



RPCV Newsletter Spring 2016

Peace Corps Month in March

Peace Corps turns 55 this year so we are going to celebrate! UF has its spring break during PC week so we are hosting Peace Corps month instead during all of March. We hope you can get involved.

We would like to connect with the RPCV community in particular at the Bon Voyage on March 20 and at the two events on the evening of March 31st. Please save these dates!

You can see other events highlighted below, but of course there are lots of ways to get involved. There are always class presentations, community events, fairs, etc. If you would like to share your PC stories and help guide the next generation of volunteers, please contact Bobbi Stienmetz at 352-294-2267 or peacecorps@ufic.ufl.edu

Upcoming Events on Campus

- 2/11: Fall In Love With PC 1 - 2:30 p.m.
- 2/18: Careers in Service Panel 3 - 5 p.m.
- 2/24: Majors/Minors Fair: 10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 3/10: CJC Career Day: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- 3/15: FYCS Networking event: 4 - 6:30 p.m.
- 3/16: Application Workshop: 3 - 5 p.m.
- 3/20: Bon Voyage Potluck: 12 - 3 p.m.
- 3/31 : Success in Service: 5 - 7 p.m.
- 3/31: RPCV Mingle: 7:30 - 9pm
- 4/5: Getting Experience as a Student: 3 - 5 p.m.
- 4/14: Art Without Borders @ the Harn: 6 - 9 p.m.



Volunteer Spotlight: Victoria graduated Summa Cum Laude from UF in Political Science and Economics, with a focus on international issues and a minor in Eastern European Studies. During her time at UF, she was an active member of Model United Nations and She's the First.

Now, Victoria serves as an International Community and Youth Development Advisor in Armenia, specializing in developing organizational and human capacity. Her job combines elements of youth services, nutritional education, and gender equality promotion. Victoria started service in Aug 2014 and will return stateside in October 2016.

Victoria is currently the co-director of the Peace Corps GLOW camp (Girls Leading Our World), organizing the week-long overnight camp to promote self-confidence, gender equity, leadership, and empowerment among young girls. Victoria is also the program manager for an Armenian-based initiative, Border 2 Border, which promotes healthy living through sustainable environmental practices and nutrition to youth in rural villages.

On January 5th, Victoria visited UF and presented about her experience in Armenia so far. The room was packed with students wanting to hear the perspective of a currently serving volunteer. Victoria headed back to Armenia and its frigid temperatures the next day. Thank you Victoria!



Rise of the Girls

This past November, the PC office on campus and She's the First, a UF student organization, hosted a screening of "A Girl Rising" to a large crowd of over 80 people. The documentary highlights the importance of education and the specific challenges of educating girls throughout the world. Through vignettes of nine girls' experiences in their respective countries, the film powerfully depicts the struggles faced by so many.

We were lucky to have some special guests as part of the screening. A She's the First Scholar, Tizita, and a Program Director from Ethiopia attended the screening and talked about the current struggles in Ethiopia. Tizita is also the star of another documentary, Difret, which was directed by Angelina Jolie and opened in select theaters in early 2014. A screening of Difret will be taking place in Jacksonville Beach at Players by the Sea Theater on March 5th at 1pm if you are interested.



Tizita (center) and PC campus ambassadors pose for a picture following the screening.



*Tizita and Melissa (center), the program director, of the Selmata Family Project, receiving gifts from She's the First *{UF} chapter president, Andrea*

Master's International in Public Health open for enrollment at UF

Just this semester, we received word that the MI in Public Health program was approved by Peace Corps. Master's International programs allow students to pair their graduate studies with PC service. PC service often times counts as the internship/practicum portion of the curriculum. Students enrolled in an MI program have additional competitiveness in the application process and PC does everything possible to place them in an area of their degree interest. If you know any students who are considering a Master's degree in Public Health and may be interested in PC too, please share with them about this new program.

UF continues to have the MI program in CALS as well. Students with an Environmental/Agriculture interest can also earn a graduate degree in conjunction with PC service.

Save the Date: Sunday, March 20th
Bon Voyage Celebration
Lake Wauburg 12-3pm

PC Prep has launched at UF

This Fall a new Peace Corps Prep program launched at UF. The program is designed for undergraduate students who are interested in learning more about PC and building skills needed during PC service. The students are encouraged to start their research about the different sectors and the types of positions being offered, and then look for relevant opportunities to gain experience here at UF. Students are required to complete both coursework and at least 50 hours of hands on experience within a specific sector. The PC Prep program is offered in conjunction with the new International Scholars Program which offers more broad global learning through coursework options, campus life events and either language or travel experience. Students are able to enroll in both programs until the start of their Senior year. We are thrilled with the response and interest in both programs so far. Over 50 students are currently participating in PC Prep and enrollment continues to grow!



RPCV Events Spotlight: Thursday, March 31st

Success in Service 5-7pm Pugh Hall

Success in Service is a TED talk-style speaker series where RPCVs have the opportunity to share their unique experiences with potential volunteers and show them the wonders of being a part of Peace Corps.

Cecilia Luna is the organizer of this event and may be reaching out to many of you soon to see about your interest in speaking at this event. Even if you don't speak at the event, come to hear others' stories. PC stories are the best. To see what past Success in Service events have been like: [Preview here](#)

RPCV Mingle at the Midnight 7:30-9pm

After the Success in Service event, head to the Midnight Bar downtown to spend some quality time with your fellow RPCVs.

The Midnight is well known for its Thursday night Language Exchange events. The Language Exchange kicks off after 9, so feel free to stick around to practice those language skills acquired during your PC service. You might even meet someone from your Country of service.

Parking is available at the municipal lots after 5pm or you can carpool from campus.

Peace Corps News

Florida Ranks 4th Among Peace Corps' Top Volunteer-Producing States in 2015

In December, Peace Corps released its 2015 rankings of the top volunteer-producing states and metropolitan areas across the country. Florida is ranked No. 4 among states with the highest number of Peace Corps volunteers. There are 299 volunteers from Florida currently serving worldwide and 7,842 Floridians have served in Peace Corps since its founding in 1961.

This is the fourth year in a row that Florida appears among the top ten volunteer-producing states. The University of Florida is Peace Corps' overall third highest producer among large colleges and universities.

The Peace Corps Announces Record-Breaking Application Numbers in 2014

This past October, Peace Corps announced that 17,336 Americans applied for two-year service positions in fiscal year 2014 – a 22-year high for the agency and an increase in applications of more than 70 percent over last year. The announcement follows historic changes to Peace Corps' application and selection process that have made applying to the Peace Corps simpler, faster, and more personalized than ever before.

Since July 2014 applicants have been able to choose their country of service and apply to specific programs through a new, shorter application that can be completed in less than one hour. Since the reforms were implemented, 54 percent of all applicants have selected the option to serve anywhere they're needed, and 49 percent have selected the option to serve in any of Peace Corps' six work sectors.



Highest Peace Corps Funding Level Ever

It seems to be a good time for PC in Washington. In October, President Barack Obama signed into law a spending package for the current fiscal year that runs through September 30th. In it, the Peace Corps received its highest appropriation in the agency's 54-year history. \$410 million was included in final budget negotiations for the Peace Corps for Fiscal Year 2016. This amount is nearly eight percent above last year's \$379.5 million Peace Corps spending level. Go NPCA! Did anyone else watch the SOTU address on January 12th? I felt proud of the volunteers and staff of PC as President Obama talked about development workers and the goals of improving Girl's Education in communities throughout the world, ending the HIV epidemic and putting a stop to Malaria as well. PCVs are out there on the front lines, implementing programs, and sharing skills to reach those goals!