



Peace Corps Sierra Leone Newsletter

Since 1961.

May, 2011

Food for Thought

As we travel around visiting Volunteers, we see you all working very hard to make a difference, with varying degrees of frustration and success. Part of what makes it challenging for everyone is the nature of what you are trying to do - promote behavior change. When you're "in the trenches" it is hard to remember how behavior change happens -- whether we're talking about raising environmental consciousness, changing teaching patterns or disciplining without corporal punishment. It happens slowly, person-by-person, until it becomes the "right thing" to do.

In the late '50s in the U.S., it was common for motorists to throw their soft drink cans and other trash out the windows of their cars. Today, very few people do this. It took the U.S. 20-30 years to bring about this change in the level of people's environmental consciousness and concomitant change in their behavior. This change, as with most changes of this kind, happened over a number of years with lots of effort and with many mutually reinforcing messages supporting and encouraging it. Laws, enforcement and fines played a role as well in shaping the new behavior. Can we expect Sierra Leone to make similar changes in less time with less effort?

What this means is that you won't always see the fruits of your labors (at least not right away). Change, of the nature we work at, is often the proverbial two steps forward, one step back kind. But you can and do make a difference in fueling the momentum towards change and presenting alternatives that people might not otherwise have considered, in showing what's possible. The issue here is perspective -- keeping it and making it work for you. (Remember that difference between being a salesman and a missionary!)

Another issue has to do with what you choose to work on. Coming from the American individualistic and results-oriented cultural perspective, we have to fight against developing "our" projects and carrying our ever-accommodating Sierra Leonean colleagues along with us. The result when we do this, of course, is that it becomes the PCV's project and it is not sustained after the Volunteer departs. Of greater impact, perhaps, is to identify the movers and shakers in your world, see what they want to do and, if they are promoting goals you believe in, dedicate your efforts to making their dreams a reality. This may not be as flashy as bringing your own projects to life, but it is the essence of empowering and capacity-building.

Most Volunteers come with a natural desire to have an impact and to leave a legacy of their efforts and this is a legitimate desire. However, this can cause problems if you strive only for the big project -- the home run -- that will have major impact. While such an effort is laudable, the realities of Sierra Leone -- getting your school or community to make it happen, timelines delays, the need for outside funding, etc., -- make the home runs a high risk for disappointment. What seems more effective if you go for the home run, is also to strive for

lots of singles – small, simpler undertakings - so that there is always something you can work on while waiting for the often-delayed home run pitch.

(Let us know what you think of these ideas and whether they are appropriate for your life and work. We'd like to hear your thoughts on what it takes to be successful as a PCV in Sierra Leone.)

Friends of Sierra Leone July Program

The FoSL visit program is close to final. Here's the latest plans:

- Sunday, July 17th: Group arrives in evening
Stays at Taia Resort in Lumley
- Monday, July 18th: 11 am – Opening Luncheon at Taia Resort
PCVs who registered by Open House date to attend are invited for lunch.
Transport will be provided from the PC Office to the Hotel and return.
Afternoon events to be determined
All PCVs invited to participate in afternoon program.
- Tuesday, July 19th: 8am-12noon – Country Update (panel/discussion with Embassy and GoSL Dignitaries (All PCVs invited to participate. Transport provided from Office and return.)
Lunch on your own
Late afternoon – Visit to PC Office for tour and meeting with current PCVs
- Wednesday, July 20th: Service day
- Thursday, July 21st: Visit to Bunce Island
(PCVs invited – cost approximately \$50.)
Closing dinner at Taia Resort
(PCVs who have registered by Open House date to attend are invited guests.
Transport provided from Office for dinner and return.)

Work leave will be given for attending July 18th & 19th and the trip to and from Freetown.

New Lost Phone Policy

Because of high incidences of phone loss and the increasing demands upon our drivers with site development and the new group's arrival, PCVs who lose their phones or have phones stolen will be required to come to Freetown the weekend following the loss to pick up a new phone and SIM card. As in the past, costs of replacement for phone and SIM card will be deducted from your next Living Allowance. Please co-ordinate this through Tom.

"It is not a disaster to be unable to capture your ideal, but it is a disaster to have no ideal to capture."

-- Rev. Benjamin E. Mays, past President of Moorhouse College (and a teacher of Martin Luther King)

Do You Have a Concern about the Health Care You Receive? (from the Office of Medical Services, Peace Corps HQ)

At Peace Corps we believe in creating a culture that embraces quality, patient safety, and service satisfaction. In order to ensure that we continue to provide quality care, we offer the Volunteer the opportunity to express concerns and, if necessary, file a complaint if the Volunteer is dissatisfied with care received.

The Quality Improvement (QI) department at Peace Corps Headquarters receives and processes Volunteer concerns regarding Peace Corps health care delivery systems; including but not limited to Peace Corps Medical Officers (PCMOs), consultants, contracted facilities and Volunteer Support.

Volunteers are encouraged to follow the process outlined below to file a concern regarding their health care:

1. If you are comfortable, inform the PCMO that you are dissatisfied with the care you are receiving **or**
2. Inform the Co-Country Directors of your concern **or**
3. File an email concern with the QI department at headquarters - **Email: QualityNurse@peacecorps.gov**

In your email include:

- Your Name
- Your location
- PCMO (or other health care provider) involved
- Detailed description of your concern

The Volunteer can expect a response from headquarters within five (5) business days. Anonymity will not be guaranteed, we may need to disclose the Volunteer's name to research the concern.

The Volunteer should note that email is not a secure method of communication. If the Volunteer chooses to communicate via email, Peace Corps will ask the Volunteer to sign a waiver acknowledging the risk of communicating via email. (*Waivers are available either in hard copy or via email from Kadie, the Executive Assistant -- 078-563154/KOKamara@sl.peacecorps.gov*).

The Volunteer is guaranteed there will be no repercussions from Peace Corps staff in relation to the concern.

This is not a method for reporting emergency or urgent issues. Contact the Field Support Nurse at the 24 hour emergency telephone number (301.790.4749) if you have an urgent or emergency issue that has not been resolved at the local (Post) level.

If a Volunteer has any questions about this process, they are encouraged to contact the Quality Improvement Nurse at 202.692.1571. All questions or concerns are taken seriously and will be investigated.

*"It's always easier to stay out of trouble than to get out of trouble."
-Mark Twain*

Security Upgrade

As one response to our spate of household burglaries, we are providing all incoming Trainees with a metal footlocker and padlock to secure their valuables. We believe keeping valuables under lock and key, out of sight and stored in a container that can not easily be extracted through a *window* or carried away will reduce, but certainly not eliminate, crimes of opportunity.

If you would like PC to supply you with a footlocker and lock, please let Tom know. We will have one made for you. Once it is ready, it will be sent to your site the next time a vehicle is in the area. These footlockers and locks are PC property and must be returned at COS. For those who signed up at Open House, no need to ask again - we have you on the list!)

We also ask that you take another look at your doors, locks and window grates and confer with Alaka if you think they need to be upgraded for greater security.

Victories Large and Small

Congratulations to the following PCVs for the following initiatives:

- Liam and Evan for their Peace Corps Partnership proposal to provide internet connectivity and training to their community;
- Amanda for her recent interview on the Voice of America;
- Chris for assisting the First Lady's initiative in upgrading the Mattru Jong hospital;
- Gavina for getting on community radio with her class;
- Michael and Jessie L. for collaborating with the Village Bicycle Project in getting affordable bikes out to their communities;
- The 12 PCVs who were joined by their counterparts for the Ambassador Self-Help Fund Signing Ceremony held in Freetown on April 20th;
- To many of you for completing World Map Projects. They are highly valued in your communities and a great opportunity for engaging students in alternative education activities;
- Alli and Meghan for their regular involvement with community radio in Moyomba
- Jessy L. for her work in promoting girls' soccer at her school;
- Jessica A and Marty for training on teaching methods done with primary school teachers who, in turn, will teach others.
- Erin whose girls club successfully wrote and performed a play for their predominantly male student body.
- Congratulations to all those participating in World Wise Schools. Sierra Leone has the highest participation rate (68%) in all of Africa.

(This is just a partial list of the victories, large and small, happening in our PC/SL world. Be sure to let us know of the good things you are doing and that of your colleagues so we can share the news. Contact your colleagues to learn more about the projects/initiatives they are working on and share them with us so we can spread the good news.)

"The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain."
-- Dolly Parton

Sexual Assault Awareness (from PC HQ)

What should Peace Corps Volunteers know about sexual assault?

Sexual assaults and rapes may occur anywhere Volunteers live, work, or travel, just as they do in the United States. The victims are usually women, and the perpetrators of these crimes are often acquaintances, neighbors, or coworkers. Last year 65% of sexual assaults reported by Volunteers stopped at unwanted touching and did not involve force or injury. 18% of these attacks involved a weapon, substantial use of force, or resulted in an injury to the Volunteer. Of the 7,800 Volunteers serving in 77 countries last year, a total of 21 reported they were victims of rape or attempted rape.

What can you, as a Volunteer, do to minimize your risk of sexual assault?

You have the primary role in maintaining your personal safety on a daily basis. You receive a wide range of safety and security training, which includes information that is specific to your country of service. You can use this information to:

- Integrate into your communities and gain acceptance;

- Adhere to the behavioral norms in that culture;
- Remain aware of your surroundings;
- Avoid locations and situations which may put you in danger of sexual assault (i.e. - *alone in Freetown at night, traveling at night, inviting men into your house*);
- Travel with trusted companions whenever possible;
- Take an active role in watching out for fellow Volunteers during social activities.
- Tell Post staff your safety concerns and ask for their guidance in addressing them.

Remember, recognizing risk is the first step in avoiding any threat to your personal safety.

What does the Peace Corps do to support victims of sexual assault?

Each incident is unique and must be handled in accordance with the circumstances of the event and in adherence to local law. As part of the Agency’s victim-centered approach, there are systems in place to make sure victims can report rapes or other crimes and seek assistance. The Peace Corps is committed to taking care of Volunteer victims with compassion and dignity.

What does the Peace Corps do to reduce the risk of sexual assaults against Volunteers?

The Peace Corps takes the issue of sexual assault very seriously and is committed to the prevention of sexual violence and supporting Volunteer victims. The Peace Corps will never be able to eliminate crimes committed against Volunteers overseas, but it employs extensive measures to train all Volunteers in the skills they can use to reduce the likelihood of becoming victims of crime.

Peace
efforts

If you are the victim of a sexual assault, contact your PCMO, Country Director or Safety Security Officer as soon as possible for support and guidance.

Corps is constantly engaged in to enhance training to reduce the

risk of sexual violence during service. Each country has procedures in place to respond quickly and provide appropriate support to Volunteers. Teams of dedicated specialists from the medical, mental health, security and legal fields are also available from Peace Corps Headquarters to help Volunteers, as needed, with the recovery process.

Where can I find information about the incidence of crime in the Peace Corps?

The Peace Corps publishes an annual *Safety of the Volunteer* report which is available on the website. Please visit Peace Corps’ *What about Safety* webpage for additional safety information and reports: <http://www.peacecorps.gov/index.cfm?shell=learn.safety>

Looking For a Diet?

As we all know, it takes 1 calorie to heat 1 gram of water 1 degree centigrade. Translated into meaningful terms, this means that if you eat a very cold dessert (generally consisting of water in large part), the natural processes which raise the consumed dessert to body temperature during the digestive cycle literally sucks the calories out of the only available source, your body fat.

For example, a dessert served and eaten at near 0 degrees C (32.2 deg. F) will in short time be raised to the normal body temperature of 37 degrees C (98.6 deg. F). For each gram of dessert eaten, that process takes approximately 37 calories as stated above. The average dessert portion is 6 oz, or 168 grams. Therefore, by operation of thermodynamic law 6,216 calories (1 cal./gm/deg. x 37 deg. x 168 gms) are extracted from body fat as the dessert's temperature is normalized.

Allowing for the 1,200 latent calories in the dessert, the net calorie loss is approximately 5,000 calories. Obviously, the more cold dessert you eat, the better off you are and the faster you will lose weight, if that is your goal.

This process works equally well when drinking very cold beer in frosted glasses. Each ounce of beer contains 16 latent calories, but extracts 1,036 calories (6,216 cal. per 6 oz. portion) in the temperature normalizing process. Thus the net calorie loss per ounce of beer is 1,020 calories. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to calculate that 12,240 calories (12 oz. x 1,020 cal./oz.) are extracted from the body in the process of drinking a can of beer.

Frozen desserts, e.g., ice cream, are even more beneficial, since it takes 83cal./gm to melt them (i.e., raise them to 0 deg. C) and an additional 37 cal.gm to further raise them to body temperature. The results here are really remarkable, and it beats running hands down.

Unfortunately, for those who eat pizza as an excuse to drink beer, pizza (loaded with latent calories and served above body temperature) induces an opposite effect. But, thankfully, as the astute reader should have already reasoned, the obvious solution is to drink a lot of beer with pizza and follow up immediately with large bowls of ice cream. We could all be thin if we were to adhere religiously to a pizza, beer, and ice cream diet. *(We're not sure if this diet falls in the category of "approved" by Laura.)*

It's a magical world, Hobbes, Ol' Buddy . . . let's go exploring!
-- Calvin's last words - 12/31/95

Almost Graduation Time

In just a few weeks, Salone 1 will be the "old hands" ("Ah, how fast they grow up.") The new Trainees will be looking up to you as knowledgeable, experienced and successful models of how to be a PCV. They may wonder if they will ever be as comfortable or effective as their predecessors. They will hang on your words of advice as founts of wisdom, giving them far more credence than things they hear from other sources.

All of you, in time, will have the opportunity to interact with the "new guys". We know you will make them feel welcome and a part of the Peace Corps family. They will work with you and the staff to build the PC/SL legacy.

If you remember the impact on you of the Liberia PCVs who assisted at PST, you will remember the power of their words and their example. In your interactions with the "newbies", we'd like to enlist your help in communicating the following messages that we believe PCTs need to hear and follow to get through those first few hard months:

- There will be difficult times when you will feel frustrated, overwhelmed or not able to make a difference . . . but they will pass.
- Always have a Plan B (or C,D,E . . .) as what you think will happen often won't.
- Stay at your site. Dividends only come when you invest time with people, learning language and culture.
- Take your safety and security seriously.
- Don't hold back. Jump in. Get involved in your community.
- You will think at times that you are the only one struggling but, in fact, at some point, everyone struggles with something;
- While many Sierra Leoneans are honest and trustworthy, you will not know who you can trust until you have been at your site for several months.

see the challenges in Sierra Leone in a completely different light than you did before or than expected. I think most times when we (Westerners) think about developing countries, we think about places where people have motivation but lack opportunity. I think the problem here is actually more of the opposite. That's not to say that I think there are as many opportunities here as in the United States, but the problem is much more so with the motivation. And honestly I think a lot of that comes down to the message sent to this country by the rest of the world. It is consistently a message of feeling sorry for the people here, talking about how poor everyone in the country is, and basically doing the opposite of empowering people by creating a system where their best option is to try to get aid instead of making their own way. I actually read in a West African guide book that according to the UN Human Development Index Sierra Leone is (or at least was at the time) the worst place on earth in which to live. I will agree that according to the standards that we are used to in the Western world there are many things (medical care, etc.) where Sierra Leone is not to the level of developed countries. But I don't think it's ever useful to phrase it in that way (and yes Sierra Leoneans have heard about that), and I don't necessarily even think it's true. Yes life has challenges here but there are challenges everywhere and the views presented also have resulted in a universal acceptance here that everything is perfect for everyone in America, poverty does not exist in America, and basically America is heaven and Sierra Leone is as far to the other side as you will find. The unfortunate outcome of all of that is an extreme "can't do" attitude and just general low expectations in general for what anyone can hope to accomplish or can expect from other people. There are low expectations for teachers to perform well, for students to do well in class, for people to go through life with the integrity that is necessary to start combating corruption here...and the prevailing attitude is just acceptance of this situation.

I had a discussion with my class about the power of the low expectations in their lives (inspired by an R. Kelly song that says "Just because I am a ghetto child, I won't live down to your expectations"), and told them that from now on my own expectations for them in my class are being raised. I expect them to come on time (and don't let them in late anymore), I expect them to be respectful (and don't hesitate to take cell phones and kick people out of class if needed), I will challenge them academically more than anyone else here will and expect them to raise up to that challenge (with the understanding that I am available and here to help them get there), and I expect that some people actually will pass their end of Secondary School exams in my class (to give you an idea in Sierra Leone less than 4% of students passed the Chemistry exam last year...yes less than 4% in the entire country). A majority of the students have responded really well to the challenge and I think that is one of the reasons classes have been much improved this term. I guess my goal as a Peace Corps Volunteer now in Sierra Leone is to try to show people that they themselves are capable of making positive changes in their own lives. Being a person devoted to motivating others in a place with really low motivation is definitely not an easy task or one where you see an outcome immediately (or ever), but at least now I have a clear understanding of the task and in my mind the goal of being here.

Quotes From Famous Mothers

- PAUL REVERE'S MOTHER: "I don't care where you think you have to go, young man. Midnight is past your curfew!"
- HUMPTY DUMPTY'S MOTHER: "Humpty, if I've told you once, I've told you a hundred times not to sit on that wall. But would you listen to me? Noooo!"
- COLUMBUS' MOTHER: "I don't care what you've discovered, Christopher. You still could have written!"
- MICHELANGELO'S MOTHER: "Mike, can't you paint on walls like other children? Do you have any idea how hard it is to get that stuff off the ceiling?"
- ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S MOTHER: "Again with the stovepipe hat, Abe? Can't you just wear a baseball cap like the other kids?"
- MARY'S MOTHER: "I'm not upset that your lamb followed you to school, Mary, but I would like to know how he got a better grade than you."
- ALBERT EINSTEIN'S MOTHER: "But, Albert, it's your senior picture. Can't you do something about your hair? Styling gel, mousse, something...?"

- JONAH'S MOTHER: "That's a nice story, but now tell me where you've really been for the last three days."
- SUPERMAN'S MOTHER: "Clark, your father and I have discussed it, and we've decided you can have your own telephone line. Now will you quit spending so much time in all those phone booths?"

"Changing one thing for the better is worth more than proving a thousand things wrong."
-- Anonymous

A Career in the Foreign Service

When is the next Foreign Service Officer (FSO) Test scheduled?

The Foreign Service Officer (FSO) test is offered three times a year in "testing windows" in Washington and selected sites around the world. Registration for the test is open all year around. The Embassy in Freetown has only offered the test once in the last few years (Feb 2011) and has not provided us so far with any information on when the next testing date(s) will be. We will advise you as soon as we get additional information.

Information on the test is provided at, <http://careers.state.gov>.

Following information is provided for those who are interested in taking the test:

For general information on Foreign Service Officer (FSO) careers:

<http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/index.html>

To learn about eligibility requirements:

<http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/index.html>

To learn about the five Foreign Service Officer (FSO) career tracks:

<http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/choose.html>

For information on the Foreign Service Officer (FSO) selection process:

<http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/employment.html>

To access the link to downloading the Guide to the Foreign Service Officer (FSO) Selection Process: <http://www.careers.state.gov/officer/register.html>

Please go to the link that follows to register online for the Foreign Service Officer (FSO) Test and/or order the Study Guide: <http://www.act.org/fsot/Careers@state.gov>

Nigeria, Sierra Leone Worst Countries for Girls (Posted by AloftNews)

(<http://aloftnews.com/index.php/author/admin/>)

Nigeria and Sierra Leone are some of the worst-performing countries to be born a girl of the 54 members of the Commonwealth with a total population of nearly two billion, a research released yesterday has stated.

The study by Plan International and the Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS) study used eight indicators including life expectancy at birth, pay equality, expected number of years in school, political participation, sport and the number of teen pregnancies. It looked at how women and girls compare with their counterparts in other countries, as well as how they compare with boys and men within their own country. It also took economic prosperity into account to ensure wealthy countries didn't get an unfair advantage.

Other lowest-ranked countries are Tonga, the Solomon Islands, Pakistan, The Gambia and Bangladesh.

New Zealand emerged the first and was the "star performer" in terms of pay equality, with women earning 72 per cent of what men earn. Barbados came second in the overall rankings and Trinidad and Tobago came third. Australia and Canada were 6th equal, and Britain and Singapore 8th equal.

In his Commonwealth Day message, Commonwealth Secretary-General Kamalesh Sharma, said: “One-half of the world’s population may be made up of women and girls; yet women and girls bear two-thirds of the world’s problems.” He added that two-thirds of those out of school worldwide are girls; and two-thirds of those who are illiterate, or out of work, or living with HIV/AIDS, are women. Women are the barometers of society: they are an indication of its internal pressure levels, and their fortunes can be the clearest forecasts of good or bad things to come. Where women prosper, societies prosper; and where women suffer, so too do the societies in which they live. By investing in women and girls, we have seen that we can accelerate social, economic and political progress.

Bits and Pieces

- When you’re in Freetown, you can pick up mail from Claudetta. When you make a Hostel reservation, you can advise her to hold your mail or have it left for you in the Hostel if you so desire. If you give Claudetta money for stamps (correct change please!), she will have stamps sent to you in the next mailing.
- SPA grant funds are still available for this year. If you’re considering a project relating to water/sanitation, life skills education, girls empowerment, HIV/AIDS prevention or reproductive health begin a discussion with Joel and your PM soon.
- The Embassy is still accepting proposals for the Self-Help Grant funding. The next round of awards will not be until Sept/Oct but it’s worth getting in your proposal long before that.
- When on the compound during working hours, please dress professionally when outside the Hostel. We have many visitors coming and going and the staff are very proud of their workplace and go to great lengths to project a professional image.
- If you see a need for a repair at the Hostel (electrical, plumbing, computer, etc.) fill out a form (in the brochure holder in the main room) and deposit in the box. If an emergency, contact the Duty Officer.
- Passport Return: We will submit all passports to Immigration in early May when everyone is back from international travel. Hope to have them available to you by early June. You or another PCV (with your written authorization) can pick up your passport from Kadie. We will not be sending passports out on mail runs for safety reasons. If you are in only on a weekend, make special arrangements with Kadie to be able to get your passport.
- If you need a copy of the syllabus for any JSS/SSS English, math or science subject, contact Abubakar. He will forward a copy to you in the next mail run.
- We are currently reviewing Living Allowance, Settling In Allowance and Travel Allowance based upon your survey results and recent inflation factors. Decisions to be made in June.

Sierra Leone Facing Facts of Teenage Pregnancy

On April 5, the United Nations Children's Fund launched a report on teenage pregnancy in Sierra Leone. Teenage pregnancies account for 40 percent of maternal deaths in the country, and the report comes as public health authorities recalibrate their strategy to address a problem that endangers both mothers and children. Seventy percent of teenage girls in Sierra Leone are married, according to a 2008 survey by the World Health Organization, in a country where early marriage is supported by traditional practice. (<http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=55107>)

What can a PCV do? Efforts, both formal and informal, promoting solid reproductive health education are critically important. Many of the girls you have in class are likely to become pregnant in just a few years. Helping girls (and boys!) make good choices about sex through life skills education, reproductive health education and parenting education can save lives.

PC has SPA funding for these types of initiatives. Talk to us, Annaliese or your PM for ideas, whether with funding or not, of how you can make a difference in this critical area.

Stopped by the Cops?

It appears to be increasingly common that PCVs are being stopped and interrogated by police or Immigration officials. With the run-up to the elections, the dramatic increase in foreigners in country and return of the diaspora, this is likely to happen more often. Whenever you travel, you should have with you your PC ID card, your yellow Immigration Card and a copy of your passport which includes the latest visa page. (Contact Kadie if you need another copy of your passport document.)

In most cases, officials are just doing their job and sharing your documents is all that is required. On occasion, it can get more complicated. If that is the case:

- Keep your cool. Stay calm. Do not get angry. Do not make threats. Do not offer money.
- Identify yourself as a Peace Corps Volunteer.
- Show, but do not give, your documents to the official.
- Ask for the name, position and station assigned of the official.
- Call Alaka if the above steps do not resolve the situation.

News from the Health Unit

I am very happy to introduce our new Medical Secretary, Esther Norman. She started work on April 28th and is quickly learning the Peace Corps system. She will be an incredible help by taking over many of the administrative duties of the Health Unit, leaving me more time to take care of Volunteers and Trainees. When you are in Freetown, please stop by to meet her. Esther's Peace Corps phone number is 078-882-800. Please program it into your phones. You should call her for refills of medications and supplies or to schedule routine appointments. Of course, you will still call me for any medical issues. As a member of the Health Unit, she is bound by the same confidentiality requirements that I am. Below is a short bio to help you know her better.

"My name is Esther Kortu Norman, a Sierra Leonean and a Kissi from Kailahun District. I am married to Alpha Norman with 2 children Jeneba Norman and Josette P.S. Norman. I am a Christian. We lived at Murray Town Barracks, Murray Town. I used to work with Mercy Ships, now Aberdeen Women's Centre which I leave to join the Peace Corp family. I was born in 1980, January 8th. I like togetherness because it makes things go faster and become easy. I like being a team member. I respect other people's opinion which helps me in learning new things. I don't know what life holds for me because life is a growing process which I must be willing to learn. I am always willing to learn. My hobbies are reading, traveling and listening.

I came to know about the Peace Corps since I was a child. I was born in Dia, Kissi Kama Chiefdom, Kailahun District. When we were small, we used to have this white woman (Peace Corps Volunteer) living in one of our houses in Dia by the name of Sia Kama. She was called Sia Kama because I believe her name was difficult to call or maybe she wanted to study about the culture of the local people and decided to create a common ground to reach the people by taking a local name. Sia in my tribe is a first born and Kama is the name of the chiefdom. This woman was so nice that everybody liked her. I remember her playing with kids. This is my memory of Peace Corps."

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant."

-- Robert Louis Stevenson

With the new group of Trainees coming, things will be a little different than last year. Sadly, you will not be my only "kids" anymore. I will be going to PST off and on throughout the summer to give sessions and vaccinations, as well as to see sick Trainees. I will send out my PST schedule when it is finalized. There may be times when I am not able to answer my phone right away (such as when I am in the middle of a session). I will call you back as soon as I am

able. If you have an emergency when I am at PST and do not answer my phone, please call Ibrahim Jalloh at 078-488-029 and tell him you have an emergency and need to speak to me immediately.

It is time to start thinking about your Mid-Service medical exams. They can be done (almost) anytime between mid-June to the first week in September. There are three parts. A focused physical exam, a dental exam and cleaning and a TB test. They probably will not all be done at the same visit to Freetown.

Plan to do your appointments when you are going to be in Freetown over your summer break. We normally do not authorize special trips for the Mid-Service exams. You will need to call ahead to make appointments. I cannot guarantee being able to your exams if you do not schedule them ahead.

The focused physical exam is an appointment of usually no more than an hour. Focused means what is done depends on what has been happening with you. Some PCVs will only get vital signs done. All men will be offered a testicular exam. Women who are not high risk and have had a Pap smear within 6 months of entering service will not get a Pap during service. If they have not had a Pap smear within 6 months of entering service they will have one Pap done during service, either at Mid-Service or COS medical exam, but not both. Women with a history of moderate to severe cervical abnormalities will continue to get yearly Pap smears.

The TB test will be placed on your arm and will need to be read between 48 to 72 hours later. This means we need to do them during a time that you plan to be in Freetown for at least 2 days. Several options might be the Friends of Sierra Leone event or Mid-Service Conference. But other times you are in town will be fine too. Those PCVs who have tested positive and evaluated will not receive a TB test, but will be evaluated a different way.

It's hard to believe you have been in Salone for almost a year. Time flies. Stay healthy and happy.

Phones

Please check now to be sure you have the correct Duty Officer phone number inserted into your cell phone contacts. It is **078-200-892**. This was changed after the first week of PST but some PCVs may still have the original number in their phones.

We've been experiencing some "technical difficulties" with the Whereabouts Phone of late. It appears that some PCVs have texted their departure/return to site information but it has not been received on the Whereabouts Phone. If you do not get a confirmation text back from your Whereabouts notification, be sure to call Kadie to ensure that your message has been received.

"Peace requires the simple but powerful recognition that what we have in common as human beings is more important and crucial than what divides us."

- Sargent Shriver

NEWS FROM P&T

Greetings from Monrovia! No, I have not forgotten where I am this month; I am currently next door... smile.

It is now less than a month from the arrival of Salone - 2! Can you believe you will be the experts in just a few more weeks? I am sure you might laugh, nervously, about this new role, but I hope you stop to think about how very far you have come in the past 11 months.

Training PST Salone - 2

There have been many questions, rumors, suppositions, etc. about the upcoming PST and what that means to Salone - I. Let me help clear some of these up for you!

PCVR(esources)

Several PCV Resources will be assisting at both TOT (training of Trainers) and PST. The number of PCVRs present and the duration of their stay are contingent upon many factors including: the number of PCTs, the academic year, secondary projects, and which week it is at PST. The PCVR schedule is prepared to complement the COTE (Calendar of Training Events). We hope to have the first draft out to PCVRs by mid-May. For those PCVRs who have been asked to work at TOT, the schedule will be relayed earlier. PCVRs have been selected based on certain criteria, basically a combination of both PST and PCV performance. PCVRs will receive additional guidance regarding roles, responsibilities, and expectations of PCVRs.

Training Site and Hub

PST is what one might call a 'closed' event. As you might remember, as a PCT, you start off in a pretty small bubble, namely the stadium. Little by little, the PCT world grows. Yes, it is a controlled environment. We work very diligently to keep PCTs safe, secure, healthy, and supported. We try to do this throughout PST, but the first few weeks are most critical. In order to stay focused on training, give the same information to trainees, and to not have PCTs/PCVRs/Staff distracted from PST, visits to the training site and hub are restricted. There will be two designated times where PCVs will be invited to meet the Salone - 2. These will probably be on a weekend and once the PCTs have had a chance to settle-in, becoming comfortable with their host families and the 'rhythm' of PST. As soon as the COTE has been finalized, we will inform you of these dates. The only other time to be at the training hub is when you are scheduled to work as a PCVR, or, if you have been asked to attend as part of a Committee (VAC, Peer Support, etc.) For those PCVs whose banking/shopping city is Makeni, you are still expected to live your life as normal. You do not have to avoid Makeni and find a new bank...smile. You do not have to walk past PCTs and pretend you do not see them. (Although I bet you often walk down the street trying not to stare at other foreigners.) Of course you may interact with PCTs when your paths cross. You are not, however, to be at the training hub during these visits. Call it Draconian if you must, but I have seen the entire spectrum of PCV participation at PST. I have seen the one extent where PCVs attempt a coup d'etat of the PTO/TM - never ends pretty. I have seen the other end where posts do not ever welcome a PCV to PST - never ends pretty. We have adapted an approach to embrace the immense value a PCV brings to PST, while maintaining the bubble. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact us.

Programming

Site Development

Site development is still happening! We have one more of our new districts, Kono, to make our first round visits. We are starting on second (or third round visits) in other districts as needed.

VRFs

I have only received 3 VRFs to date. Please make sure you have your VRF submitted by the deadline of May 20. It is very important that we have time to import and review these prior to PCT arrival. As long as you follow the steps in the training, you should be able to save your VRFs. We learned that it was due to being on the network that I was unable to save on that particular laptop. As the PCV computers are not on the network, you should be able to do your work there as well as upcountry. As a reminder, if you have technical problems or questions please contact Everad. If you have programmatic questions contact someone on the programming team.

Well, that is all for now. Hope that Term 3 has started off well for you! Tenki - Annalies