

The FoE Quarterly

November 8th 2005

Contents:

• From The Board.....	1	• Ecuador’s New PTO Addresses FoE Members.....	4
• Sharing Memories On The Internet with “Flickr”.....	2	• Omnibus 73’s First Reunion.....	5
• Summer Fundraising Results.....	2	• “Eventually I Will Act” by RPCV Lupe Staigers.....	5
• FoE Goes Global.....	2	• “One More Time” by RPCV Carol Badran.....	6
• FoE Sponsored Projects.....	3	• 2005 Peace Corps Statistics.....	7
• Ecuador’s Troubled Presidency.....	3	• Upcoming Events.....	7
• To Serve Again: The Crisis Corps.....	3		

From The Board...

Friends of Ecuador is excited to publish its second quarterly newsletter with a new look and greater content coverage. We hope to keep the focus on quarterly updates to our members and friends while expanding the services and information offered at www.FriendsofEcuador.org.

We welcome John Varrieur back from two years of service in Cotacachi as a Sustainable Agriculture volunteer. We are glad to have his talent and organizational skills as the newsletter editor. We also welcome Sean McGuckin ('83-'85, Water and Sanitation Program) as our new Database Manager. If you're interested in lending a hand at Friends of Ecuador, let us know.

We'd like to give a hearty "welcome back!" to the RPCVs of Omnibus 90. We thank you for your service and hope you will find Friends of Ecuador a useful site to keep abreast of current events and community efforts in el Ecuador.

With the return State-side some RPCVs begin to wonder how they can preserve memories of profound and pedestrian moments. FoE is creating an electronic archive using the services of Flickr.com to store photos that you would like to preserve as a visual record of Peace Corps in Ecuador. These will be publicly available photos. If you're interested, please include with your submission an appropriate 20 word caption and 3 to 5 keywords to facilitate categorization and search capabilities.

We hope you enjoy FoE's new services and share this with your friends from the Peace Corps,

Saludos,

Josh and Ben

Sharing Memories On The Internet With “Flickr”

In its July newsletter, FoE announced the FoE web debut of the [photo album](#) that RPCVs presented to recently retired Natural Resources APCD, Francisco Garces, in recognition of his many years of service. The digitally scanned album has since been viewed by numerous visitors to the FoE website and provides a great example as to how FoE brings together volunteers of present day PC-Ecuador with those of yesteryear.

To further connect FoE members through photographic imagery of Peace Corps experiences, FoE has begun a paid subscription with Flickr, an internet organization that facilitates group photo sharing. FoE encourages its members to donate selected digital copies of their PCV photos for long-term digital preservation and sharing. With FoE member support, this photographic database will grow into a valuable visual archive of the unique faces and moments experienced by Ecuador’s PCVs



PC-Ecuador’s Maria Eugenia Cobo with former Natural Resources APCD, Francisco Garces, at his retirement party in July ‘05.

and RPCVs over the last 40 years. *Please contact foe@friendsofecuador.org for information on how you can begin uploading your photos.*

Summer Fundraising Results:

In August FoE sent the Gender and Development (GAD) PCV committee a \$2,945 check for young women’s high school scholarships. Thank you again to everyone who participated in the [2005 GAD raffle!](#)



Photo courtesy of RPCV John Zorovich (Ecuador, 98-01)

FoE Goes Global

FoE registered this past July with Giving Global, a San Francisco nonprofit that allows prospective donors and volunteers to locate NGOs around the world. Giving Global’s user-friendly database can be searched by region, country and development focus (e.g., agriculture, health, biodiversity), allowing users to quickly zone in on critical work of particular interest to donors and volunteers. Giving Global ensures that 100% of every online donation reaches the intended beneficiary.

After registering with Giving Global, FoE was provided with web space to display information such as its mission goals, history and details about projects currently sponsored by FoE. A special link to this FoE page was featured on the Giving Global homepage in October. The extra visibility that the link conferred may have been responsible for the recent spike in FoE membership. Let us know what you think and if you have other suggestions.

For more information on GivingGlobal’s free services, see: <http://www.givingglobal.org>

FoE's Featured Projects (2005):

- Day care nursery for the Association of Social Participation "Cristobal Colon"
- Education grants for at risk youth in Guayaquil
- HIV Clinic - counseling and testing services
- Quijos River Valley Conservation Program (Tena, Ecuador)

To support these projects, go [here!](#)

Ecuador's Troubled Presidency

Ecuador President Alfredo Palacio recently requested permission from election authorities to reform the Constitution and government via general assembly. Threatened by that move, Palacio's political opponents in Congress called the act unconstitutional and demanded his resignation.

If Palacio's powerful opponents get their way, he will be the fourth president deposed in ten years. But it is questionable as to whether Palacio falls into the same ill-fated category as the other presidents removed from office.

President Abdala Bucaram (96-97), accused of corruption and known as "El Loco," was ousted by a Congress ruling him "mentally incompetent." President Jamil Mahuad (98-00), unpopular for his inept austerity measures addressing a flailing economy, was removed in a bloodless military-led coup. Widely despised President Lucio Gutiérrez (02-05) was thrown out of office by Congress in April for unconstitutionally dissolving the Supreme Court after having packed it with his own political supporters.

To Serve Again: The Crisis Corps

The [Peace Corps' Crisis Corps](#) is an excellent opportunity for those RPCVs who want to return to service but who are unable to complete another two-year commitment. Crisis Corps Volunteers serve for a maximum of 6 months, addressing a specific crisis through short-term projects.

Founded in 1996, the Crisis Corps was designed as Peace Corps' emergency response mechanism, to quickly send RPCVs to areas of heightened need. Successful candidates must already have completed at least one year of Peace Corps service, while also possess the language and skill sets specifically required for the post. A volunteer's service in the Crisis Corps could address one of a variety of today's relief efforts, including AIDs-related programs in Africa or tsunami relief projects in Asia.

Until recently, Crisis Corps Volunteers served solely in overseas posts. But after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf Coast region in August, Peace Corps Director Gaddi H. Vasquez sent Crisis Corps Volunteers to various cities in the region to assist the relief efforts. Since September 8th, 190 RPCVs have been deployed on 30 day assignments, while at least 200 more will follow in subsequent months.

Read below about RPCV Carol Badran's return to Ecuador as a Crisis Corps Volunteer.

Palacio was Vice President under Gutierrez and legitimately sworn in by Congress after Gutierrez was deposed. Until now, Palacio's short term has been marked by increased social spending and leftist-styled reform to aid the nation's poor. Such work has made Palacio popular among the general populace, a situation different from that of the deposed presidents. Still, none of the nation's political parties have openly pledged their loyalty to Palacio.

The following weeks will reveal whether President Palacio survives his latest and most contentious move to further push Ecuador along a path of radical reform.

Find the most recent news about Ecuador [here!](#)

Ecuador's New PTO Addresses FoE Members

Hello! I am Kirk Leach, the new PTO/Deputy Director at Peace Corps Ecuador. I arrived in Quito on July 18th, 2005, after a month of Overseas Training in Washington, DC, and I am really excited about being here. Peace Corps Ecuador is already a strong program, but I am hoping that my skills and experience will help us to be the best we can be. The support of Friends of Ecuador is extremely helpful to us, and I look forward to working with you to take it to the next level. It is a testament to the people of Ecuador that so many Ecuador RPCVs take a continuing interest in the country.

In case you're interested, here is a little about me:

I began my career as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Honduras (1989-1991) in Water/Sanitation. Following Peace Corps, I spent about eight years in the New York City metropolitan area. My work experience there included time as District Representative for Congresswoman Nita M. Lowey, Program Manager for the Foreign Policy

Association and Program Development Associate for International Planned Parenthood/Western Hemisphere Region (IPPF/WHR).

In 2000, I returned to Latin America as Advisor to a USAID-funded Child Survival project in eastern Bolivia, near Santa Cruz de la Sierra, for the International Eye Foundation. From October 2001 to November 2003, I was the Deputy Field Office Director for Save the Children in La Paz, Bolivia. For the 19 months previous to coming to Ecuador, I was the Country Director for Project Concern International in Tegucigalpa, Honduras.

I am originally from the Albany, NY, area. My wife, Danielle, and I have two sons, Mateo (5) and Mason (3). Both boys have lived their entire lives in Latin America and are fully bilingual. Danielle is a Consultant and has worked for USAID and CARE, among others, in Bolivia and Honduras. Although I spend most of my free time with my family, I also find time for running and working out. We have already organized a group of current PCVs to run races in Quito. There are several very fast former prep and university star runners! I am looking forward to the many outdoor adventure opportunities in Ecuador. My other interests include listening to live music, historical nonfiction, adventure and travel literature, web site development, and web-based micro-enterprise for small crafts producers in Latin America.



Oigan!!!

On October 8th, Ecuador Tied Uruguay To Qualify For The 2006 World Cup In Germany!

Donde estarán la FIESTAS?!!

Photo: RPCV John Varrieur (Ecuador, 03-05)

Omnibus 73 Holds Their First Reunion

Omnibus 73 (Ecuador, 95-97) held their first reunion in July, 2005. The gathering, held at the FloyFest, a world music festival in southern Virginia, went very well. Although only five RPCVs (Vicki Mann, Hugo Hoffman, Paul Koester, Tim Sulser and Terry Ruthrauff) came, it was a number sufficient for lots of fun and catching up. Vicki and Hugo are currently working as school teachers in, respectively, New York and Tennessee. Paul is employed in Nebraska as a hydrogeologist, Tim works as a research analyst in Washington, DC, and Terry is a psychologist in Grenada, West Indies. Further larger gatherings are being planned, as those in attendance



Photo and article courtesy of RPCV Terry Ruthrauff (Omnibus 73)

attempt to locate fellow RPCVs with whom they served. Please email information useful to that search (e.g., addresses for Omnibus 73 and other interested RPCVs) to: terryruthrauff@hotmail.com

Eventually I Will Act

I have been in the United States for three months now. It feels like I have been back forever. Ecuador is worlds away. I have settled into my routine. It's not that I don't think about Ecuador and the people I left behind, it's just hard. It's hard to pick up the phone and call my friends there. There is no email where they live and they don't know how to use it anyway. And when I think about them, it makes me sad. Still, I haven't called. Why is it so hard? It's just a phone call, right? So why can't I take the time? What exactly is stopping me?

Sometimes I try to justify it by thinking that I am done with that part of my life now. It was an amazing and wonderful experience, but it's just not realistic to keep in touch. I did all I could. I dedicated two years there. Hmm, is that project I started still going? I am afraid to know the answer. I don't want to believe that after all my

- RPCV Lupe Staigers (Agriculture, 03-05)

efforts it turned out to NOT be sustainable. But, I could call, just for a minute to find out. Is that the reason I have lost touch? Am I afraid of failure?

Or maybe it's because at times I feel that I dreamt up Ecuador. It *is* another world. Time stops there. There are no seasons. The sun always shines. I can close my eyes and I can see the rolling green mountains in my mind. I can feel the intense sun on my face. Ah, Ecuador. Does anyone else speak Spanish when they dream?

As far away and surreal as it seems, Ecuador often creeps into my thoughts. I notice the differences between here and there. The good and the bad of both these worlds. I still get excited when I talk about Ecuador and every time I meet a Latino, I secretly hope that s/he is Ecuadorian, so that I can reminisce and use all my Ecuadorian Spanish words that I can't use with just anyone.

Eventually I Will Act ...continued...

So I still think and dream about Ecuador, but I don't call. And so I wonder: If it is so hard to call now, what will it be like years from now? Will I completely forget about the friends I made? Will they become just memories frozen in time? Or will I go back to visit one day? Will I at least call?

Before I left there, I told everyone, "I would call. I would keep in touch. Of course I will visit one day." And my friend Esmeralda said to me, "Every gringo that has lived here says that. And they do keep in touch, at first. But as time passes, they forget. And we just keep going on, forgotten."



RPCV Lupe Staigers in Ecuador (2004)

I sit here. I think. Eventually, I will act. I will pick up that phone and call Ecuador. I don't know how long that might take me. And after I call once, will I call again? Or will this process, these mixed emotions, continue? I can't be sure. But I know that I should call.

One More Time...

- RPCV Carol Badran (Ecuador, 79-81)

Twenty-five years after I first went to Ecuador as a PCV I found myself back again last year as a Crisis Corps Volunteer. My task was to spend six months assisting in the development of a national AIDS prevention education program targeting youth and families. I looked forward to my return, since I knew this time I would arrive better prepared professionally, but I also wondered about the challenges that awaited me.

It amazed me how suddenly I was immersed in a place that seemed so familiar – the sounds, smells, language, dress, etcetera – yet in many ways was very different. I was shocked when one of the first reminders I saw of globalization was a Cinnabon and Baskin Robbins in Quito. While I expected the usual assortment of fast food chains, Cinnabon didn't quite fit that category in my mind. There were so many more cars in Quito and the drivers seemed

even crazier than I'd remembered. But there were many wonderful things about being back, as well. I was pleasantly surprised to find some familiar faces still working for the Peace Corps. As an older experienced volunteer I was immediately met with great respect from the agency where I worked. Having the language capability (a little rusty, but adequate) also helped in making a quick entrance.

I encountered the familiar challenges of a much slower pace, slower production and less motivation by some with whom I worked. However, because of my professional development I was able to regroup and rebound more quickly and creatively than before, (an advantage of aging when ones physical rebounding isn't quite as swift!).

There isn't space to share the depth of my experiences, but overall I found them tremendously rewarding and humbling. While I

accomplished a lot professionally, once again the biggest rewards for me were the deep friendships which were rapidly made. I highly recommend a return to service for anyone who is remotely considering it later in their professional career. Perhaps one of my most valuable lessons was the reminder of how little most of the world has, and how my life doesn't need to be so cluttered and complicated by material goods.

Whether one returns to their original country of service, or simply goes to another area where there is a great need, such as the areas affected by Hurricane Katrina, I believe the growth one can experience is well worth the sacrifices one makes in order to go.

Carol first wrote about her Crisis Corps experience in the June 2004 El Clima, which you can find on the FoE website: [here](#). She also welcomes emails from old friends and questions about the Crisis Corps:

c.badran@juno.com

Official 2005 Peace Corps Statistics

Notable Highs

This year there are 7,810 volunteers –the highest number in three decades–serving in 71 posts. Of that total, 16% are from minority groups, the highest level since Peace Corps began tracking ethnicity in 1987.

Historic Firsts

This year Peace Corps Volunteers began serving in Mexico, while Crisis Corps Volunteers were sent to Sri Lanka and Thailand to assist with rebuilding tsunami devastated areas. Crisis Corps Volunteers also began working domestically on Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

Other Interesting Tidbits

Of the 7,810 volunteers serving this year, 96% have at least a Bachelor's degree, while 13% have a Master's degree or higher. Women comprised 58% of all volunteers. Seniors aged 50 and over represent 6% of the total. The average age of all PCVs is 28.

Statistics taken from "Highest Number of Volunteers in 30 Years," with permission from the Peace Corps Press Office. Find the full article online [here](#).

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 11** – Latacunga Independence Day
- Nov. 20** – World Children's Day
- Nov. 24** – Thanksgiving Day
- Dec. 1** – World AIDS Day
- Dec. 6** – Founder's Day, Quito
- Dec. 21** – Winter Solstice (Primer día del Invierno)
- Dec. 24** – Christmas Eve (Nochebuena)
- Dec. 25** – Christmas Day (Día de la Navidad)
- Dec. 26** – Kwanzaa & Hanukkah begins
- Dec. 31** – New Years Eve (Año Viejo)

Please Contribute Your Own Articles and Photos!



Did you enjoy the articles in this newsletter written by and for RPCVs? Do you believe we all can benefit from sharing our experiences? If so, please support this endeavor by contributing to a future FoE newsletter. Please let us know if you're interested in submitting your own photos or writing and we'll contact you soon!

The **Friends of Ecuador** is a 501c3 nonprofit membership organization. Anyone who has an interest in supporting grassroots development in Ecuador, (e.g., Ecuadorians, North Americans, parents, Volunteers, travelers, and students) is eligible to join. We provide web space to reconnect RPCVs as well as continue the legacy of service through promotion of screened community projects in Ecuador.

Contact us at:

foe@friendsofecuador.org

For more information visit:

<http://www.friendsofecuador.org>