

Northern California **PEACE CORPS** ASSOCIATION

Connecting Bay Area RPCVs since 1982



2021 Newsletter

Letter from the Board President

Dear Peace Corps Community,



As volunteers, many of us are used to a more “low-tech” lifestyle from our days in the Peace Corps. Since 2020, however, we have been presented with a new challenge requiring “high-tech” solutions—how do we as a Peace Corps community maintain our work, our service, and our connection with each other, when we can’t meet in person? Not surprisingly, the Northern California RPCV community rose to the challenge! Our virtual events this year included career support for evacuated volunteers, robust book club discussions, conversations with Rotary International, and a series of RPCV storytelling evenings co-sponsored by the Peace Corps Volunteer Club of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies. In March of 2021, we also had an entirely online Annual General Meeting. Later in the month, our new board convened via Zoom to discuss our strategic goals and priorities for this year. I encourage you to reach out to your local reps or anyone on the board with suggestions or questions about getting involved! You can reach us at connect@norcalpca.org.

Later in the summer, we were able to resume in-person events in accordance with county guidelines. We saw each other again at the Annual Picnic in Golden Gate Park, various happy hours, a few service events, and even a Giants game! Our advocacy team has been hard at work this summer, scheduling meetings with our various representatives and organizing an op-ed campaign—see Frank’s update on page 3 for more details. The grants committee also awarded seven grants in October, and we’ve upped our online presence with a new Instagram account—follow us [@norcalpca](https://www.instagram.com/norcalpca) for news, updates, and upcoming events!

In these last two years, we’ve learned how to communicate with each other in new ways. We definitely gained new Zoom skills we never thought we’d need! In some ways, this adaptation has helped us become more connected and reach more RPCVs than ever—we’ve gathered with members from all of our regions where no one had to battle any traffic, connected with NorCal RPCVs who are now based all over the United States, easily communicated with our legislators’ staff in DC, and we’ve slowly emerged to share some fellowship in person when it was safe to do so. I’m sure the rest of 2021 will see more adaptation, but if there’s any group that’s up to the challenge, I know it’s our Peace Corps Community!

Danice Guzmán
NorCal PCA Board President
Morocco '07-'09

LEADERSHIP 2020 – 2021 NorCalPCA Board of Directors

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Marilyn Hyde, Grants Committee Chair
Michael Hotard, Board Alumni

Treasurer's Report

For the last year, your Northern California Peace Corps Association has performed well financially. Our funds sit in two accounts. Our Beneficial bank account, used for operating expenses and grants, grew by \$13,527.68 since our last newsletter, for a current total of \$54,830.76. Our Fidelity investment account, used for long term projects, has grown over \$15,000 since last year and now totals \$48,491.64.

In fiscal year 202-21 (our fiscal years start in October and end in September) we took in over \$2,550 in memberships and \$3424 in general contributions towards our general fund. We use these funds for general operating expenses (for example, supporting volunteer work and regional events), and spent just over \$1,389 during the last fiscal year. Because we were unable to host events for most of the year due to the pandemic, we had a surplus of \$4,000 that will be used to drive additional events to further our mission in the coming year.

For our grants program over the last fiscal year, the purchase of calendars and funding of approved grants was just over \$10,762. We took in just under \$19,475 (which included a generous \$10,000 donation!), but with a \$7,200 surplus remaining from the previous year, we have a current total of \$27,584 (including calendar sales) to push additional efforts forward. Take a look at page 5 for details on our newest grantees.

We look forward to serving you, our growing community, and value your continued financial support. We hope to see you at a NorCalPCA event soon!

THE MISSION OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION



To support Returned Peace Corps
Volunteers residing in Northern
California,

To promote a better understanding
of the people of countries in which
our RPCVs have served, the Third
Goal of the Peace Corps,

To continue making the world a
better place through community
service and offering small grants for
community development projects,
and

To advocate for the needs and goals
of the Peace Corps and Peace Corps
community.

2020-2021 Donors

These members and friends have made a donation to NorCalPCA in the last year. Their generosity supports all Northern California RPCVs and the communities we continue to engage with following our service through the wide variety of programs organized and sponsored by NorCalPCA.

Please join us in thanking them.

Lifetime Platinum Membership

Elizabeth Karplus
Terry Vogt

In Memory of Alan Beals

Doris Dodge
Marilyn Hyde

In Memory of Mr. Chiam

Nicholas Ancel

In Memory of Joe Moriarty

Marie Bacher
John Bost
Celia Bosworth
Ellen Davis-Zapata
Barbara, Dan, & Allie Fritschen
Marilyn Hyde
Pete Johnson
Kendall Mau
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In Memory of Cristina Nardone

David Chang

In Memory of Lenore Waters

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D Robert Foster
Amy Greene
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Ruth Owades
Philip Palley
Marie Louise Phelps
Alexis Scott
Nancy Scott
Gwyn Waters

**In Memory of John Murphy,
John Mascolo, Tony Casper, Bill
Seimers, & Phil Bosserman**
James Boyd

NorCalPCA Volunt'Hero

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Update on NorCalPCA Advocacy

By Frank Price, NorCalPCA Vice President

Peace Corps Reauthorization Act

In March of 2021, RPCV (Ethiopia 1966-1968) and co-chair of the Congressional Peace Corps Caucus, Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA), reintroduced the Peace Corps Reauthorization Act. The reintroduction coincided with the 60th anniversary of the Peace Corps' founding by President John F. Kennedy, and the start of National Peace Corps Week. The bill calls for increased funding when Peace Corps Volunteers return to the field.

NorCalPCA Vice President Frank Price worked regularly with Jonathan Pearson of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) as well as our California PCA affiliates to set up meetings with Senator Alex Padilla's office and Senator Dianne Feinstein's office to discuss the bill and ways to increase the Peace Corps budget, extend health insurance, increase protection for whistleblowers, and more. NorCalPCA was an active participant in weekly advocacy meetings as well as National Days of Advocacy.

2020 Frank H. Williams Award

Dr. Sheldon Gen, who currently serves on the Petaluma School Board of Education, was honored by the Peace Corps as one of six 2020 Franklin H. Williams Award winners. The award, named after the civil rights leader who assisted with the founding of the Peace Corps, honors Peace Corps alumni from ethnically diverse backgrounds who exemplify an ongoing commitment to community service and the Peace Corps' third goal of promoting a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. NorCalPCA Vice President Frank Price was able to interview Dr. Gen under the auspices of the Commonwealth Club, where Dr. Gen talked about his family, his background, and how his Peace Corps experiences added to his ability to succeed in the engineering world.

Interview with Glenn Blumhorst, CEO and President of the National Peace Corps Association

As part of his West Coast tour, CEO and President of the National Peace Corps Association, Glenn Blumhorst, made a stop at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco for an interview with NorCalPCA Vice President Frank Price. Since the evacuation of 7,000+ Peace Corps volunteers during the pandemic, Glenn was forthright and honest in his appraisal of the current situation. He assured the virtual audience that the Peace Corps has not been dissolved, with most Peace Corps nations around the world keeping offices open as staff wait to return to the field. In the meantime, evacuated volunteers have been given extra opportunities such as improved health benefits and networking and career assistance thanks to the efforts of NPCA, its affiliates, and Congress. NPCA has also hosted several town hall meetings to solicit feedback from RPCVs about important and timely topics such as social responsibility, systemic racism, equity, recruiting, and creating a Peace Corps that better reflects and includes the diversity of the American nation. After the interview, a small group gathered at Comal in Berkeley for drinks and hors d'oeuvres.

Op-Eds for the 60th Anniversary of the Peace Corps

In honor of the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps, NorCalPCA members submitted op-eds to newspapers throughout Northern California about their experiences as volunteers, the importance of Peace Corps as an organization, and why it needs increased funding.



Left: Meeting with Senator Alex Padilla's office over Zoom

Right: Reception at Comal in Berkeley with special guest, NPCA President Glenn Blumhorst

In Memoriam

NorCalPCA recently learned of the passing of the following members who were instrumental in the creation and/or growth of our group. If you would like to make a donation in their honor, please visit www.norcalpca.org.

To notify us of other members of the NorCalPCA community who have passed, please email board@norcalpca.org.



Alan Beals

Alan Beals died in Sonoma on June 29, 2021. Long-time NorCalPCA members will remember Alan and his late wife, Darleen, who were active in the group's early years. Alan was NorCal President in 1989 and a Board member, and Darleen was the longtime editor of the NorCal newsletter *Connecting*. The Beals were generous hosts for many RPCV events in the North Bay, faithful participants in yearly Point Reyes Trail Clearings, and dedicated salespeople of NorCal merchandise at Bay Area events.

A native of Vermont, Alan was drafted into the U.S. Army and served in Alaska. He then joined the Peace Corps where he was posted to Sierra Leone, 1962-1964, and met Darleen. The Beals moved to San Francisco after they married, and eventually to Sonoma where they raised their family. Alan was a social worker with the developmentally disabled and veterans until his retirement. They enjoyed travel on cruises and wine tasting. They are survived by two daughters and a granddaughter.

Marguerite E. "Meg" Carter

Marguerite E. "Meg" Carter passed away April 16, 2021 at age 67. She was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Senegal from 1975 to 1977 in Education teaching English. She also served twice in the Crisis Corps: in Uganda in 2007 and in Guinea in 2011.

Meg started the NorCalPCA's Book Club in 2009. She read every book, determined restaurants that matched the cuisine of the country we read about, and came up with very thought provoking questions to discuss. Meg gave numerous talks about her Peace Corps experiences through the Speakers Bureau, the recruiting office, and on her own any time she was asked.



Meg saw herself as a storyteller, but in many ways she was a visionary. On her blog (damascusgateblog.wordpress.com), Meg states "We all came out of Africa, whether centuries or millennia ago. So we can all celebrate Africa Day." About one in five envelopes on her holiday card list carried international postage. Meg believed that "Peace is always possible. Imagine it today."



Susan Neyer

Susan Neyer (RPCV Philippines '62-'65) passed away on September 15, 2021 after a 3-year battle with cancer. Susan was active with both NorCalPCA and the NPCA. She was a NorCalPCA board member from 1986-89, President for 2 years, layout editor of the newsletter after leaving the board, helped coordinate international calendar sales, and served on the Grants Committee. Susan was also an elected NPCA Board member from 1986-92, served as Chair for 2 years, and edited the Global Education and Group Leaders Digest newsletters for many years after her service on the board.

Susan was born in Cincinnati and raised on Great Lakes Naval Base near Chicago. She graduated from Marquette University in 1961 and returned after Peace Corps for her M.A. in Urban Education. She was a teacher trainer in the northern Philippines and Peace Corps trainer in Hawaii for 2 years. She worked with migrants in Milwaukee and learned Spanish in Mexico during the summer. Susan moved to Santa Ana in 1971, then to Northern California where she taught bilingual kindergarten and first grade in the Oakland Fruitvale District for 20 years.

Susan met her husband Pete Johnson (RPCV India '67-'69) through NorCalPCA and together they took a 6-month trip in 1990 through the Pacific, southeast Asia, and Africa, visiting their Peace Corps sites as well as many Peace Corps countries. Susan and Pete were married in Yosemite in 1993 and re-visited every May. In retirement, Susan was a busy art gallery docent, Master Gardener, NorCalPCA volunteer, and international and domestic traveler.

Meet Our 2020-2021 Grant Recipients

We remember and appreciate with gratitude the many years of work by Susan Neyer (1939-2021) on the NorCalPCA Grants Committee.

NorCalPCA approved funding for seven projects totaling \$15,600 in fiscal year 2020-2021. Several of the projects are in response to local challenges brought on by the global Covid-19 pandemic, as well as climate change, natural disasters, and displacement/refugee resettlement. Funds for this year's Grants Program were contributed by more than 36 donors, including memorial contributions from friends and family of NorCalPCA member Lenore Waters, and from the proceeds of International Calendar sales. Please visit www.NorCalPCA.org/grants for more information on our grantees, how to nominate an organization for a grant, and how to get involved with the grants committee.

\$3,000 to Health Access Connect (HAC), an NGO based in Kampala, Uganda, and Dallas, Texas. Started in 2014, HAC provides accessible, affordable health care resources to Ugandans in rural areas. Their aim is to increase health equity when remote communities are limited by distance and transportation. NorCal funds will be used to purchase roofing sheets and supplies for outreach clinic kits (PPE, rain gear, and privacy curtains) to allow set-up of temporary health clinics.

\$2,500 to Proyecto Itzaes (PI), a non-profit organization that provides free, community-based education programs in Yucatán, Mexico. PI serves indigenous communities where traditional subsistence lifestyles, dependent on farming and seasonal fishing, can no longer support families. NorCal funds will be used for one-on-one tutoring and development support as well as school supplies for classes and training for targeted adults (PI advisors and other village participants) to become equipped to treat and assist students and families facing the effects of Covid stress disorders and grief.

\$2,500 to Mali Kalanso, an NGO started by RPCVs in 2010 that supports education efforts in Kalanso village, Koulikoro Region, Mali. Mali Kalanso was created to provide education in a remote rural community where most children did not previously have access to education. NorCal funds will be used to purchase one solar-powered digital library for middle school students under staff supervision.

\$2,000 to Associação Moyo Utsitsi (ASMU), near Vanduzi, Manica Province, Mozambique. Founded in 2011, ASMU's mission is to serve, advocate for, and promote the wellbeing of orphans and vulnerable children, as well as families in the community who are impacted by poverty and HIV/AIDS. NorCal funds will be used to build a tower for two water tanks with a capacity of 1500 liters (396 gallons) of well water.

\$2,000 to Hands Across the Sea (HAS), an international non-profit organization based in Boston and operating in the Eastern Caribbean. Since 2007, HAS has been embedded in island schools with the goal of sending books; creating or rejuvenating lending libraries; and sustaining literacy gains. NorCal Funds will be used to support shipment, delivery, and distribution costs for children's books, especially to St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

\$1,950 to Fundamental Initiative for Sustainable Transformation (FIST) Uganda, an NGO based in Jinja, Uganda that has served young mothers and vulnerable women in Masese-Walukuba slums since 2015. NorCal funds will be used to purchase 15 sewing machines and materials that will be retained by FIST Uganda for ongoing classes.

\$1,650 to Together for the Family (TFF) in Zahle, Beqaa Valley, Lebanon, a Christian organization which serves all those who desire help, regardless of religion. Many Syrian refugees are their clientele. They provide training, support, and resources that help parents, youth, and children, including vocational training, safe learning environments, and financial and environmental education. NorCal funds will be used to support the creation of a new greenhouse: purchasing materials for land preparation, construction of the greenhouse, and seeds and plants.

Our Evacuation Story

By Madeline & Clint Kellner



By March 2020, we had been living in Iquitos in the Peruvian Amazon for two months and were just beginning to grasp how we, as Peace Corps Response Volunteers, could help Minga Peru, the non-profit organization to which we were assigned. Clint was working on advancing educational tourism while I was focused on women's leadership development, both centered around the indigenous communities of the Amazon. Our commitment was for one year. Then the global Covid-19 pandemic hit, and Peace Corps made the tough decision to evacuate over 7,300 Peace Corps Volunteers worldwide. We returned to the United States, understanding the need for the evacuation but sad and very disappointed that we couldn't continue working with Minga Peru.

A few weeks later, in early April, we participated in a Zoom call with Minga Peru staff and two other RPCVs to discuss ways we might be able to support the non-profit virtually during the pandemic. With the loss of tourism income, decreased mobility due to quarantines, and lack of adequate health services, local residents faced extreme challenges to their livelihood and health. Minga Peru was seeking funding for its Covid Emergency Response Plan, which included family

community gardens to address food security, radio programs on how to stay safe and healthy, and personal protective supplies, such as masks, soap, and sanitizer.

We mobilized and reached out to potential new donors as well as current and past Minga Peru supporters to generate financial support for the plan. We also wrote two grant applications and were successful in obtaining both—one from NorCalPCA and the other from Novato Sunrise Rotary. We continued this work through the more formal Peace Corps Virtual Services Pilot program, which spanned from October 2020 to February 2021, and expanded it to include a continuation of the women's leadership development program that I had started on during my time in Iquitos.

We continue to work with Minga Peru in generating funding and support for their programs. It can be challenging at times, as the internet connection in the Amazon is spotty and heavily affected by weather, and has taken patience and creativity. Thankfully we had already established a relationship during the two months we were on the ground in Iquitos, which has been a huge advantage. In the meantime, we applied for reinstatement last year and are hoping that conditions will improve such that we can return to the Peruvian Amazon to continue to support Minga Peru in-person. We will be sure to continue to update NorCalPCA on our progress!



Regional Updates

North Bay

The pandemic didn't slow down our North Bay RPCVs! The Marin group, organized by RPCV Bob Casey, kept up their 3rd Tuesday happy hours via Zoom, reconvening again in person starting in June 2021 with meet-ups at Marin Brewery. The Sonoma group also organized a potluck in Santa Rosa in July 2021.

Marin Rotarian, Keith Axtell, and North Bay Board Rep, Madeline Kellner, launched an effort in January 2021 to strengthen domestic and international service work through the Peace Corps/Rotary Partnership. This resulted in an informational panel held in September 2021, co-sponsored by NorCalPCA and Rotary District 5150, with over 40 in attendance.

East Bay

The NorCalPCA East Bay Region exercised our Peace Corps adaptability skills in various ways during the pandemic. The long-running book club kept up stimulating conversation via online meetings and supported local businesses by recommending international restaurants for take-out orders. If you love books and can help with outreach for the book club in 2022, please contact kathleencampbellwork@gmail.com.

We also continued the East Bay tradition of volunteering at the Alameda County Community Food Bank in October. Stay tuned for more volunteer opportunities throughout the year!

When our unpretentious social hangout, The Albatross Pub, closed as a result of the pandemic, the situation began to look grim. But never fear - the East Bay region began meeting again in-person in July 2021 on the patio of Comal near the Berkeley BART station - please join us at our next monthly happy hour!

San Francisco

It's been a hot vax summer and the San Francisco region has been full of activity! We started off with an epic BBQ at Golden Gate Park in July. Copious amounts of hamburgers, hot dogs, and adult beverages were consumed in the pursuit of a good time, and we were thrilled to see old friends and make new ones after months of isolation.

To keep things rolling, we also restarted our monthly happy hours, including a recent visit to NightLife at the Cal Academy of Sciences in October. We'll be moving this monthly event to different venues and neighborhoods throughout the city, so please join us at one and/or feel free to suggest ideas!

The SF Giants were killing it this year, so we supported them with a night out at the ballpark. Finally, to work off all of the calories from happy hours and the ballpark, we've had a number of hikes across the Bay. To summarize the summer of 2021, memories were made and friendships were formed. Stay tuned for more events and volunteer opportunities!

Santa Cruz & Monterey

The Santa Cruz-Monterey Peace Corps group had to postpone many activities because of the pandemic, but we quickly adapted to virtual gatherings. On the plus side, this meant one could join the East Bay's book club or the Santa Cruz story-telling happy hours from anywhere!

We did five happy-hour story-telling Zooms, each focusing on different regions of Peace Corps service: the Philippines, two evenings in Africa, another in Latin America, and, finally, on islands in the Caribbean, Micronesia, and the Pacific Ocean. The series was a joint effort of NorCal's Santa Cruz/Monterey region and the Middlebury Institute of International Studies' RPCV Club located in Monterey. We look forward to continued engagement with the MIIS Club on social and service-related events.

By summer 2021, we started doing small group gatherings such as hikes in the Santa Cruz and Monterey mountains followed by lunch at restaurants with outdoor seating. A beach party BBQ was attended by 40 RPCVs and their guests. Please continue to stay in touch through our virtual meetings and in-person gatherings!

Peninsula/South Bay

The South Bay RPCV group has slowly been getting back in the swing of things by hosting monthly happy hours. We have been testing different days of the week and locations, such as Downtown San Jose, Redwood City, and Mountain View. We have also been working on strengthening our partnership with Rotary by offering local volunteer opportunities for RPCVs, the first of which was in October 2021 where we built a fence at a farm in Redwood City. As Covid restrictions continue to be relaxed, we hope to do other events such as dinners at local international restaurants that coincide with cuisine from our host countries. Participation and new ideas are highly encouraged!

Email us at connect@norcalpca.org to get in touch with your regional representatives and/or if you are interested in attending NorCalPCA events in your area!

Membership



Become a member or make a donation to support our mission.

Membership is open to ALL.
 NorCalPCA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit.
 Membership dues and other contributions are tax deductible to the extent of the law. See back cover for information on membership tiers, subject to change.



Register online at
www.NorCalPCA.org/join
 or fill out this form and mail to:

NorCalPCA
P.O. Box 2547
San Francisco CA 94126

Checks should be made payable to
 'NorCalPCA' at the same address.

Tell us about yourself and your service!

Name:	
Address:	
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Country of Service:	Years of Service:
Sector/Assignment:	

Please consider making a tax-deductible contribution to NorCalPCA!


General Fund: \$	Grants Program: \$
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\$100/year **NorCalPCA Volunt'Hero**
Publication of name in the NorCalPCA annual newsletter
Special invitation to a NorCalPCA Supporter Appreciation event
Recognition at the NorCalPCA Annual General Meeting

NorCalPCA is an affiliate of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). As you join or renew your membership with NorCalPCA, you will have the opportunity to join NPCA and over 180+ other affiliate groups it's quick, easy, and free!



If you'd rather not register online, please fill out the form on the back of this page.