

Diversity Matters

MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Our Mission

The Minority Peace Corps Association is a non-profit organization founded by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of color, committed to broadening the awareness of Peace Corps in minority communities and supporting minorities applying for, serving in or returning from Peace Corps, in order to continue building diversity within Peace Corps.

Peace Corps Director Meets with MPCA



Peace Corps Director, Gaddi Vasquez (Front Center) and New York Regional Peace Corps Manager, Edwin Jorge (Front Far Right) meet with members of the Minority Peace Corps Association

This summer the Minority Peace Corps Association (MPCA) met with Gaddi Vasquez, the new Peace Corps Director, to discuss diversity within Peace Corps. The Director was more than willing to share with MPCA members his plans to increase the number of minorities joining Peace Corps. One of his methods is to involve the returned Peace Corps volunteer (RPVC) community in Peace Corps recruiting efforts.

The meeting was a great success! MPCA members enjoyed talking personally with the Peace Corps Director and sharing their ideas about increasing the awareness of Peace Corps in the minority communities.

In less than six months, the Minority Peace Corps Association's website [www.minoritypca.org] received more than 2,000 hits. Visit our website and click on the Calendar Page to join in our activities.

Volunteer Actions – Then & Now

Keeping Up With Aossey, a Muslim-American RPCV



Most Returned Peace Corps Volunteers can go on & on about their brief two-year spell overseas, working on various developmental, agricultural, and health related projects. How many of them can boast of continued active service spanning close to four decades? Bill Aossey is one such RPCV whose international career extends from his Peace Corps service in Senegal, West Africa 1963-65, to co-founding a medical supply-manufacturing venture in Egypt during the 1970's, to a 5-year appointed term on the Civil Rights Commission in Cedar Rapids, Iowa City in 2001.

Instead of returning to the States after his service and relegating his Peace Corps experience to quaint anecdotal material for future dinner parties, Mr. Aossey visited countries from Afghanistan to Zaire. During his time in these various nations, Aossey's interest in agricultural and social development was piqued and he returned to the states to pursue a master's degree in political science and international development.

In 1974, with financial support from relatives and friends, Aossey founded Midamar, a nationally recognized export company. Based in Cedar Rapids, Midamar has supplied food items to international restaurants and hotels, as well as provided technical support for various manufacturing business enterprises. Midamar's success is attributed to its tenacious leadership and staff involvement especially during the currency crisis of the 1980s, which impinged on the company's commerce. Added to Midamar's economic impediments were various political skirmishes, such as the invasion by Iraq of Kuwait, which numbers among the various countries the company, serviced. True to Midamar's devotion to its clientele, Midamar is committed to the rebuilding of Kuwait as well as the company's business in the area.

MPCA was honored to meet with Mr. Aossey this past July at the 40 + 1 Peace Corps Anniversary held in Washington D.C. Mr. Aossey was among the panelists of a workshop geared towards exploring RPCVs in Muslim communities. Mr. Aossey provided encouragement for the MPCA members with supportive words and helpful ideas for the group's development effort.

MPCA salutes Mr. Aossey ...

"A Seed Planted in Far Rockaway"

On August 30, 2002 MPCA members Carmenza Cespedes (Panama 98-00) and Brian Harris (Honduras 97-99) gave an educational seminar to the Alive Ministry's youth group located in Far Rockaway, Queens, NY. The seminar covered the basics of debt management and the Peace Corps. The group of 30 bright youths, who were predominantly African American, ranged in ages from 5-20 years old. However, the age gap didn't interfere with the ability of the entire audience of capturing the importance of managing debt in the future and the wonderful opportunity of serving in the Peace Corps. The youths were especially impressed when Brian demonstrated his Spanish language skills as he and Carmenza purposely shifted languages in the middles of his presentation. At the end, the evening was enjoyed by everyone with Carmenza and Brian being extremely impressed by the energy, dedication and talent of the youth present.

