

Friends of the Dominican Republic



Cyber News - Issue #51 - December 2009

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President's Corner -

An important aspect of Friends of the Dominican Republic is supporting the Peace Corps in the DR in various ways using your dues and donations. Read the year end reports on your two Funds in action in the first article below.

You all should have received our annual printed newsletter via the postal service in the past week. If you did not receive it, then we need your current postal address. We have postal addresses for many, and email addresses for many, so we reach everyone with both methods at least once per year.

Advertising works! Through the Cyber News and personal contacts we have 3 volunteers for the Board of Directors of FDR. Elections will be held before the end of the year. We are holding one more spot open for a RPCV in the DR. If you are in the DR wish to volunteer or have questions, please contact us at president@fotdr.org.

Using Constant Contact for mailing our Cyber News allows us to include questions and reminders which we do at least once per year. If items just have a field name then we do not have that information from you, or the program has gone goofy. Let us know if any of the data is not correct. If you feel inspired to assist PC DR, then please update your dues and send donations.

This has been a strong year for our funding of projects. Your dues and donations have assisted significant projects.

Our emphasis over the past several years has been the Community Challenge Fund which has talk of its impacts below. The Program Support Fund (PSF) is for special projects which will benefit a broad sector of Volunteers and cannot be funded by ordinary means. The PSF funded two significant requests this year.



PSF funded printing of a Health Education book designed by PCV Adrienne Gilbert to be used by health Volunteers and local health workers to educate illiterate or semi-literate people using illustrations on one side of the standing book and reminders for the presenter on the other side. The unique concept is being considered by Peace Corps for other Latin American countries. See the full report on the web site. PHOTO: Health Education class with the Book.

PSF also provided updated Adobe InDesign software for all PCVs to use in creating project materials as well as for publishing the Gringo Grita news.

Other interesting PSF news is that the Zona Colonial tour and history education that PSF provided to the two training groups each year was considered so valuable that Peace Corps now provides this education during training. (Come to the 2012 Reunion and you can enjoy the same educational tour!)

Annual Fund Drive for Community Challenge Fund Donations

December marks the beginning of a two month fund-raising drive to support on-going approvals of Community Challenge Fund (CCF) projects. Look in your mailboxes for the envelopes with the bright BLUE and RED Dominican flag. This year, we have targeted 9 projects for approval. To date, 33 projects, planned and coordinated by PCVs living in the communities, have been approved over the first 5 years of the program. These projects have included water supply, educational facilities, health clinic, latrines, sanitary cement floors and community electrification projects. There is no overhead charged on donations so that 100% of donations go directly to pay for construction materials while the community members provide the labor and other materials. This year we are making a major effort to expand the number donors contributing by 25%, so if you haven't already contributed to support these high-impact projects, please join us now. For more information, including project photos and descriptions and how you can help with contributions, see our website at <http://home.comcast.net/~johnepler>

Highlighted Community Challenge Fund Project

The El Limón Health Care Clinic Construction project was approved in September 2009 to meet a major community need. Four remote communities located in the central east hills of the country joined together to form a committee to solve one of their most pressing problems-community health. Due to extremely poor roads that are impassible in wet weather, residents of the community faced severe challenges when someone became sick or was injured in an accident. Lack of timely medical attention greatly complicated their medical condition. With the help of PCV Stacy Ngo, the villages obtained a commitment from the Ministry of Health for a doctor, nurse and medical supplies provided the community could create a health clinic facility. Two youth groups and a women's group joined to organize the fund-raising and the project work committee. A Challenge Fund grant of \$2,000 put them over top for the \$7,265 in cash they needed to raise. The community is contributing over \$14,000 in donated labor and local resources such as sand and gravel. When the construction is completed, the 705 persons in the communities will enjoy easy access to health services.

¡Atención, No Lo Pierdas! Mark Your Calendar

In early February 2012 in the Dominican Republic FDR will join Peace Corps DR in celebrating 50 years of continuous dedicated presence and service in the DR. Starting in 1962 and continuing to the present, Peace Corps has never left the DR, even during the revolution/invasion in 1965. FDR, Peace Corps DR, and Fondo Quisqueya, our sister organization, share planning and sponsoring reunions in the DR every five years. In 2012 FDR has the lead in putting on the biggest celebration ever, the 50th Anniversary!! Keep your calendars open and watch the Cybernews and our website, www.fotdr.org for more information.

John Evans, Chair of Reunion Committee (DR 67-69)

What Dominican Stories Do You Tell?

When talking with family and friends about your PCDR years, what 3 or 4 stories do you most frequently share? The Friends of the DR is compiling a 50-year history report for distribution at the 50th PC in the DR Conference & Reunion planned for early 2012 in Santo Domingo. Our goal is to include stories from RPCVs and former staff for each year, 1962 through 2011, and from each group. You can help two ways:

1. Write one or more of your favorite stories about life in the DR, your Dominican experiences, project, historic event, adventure, human interest, humor, etc. The stories can be short 1-page or up to 4 pages long. Photographs illustrating your story are recommended.
2. Contact friends from your group to encourage them to also submit stories and photos for the history.

Got a story idea? Email a brief description to the History Project chair at: history@fotdr.org. Be sure to include your full name, PC years & project title, telephone, and email address. You will quickly receive a reply with instructions and suggestions.

Neil Ross, Chair of History Committee (DR 62-64)

We Need Some Help! Volunteers willing to help telephone former RPCVs are needed.

Do you feel your detective skills are not utilized properly? Are you wondering how you will keep your "Monk" skills active? There is a way!!! We are trying to locate former PCVS from the DR. While the FOTDR generally contacts people through email it is not always easy to locate former RPCVs email addresses. I need assistance with contacting former PCVs to find out if they have an email address we could use to keep in contact with them.

Anyone can contribute by providing some "one-time" help (it can be for a limited time or within a specific region such as northeast or California) with making some of these phone calls. Obviously this will work best if you have "free telephone calls" or "a monthly fee for unlimited calls".

Please contact Janice Jorgensen to let tell us what you are able to do to help us begin relocating folks. There are about 500 people who we need to contact. Contact Janice at: membershipdirector@fotdr.org

Janice Jorgensen (DR 66-68)

President Obama promised to double the Peace Corps to 16,000 volunteers by 2011.

* The current FY 2009 budget required a cut of 500 volunteers, with 7671 volunteers today. That is half the size of 1966.

* The Obama budget proposal for FY 2010 was for only \$374 million, which is an increase of only \$34 million. The House and the Senate compromised at \$400 million, an increase of \$60 million which was signed by President Obama as part of the massive Fiscal Year spending bill.

* Many countries are on the waiting list to start Peace Corps programs and at the same time there are actions to re-vision Peace Corps for the next 50 years. Significant increases in funds will be needed in FY 2011 for the proposed growth. The FDR Board voted to join with NPCA and 63 other affiliated RPCV groups to sign a [letter](#) to President Obama to provide the increase in funding in FY 2011 for significant improvement of operations and continued growth of programs.



New Peace Corps Director Visits DR

Aaron Williams, recently appointed by President Obama to head the Peace Corps, paid a visit to the DR. He served there as a Volunteer in 1967-70 in Monte Plata. Practice your Spanish reading this Nuevo el Diario article at <http://elnuevodiario.com.do/app/article.aspx?id=165879>

Former PCV Michael Lisman visits Santo Domingo to discuss obstacles to education in the DR

A recent article in ListinDiario.com featured Michael Lisman, RPCV-DR and currently the Coordinator for the Caribbean and Central America for the Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas (PREAL) during a recent visit to Santo Domingo where he discussed educational needs of the country. PREAL works in coordination with Acción para la Educación Básica and both institutions, together with the Dominican Secretary of Education, the Pontificia Universidad Católica Madre y Maestra and the Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales, are developing a project to implement a model for improving the quality of education.

See the full article on Lisman. More Spanish practice at:
<http://www.listin.com.do/app/article.aspx?id=120994>

RPCV Mentoring: Don't Be a Fish Out of Water



Do you ever feel like a fish out of water or remember what it was like? Whether you are just coming home from Peace Corps or you've been back a while, the RPCV Mentoring Program is for you. Tap into the experience of someone who knows what you are going through. Help someone with the transition back to the U.S.

NPCA's RPCV Mentoring Program is really taking off. This online system allows PCVs just returning from service ("mentees") to be matched with those who have been back a while ("mentors") for assistance with readjustment, career options and engagement in Third Goal activities. We have mentors and mentees already signed up that need to be matched! This is a great way for new RPCVs to be introduced to the area and for local RPCVs to keep in touch with a country of service or connect to some place new via the newly returned PCV. To learn more (and to register as a mentor or mentee), visit www.rpcvmentoring.org.

FDR is participating in the Mentoring Program to recruit mentors and mentees, as well as to administer our part of the program. If you sign up you should be referred to us to create a match between mentor and mentee.

Invitee Match Program

Invitees to Peace Corps DR receive much better materials to prepare them for the changes of living there. Peace Corps has great manuals for each country. We have the manual and other materials on our web site. However they usually have a few more questions to ask. If you would like to help an Invitee, or if you are an Invitee, please contact us at: PCDRMentoring@gmail.com.

Are You Connected? NPCA has started a social network site where you can look up various sorts of groups and many of your friends.

Friends of the Dominican Republic has a page at <http://community.peacecorpsconnect.org/group/dominicanrepublic>

FDR is also on Facebook
www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=138204071776

CONTACT US! Have a news piece, announcement, photo, or suggestion for the next Cyber News? Sent it along to the FDR Cyber News editor at CyberNews@fotdr.org . Visit Friends of the Dominican Republic online at: www.fotdr.org .

Cyber News is distributed by email and includes website links to more in-depth articles. View past editions of the Cyber News at www.fotdr.org by selecting Cyber News in the top menu bar.

Your Donations are the "combustible" (fuel) that keep FDR's Program Support Fund and the Community Challenge Fund supporting Volunteer projects alive and effective. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, all donations to FDR are tax deductible.

Keep your Membership up to date: *FDR dues are only \$15 per year!*

Pay dues and donate with credit card or Pay Pal at www.fotdr.org , or mail dues & donations, payable to "Friends of the Dominican Republic," to FDR Treasurer, John Evans, 4512 Park Road, Alexandria, VA 22312.

FDR is an affiliate of the **National Peace Corps Association** (NPCA). NPCA dues are \$35 per year! Add that to your check for FDR membership and send to either FDR or to NPCA Membership, 1900 L Street NW, Suite 404, Washington, DC 20036 (designate FDR as your affiliate group). You may join or renew membership for both FDR and NPCA online at www.peacecorpsconnect.org/renew .

Fondo Quisqueya - FDR collaborates closely with our sister organization, Fondo Quisqueya. Like FDR, Fondo Q is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation. Fondo Q provides scholarships for low income Dominicans at all levels below university, including vocational and non-traditional education. Fondo Q welcomes your support. For complete Information about Fondo Q, visit their website: www.fondoq.org . Contributions may be sent to Fondo Quisqueya, P.O. Box 6628, Falls Church, VA 22040-6628.

Send changes in postal or e-mail addresses to Janice Jorgensen: MembershipDirector@fotdr.org . Better yet, make the additions and changes to any of your data on the website.