

Diversity Matters

MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION, INC. NEWSLETTER

Vol. 3, Issue 2

Quarterly

Spring 2004

Our Mission

The Minority Peace Corps Association is a nonprofit organization founded by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of color, which aims to:

- * promote community service,
- * provide support and assistance to returned, and serving Peace Corps volunteers and applicants of color,
- * enhance the awareness and participation of Americans of color in international experience, international careers, and international affairs

"Communication is the key, however, action is the vehicle and together they will take us where we need to go."

MPCA President, Leslie Jean-Pierre



THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO ALL THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THE MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION AND CONTINUE TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN OUR FUTURE. THESE LEADERS, FAMILY AND FRIENDS OFTEN PLAY A SUPPORTING ROLE IN THE PEACE CORPS COMMUNITY AND THE COMMUNITIES THAT THE MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION SERVES.



A MOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE: WHAT MOTHERS HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR SONS OR DAUGHTERS JOINING THE PEACE CORPS.

The Minority Peace Corps Association, MPCA, takes a look at the Peace Corps experience from a different view. *Diversity Matters* sent out a request to MPCA membership asking them to query their mother's experience during their Peace Corps escapade. Below are a few of the responses that we got back.

ON BEHALF OF THE MPCA WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL THE MOTHERS WHO HAVE SUPPORTED THEIR CHILD'S DECISION TO JOIN THE PEACE CORPS. WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S WISH MAY NOT HAVE BEEN FULFILLED!

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

Mother – Mary C. Aranha
RPCV – Ivan J. Arancha, El Salvador, 2000 - 2002

"I only want to surround myself with good people in a warm, caring community. Fishing, building and helping people in places where things need to be built and people are much more humble, fills my heart with so much satisfaction." These were the words of my son Ivan J. Aranha, reminiscing about his Peace Corps tour and the community where he had served.



MPCA member Ivan J. Aranha and mom Mary C. Aranha

Ivan was a senior at Howard University in Washington, DC in 1999, when the Peace Corps recruiters visited his campus talking with students. Ivan came home and told the family that when he graduated in May: he planned to join the Peace Corps. We were very excited and proud of his decision. We were very supportive as he began preparing his application and when he went for his interview. As Ivan's mom, I was anxious during the periods of time Ivan had to wait for a decision on his selection and then later on his assignment. I was extremely excited and happy when he learned that his Peace Corps assignment was El Salvador. Ivan emailed us often and we sent him care packages.

(A Mother's Perspective.... continued on top right of page 4)

BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES

In the spring of 2003, MPCA President, Leslie Jean-Pierre went to Chicago to promote the organization. During a meeting with key leaders of Induna, a nonprofit African American RPCV Organization based in Chicago, it was decided that both organizations shared many of the same goals and objectives. Instead of reinventing the wheel a decision was made to work together. Induna & MPCA Chicago is currently working to increase its membership base, locate funding for the Center for Global Understanding and Awareness, and organize for the National Peace Corps Association Conference this summer. Specifically MPCA Chicago is planning to have a Diversity Dinner along with the Chicago Recruiting Office to encourage people of color to join Peace Corps. It is our hope through these efforts that the needs of the community will be met and a better understanding of the world will be achieved.

Elizabeth Thomas.



Elizabeth Thomas is currently a recruiter at the Chicago Regional Peace Corps Office. As of 2003, she has been a MPCA member and regional representative for the Chicago area. In this position she acts as MPCA's liaison to the Chicago Regional Peace Corps Office

and the Induna organization. Elizabeth also was present at last year's MPCA National Conference in Philadelphia, where she gave reports on the Chicago area.

“My purpose in life is to make a difference. After learning about the Minority Peace Corps Association and its mission from Leslie Jean-Pierre, I recognized that this organization could be the means for me to help make a difference in my own community. I may not have traveled to another continent in the capacity of a Peace Corps volunteer but I feel I can still help in my community by working with an organization like the Minority Peace Corps Association.”

Beulah Lewis aka (Debbie)



Beulah has taken on the position of this year's MPCA Community Teacher's Awards coordinator. She has been working diligently meeting with Newburg school officials, the Superintendent and principal of North Junior High, in Newburg, New York.

DC CHAPTER HOSTS SECOND MPCA ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE.

This year the Minority Peace Corps Association DC Chapter will host the MPCA National Conference. They are working together with the Board of Directors and the National Committee to make sure that this year's event is exciting for everyone. This year's theme is "Together We Can...", meaning together this organization can accomplish a great deal. However in order to do so, MPCA needs the participation of all of its members, friends and supporters.

The conference will be held in Washington, DC from Friday, July 16 to Sunday, July 18, 2004. There are plenty of activities planned and lots of great people to meet. Make sure you register early and don't forget to order a National Conference 2004 MPCA T-shirt to wear for Sunday's Park Picnic.

Registration fees are as follows:

	<u>Members</u>	<u>Non-Members</u>	<u>Other</u>
Before June 15, 2004	\$45.00	\$55.00*	\$40.00**
After June 15, 2004	\$55.00	\$65.00*	\$40.00**
Friday Reception only	\$20.00***	\$25.00***	\$20.00***

*This includes one year discounted membership to the Minority Peace Corps Association **You fall into this category if your COS date was in the last 12 months ***Can not make conference but can make Friday evening's reception at the hosting embassy

We are registered with the downtown Embassy Suites located on 1250 22nd Street Northwest. Each suite includes a separate living room, mini refrigerator, microwaves, and non-smoking are available. The cost per suite per night is \$139.95 for two double Bed Suites and \$129.95 for King bed Suites. Evening cocktails and cooked to order breakfast each morning is included in hotel fee. Please call hotel to make reservations at (202) 857-3388 and mention that you will be attending the MPCA National Conference.

As an option to save some money RPCVs in the DC area are opening their homes for conference participants during the conference weekend. If you are interested in staying in one of these homes please contact Maceo Thomas at vgano@hotmail.com.

MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2004

EMBASSY SUITES DOWNTOWN WASHINGTON, DC
Friday, July 16, to Sunday, July 18

Tentative schedule

Friday – Welcome reception at an Embassy
Saturday – Workshops and self help courses
Sunday – Park Activities and Park Picnic

For more information on this year's conference please contact Marcia Parkes at marcia@minoritypca.org or Visit our website at www.minoritypca.org.

MINORITY PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION COMMUNITY TEACHER'S AWARDS

The MPCA Community Teacher's Awards celebrates the efforts of teachers, particularly minority educators, in the face of the many challenges to education today.

For more information, please contact CTA 2004 coordinator Debbie Lewis at dlewis@minoritypca.org

Minority Peace Corps Association

Who we are: The Minority Peace Corps Association is a nonprofit organization founded by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of color, which aims to: promote community service, provide support and assistance to returned, and serving Peace Corps volunteers and applicants of color, enhance the awareness and participation of Americans of color in international experience, international careers, and international affairs.

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 National Connection Conference
- International Group Trips (Biannual event)

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 and National Conference
- Access to MPCA Career Development website member's only section
- Membership on the members only listserv
- Participation in the MPCA Book Club
- Opportunity to nominate a candidate for the MPCA Community Teacher's 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.minoritypca.org

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

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION

NPCA 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

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY

A MOTHER'S PERSPECTIVE: CONT'D

MPCA MEMBERSHIP / RENEWAL *SHORT* FORM:

You can receive additional benefits by joining the National Peace Corps Association. Please visit their website for details.

- \$15.00 MPCA membership only \$ _____
- \$50.00 NPCA and MPCA one-year membership (\$15.00 per each additional household member) \$ _____
- 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 \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Email: _____

Home or Work Phone: _____

Peace Corps Assignment: _____

Years of Service: _____

Please indicate areas of interest by checking the boxes below:

Diversity Dinners	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social Activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Special Events	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Membership	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership Position	<input type="checkbox"/>
Newsletter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Website Design/Administration	<input type="checkbox"/>
Listserv/Yahoo groups Moderator	<input type="checkbox"/>
MPCA Book Club	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>
Speakers Bureau	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education Program	<input type="checkbox"/>
Peace Match	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial Reporting	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Enclose your check along with this membership form and send it to the address below.

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

You can also join online at our website www.minoritypca.org

Do not forget to register for this year's National Conference which will be held in Washington, DC from July 16th – 18th. Please visit the 2004 MPCA National Conference page at <http://www.minoritypca.org/MPCAconference2004.html>

He shared his experience of working with the community; building a water system, installing latrines and teaching the young school students of El Salvador. Ivan's actual assignment was in Usa Latune, a community of almost a thousand people. Ivan stressed the importance of being part of the community of leaders and learners. As a result, he found himself both leading and learning from the people of El Salvador.

Ivan has always been a caring person who wanted to give of himself and help others. As a result of Ivan's experiences in Peace Corps, I see him as a person who understands and appreciates the values of human dignity, character and citizenship; and these are the qualities that a free and vibrant society depends on. He learned about the broader community in which he lives and has developed empathy for others and a sense of his own capacity to improve the lives of those around him. To me, the greatest benefit has been in Ivan's personal growth and his heightened understanding of the needs of others.

Our family often talks about how we wish we had had such an experience during our younger years. How much richer this world and society would be if more of us, especially our young people, were encouraged to serve the broader community. Hopefully this would lead to respecting diversity, ourselves and others.

A nation's values are measured more by its actions than its words. The Peace Corps experience certainly benefited Ivan. He has demonstrated that he's a hard worker, perseveres in adversity, takes responsibility for his actions and cares about human dignity.

I am glad Ivan had the experience. He is continuously helping us and everyone who interacts with him. I am proud to be his mother.

Mother – Nerza Brana Aquino

RPCV – Narissa Aquino, Rup. of Kiribati, 2001-2003

Diversity Matters: What was the first thing that came to mind when your daughter told you she was joining the Peace Corps?

Nerza: I was excited for Nerissa but also envious. Part of me wants to travel and see new things, see the world but I don't have the courage to do it alone like she does.

Diversity Matters: Please feel free to add any additional information that you would like to share with our readers.

Nerza: I realized that I could see myself joining the Peace Corps some day. I've been a nurse for over 30 years and I know that my skills would be very helpful. My first choice for assignment would be to serve in the Philippines, my second would be anywhere in the Pacific, and I guess my third choice would be in South America since I know some Spanish.

Nerissa Aquino served in Republic of Kiribati as a Health Education Peace Corps volunteer from 2001 – 2003. Her recruitment began in Seattle PCO and finalized in Atlanta PCO. She has been a MPCA member since summer of 2003.

(A Mother's Perspective.... Continued on page 5)

A MOTHER’S PERSPECTIVE: CONT’D

ADDITION TO THE SHORT STORY REQUEST, DIVERSITY MATTERS ASKED THE MOTHERS OF RPCV’S A FEW QUESTIONS THAT WE THOUGHT OUR READERS MIGHT HAVE ASKED.

Mother – Mary Sommerlad RPCV – Tiffany Sommerlad, Armenia, 2001-2003

Diversity Matters: What was the first thing that came to mind when your daughter told you she was joining the Peace Corps?

Mary: I thought it was a good idea and that it would be a great adventure. I was happy that she would get to travel and gain know-how.

Diversity Matters: How supportive was the family during your daughter’s service?

Mary & Tiffany: The family was very supportive. My mom wrote letters almost every week. My dad called me once a month and mailed me multiple boxes of supplies.

Diversity Matters: What difference did you see after your daughter’s completion of service with the Peace Corps?

Mary: She became more mature. It was funny to watch her translate common items into English.

Diversity Matters: Please feel free to add any additional information that you would like to share with our readers.

Mary: While my daughter, Tiffany was in the Peace Corps, 9/11 happened and I found out how the Peace Corps really works. After panicking I sent them an e-mail around 9/15 saying that I could not wait for three weeks to hear if my daughter was safe and I wanted to know right away. They sent me a very nice e-mail saying that they had contacted each volunteer and they were safe. Two weeks after that, one of Tiffany’s instructors came back to the US and called each contact person on the list to let them know that all was well. I thought this was touching and I was grateful that she was in a safe place and that the Peace Corps was watching out for her.

Tiffany Ann Sommerlad served in Armenia as a Business Education and Community Development Peace Corps volunteer from 2001 – 2003. She was recruited from the San Francisco Office and has been a MPCA member since 2003.

MPCA OFFICERS	
President, Newsletter, Website	Leslie Jean-Pierre
Financial Officer	Carmenza Cespedes
Secretary, Membership	Bruce Thomas
National Committee Liaison	Brian Harris
Overseas Liaison	Marisol Perez
New York chapter President	Nycole Thompson
Chicago Representative	Liz Thomas
DC chapter President	Marcia Parkes
Philadelphia Representative	Juanita Celix

PARTNERS AND FRIENDS: “INDUNA” PART I OF III.

MPCA TAKES A LOOK AT AN CHICAGO BASED AFRICAN AMERICAN RPCV GROUP.

Shared by RPCV Adansi Norkware, Induna

In 1978, I was working as a teacher with the City Colleges of Chicago, my duties involved teaching and preparing adult high school dropouts in the inner city to take the GED test, which if they successfully passed, would be equivalent to a high school diploma. I was young, energetic, loved teaching and the challenged of helping others people not as fortunate as myself achieve their goals and objectives in life.

A woman by the name of Jackie Williams hired me to work for the City Colleges. Jackie would always talk about her brother, George Cole, who was serving in Africa as an U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer. I got a chance to meet Jackie’s brother in 1976, when he completed his two-year commitment as a Peace Corps Volunteer and returned to the United States.

Jackie helped George to get hired as a teacher at the City Colleges. George and I worked together. We both taught and prepared students for the GED test in my old neighborhood in the Robert Taylor Projects. George and I both needed a place to stay. So we decided to rent and share an apartment together. We found a three-bedroom apartment on the fringes of Hyde Park and split the rent.

In between partying and working together there was one thing that struck me about George, he would always talk about his exploits, adventures and travels as a U. S. Peace Corps Volunteer in the country of Lesotho. Lesotho is a small country that is landlocked by South Africa. George would recount to me how he would travel in and out of the country of South Africa to enter and leave Lesotho. South Africa, in those days, was still under apartheid and ruled by the white Afrikaans minority government. He talked about the history and customs of the Zulu people and their great military leader Shaka. George was so impressed with Shaka, that he began writing a book about him during the time we lived together.

George also vividly described his travels, after he had fulfilled his two-year commitment with the Peace Corps. When George left Southern Africa, on his way back home to the United States, he visited other countries in Southern Africa, countries like Namibia, Angola, Zambia, Zaire and Mozambique. He then traveled up the east coast of Africa to Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, the Sudan and Egypt. He then crossed the Sahara dessert to Chad, Libya, Senegal, Algeria and Morocco. In Morocco, he crossed the Mediterranean Sea into Spain, France, Italy, West Germany, Austria, Denmark, and Sweden. George also visited such Eastern European countries as Turkey, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Greece. George ended up in England, where he took a flight home to the United States.

George and I shared our apartment together in Hyde Park for nearly one year. In the fall of 1976, George enrolled in grad school at the University of Missouri in Columbia Missouri. He was forever pursuing knowledge and his own self-improvement.

(Induna.... Continued on page 6)

BEHIND THE SCENES: OUR LEADERS AND REPRESENTATIVES CONT'D.



Bruce Thomas, an MIS manager at Lincoln Hospital has always been a behind the scenes supporter of the Minority Peace Corps Association. First as a benefactor of the first Community Teacher's Awards and

also a generous supporter of the color copies of the *Diversity Matters* newsletter. In 2002 Bruce was able to match a National Peace Corps Association grant in in-kind-gifts which enabled us to publish color MPCA informational brochures which help attract new membership.

Bruce later became more "hands on" when we needed someone with his IT level of expertise to create a membership database for MPCA. We soon realized that the more he gave the more we appreciated his work and support. It seemed more than obvious that we needed him on the board. With his prior experience on a few New York hospital boards he was asked to take the position of Secretary of the MPCA Board.

Bruce has over 20 years in MIS management and is currently employed by the New York Health and Hospital system. His current post is at Lincoln Hospital in Bronx, New York. It's a wonder how Bruce is able to manage with work, school and family and still often make time to volunteer to serve in a few extra capacities that truly help supports the mission of the Minority Peace Corps Association. Bruce also serves as the database manager and the Membership co-coordinator.

Juanita Celix is an RPCV who served in Nicaragua from 1994 to 1998. She heads the Philadelphia chapter of the MPCA, which got its official start in November 2002. The chapter has been on the move since, sponsoring several diversity dinners for area RPCVs and applicants, collaborating with AmeriCorps on community service events, participating in panel discussions and campus recruitment, and hosting the first MPCA National Conference.*



(Excerpts from Peace Corps Hotline March 1, 2004) Juanita (right) accepting Proclamation from Philadelphia Mayoral Officer, Leslie Day (left) on February 28, 2003.

On behalf of the MPCA we would like to congratulate Juanita on finishing Medical School at the University of Pennsylvania and receiving her first choice of residency!!!

We can truly say that MPCA owes thanks to members and supporters like Bruce Thomas and Juanita Celix.

"INDUNA" PART I OF III. CONT'D

George asked me to drive him with all of his belongings down to school. I considered it an honor to drive him the 700 or 800 hundred miles to school. We had become close friends and I thought that I was fortunate to have had the opportunity of knowing him. He didn't know it, but by sharing his Peace Corps experiences with me, I came to the realization that there was a world, a life outside of the United States, where people wouldn't take kindness for a weakness. A place where you can be spontaneous and accepted as a human being, regardless of your racial, ethnic cultural or religious background.

I knew that I needed the same type of experiences for myself, for my life to be whole. Although teaching was very fulfilling for me, I knew that I could never be completely happy, especially as an African American, until I saw some of the world and experience more of life other than what the United States or Midwest had to offer me. I had very little money and hardly any savings, but I had to find a way to make my dream real.

In 1977, I decided to sign up for the Peace Corps. I was accepted into the Peace Corps and assigned as a teacher in the West African country of Ghana. The first leg of my trip involved a one-week stay in Philadelphia for an overview of the country of Ghana. I departed Chicago in May of 1978, with my bags packed for two years to live in Africa.

I spent a week in Philadelphia with over 100 volunteers from all across the country. We stayed at the Ben Franklin Hotel. During that week we were all given an overview on the political, economic and social makeup of Ghana, from a historic perspective. All of the potential volunteers were provided with cross-cultural training on the local customs and traditions of the many ethnic groups that make up the people of Ghana. The all day workshops and seminars were conducted by former or current Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV) from Ghana or by Ghanaians, who were employed by the Peace Corps.

Five days after all of the potential volunteers arrived in Philadelphia, they had to make up their minds, if they really want to spend 2 years living and working in a Third World country or return home. I along with 110 other people decided that we did want to go on to Africa. The others decided that the Peace Corps wasn't for them and were provided with tickets to their hometowns. The Peace Corps gave the rest of the group, which included 9 other African Americans, another two days of country overview of Ghana. We then took individual pictures and were provided with passports. We were inoculated, so that we would be protected against various tropical diseases and placed on an airplane straight to West Africa.

Note: This is a three part story that will continue in our next issue of the Diversity Matters Newsletter. To get the full story you can visit our website at www.minoritypca.org/Community

2004 ACTIVITIES

May

Asian & Pacific Island Heritage Month

National Teacher Day

AIDSWALK NY - 16th

MPCA Diversity Dinner NY – 21st

MPCA Diversity Dinner-Philadelphia

June

World Environment Day

CTA & PC Partnership Fundraiser at SOB's, NY – 4th

MPCA Community Teacher's Awards, Newburgh, NY – 9th

July

*MPCA 2nd Annual National Conference-
Washington, DC, July 16th – 18th*

August

NPCA National Conference –Chicago Aug 5th -8th

September

Hispanic Heritage Month (9/15-10/15)

MPCA Diversity Dinner-NY- 23rd

October

Halloween

November

American Indian Heritage Month

Thanksgiving

December

International Volunteer Day

MPCA Diversity Dinner-NY – 9th

*Chanukah
Christmas
Kwanzaa*

Please visit MPCA website at www.minoritypca.org to get detail information on these and other events.

IN THE SPOT LIGHT

Wedding News & Then Some...



Carmenza Cespedes (MPCA Financial Officer & RPCV Panama 98-00) married Timothy Thompson (MPCA Member & RPCV Panama 98-00) on February 13, 2004. Here they (First and Second Top left corner) are pictured with fellow MPCA past and present Board members and RPCV friends.

Presently, **Carmenza** is attending NYU Stern School of Business and is expected to receive her MBA by 2005 at which time she will pursue a management career in banking.

Timothy, a Civil Engineer for Mueser Rutledge, will pursue his Masters in Engineering at Purdue University in the Fall.



After several years at Save the Children as an Education Specialist for the Middle East and African, **Marisol Perez** (left) will be joining USAID Education team in Guinea where she will be the Education Program Advisor. Marisol is a founding board member of the Minority Peace Corps Association and serves as the Overseas Liaison.

Marisol Vigil (right) is gearing up for graduation this spring. She will receive her masters from Columbia School of International and Public Affairs. Marisol is a founding board member of the Minority Peace Corps Association.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPDATES

DID YOU KNOW?

DIVERSITY MATTERS: Diversity Matters is currently looking for newsletter editors and a newsletter coordinator. If you are interested in volunteering for either position please contact Leslie Jean-Pierre at community@minoritypca.org.

PEACE CORPS STORIES NEEDED: Have you considered submitting your personal Peace Corps story? We continue to have the need of stories to post on the website and publish in our newsletters. These stories are great tools for potential Peace Corps applicants to get an insight of a Peace Corps experience from a minority perspective. Please send your story and a picture today via email to community@minoritypca.org or mail it to the address below.

AIDS WALK NEW YORK: It's still not too late to register for the AIDS WALK New York on Sunday, May 16, 2004. The Minority Peace Corps Association and other RPCVs have joined the New York Regional Peace Corps Office for the second time to walk and raise money to help fight AIDS. To join the Peace Corps team please visit the link below: <http://www.kintera.org/faf/search/searchTeamPart.asp?ievent=41823&lis=1&kntae41823=B52987E7E834498990D7964094A9E934&team=391221> or visit the MPCA website.

COMMUNITY TEACHER'S AWARDS: This year's awards ceremony will be held in Newburgh, New York. Minority Peace Corps Association hopes that the recognition of the CTA recipients will:

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

PEACE CORPS COMMUNITY

PEACE MATCH: Peace Match is now online! RPCVs can register there to be a speaker. The Peace Match Program is being developed and administered by the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) under a cooperative agreement with the Peace Corps. The goal is to increase the number of classroom presentations made by RPCVs throughout the year by making it easier for returned volunteers to find a speaking opportunity and by helping teachers to identify RPCVs who would be willing to visit their classrooms. For more information please visit Peace Match website at <http://www.peacematch.org>.

NATIONAL PEACE CORPS ASSOCIATION: Join nearly 2,000 Returned Peace Corps Volunteers and friends in Chicago for the 2004 National Peace Corps Association biennial conference this summer - August 5 to 8, 2004. Celebrate NPCA's 25th anniversary and "Celebrate a Legacy of Service".

Did you know that the title of MPCA's newsletter *Diversity Matters* was thought up during a brain storming session in Brooklyn, New York at a regular board meeting, by MPCA board member Gigi Ndiaye. We all agreed that it would be a great title due to its double meaning. Gigi has contributed by providing financial support, newsletter management and initiating the Prospect Park Clean-Up events.

Did you know that MPCA DC chapter president, Marcia Parkes is one of the original founders of the Minority Peace Corps Association, which met on January 22, 2002 at the New York Peace Corps Office. This meeting was the first meeting after 9/11 which resulted in the relocation of NY's Peace Corps Regional Office from 6 World Trade Center.

Marcia later moved to DC and started a MPCA DC chapter. Since then the chapter has hosted a Diversity Dinner, initiated a local Park clean-up at Watts Branch Park in Far Northeast Washington and has started a regional MPCA DC listserv with over 40 MPCA members, Peace Corps staff, Peace Corps applicants and friends actively participating in daily discussions about Peace Corps and the local community. The DC chapter is taking it one step further this year by hosting MPCA's 2004 National Conference in Washington, DC.

Did you know that MPCA members, Donald Lahuffman and his wife Maria Lahuffman have been major financial supporters of the Minority Peace Corps Association. Also, in the last six years and over twenty Diversity Dinners in the New York area alone; they have not missed more than two events.

Did you know that Peace Corps Regional Managers, Harris Bostic and Edwin Jorge have been active supporters of the Minority Peace Corps Association.

Edwin Jorge, regional manager of the New York Regional Peace Corps Office has been very kind in allowing MPCA members to meet at the Peace Corps office on certain occasions. Last year his office worked with the Minority Peace Corps Association in initiating the first Community Teacher's Awards at Paul Robeson High School in Crown Height, Brooklyn.

Harris Bostic, regional manager of the San Francisco Regional Peace Corps office continues to support the Minority Peace Corps Association. His office has worked with the MPCA in assisting applicants of color through collaborative efforts. Harris also attended MPCA's first National Conference to discuss how MPCA and Peace Corps Regional Offices can help each other in promoting the third goal of Peace Corps.



Minority Peace Corps Association
Village Station, P.O. Box 244, NY, NY 10014
www.minoritypca.org