

Diversity Matters

MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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Quarterly

Spring 2003

Our Mission

The Minority Peace Corps Association is a nonprofit organization founded by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of color,
* created to promote community service,
* 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 to build diversity within Peace Corps

*“Communication is the key and action is the vehicle,
together it will take us where we need to go.”*

MPCA President, Leslie Jean-Pierre

PHILLY MPCA CHAPTER WORKS WITH AMERICORPS PHILLY.



The Philadelphia Chapter of the MPCA celebrates a Black Heritage Month Diversity Dinner with Americorps.

AmeriCorps and the Minority Peace Corps Association (MPCA) Philadelphia have recently joined efforts to work in minority communities to increase the awareness of community service opportunities locally, nationally, and internationally. On February 12, 2003 the MPCA Philadelphia chapter and the AmeriCorps office in Philadelphia co-hosted a diversity dinner to bring together local Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV), former AmeriCorps volunteers, and Peace Corps and AmeriCorps applicants in the Philadelphia area.

In celebration of Black History Month, the dinner was held at Big George's Stop-N-Dine, where guests enjoyed good home cookin' while sharing stories with applicants and meeting RPCVs and former AmeriCorps volunteers now in the Philadelphia area. In addition, the AmeriCorps office in Philadelphia and the MPCA Philadelphia chapter announced a new community service partnership, starting with a joint service project to take place later in the spring. *Continued on page 2 "Upcoming Events."*

MPCA COMMUNITY TEACHERS AWARD HONORS MINORITIES IN EDUCATION

Minority Peace Corps Association (MPCA) will present its first Annual Community Teachers Award on May 15, 2003 at Paul Robeson High School in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY.

The MPCA, through its first Community Teachers Award, will proudly honor exemplary minority educators working to make a difference in minority communities in the United States and abroad.

Teachers are nominated by a school committee made up of representatives from the Parent Teachers Association (PTA) students association and school administration. Each nominee must have demonstrated leadership in their profession, by impacting their students' learning and actions, as well as, affecting their school and the larger community. This year, two teachers - one based in the United States and the other a Peace Corps Volunteer teacher based in one of the *over 65* countries where Peace Corps serves - will receive this award. Our goal is to build awareness about the need for more minority educators within Peace Corps and throughout the nation.

Upcoming Events

DIVERSITY DINNERS/ ASIAN /PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

New York City – “Harmony Palace”

Thursday, May 22, 2003 @ 6:30PM

98 Mott Street between Canal & Hester Streets

A full dinner menu for \$18.00, including tax and tip. For more information please check out the calendar section on our website at www.minoritypca.org RSVP by email at diversitydinner@minoritypca.org *

* Please indicate the number of guests attending when you RSVP.

MPCA DC: This new chapter is planning its next event. If you would like to participate or help out in any way, please do not hesitate to contact Marcia Parks via email at marcia@minoritypca.org or Maceo Thomas via email at maceo@minoritypca.org. For more information please check out the calendar section on our website at www.minoritypca.org

MPCA Philadelphia: cont.'d from page 1; The dinner was an overwhelming success; with over 35 people in attendance who all received door prizes. Members of the Philadelphia RPCV group participated as well. To learn more about upcoming community service events or MPCA Philadelphia please contact Juanita Celix at Juanita@minoritypca.org.

MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY TEACHERS AWARD

MPCA COMMUNITY TEACHERS AWARD FUNDRAISER

Friday, May 2, 2003 @ 7:00PM
Teacher's College, Columbia University
525 West 120th Street
New York NY

For more information please call (718) 230-5604

MPCA COMMUNITY TEACHERS AWARD CEREMONY

Thursday, May 15, 2003, @ 6:00PM
Paul Robeson High School,
150 Albany Avenue, Brooklyn, NY

You can support the MPCA Community Teacher Award by making a donation or sponsoring a Peace Corps volunteer Community Teacher Award recipient's local project.

MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES HAITI'S BICENTENNIAL

MPCA will be celebrating Haiti's 200 years of independence with an international group trip to Haiti in February 2004.

For more information, please contact Leslie at leslie@jpassociation.org.

ACTIVITIES TO LOOK FOR

MAKE THIS SUMMER YOUR OREGON SUMMER! NPCA'S ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

A schedule, registration form and hotel information for NPCA's Annual General Meeting, Presidents Forum, and weekend of events in Portland, Oregon August 1-3 is now available from the "What We Do" link at www.rpcv.org or click: <http://www.rpcv.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=680>. The reunion is open to all RPCVs, former and current Peace Corps Staff, family and friends! You do not have to be an NPCA member or associated with the Peace Corps to attend.

The Columbia River Peace Corps Association is working hard to make this a stimulating and fun-filled reunion and encourages you to turn your visit into a full vacation! Activities surrounding the meetings include workshops, an international bazaar, a career fair, and a visit to the Celebrations Exhibit presented by the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience. During the week, go to the coast or the mountains or even down to Ashland for the Shakespeare Festival where you can enjoy a selection of Shakespeare plays. The following weekend, travel to Silver Creek Falls State Park, where the Eugene group has reserved two group campsites for the annual NW Regional RPCV campout. For more information please visit <http://www.rpcv.org/pages/sitepage.cfm?id=680>.

NEW YORK AIDSWALK 2003

The **New York Regional Peace Corps Office** is registered for AIDS Walk New York. The team name is **Peace Corps**. Feel free to go to their website at <http://www.kintera.org/faf/home/> and register to walk, make a donation or simply volunteer. Please encourage all who are interested to register with the Peace Corps team. It would be great to have a strong MPCA presence at this event and it's a wonderful opportunity to show off those fabulous MPCA t-shirts.

The walkathon will take place May 18, 2003 in Central Park. You should get there no later than 9:00 am to register. The walk starts at 10:00 am. It should be a great turnout. New York has earned the reputation of a top producing city for this event. Last years AIDS Walk, NY had nearly 42,000 participants and collected over 4.7 million dollars.

Join us this year as we strive to soar to new heights. For more information visit AIDS Walk NY online at <http://www.kintera.org/faf/home/>. The Peace Corps team will be meeting at a designated time and place before the walk. To get more information please contact Brian Harris at bharris@peacecorps.gov or (212) 352-5449.

Minority Peace Corps Association

Who we are: The Minority Peace Corps Association is a nonprofit organization, founded by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of color, committed to promoting community service and 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 to build diversity within Peace Corps.

Through partnerships, special events and outreach activities the MPCA strives to *strengthen Americans' understanding about the world and its peoples.*

The MPCA is funded through fundraising activities, membership dues and through generous contributions by members and supporters, which helps pay for the community projects, website, MPCA newsletter, and other printed material.

Membership is open to all who share our mission. You do not have to be a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer to be a member of the MPCA

What we do: **Diversity Dinners**

- Hosted at ethnic restaurants by MPCA and local Peace Corps recruiting offices.

Mentor Program

- RPCVs of color connecting via email with minority Peace Corps applicants to share their Peace Corps experiences.

Community Service

- Volunteer events such as park clean-ups and "youth talks".
- Visiting minority communities and working with youth groups.

Speakers Bureau

- RPCVs speaking at schools and to community groups that want to know more about Peace Corps host countries and RPCVs experiences.

Fundraising

- Funds raised through t-shirt sales, special events, and donations are used for local and international projects and Peace Corps Partnership projects.

Annual Events and Biannual Events

- MPCA Community Teachers Award
- MPCA Connection Conference
- International Group Trips

Membership Benefits: As a member of the MPCA, you are entitled to the following benefits:

- Quarterly MPCA newsletter
- Discounts on MPCA merchandise
- Invitations to MPCA community/social events
- Opportunities to create volunteer initiatives in your community under the auspice of the MPCA
- Free membership on the listserv
- Participation in the MPCA Book Club
- Opportunity to nominate a candidate for the Franklin H. Williams Award and the MPCA Community Teachers Award
- Opportunity to start a MPCA chapter in your area

Membership is open to family, friends & supporters. Please complete and submit the registration form on our website on the membership page at www.minoritypcap.org

You can receive additional benefits if you also join the National Peace Corps Association.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION NEWS

NPCA New Membership Rates: Has your membership expired? Sign up today!! Remember, if you select MPCA as your affiliate group, then NPCA sends us \$15!! For more information, please visit the NPCA's website: <http://www.rpcv.org/index.cfm>

Your NPCA Membership Benefits Include

- Subscription to Worldview Magazine
- Free membership in one affiliate group
- Free participation in our programs: Global Teachnet, Emergency Response Network, Advocacy Network, Peace building
- Subscription to alumni newsletter 3/1/61
- Discount on NPCA merchandise and conferences
- Special service project travel opportunities
- Special short term travel insurance
- Discount on the Hospitality Network (a network of RPCV hosts throughout the country)
- Eligibility for scholarships
- Alamo rental car discount
- Choice Hotels International discount
- Access to online RPCV directory

\$50/individual

\$65/family

\$135/individual three-year

\$180/family three years

BECOME A MEMBER TODAY

MPCA Membership / Renewal Form:

Minority Peace Corps Association membership is not restricted to only Returned Peace Corps Volunteers. It is also open to prospective volunteers, family, friends and to anyone whose goals are similar to those of the Minority Peace Corps Association.

Anyone interested in becoming a member can contact **Carmenza Cespedes** carmenza@minoritypca.org or fill out the form below and send it to:

Membership Officer
 Minority Peace Corps Association
 Village Station
 Post Office Box 244
 New York, NY 10014

This form can also be used to update your information.

As a MPCA member you are entitled to the following benefits:

1. Quarterly MPCA newsletter
2. Discounts on MPCA merchandise
3. Invitations to MPCA community/social events
4. Opportunities to create volunteer initiatives in your community under auspices of the MPCA
5. Free membership on the listserv
6. Opportunity to nominate a candidate for the Franklin H. Williams Award or MPCA Community Teachers Award
7. Opportunity to start a MPCA chapter in your area.
8. Participation in the MPCA Book Club.

You can receive additional benefits by joining the National Peace Corps Association.

- \$15.00 MPCA membership only \$ _____
- \$50.00 NPCA and MPCA one-year membership (\$15.00 per each additional affiliated group) \$ _____
- I would like to make a donation to the MPCA at this time in the amount of \$ _____

Enter the total amount of the check you are sending \$ _____

First Name		Last Name	
Street		City	
State		Zip Code	
E-mail		Work Phone	
Home Phone		Country of Service	
Peace Corps Assignment		Years of Service	

Please indicate areas of interest by checking the boxes below:

Diversity Dinners <input type="checkbox"/>	Social <input type="checkbox"/>	Special Events <input type="checkbox"/>
Membership <input type="checkbox"/>	Community Service <input type="checkbox"/>	Education Program <input type="checkbox"/>
Speakers Bureau <input type="checkbox"/>	Newsletter <input type="checkbox"/>	Website <input type="checkbox"/>
Listserv <input type="checkbox"/>	MPCA Book Club <input type="checkbox"/>	Officer <input type="checkbox"/>

Enclose your check along with this membership form and send it to the Minority Peace Corps Association

Robin M. Cooper, RPCV
The Matchmaker
EPA Recruiter, San Francisco



Making viable and appropriate matches has become Robin Cooper's specialty, passion and sheer talent. Whether the match occurs in a sports stadium, global development arena, career track or environmental field, Robin has proven over and over that she has the contacts and know how to recruit, train and match individuals to

opportunities that bring out their best.

A great deal of her "matching" was conducted with Peace Corps as a Volunteer, RPCV and employee. In 1995, Robin arrived in the East Africa nation of Kenya to serve as a Peace Corps Small Business Advisor for the Commerce Ministry. Armed with her masters' degree in human resources training, her bachelors in business administration and her will to make a difference in the world; she developed training seminars for non-government and government officials, taught accounting, marketing and business planning for a vocational institution. Not to be exhausted, she coordinated research that produced grant proposals for community poultry-keeping projects that included revenue and expense projections, cost/benefit analysis and marketing and management plans. Within two years, all of this resulted in her bringing much needed training and access to resources to groups of small business owners seeking professional support—thus, matching the entrepreneur to the marketplace.

Prior to joining the Peace Corps, Robin was the owner of a small business that recruited officials as referees and umpires for sporting events. She amassed a roster of qualified officials as well as kept abreast of upcoming youth and adult sporting events. Once again, this matchmaker made a name for herself as one who would bring some fairness to the wide world of sports.

From 1998-2002 Robin continued with her beloved Peace Corps, this time as a Recruitment Employee. Using her own experience as a Volunteer, she spent five years traveling throughout the Seattle and San Francisco regions promoting Peace Corps to scores of citizens and helping them to find viable matches for their skills, education and interests. Since August 2002, Robin has been facilitating similar recruiting-employment collaborations with the Environmental Protection Agency in San Francisco.

Through such involvement with her own sports company, the Peace Corps and the EPA, Robin has coordinated fair and equitable recreation, promoted cleaner environments, advocated peaceful global co-existence and staffed qualified workforces. With this, Robin Cooper, a tireless champion in the arena of training and recruitment, has yet to meet her match.

By Harris Bostic II
Manager, Peace Corps San Francisco Regional Office

MPCA COMMUNITY TEACHERS AWARD
May 15, 2003

Background

MPCA, through its first **Community Teachers Award**, will proudly honor exemplary minorities in education in the U.S. and aboard on May 15th, 2003.

Purpose

The MPCA **Community Teachers Award** celebrates the efforts of teachers, particularly minority educators, in the face of the many challenges to education today.

Specifically, MPCA hopes this recognition will:

- contribute to Peace Corps' third goal and promote the MPCA mission
- promote *Education for All*, especially education in minority communities and abroad
- build awareness about, and support the need for, more minority educators within Peace Corps and throughout the nation
- encourage teachers to continue to inspire, motivate and facilitate discovery and learning for children and young people in minority communities and settings

Community Teachers Award

Recipients will receive:

- A \$500.00 check, to offset the cost of any additional school supplies for the stateside recipient and a pizza party for their class of their choice.
- A \$250.00 grant to the Peace Corps Volunteer recipient to help in a Peace Corps secondary project.
- A plaque signed by the President of MPCA and a Peace Corps or Department of Education representative.

Eligibility

This year two teachers will receive this award - one based in the U.S.; A teacher, nominated by a school committee made up of representatives from the PTA, students association and school administration, will have demonstrated leadership in their profession, by impacting their students learning and actions, as well as affecting their school and the larger community. The other recipient; a (African-American, Hispanic-American, Asian-American or Native American) Peace Corps educational volunteer, based in one of the *over 65* countries where Peace Corps is serving aboard, who is working on an educational project which is making a significant impact in their community of service.

Officers

President	Leslie Jean-Pierre
Financial Officer	Marisol Vigil
Membership Officer	Carmenza Cespedes
Grant Writer	Lyra Alicea
Newsletter Coordinator	Gigi Ndiaye
Education Officer	Marisol Perez
NY Representative	Brian Harris
D.C. Representative	Marcia Parkes
Philadelphia Representative	Juanita Celix

MPCA DC CHAPTER
Celebrates Black Heritage Month
Friday, February 28, 2003



RPCVs Maceo Thomas (left) and Brian Harris (right) in front of Cada Vez

On Friday, February 28, the DC chapter of the MPCA, in honor of Black History Month, held its first diversity dinner at the Cada Vez restaurant located in North West Washington DC. The event was attended by approximately 30 RPCVs who dined on a delicious buffet style dinner and danced through the night to the international rhythms of reggae, salsa, and calypso. There were also raffle giveaways and other prizes. Also in attendance were MPCA President, Leslie Jean-Pierre, and NY area Representative, Brian Harris, who both made a special trip from New York City for this event.

PEACE CORPS DAY
MPCA Philadelphia receives Proclamation
Friday, February 28, 2003



RPCVs Leslie Jean-Pierre (far left), Brian Harris (3rd right) and Juanita Celix (far right) accepts Peace Corps Day Proclamation from Philadelphia Mayor's Office Representative, Leslie Day (second left).

On February 28, 2003, thousands of RPCVs returned to classrooms, community centers, and places of work to share their overseas experiences and bring Peace Corps home. Peace Corps Day is an annual commemoration of the founding of the Peace Corps and provides an opportunity for RPCVs to fulfill the third goal of the Peace Corps mission: to educate Americans about the people with whom they lived and worked.

This year Peace Corps Day was officially recognized by Philadelphia Mayor John F. Street, who signed a proclamation in honor of the over 500 Philadelphians who served in the Peace Corps. Representatives from the Philadelphia MPCA chapter and the regional Peace Corps office were invited to City Hall to receive the signed proclamation.

**MPCA YAHOO GROUP LISTSERV A GREAT TOOL FOR
CONNECTING RPCVS AND APPLICANTS.**

To join, simply send an e-mail to minoritypca@yahoo.com requesting an invitation. Please include your name, preferred e-mail address and your Peace Corps connection.

MPCA

Minority Peace Cops Association
Village Station, P.O. Box 244, NY, NY 10014