

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

PEACE CORPS/ THAILAND

PROMOTING PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP



Peace



Sustainability

Development



Friendship



Education



Youth



Thais and Americans working together in friendship and development

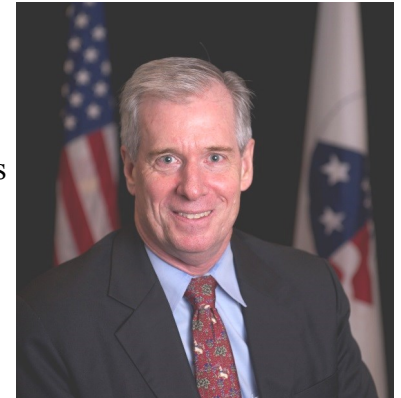


Message from the Country Director

Dear Friends and Partners,

I am very pleased to report on Peace Corps' activities in Thailand for 2013, our 51st year of operation in the Kingdom of Thailand. During this half-century, more than 5,200 Volunteers have served here. I am very fortunate to have been one of those Volunteers.

Building on a half-century long partnership, this report celebrates a year's worth of service offered by our Volunteers in collaboration with their Thai partners in support of Thai communities.



Kevin F. F. Quigley

We would like to express our deepest appreciation for the continued strong partnership with our counterpart agencies: Thailand's International Cooperative Agency (TICA-Ministry of Foreign Affairs), the Department of Local Administration (DLA-Ministry of Interior) and the Office of Basic Education (OBEC-Ministry of Education).

Peace Corps Thailand operates two programs currently focused on helping equip Thai youth for the future: **1) Teaching Collaborative and Community Service, and 2) Youth in Development.** In executing these programs in 2013, 102 Volunteers worked to assist schools and local administration offices, especially around issues of public health, English language learning, and life skills development.

As we have always done, Peace Corps' approach relies on our Volunteers working side by side with their community partners to increase local capacity to address needs identified by communities that align with national priorities. This requires that our Volunteers live with Thais and speak the local language to best facilitate knowledge transfer and cultural exchange.

If you have any questions about this report or suggestions on how we can enhance our impact here in Thailand, please do not hesitate to let me know.

With very best wishes,

Kevin F. F. Quigley, Ph.D.

"I am very fortunate to have been one of those Volunteers."

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"This report celebrates a year's worth of service offered by our Volunteers in collaboration with their Thai partners in support of Thai communities."

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U.S. Peace Corps

The Peace Corps traces its roots and mission to 1960, when then Senator John F. Kennedy challenged students at the University of Michigan to serve their country in the cause of peace by living and working in developing countries. From that inspiration grew an agency of the federal government devoted to world peace and friendship.

Since that time, more than 215,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 host countries, working on issues ranging from AIDS education to information technology and environmental preservation. The Peace Corps' mission has three simple but timeless goals:

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 peoples served; and*
3. *Helping promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.*

Overview of Peace Corps Thailand

Over 5,200 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in Thailand since the program was established in 1962. Volunteers have worked throughout the country in a wide range of projects including education, rural development, health, and environment. Peace Corps' distinguished history here reflects the close relationship between Thais and Americans working together in friendship and development.

Twenty-six staff and four regional staff, under the leadership of former Thai Volunteer and Country Director **Kevin F. F. Quigley**, support Volunteers through intensive language and cross cultural training, health care, job training and safety and security support.



Volunteer Profile

78	Currently serving PCVs
65%	Female Volunteers
35%	Male Volunteers
13%	Over the age of 50
100%	College educated

Volunteer Programs

Group 124 Volunteers are working in two programs:

- Education Volunteers, **Teacher Collaboration & Community Outreach (TCCO)**, work primarily with teachers to strengthen English teaching and curriculum design, improve English skills, and apply participatory learning approaches.
- **Community Based Organization Development (CBOD)** Volunteers assist Sub-District Administrative Offices (SAOs) and community leaders to promote and encourage sustained development in rural Thai communities.

Group 125 Volunteers are working in two programs:

Volunteers in the **Teacher Collaboration and Community Service (TCCS)** Project, work to strengthen English language Instruction. They also support the Royal Thai Government's education initiatives and promote community service projects.

Volunteers in the **Youth in Development Project (YinD)** help prepare Thai youth for their adult roles as engaged and constructive citizens. Volunteers and their Thai counterparts educate youth in life skills, service learning, healthy lifestyles, civic engagement and entrepreneurial skills.



Volunteer Group 1 (1962 – 1964)



Volunteer Group 125 (2013 – 2015)

Impacts in 2013

Peace Corps Thailand Office Upgraded

Peace Corps Thailand made important strides in establishing a regional hub by obtaining the resources to lease a vacant house on our compound and then renovating that house and the existing medical unit so that we can provide expanded services to other Europe, Mediterranean and Asia Posts, without detracting from improving quality in our Peace Corps Thailand programs.



Main Office Building



Front Office Building (Regional Office)



Volunteer Resource Center (Back Office Building)



Impacts in 2013

“Personally, the proudest Volunteer's achievement is when Volunteers and counterparts work together in response to locally identified needs. I am also very glad to see the inner growth of each Volunteer. They have moved beyond camps and a string of activities to more sustainable community-led activities. The great majority of CBOD/YinD Volunteers suggest that they are very comfortable around the Thai community and have adapted to the Thai ways of life. PCVs are learning how to step back when they deal with challenges and difficult situations, and they also learn to be more flexible and patient.”

Jaree Kiatsuphimol, CBOD/YinD Program Manager



Community-Based Organizational Development (CBOD) Project

Total Project Beneficiaries

Individuals (<i>local people/students</i>)						Number of Local Administrative Offices/ Schools/ Health Units
Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15	229
1682	2747	1009	1612	3372	3599	

Service Providers (<i>Government Officers/ Key Actors/ Youth Leaders/ Community Leaders</i>)						Number of Sub-districts (Tambons)
Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15	133
478	757	62	182	6	11	

Youth in Development (YinD) Project

Total Project Beneficiaries

Individuals (<i>local people/students</i>)						Number of Local Administrative Offices/ Schools/ Health Units
Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15	77
122	131	482	571	1303	1476	

Service Providers (<i>Government Officers/ Key Actors/ Youth Leaders/ Community Leaders</i>)						Number of Sub-districts (Tambons)
Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15	51
151	225	6	17	0	6	

Impacts in 2013

“From my observation during site visits, I can confidently say that the majority of teachers who are the Volunteers' counterparts have made professional progress through interacting and working directly with a Volunteer. After co-teaching/team teaching with the Volunteer for a while, the counterparts are slowly realizing that maybe they put too much emphasis on grammar and structure, and that the order they introduced a foreign language is completely reverse to the mother tongue. Now many teachers-despite not having the expertise-are starting to pick up how to teach Phonics, because they are convinced that letter recognition and knowing the sounds of each letter are essential skills for the students to have a good foundation of English. Many Volunteers are making headway with this approach, resulting in the students' increased confidence. Besides, the new teaching techniques and positive discipline methods introduced by the Volunteers have contributed to these students being more motivated to learn English. It's really fascinating to see the students who once refused to read anything in English pick up Phonics readers to read on their own.”

Suvimon Sanguansat, TCCO/TCCS Program Manager



Teacher Collaboration and Community Outreach (TCCO) Project

Total Project Beneficiaries

Individuals (*Students/Teachers*)

Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15
1103	758	831	1364	6588	7617

Number of Local Administrative Offices/ Schools/ Health Units

315

Service Providers (*School Directos/Key Actors/Youth Leaders*)

Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15
301	747	406	368	66	73

Number of Sub-districts (Tambons)

187

Teacher Collaboration and Community Service (TCCS) Project

Total Project Beneficiaries

Individuals (*Local People/Students/Teachers*)

Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15
1136	1072	344	338	3601	3978

Number of Local Administrative Offices/ Schools/ Health Units

86

Service Providers (*School Directors/Key Actors/Youth Leaders*)

Males above 24	Females above 24	Males 15-24	Females 15-24	Males under 15	Females under 15
223	609	4	28	0	6

Number of Sub-districts (Tambons)

58

Volunteer in Action

Phonics as the Critical Building Block from Reading Success

Barbara Harm, a 25-year veteran teacher from California, is serving as an Education Volunteer in Phitsanulok. She has focused on phonics as the best means for establishing the foundation for improving students' reading ability. Barbara saw that her students' progress was stuck because they were merely memorizing words. She explains, "English is about eighty percent

"English is about eighty percent phonetic, and knowing phonics opens a world of vocabulary to the English learner."

phonetic, and knowing phonics opens a world of vocabulary to the English learner." Learning the sounds of the consonants, vowels, digraphs and blends clarifies pronunciation and gets the Thai students vocalizing right away, and vocalizing correctly, which takes away a lot of the fear of speaking English out loud." A good phonics program integrates speaking, listening and reading decoding and comprehension skills as well as skills in spelling, letter formation, sentence structure and mechanics. Barbara has poured hundreds of hours of work into making phonics resources for her co-teachers and readily shares these materials with other Volunteers.



Volunteer in Action

Ina Chu has been working with an indigenous sea tribe called the Moken. For generations they lived off of Thailand's Andaman coast. After the 2004 Tsunami, many Moken relocated on land, where they've begun assimilating into mainstream Thai culture. This comes at the cost of their rich cultural heritage. Ina's project intends to preserve one crucial part of the culture, their oral language, before it disappears with the last speakers. Every week, her counterpart and she meet with Moken elders to video record songs, legends, personal stories, and phrases in the traditional language. With the help of Moken youth, she then translates and upload these videos onto a database for endangered languages. The work is slow and steady, but she hopes it will inspire this new generation of Moken to take pride in their unique culture, especially in this globalizing world.

Her project intends to preserve one crucial part of the culture, their oral language.



Volunteer in Action

Kirstie Boyette, a CBOD Volunteer from Florida, spends the majority of her time working with her village's youth community. In addition to teaching English, Kirstie facilitates life skills training that incorporate drug and alcohol awareness, public speaking and theater. Kirstie and her co-teacher's latest project is an occupational baking group comprising of 37 fifth- and sixth-grade participants. All students are required to invest in the business. With the help of Peace Corps Thailand's mini projects assistance grant, the youth occupational group

was able to purchase baking necessities such as ovens, spatulas and baking pans. The young entrepreneurs are currently working on perfecting their craft, implementing marketing strategies and raising awareness of their business. The students bake and sell bi-weekly to the school's surrounding neighborhoods. Since the project's initiation, Kirstie has seen that the students are more

business-minded, responsible and hard working. The occupational baking group has also helped to reinforce positive gender roles with a plethora of eager male students. In two months' time, the group's goal is to have a stand at three local markets in the village every week.



**Innovative approaches
to teaching life skills.**

Volunteer in Action

Sarah Lingo has spent a large part of her service working in her community's schools teaching life skills including sex-education, drug and alcohol awareness, recycling, and nutrition. In July, Sarah worked with the local high school to educate students on how to protect themselves from contracting dengue fever, as dengue fever rates are expected

to be at an all-time high this year. The session included a presentation on dengue fever, how to protect yourself, and how to construct and care for an Ovitrapp, which helps reduce mosquito populations. Thirty high school constructed their own Ovitrapp to use in their home or around the community. Ovitraps help to reduce the Aedes mosquito population (which are known carriers of dengue fever) by attracting female mosquitoes

seeking a place to lay their eggs. When the eggs hatch and develop into adults, they are trapped inside the device and die. Sarah will continue to work on dengue education in her community through the schools and the community clinics, who have expressed an interest in learning about Ovitraps and hosting trainings of their own.



**Sarah will continue to work on
dengue education in her
community through the
schools and the
community clinics.**



Volunteer in Action

Keith Wingard: As a Volunteer in the education sector, Keith was excited to meet all his new students and think about ways he could help them enjoy learning English when he first arrived at site. However, after the first few weeks of classes, it became very evident that the vast majority of students, from grades 1 through 6, had very low English reading ability levels. This situation was readily admitted by both his co-teachers. Beyond limiting their options for "reading" practice, it also affected students' writing skills, speaking skills, and

confidence with the English language. Many students were unable to read simple sentences despite having spent several years studying English in school. Despite not having much experience teaching phonics, both his co-teachers agreed to incorporate a phonics plan to help students with letter recognition, reading skills, listening skills, and pronunciation. They initially collaborated on coming up with TPR (total physical response) actions to be used for each letter, sound, and basic vocabulary word

"Phonics help students with letter recognition, reading skills, listening skills, and pronunciation."

(ex. A, "a", apple), and set up a plan for introducing 3 or 4 letters every other week. They used a simple story to keep students interested in the phonics lessons by using the phonics letters already taught to "sound out" basic words/practice reading them (decoding), and using phonics to "hear" vocabulary words and practice spelling them. (encoding).



Volunteer in Action



Learning Life Skills Through Soccer: Kenneth Woods III is a Youth and Development Volunteer, who with the the help

of his counterpart, Mr. Bordin, has been working with 22 young boys, ages from 11-14, interested in playing soccer every Tuesday. This is part of a Physical Education class designed to promote healthy living, communication, teamwork, sportsmanship, and the importance of positive competitiveness. This class

also helps the boys find healthy ways to deal with stress through the teachings of game-like situations.

Every Monday, Mr. Bordin and he sit down for 30-45 minutes, and they discuss the lesson plan for the next day. They usually refer to the teachings out of the Right to Play resource book, (Sports for Development) to develop innovative approaches to promote life skills for adolescent boys.

"Sports can help promote healthy living, communication, teamwork, sportsmanship, and the importance of positive competitiveness."



Volunteer in Action

Camp GLOW: Girls Leading Our World (GLOW) Camp was created in 1995 by Peace Corps Volunteers and local teachers in Romania. The purpose of Camp GLOW is to encourage and empower young women “to become active citizens by building their self-esteem and confidence, increasing their self-awareness, and developing their skills in goal setting, assertiveness, and career and life planning.” Since 1995, PCVs in more than 60 countries have established GLOW camps to promote the empowerment of women around the world.

In September, Thailand’s first-ever Camp GLOW was held at Chulaporn Ratchawittayalai School, Pathumthan Province. It brought together 50 youth from all over Thailand. Ten different communities, representing all of the regions of Thailand, participated in this empowering event.



The First Camp GLOW in Thailand

Volunteer in Action

Student-Friendly Schools Training: Fifteen Peace Corps Volunteers and their counterparts participated in this pioneering Student Friendly Schools (SFS) training. SFS is a three-day workshop designed to prepare Volunteers and their counterparts to respond to school-related gender-based violence in their communities. Because gender-based violence is a worldwide problem that raises public health and human rights concerns, workshop participants learned how to develop a community-specific plan to address the social concept of gender roles and the negative consequences of gender-based

violence as well as how to recognize, prevent, and respond to these problems. The SFS also provides gender empowerment sessions and encourages critical thinking on the part of all participants.



2nd and 3rd Goal Promotion

- Learning Language & Culture
- Thai Host Families
- World Wise School Partnerships
- Peace Corps Thailand Website/Social Media
- PCT Wiki by Volunteers
- Volunteer Blogs

Sara Kline was one of only six currently serving Volunteers to attend Peace Corps' Third Goal Mobilization Summit in Washington, D.C. As part of the Summit, *Blog It Home* contest winners from Ethiopia, Mexico, Jamaica and Thailand presented their experiences and showcased how they use technology to broaden cultural and global awareness. Sara was very happy to hear that readers are learning new skills through her blog posts, the RPCV D.C. Knitting Group began making plastic bag yarn-making through one of her crafting posts!

Besides the excitement of the Summit events, the highlight of Sara's trip was teaching an audience of D.C. residents the Northern Thai "Sa-Wat-Dii -Jao" and the lyrics to the Thai fruit song & dance during Saturday's presentation at the Mt. Pleasant Public Library. It warms Sara's heart knowing that each of the bloggers passed on a growing curiosity and admiration for our countries of service, and they look forward to advancing their efforts to fulfill Peace Corps' Third Goal throughout their two-year journeys and beyond. She said "Khob Khun Jao" to the Office of the Third Goal for this amazing opportunity!"

To visit Sara Kline's Blog: <http://klinesc.blogspot.com/>



Supaporn Boonraksasatya

Training Manager,
Peace Corps Thailand



I was inspired by an American teacher who was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand to study English and to become a part of the

Peace Corps myself. I am fortunate to have worked for the Peace Corps in various capacities during PST for 13 years. After my first experience with the Peace Corps, I went to work in the private sector.

No matter where I worked I always wished to return to Peace Corps to repay my beloved organization. Peace Corps gave me chances to learn, gain knowledge as well as improving my training skills. And, I am happy to say that my dream finally came true as I am back working for Peace Corps as the Training Manager since September 2009. It is a great honor, and I am so proud to be here.

“Peace Corps Volunteers inspired a young and lost student in the remote province of Pattani to become a Ph.D. graduate in Engineering and a proud and honest high level government official.”

Manoon Aramrattana, Ph.D.

Former Secretary-General,
Office of Atomic Energy for Peace



Peace Corps Volunteers (Ms. Jackie Dunn and Mr. John Goldrick) helped increase my English capability to win the American Field Service (AFS) scholarship award in 1965, which inspired a young and lost student in the remote province of Pattani to become a Ph.D. graduate in Engineering and a proud and honest high level government official who is recognizable as a person promoting peaceful uses of atomic energy in Thailand and worldwide.

Assist. Prof. Ubon Sanpatchayapong, Ph.D.

Director of Bilingual Education,
Rangsit University



Miss Doris Gold and Mr. Daniel Hantman were two Peace Corps Volunteers from Trang back in 1963. Miss Doris taught English at Saparajinee's girl School while Mr. Daniel was at a boy's school called Wichienmathu. Our principal at that time was Ajaan Jiamjit Boonyanurak, who was also a Thai teacher. She gave Ajaan Doris the name “Darisa”, whereas Ajaan Daniel was named “Danai”. However, students in my class usually called Ajaan Doris “Miss Doris”. She was our real English teacher!

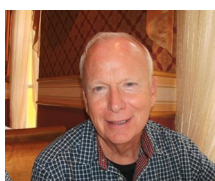
We were very fortunate to have studied with “Miss Doris”, who was an outstanding English teacher; kind, understanding, devoting, and very intelligent. Thus, she captured all the students' hearts. Her class was lively, fun, and very productive. We enjoyed studying, singing, sharing stories with one another, and listening to inspiring stories told by ‘Miss Doris.’ I remember well the song ‘Blue Sky’ and in her class learned invaluable techniques such as working in groups, reading, and writing. Because of her, reading became my hobby. My name ‘Ubon’ is written this way because of her suggestion. I made a resolution: if ever I became a teacher, I would be an English teacher like Miss Doris!

PC Experiences and Impacts: Thailand RPCVs



Rose Marie Welliver Wanchupela

I will always be grateful for the vision and leadership of our first Peace Corps Director, ***Sargent Shriver***, our teachers at the University of Michigan training program, and our Country Director, Glenn Ferguson. I am especially grateful to the American people who have supported the Peace Corps program from the beginning and to the people of Thailand who have so enriched my life.



Vernon A. Nelson

Being a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand opened up a whole new world to me, literally and figuratively. Being a Volunteer in Amphur

Kuchinarai, Changwat Kalasin gently pushed me out of my cultural "box". This was a life altering experience, in an amazing culture which cemented strong bonds between the Thai people and myself. In retrospect, "Humbling" best describes how I look back upon this experience.



Doris Gold Wibunsin

Just about 51 years ago, graduating from college and wondering about my future, my goals were vague, my plans fluid, my path blurred. After completing my Peace

Corps assignment, my goals became a bit more focused, my plans somewhat more determined, and my path a bit lucid. Nearing completion of my graduate program, I thought I finally had developed clear goals. But then fate stepped in, completely unexpectedly: returning to Thailand for what I assumed would be a temporary hiatus, prior to taking up the goals, plans and path I thought I'd finally determined. And now, 50 years on, musing about goals set and goals changed, goals attained and goals abandoned, plans designed and plans altered, and a path that started out indeterminate and tortuous and leading in a direction that I couldn't conceive, has, after all, taken me to a place that, while I would never have considered, finds me generally comfortable and content.



Barent Springsted

My Peace Corps experience in Thailand added a surprisingly new and long lasting element to my life. Working in the countryside in a public health project was

challenging in ways that I never expected. My interaction with my Thai counterparts was very rewarding in terms of work and the lifelong friendships that developed as a result of my time in Thailand. The lasting friendships with fellow PCVs that have come about over the years is a very valuable part of my experience.



Tony Zola

My two years in Peace Corps Thailand were the best two years of my life. While in the Peace Corps Thailand, I often thought:

Where else would I want to be at this point in my life? The Peace Corps experience was a once in a lifetime encounter with an alternative life; not a simple change of lifestyle, but an occasion for celebrating humankind's similarities and differences. Peace Corps Thailand was an experience in cross-cultural living that stimulated the senses and provoked communication skills that one did not realize one had. One can only hope that through the Peace Corps, one was able to give to others as much as one received in return in terms of experience; to benefit those who needed technical assistance and knowledge and who would progress socially and economically as a result.



Bruce Howard

Peace Corps service in Thailand changed my life. I have now spent an additional 26 years living and working East Asia following my five years as a Volunteer: 11 as a teacher and 15 more as a Foreign Service officer serving in four different U.S. embassies. Wherever I've served, there have been other former PCVs around whose lives have been similarly influenced, and I'd like to think that whatever good we've done in the world began with our Peace Corps days.

PC Experiences and Impacts: Currently Serving PCVs



Faith Eakin, TCCO 124

Serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand has changed my life. Before applying I had attended many PC events at my university and I heard returned Volunteers voice the same sentiment. Yet I did not believe that two years could make such a huge impact on a person. However, it has. Peace Corps is transformative because it empowers people to simply be better people. Myself, the counterparts I work with at school and the villagers I live with have all been impacted and the bond that a common empowerment creates can never be broken. I joined the Peace Corps to give my time and share my skills with people I had never met, not fully understanding all that they would give to me. I now understand that change and personal growth are unavoidable and that it is impossible not to feel gratitude to the Peace Corps for introducing me to the people of Thailand. People who will always be my family.



Erin Gallegos, TCCO 124

In my nearly two years of Peace Corps service in Thailand, I have unlearned many of my prior assumptions about development work, the world, my home, and myself, and relearned about these things in ways that I could never have imagined prior to coming here. I have learned that giving the simplest of things - a smile, a listening ear, a helping hand - that this goes further than all the work we may have thought we came here to do. I have also learned that without these things, the work itself is joyless. To work with others, one must first delight in their presence and their lives. I have done my best to be open to creating and sharing in the joy of others, and to share bits of this experience to those at home who have not been fortunate to live it. Today, I still lack the perspective to know just how transformative this experience has been, but I know that I do feel transformed, and in small ways, those around me have transformed as well.



Grace Alivia, TCCS 125

My first year of Peace Corps Service has been a year of immense change and growth. When I first arrived in Thailand, I carried with me so many ideas and expectations about my new host country, Peace Corps, teaching, and myself. I had no idea how much my personal beliefs would be challenged or how much I start to think differently and think bigger. Peace Corps gave me the tools and cultural understanding to see the world in a new way, from a different perspective. Thailand challenged me to put away my own agenda, to put my community before myself, and to ask what other people think and desire. The biggest lesson I learned in my first year of service is that development starts small: It starts with relationships; it starts with conversations; it starts over a shared meal. Development starts with a meeting of minds and a sharing of hearts. Peace Corps and Thailand have enriched my life greatly and I have learned so much about myself and my community. In my second year of service, I hope I will be able to reciprocate the generosity I have been so fortunate to receive this year and continue to grow and learn with my Thai community.



Mininder Sodhi (Mimi), YinD 125

It's hard to believe I've been in Thailand for nearly a year; Pre-Service Training seems a long time ago! I have learned so much about myself during the first 10 months at site. They say "everyone's Peace Corps Experience is unique" and it truly is. Some are challenged by the isolation, some by the language, some by the lack of privacy, some by the lack of "work", some by the lifestyle, some by the work styles, some by all of it. The challenge seems to match each Volunteer's "area of growth." For me, it was my drive to do "something meaningful" and to partner with the community to "implement programs and projects that they identified." After working through my frustrations, self doubts and wondering why I am here, I realized that each day I am here I am making a difference in some small way. I've built some great relationships with counterparts, kids speak to me with more confidence, I am even joking with my counterparts. Although my experience is not what I had thought it might be, it is the right experience for me, at this time in my life. I look forward to what the next year has in store.

Major Events in 2013

Swearing In Ceremony Volunteers Group 125 (2013-2015)

March 22, 2013: Suphanburi Province, Royal Thai Government Representatives joined by Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney swore in 47 Peace Corps



Volunteers, who will serve for the next two years in Thailand. After administering the oath of service to the new Peace Corps Volunteers, the Ambassador officially presented them to Ms. Angsana Sihapitak, Deputy Director-General, the Thailand International Development Cooperation Agency (TICA). TICA serves as the sponsoring and coordinating agency for Peace Corps and other international agencies working in partnership with the Thai Government.



Deputy Director General Angsana Sihapitak then officially presented 26 of the new Peace Corps

Volunteers to representatives of the Ministry of Education's Office of Basic Education Commission (OBEC) and 21 new Peace Corps Volunteers to the Ministry of Interior's Department of Local Administration (DLA). The 26 Peace Corps Volunteers assigned to the OBEC are working with their Thai Counterparts in the Teacher Collaboration and Community Service Project to help increase the capacity of Thai teachers using student-centered and participatory learning principles.



The 21 Peace Corps Volunteers assigned to DLA are working with local Sub-District Administrative Organizations in the Youth Development Project to prepare Thai youth for their roles as healthy, productive citizens who contribute positively to their communities and country.

Cailyn Torpie, a graduate from University of Washington, was one of two Volunteers



selected to represent her group by giving a speech in Thai.

Serving in the Peace Corps is a family tradition. Cailyn's parents, Ann and Scott met as Peace Corps Volunteers in Thailand. Cailyn's older sister, Ryan, served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Mali.

The first group of Peace Corps Volunteers in Thailand arrived in January 1962. Since then, more than 5,200 have served here. Peace Corps Thailand is one of the oldest uninterrupted partnerships between a host country and the Peace Corps.



"The first group of Peace Corps Volunteers in Thailand arrived in January 1962. Since then, more than 5,200 have served here."

Mid-Service Conference Volunteers Group 124

April 2, 2013: Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, the recent Secretary General of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), attended the Mid-Service Conference for Volunteers in Group 124 at the Suan Dusit Place Hotel, Bangkok.

Dr. Surin talked about his life's work, aspirations for Thailand and thanked the Peace Corps for changing his life. As a young student in Nakhon Si Thammarat, Dr. Surin was taught English by two Peace Corps Volunteers, **David and Phyllis Johnston**. The Johnstons helped him obtain a scholarship through the American Field Service for his junior year in a high school in the United States, where he eventually returned to graduate cum laude from Claremont College, and receive a master's degree and a doctorate in political science from Harvard University.



Dr. Surin's talk inspired the Volunteers and provided them a clear agenda upon which they could make discernible progress during their two-year service: *1) engaging Thais with their neighbors and the rest of the world, 2) enhancing English teaching and learning, and 3) advocating for equality under the law and promoting tolerance of others.* This

clear agenda helped make greater sense of what can be a challenging assignment for the PCVs.

Reflecting his life-long commitment to Peace Corps' values of service and understanding, Dr. Surin will be awarded the 2014 Harris Wofford Global Citizens Award following his nomination by members of Group 124.

The 44 Peace Corps Volunteers who attended this conference have served in Thailand for one year. They range in age from early 20s through late 60s. They work closely with Thai counterparts in small, rural communities; half work at the Sub-district Administrative Office doing community development and half work at schools to train teachers of English and promote participatory learning approaches.



180th Anniversary of Thailand and United States Relations

Kyle Sakowicz, TCCO 124 and **Kirstie Boyette**, CBOD 124 represented Peace Corps Thailand on the occasion of the 180th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Thailand and the United States hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on May 29, 2013. Prime Minister Yingluck Chinawatra stopped by at the Peace Corps/Thailand booth and spoke with Nong Om, a 10-year student of Volunteer Kirstie Boyette, who was standing next to Nong Om with tears in her eyes. Then, the Ambassador gave Nong Om a big hug for doing a great job speaking with the Prime Minister Yingluck.



Kyle Sakowicz

Peace Corps Thailand 124

Teacher Collaboration and Community Outreach Project



Serving with **Peace Corps**,

I have the unique opportunity to be immersed into Thai culture, also being able to represent American culture. My host family, co-teachers, students, and community teach me about Thai culture through language, religion, activities, and food.



Kirstie Boyette

Peace Corps Thailand 124

Community Based Organizational Development Project

Through **Peace Corps**,

I've experienced a different world and my horizons have been broadened. I'm excited about this year for me and my community. I'm hoping, it'll be enough to make a big difference. Sargent Shriver said, "**The Peace Corps is guilty of enthusiasm and a crusading spirit. But we're not apologetic about it**".



Peace Corps Training on Continuing Medical Education, Safety and Security, and Sexual Assault.

June 3, 2013: *Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney* delivered welcoming remarks during the Opening Reception for the Peace Corps Training on Continuing Medical Education, Safety and Security and Sexual Assault Response Liaison. This training involved approximately 120 Peace Corps staff from 20 countries and 28 participants from Peace Corps Headquarters including Ms. Helen A. Lowman, Regional Director, Europe, Mediterranean & Asia (EMA) Region, and Ms. Maryann Minutillo, Senior Advisor in the Office of the Director.



This Training Event rolled out the new Sexual Assault Response Liaison (SARL) position and provided ongoing training related to the Peace Corps' commitment to reducing the risk of violence against Volunteers and ensuring that Volunteers are confident they can seek support from the Peace Corps if they do become victims. The new SARL position is an important part of the Agency's commitment to providing

compassionate and capable care for Volunteers who have been sexually assaulted or have experienced other serious crimes.

During the last several years, the Peace Corps has initiated a comprehensive approach to reducing risks and strengthening its response to Volunteers who have been the victims of sexual assault and other violent crimes. This Training discussed the Agency's approach to providing integrated and coordinated care and support of Volunteers, and the development of better training and enhanced risk-reduction strategies. Through this comprehensive approach, the agency strives to create an environment where Volunteers experience a safe and productive service.



Thanksgiving Dinner and COS Conference Volunteers Group 124

Ambassador Kristie A. Kenney hosted a memorable Thanksgiving dinner at the Residence for Volunteers completing their services in March 2014. This dinner was a wonderful opportunity to thank 38 Volunteers of Group 124 for their service and to recognize the legacy each will leave in their host communities.

After the dinner, the Volunteers travelled to the COS Conference in Cha-Am. The Volunteers had a memorable time, and based on what they learned and experienced, they are well prepared to finish their PCV service strong and to continue on to the next chapter of their lives in ways that build on their Volunteer experiences here.



The Year Ahead:

- ◇ Welcoming 55 Trainees to Pre-Service Training #126, *January 13 - March 19, 2014*;
- ◇ Piloting the joint Swearing-in and Close-of-Service Event on *March 19, 2014*;
- ◇ Sharpening our programmatic focus in education collaboration and youth in development programs;
- ◇ Providing outstanding regional services to other Peace Corps' Posts; and
- ◇ Strengthening relationships with Royal Thai government and community counterparts.



Peace Corps Thailand



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