always looking for more individuals to help planning efforts. It's fun and a great way to network with other RPCVs.

MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS

Lisa Groshong, Pat Westhoff, and Don Spiers devote invaluable time, energy, and skills to help fulfill our mission and engage with our communities. We owe them a big THANK YOU for all they do. We are always looking for more individuals to volunteer their talents. If you have some ideas for volunteer activities, please reach out to us!



LISA GROSHONG

Loaves & Fishes
Coordinator
Zambia, 2008-2010
Georgia, 2011

Want to become more involved? We have a variety of volunteer opportunities, from a few hours a month to a couple of times a year. Some of the volunteer opportunities include: Loaves & Fishes, Adopt-a-Spot, Peace Corps advocacy, Earth Day, Trivia Night, calendar sales, speaking events, and more!

Contact us: centralmorpcvs@gmail.com



DON SPIERS

Advocacy Chair, Adopt-a-Spot Coordinator
Venezuela, 1973-1975

PAT WESTHOFF

2021 Calendar Sales
Guatemala, 1979-1981



MEET THE RECRUITER

In June 2021 we welcomed a new Peace Corps Missouri/Illinois Regional Recruiter, Verlisha Brandon. Verlisha is leading Peace Corps recruitment efforts across both states, including the University of Missouri campus. Our organization is working with Verlisha to help provide recruitment support.



VERLISHA BRANDON

MO/IL Regional Recruiter

Verlisha has a B.S. and M.S. in Health and Physical Education from Virginia State University. Verlisha had the opportunity to serve in two Study Abroad programs while attending VSU, Ghana in 2017 and Bolivia in 2018. As a Peace Corps Volunteer, she served in Eswatini (formerly Swaziland) as a Youth Development Specialist from 2019 up until evacuation due to COVID-19 in 2020. As a Youth Development Specialist, she co-taught Life Skills at the secondary school in her community alongside her counterparts with an emphasis on lessons like resume building and job interview preparation.

Verlisha is very passionate about introducing to some and increasing in others the importance of cross-cultural learning opportunities. She looks forward to being a recruiter to share her volunteer experiences and hopefully help others want to volunteer with the Peace Corps as well. Verlisha speaks intermediate Spanish, SiSwati and knows a few sayings in Twi. In her free time, she likes to listen to audio books, coupon, and journal about her day to day life. She is often known as “the life of the party” and is excited about bringing her character into her role as a recruiter!

ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES

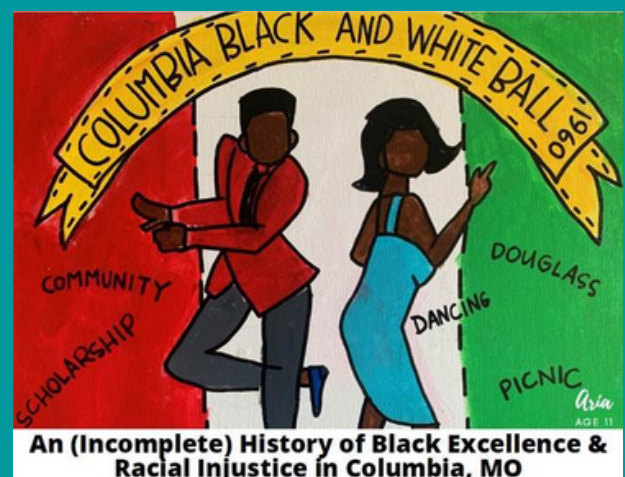
PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS RETURN TO SERVICE

The COVID-19 pandemic had a major impact on the Peace Corps program, as all volunteers were quickly evacuated from site in March/April of 2020. After a two year hiatus, in March 2022 Peace Corps slowly started returning volunteers to service. Today, there are open volunteer positions all around the globe for a variety of job functions, and volunteers are currently serving in over 60 countries.

SMALL GRANTS PROGRAM

With the volunteers returning to service and getting settled in their communities, our organization is looking for ways to support volunteers in service with our small grants program once again. Our small grants program is open to PCVs with connections to Missouri and seeking financial support for an in-country program/project. We are connected with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) and regularly check with them for funding opportunities in which we can support volunteers in the field. For more information about our small grants program or to apply for funding, email us at centralmorpcvs@gmail.com

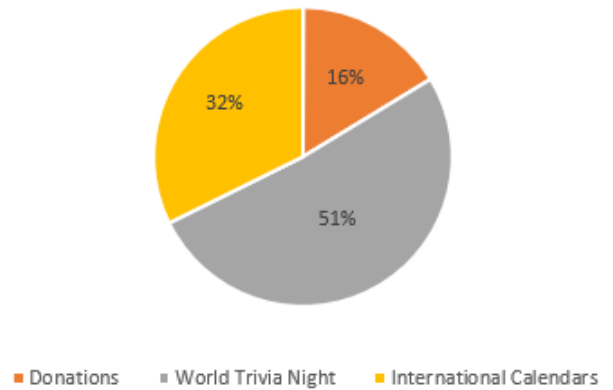
While the Peace Corps was halting new volunteers from entering the field during the COVID-19 pandemic, we shifted some of our small grant funding to support local community initiatives that aligned with our mission. One such initiative was the 2022 Columbia Black History and Excellence calendars. These calendars were produced in partnership with the University of Missouri School of Social Work, and proceeds benefited two local organizations.



FINANCIAL UPDATES

| Income | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Interest Earned | \$1.35 |
| Donations | \$350.00 |
| World Trivia Night | \$1,106.00 |
| International Calendars | \$695.40 |
| Total Income | \$2,152.75 |
| Expenses | |
| International Calendars | \$725.28 |
| Social Events | \$755.55 |
| World Trivia Night | \$519.08 |
| Loaves & Fishes | \$1,001.19 |
| Administration | \$502.62 |
| Total Expenses | \$3,503.72 |

2022 Income



2022 Expenses



The above figures reflect our 2022 financials; however, it is important to note that not all of the income from the international calendars was deposited into our bank account during 2022. Instead, this income will show up in our 2023 financial report since the deposit was made after the new year. In addition to these figures, in 2021 we were awarded a City of Columbia Human Rights Commission grant for our partnership to produce the Columbia Black History and Excellence calendars. In addition to these funds, we secured over \$2,000 through donations and our fundraising efforts in 2021.

Thank you to Frank Yates, for the work you do as Treasurer!

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Adopt-a-Spot

Don Spiers continues to coordinate our Adopt-a-Spot volunteer efforts. For those of you who are not aware, our group is responsible for a stretch of Elm Street in downtown Columbia. This past year, we have had a steady turnout of regular volunteers to pick up trash on various occasions. As we remained socially distanced and wearing masks, it was nice to have human interaction during times in which everything else around us stood still. As always, thank you to Don for your commitment to our community and coordinating this effort!



Caleb O'Brien and Emily Piontek serving chili mac and cornbread in December.

Loaves & Fishes

Ashlee Christiansen and Lisa Groshong coordinate our Loaves & Fishes meal, which is served on the 5th Friday of each month in which there are five Fridays. Our organization organized and served four meals in 2022, serving more than 400 meals in total. It is hosted at the Wilkes Blvd United Methodist Church. Numbers have been up this year because of economic conditions. A huge shout out to all the cooks, servers and clean-up crew, especially Barbara and Carolyn who are absolute inspirations. Our first meal is March 31, 2023. Ashlee and Lisa, thank you for all of your efforts this year!

2022 ANNUAL MEETING

Kiwanis Park, Columbia MO



On April 23, 2022 we were able to hold our annual meeting in person, our first time in two years! It was an extra special occasion, as we used the annual meeting as an opportunity to welcome the India-37 visitors who were visiting Columbia and the University of Missouri. The India-37 group are RPCVs who served 50 years ago in West Bengal, India, as the 37th group to serve in India. Prior to their service, this group completed their pre-departure training on the Mizzou campus and still have ties to campus. In April, they returned to Columbia for a reunion, and to establish a scholarship fund at MU. We were happy to host them at our annual meeting.



We choose to hold the annual meeting outdoors at the Kiwanis Park to mitigate potential germs from spreading, and we had the event catered by India's House. A large group of RPCVs and their families joined us, and we all enjoyed good company. The outdoor atmosphere, delicious food, and personal connection with other RPCVs made the event especially joyous for all who attended.



FUNDRAISING



2022 Trivia Winners, "The Team to Beat"

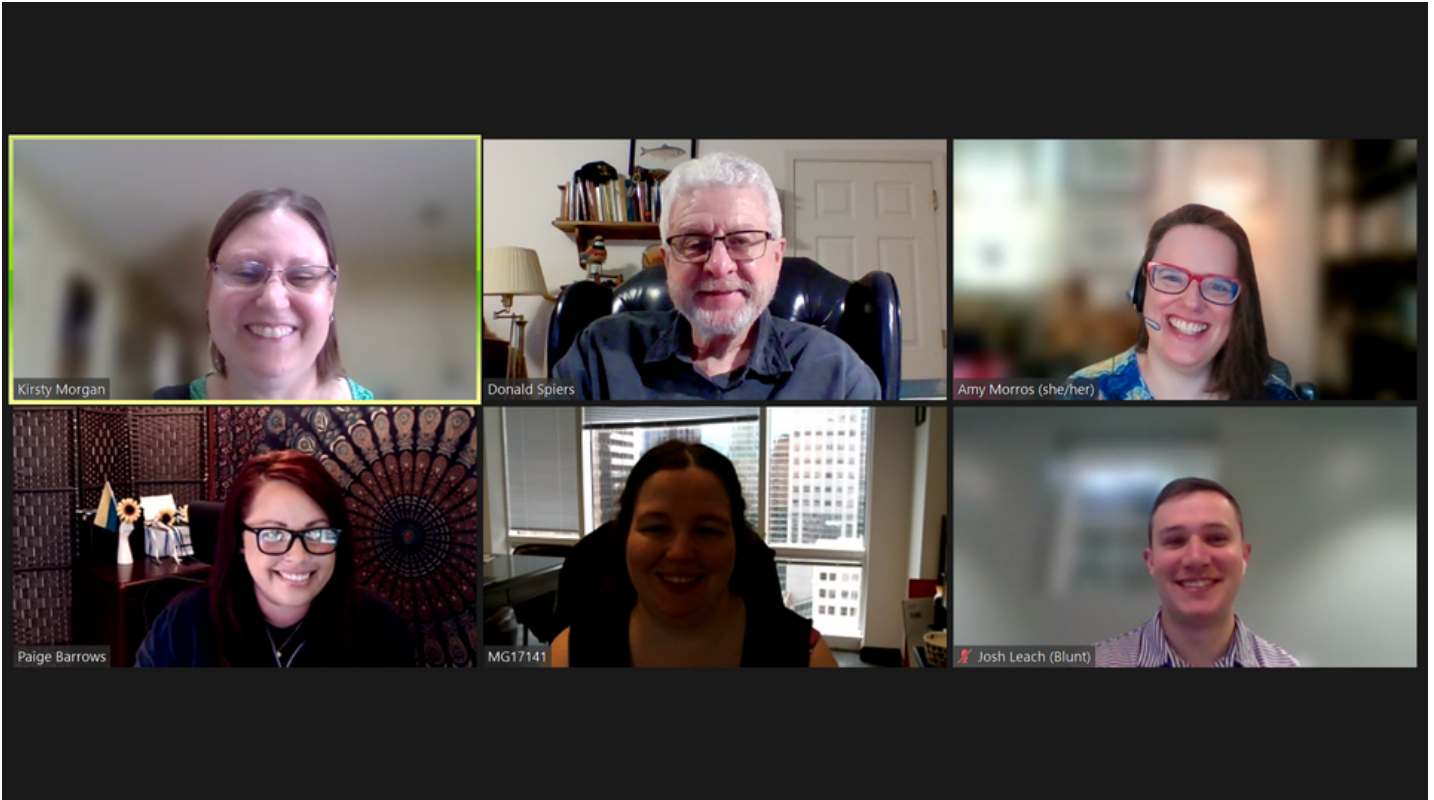


Our two main fundraiser events, the Annual World Trivia Night and the International Calendar sales, raised a hefty sum of money this year. Trivia Night was in person this year, our first time since 2019.

We had nearly 50 people in attendance and a lot of laughs were shared all night. Thank you to Jeremy Winter who created the trivia questions and acted as the emcee for the night!

Again this year, we sold international calendars produced by the Wisconsin-Madison RPCV group. We sold all 75 of our 2023 calendars this year with the help of Trevor Harris, who volunteered his time to promote calendar sales and deliver calendars. Thank you to Trevor and everyone who continues to order a calendar (or more) each year!

ADVOCACY



Don Spiers continues to serve as our Advocacy Chair. In 2022 he continued to coordinate with the Kansas City and St. Louis RPCV groups to engage in legislative advocacy with our state officials. In May of 2022 he and others met with Senator Roy Blunt's office via Zoom. In this meeting, an RPCV who served in Ukraine, Paige Barrows, spoke of her service and the connections she made while a volunteer. Thank you, Don, for continuing in this important role and representing our organization!

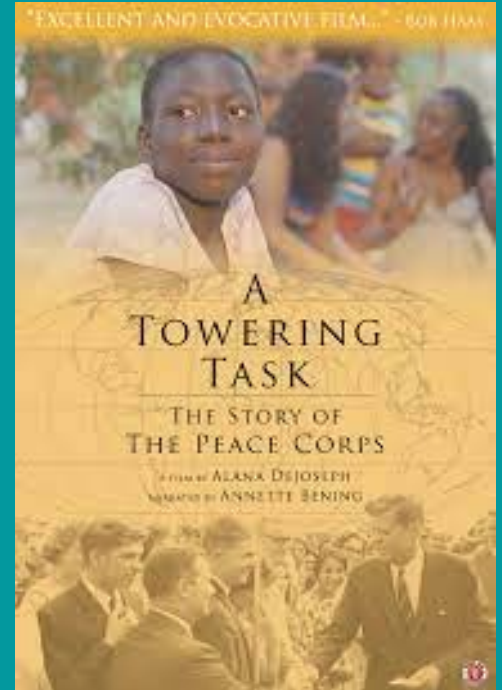


3RD GOAL FILM SERIES

A Towering Task: The Story of the Peace Corps



Attendees at the film screening on June 29, 2022.



In June we collaborated with the Daniel Boone Regional Library to feature the film, *A Towering Task: The Story of the Peace Corps* by Alana DeJoseph and narrated by Annette Bening. This independent film was released in 2019 and tells the story of the Peace Corps - past, present, and future. Jenifer Pilz worked hard to make this screening happen by securing donations through the International Center and the CAFNR International Programs. Three University of Missouri students volunteered, Ode Bela, Quinn Cunningham, and Muh Syukron. There was an excellent turnout for the event!

A big thanks to Jenifer Pilz for organizing this event, along with Lauren Williams with the Daniel Boone Regional Library, the student volunteers, and those who attended!

RPCV SPOTLIGHT



Frank Yates Ghana, 1973-1976



Frank Yates served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ghana from 1973 to 1976. He was assigned to the Ghana Department of Forestry, where he built roads and buildings for a planned pulpwood plantation in the Western Region of Ghana. He lived in a three-room bungalow on the Forestry Department compound in Takoradi but spent some weekdays at the camp in the forest reserve in Daboasi. As part of his duties, he traveled to the Forestry Technical School in Sunyani, to a lumber mill in Samreboi, and to the capital in Accra for tool and building materials. He built a 2-room office building at the Forestry Department compound in Takoradi and another at a new compound in Daboasi. He also built three 3-bedroom houses for future senior staff and two duplex houses for future junior staff at Daboasi. Another Peace Corps Volunteer later was assigned to Daboasi and lived in one of the junior staff houses.



Frank traveled throughout Ghana and visited many of the other PCVs at their sites while on a month-long holiday. He also received many visitors at his home in Takoradi from other Ghana PCVs and PCVs from other West African countries.

RPCV SPOTLIGHT

Claire Lea Guinea, 2002-2004

After graduation from the University of Missouri, Columbia in 2000 with a double major in Spanish and Psychology, Claire considered many options for working abroad. Applying to join the Peace Corps seemed the most difficult choice, but by far the most desirable of the options. As a PCV, Claire was sent to Guinea, West Africa, officially as a TEFL instructor. Upon arrival, the Peace Corps staff asked for volunteers to switch to the math education program, as math teachers at the middle school level were in short supply nationwide. Claire made the switch, spending two years in a small middle school in Banian, Faranah. Claire appreciated the warm welcome, the slow pace, the predictable diet, the mango trees, and most of all the people of her town. She loved her short-wave radio, locally tailored outfits, stew made from sweet-potato leaves, goats and cows free-ranging in front of her hut every morning. She said a warm farewell to Guinea in 2004, taking a long close-of-service trip with friends to Morocco.

In 2014 came another journey into the unknown when Claire and her family made the move from Columbia, MO, to a remote corner of the Missouri Ozarks near Ava where they began work on 80 acres of fields and oak forest. Today they operate a business called Dockley Ranch where they have 40+ Nigerian Dwarf goats (the same breed she saw in Guinea) that free-range in her front yard every morning. It's not exactly what Claire expected to get from her Peace Corps service experience, but the unexpected is usually exactly right.



Central Missouri Returned Peace Corps Volunteers



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Website: www.morpcv.org
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