

Celebrating Peace Corps 60th Anniversary

Newsletter 71 | Fall 2021

A Message from The Philippines Embassy in Washington, D.C.

By: Ambassador Jose Manuel G. Romualdez

On behalf of the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines, I wish to extend my warmest greetings to the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (PCAFPD) on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Peace Corps Philippines.



This milestone year is further strengthened by the 75 years of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and the United States and fortified by the longstanding people-to-people ties between our two nations.

We saw how the Peace Corps thrived in the Philippines these past six decades in your engagements with vulnerable communities in the Philippines, and by championing social, economic, development and educational programs for Filipinos. These initiatives spearheaded by your dedicated volunteers represent the very core values of our relationship that we hope to continue and expand in our future.

Allow me to likewise express our appreciation to PCAFPD for your numerous scholarship programs that have given new and encouraging opportunities to the Filipino youth. There is no doubt that the continued success of the Peace Corps program is anchored on your members and volunteers, who continue to make a life-changing impact at the grassroots level during and beyond their tours of service.

It is our hope that Peace Corps Philippines and PCAFPD will have more successful projects in the decades to come. Maraming salamat at mabuhay!

In celebration of Peace Corps Philippines 60th Anniversary, we asked for your Peace Corps stories and reflections. Please enjoy this selection of memories, sent in by you – our fellow RPCVs and donors.

Never having to start sentences with “I should have”

By: *Letitia Morse Lladoc, 1964-66*

THEN: While attending Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania, I heard President John F. Kennedy say, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". Inspired by these words, I eagerly applied to the United States Peace Corps. I was ultimately accepted and assigned to teach English (TESOL) in the Philippines from 1964 to 1966.

My two-year commitment in the Peace Corps stretched to 15 years of living and working in the Philippines. I met and married, my late husband Jesse Lladoc, the Deputy Governor of the Province of Leyte, who later became the Vice Mayor and Mayor of Ormoc City, making me for a number years "the first lady of Ormoc City" (not part of the Peace Corps mission).

I continued my teaching career at St. Peter's College teaching Psychology, Sociology and TESOL methods to both students and faculty. After

completing a master's degree in counseling at the University of the Philippines, I opened a Bookstore and a Family Counseling Center.

Due to the growing political unrest in the Philippines, Jesse and I, with our two children, were forced to leave the Philippines in 1979. We settled in my hometown of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

I continued my teaching career in the Social Studies Department at Pocono Mountain High School. I organized student groups to address issues arising from the new diversity in our school district. Throughout the years I developed English as a Second Language Programs in our school district and neighboring districts. I also organized ESL/Multicultural/ Diversity In-service programs for administrators, teachers, counselors, and staff in Pocono Mountain and surrounding school districts.

I was employed as an Adjunct Instructor of Multicultural Graduate Education with Regional Training Center/Gratz College and The College of New Jersey from 1994-2011. I taught more than 1,500 teachers in Pennsylvania and New Jersey.



NOW: I am presently an Adjunct Professor at Northampton Community College, teaching English as a Second Language. I travel only seven miles from my home to teach what I taught in the Peace Corps more than 50 years ago!!

How different my life might have been, if I had never taken the opportunity to join the Peace Corps. My decision changed me forever and gave me a wonderful family and a world of experiences. I have never had to start my sentences with "I should have ... "

You Can Go Home Again

By: *Gerald Mullins, 1961-63*

Through the years, many Returned Peace Corps Volunteers have gone back to their overseas sites. Perhaps not too many, however, have done so over a longer period of time than I, when I returned to the Philippines in January 2016. From 1961 to 1963 I was assigned as a teachers' aide at San Fernando Elementary School in rural Albay province in the Philippines. The school and community rest on the slope of the picturesque and nearly perfect cone-shaped Mayon volcano. The January 2016 visit was my first time back to "my school" since I left in June 1963, a period of close to fifty-three years.

To my surprise -- and delight -- I was warmly welcomed and treated as a returning son as I walked onto the school grounds in San Fernando. The teachers and villagers had been alerted in advance of my coming so it was not a complete surprise. What was a surprise, however, was the large turnout, including more than a dozen of my former students, most who are now in their sixties. I joined the current students and staff in the pledge to the flag and singing the Philippine national anthem, "Lupang Hinirang". This was followed by a huge spread of breakfast delicacies including papaya, pineapple, fried bananas, and rice cakes, all prepared by the former students. At one point one of the men in the group spoke up and reminded me that I had given him a copy of the Boy Scout Handbook back in 1962. He stated, with considerable regret, that the book was destroyed when a typhoon struck the area a few years later. (A follow-up task for me when I returned to Wisconsin was to send him a new copy of the handbook.) A short while later, while visiting over breakfast, two of the women in the group of former students, who were grade three students back in 1962, started singing several songs I taught them during our time together. I was stunned when, from behind me, they started in with several verses of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" and "The Itsy Bitsy Spider". They still remembered that small bit of fun we shared together so many years ago.

While one may wonder what tangible contributions are made through their Peace Corps service -- this was particularly true for early PCVs whose job

descriptions were often not well defined -- I would say, nevertheless, there is no mistaking the success of the "good will" side of our efforts in the early days.



I continue to be pleased to have served in the Peace Corps and to have answered the call of President Kennedy to what was then a new, but very exciting-sounding, program. The return described here further reinforces the good feelings I have about the Peace Corps.

Looking back, little did those of us who joined in 1961 -- most fresh out of college at the time -- ever dream the Peace Corps would endure as it has and that many thousands of Volunteers would follow. Finally, as a last word, to those RPCVs who have not yet journeyed back to their sites of assignment, be sure to do so. You will find that you can go "home" again.

From San Jose, CA to San Jose, Albay, Philippines

By: Martha "Marty" Hull, 1961-63

During my two years in the Philippines, I had three "home base" areas, all south of Manila: Masbate; Marawi, Lanao del Sur; and Libon/San Jose, Albay. Our stated job was to be a "Teacher's Aide" in English and science, but we were free to expand our roles as needed.

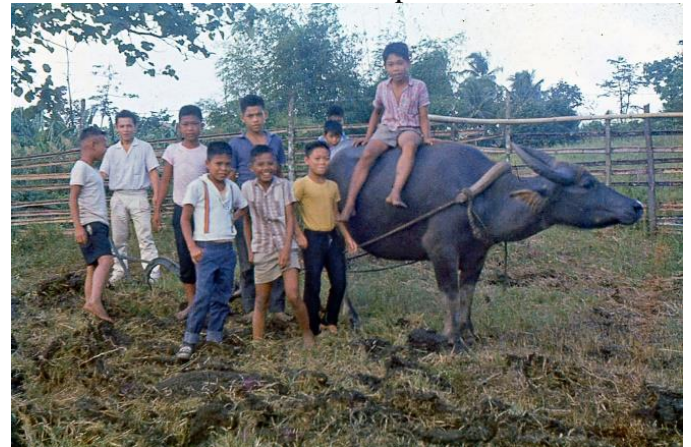
Libon is a rice growing central valley area. There was a small mountain range between Libon and the sea. Although I lived in Libon, the school where I was assigned, San Jose, was at the very top of the mountain range. San Jose was a small self-sufficient barrio growing sugar cane, camotes, and coconuts. A bus made three trips a day over to the sea where it

picked up passengers and fish and then came back to Libon. I caught the first trip over at 5:30 am and the last one back at 4 pm.

My school had two buildings that were government issue pre-fabs. There were three classrooms and a small administrators' office in these buildings. The other classes met in an old structure made out of bamboo, palm leaves, grass, and some corrugated iron strips left from WWII. These classrooms had dirt floors. The school had no running water, electricity, or toilets. Classes were held from 8:30 to 12, then children went home for lunch and a rest. The afternoon classes from 2 to 4 were not usually classroom activity, but work projects (cleaning, gardening). Occasionally the children got free play which was greatly enjoyed!!

Shortly after I arrived, the parents had a meeting and decided to build a room for me. They wanted me to start a library. I talked them into building another classroom as well as my room, which was to be half the size of a classroom. It took the men a little over a week to build the rooms. The sixth-grade boys and I made all the furniture for my room (a table, chairs, bookcases). The room was used for small group instruction and teacher work projects, as well as a small library with the few books I was able to get.

Towards the end of my stay there, the 6th grade teacher/principal didn't show up for class for several weeks. I wound up teaching 6th grade with no materials or lesson plans. One of the boys brought his carabao to school and we plowed a field for a



new garden. Unfortunately, for these students, 6th grade was the end of their schooling. There was no

high school they could attend without moving down to the central valley.

One of my favorite things at San Jose was our United Nations festival, which I started. The children were divided into groups representing different countries. I had to have several meetings with parents before any of them would allow their child to represent Japan, a nation still hated because of WWII. I worked with all groups except the one representing the US. The 2nd graders wanted to surprise me... And they did, donning costumes appearing as Native Americans.

I never thought of anything I did as a “project” and felt like a failure most of the time.... Now that I think of it, I do think I was doing what the Peace Corps set out to do, not making a big bang, but getting people to work together on common goals.

RPCV Reflections on our Lives

By: Barbara Stoughton Hiller, 1963-65

As a RPCV, I am often asked what we, as volunteers, accomplished in our assignments. As I reflect on my teaching time at Morong High School (Rizal) and Philippine Normal College (Manila), the more important question is how did the experience impact my professional and personal life?

From day one of training, we learned the importance of listening and continual self-learning. Every day involved teaching and building relationships through continual learning (Tagalog, cultures-theirs and ours-and history). Embedded in all was the true meaning of humility and sensitivity.

Phil and I met in training, worked together as volunteers and married at the end of our service in 1965. We often talked about the impact of the Peace Corps on us as educators. We had learned that we were not simply mathematics and science teachers, but that through these courses we could have a deep impact supporting and challenging our students as they sought to define their futures.

The Peace Corps enriched our lives as a family, as educators and community members.

Still Remembering and Wandering

By: Michael Beaudoin, 1963-64

Are there especially memorable moments from my time in The Philippines? It is a pastiche of so many events and experiences, some that have long faded from memory, and others as vivid as the day they happened. An early one concerns my last meal before leaving home and my first meal with temporary hosts on the island of Mindanao. Assuming it would be a while before I'd be eating lobster again, my family feasted on this classic Maine meal. My Filipino hosts' special treat? Lobster!

My arrival to my assigned barrio was not an especially auspicious start. A PC staffer stopped the jeep at a dusty crossroads, then instructed me to walk a mile into the village and ask where Mr. Saldo, the school principal, lived and introduce myself as his Peace Corps Volunteer. His casa was my casa until I was able to arrange for construction of a thatched roof cottage on the school grounds (cost: \$400.)

Perhaps my most vivid memory happened on November 22, 1963: My part-time houseboy came running into my cottage shouting: “Sir, your president is dead!” I still have the telegram Director Sargent Shriver sent every PCV around the world the next day which read: “Now, more than ever, we must all carry on the work that President Kennedy asked us to do.”

When asked what I might consider be the most dramatic difference between my life in a remote Asian village 7000 miles from home in the early 1960s, and what it would be like today, I'd probably suggest it would be the impact of the digital age on daily life. I can recall only one phone chat with my family in two years, with communication limited to a once-a-month exchange of news via tissue-like air-mail envelopes folded in half serving as stationary with hand written notes on the inside. Today's PCVs likely cannot imagine missing digital contact with loved ones back home most every day.

One question that remains with many RPCVs long after they have returned is whether what they may have accomplished might have had much impact on the people and places they encountered. For me, a

partial answer came a few years later when I worked at PC headquarters in Washington, DC. In the library there, I spotted a magazine published in The Philippines that featured a story about an athlete who was a member of the country's 1968 Olympic track team. Though she did not win any medals, she did set a new national record in her event, one that had existed for 26 years! No mention of me, of course, but I had the special feeling that, as her high school coach, I might have contributed in some modest way to her athletic achievements.

Among the myriad ways in which my PCV experience had a transformative impact on my life, is my life-long quest for travel, having traveled in more than 50 countries.

T.S. Eliot was correct; we do indeed know a place, and perhaps ourselves, for the first time upon returning, and hopefully we are better for it. Our good works in those far-away places surely benefited us at least as much as those we engaged with for two or more memorable years.

2021 Sargent Shriver Award

Congratulations to Philippines RPCV Sherry Manning (2006-08), winner of the 2021 Sargent Shriver Award for Distinguished Humanitarian Service. This award is given annually to those RPCVs who continue to make a sustainable contribution at home or abroad. Sherry is founder of Global Seed Savers, a nonprofit committed to ending hunger by providing access to farmer produced seeds and foods.



Scholar Essays 2nd Semester 2020-2021

Perseverance

Jeniefer Marcelo is pursuing a BS in Secondary Education at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

People cannot reach their destination if they decided to give up along the way because of rock roads and long journey. I often put that thought on my mind whenever I lose hope and got tired. There are no shortcuts in obtaining the success and the good life that we are aspiring. We have to endure every obstacle that we may encounter on our way to success.

Students and educators were bombarded by various hindrances and difficulties since the pandemic began. I am in the field of mathematics and I admit that it is a little bit hard to cope with the lessons at this point when classes were only virtually done. Since we do not have stable internet connection in our province, there were times that I was not able to attend my classes. Sometimes, it was frustrating because those were my major subjects and I can only focus on my modules. However, if there are numerous blockages in the road, we must build our way. I cannot just sit, complain, and do nothing. Hence, I exerted much effort to learn those subjects. I should not be swayed by challenges if I really want to attain what I am desiring, which is success.

I am currently building myself as a future educator. Soon, I will have to deal with my future students who will also depend on my teachings. Thus, the effort that I am putting in the present as a college student is significant. The patience and perseverance in the present will serve as a preparation and will determine our future. I am constantly reminding myself that knowledge must come first. Recognition without knowledge is just a piece of paper.

I have several dreams when I was a child just like any other kid, but actually I did not really expect that I would end up taking this path. I was hesitant at first

because most of the times I lack confidence, and I have a fear of standing in front of people. On the other hand, I enjoy explaining things and the thought of helping others by providing the information and teachings that they need makes me happy. Being in this field reminded me of the importance of focusing on the learnings rather than any recognition and praises.

I am planning to teach here in our province where I started to create my dreams. I want to help thousands of children by sharing my knowledge and become part of their journey. The young generation needs an educator who is willing to understand his/her students' any circumstance especially wherein we are adjusting to new learning system. I would not become that kind of teacher if I would not persevere enough. Education is one of the essential things that no one can take away from us and it can be a door for several opportunities.

A Glimpse of Online OJT

Jennalyn Basco is pursuing a BS in Psychology at Bataan Peninsula State University

On the Job Training (OJT) is probably one of the best experiences a college student could ever have during his or her schooling, for it serves as a good medium to be able to apply all the theories and concepts he or she has learned during lecture sessions in class. It widens their grounds beyond the four corners of the classroom, and thus allows them to grasp the real essence of the field they have chosen. However, as the pandemic limits our freedom, the academe has adjusted tremendously as well; that even professors had encountered difficulties in providing quality education to the young minds.

Nevertheless, through our dedicated professors who handled our midyear classes, we were able to learn a lot, given that we only have a month to take up all the necessary skills required when we have been deployed in the real setting after graduation. As a technique, our college Dean Juliet Masangcap together with our professors came up with a webinar-workshop style OJT wherein they invited various

speakers who could share their expertise in different settings after graduating BS Psychology—clinical, industrial, and educational. Indeed, despite the challenges brought about by our current situation, the students are still able to receive quality education amidst the threat of the invisible opponent. With the comfort of our homes, we were able to know some of the necessary skills by just lending our ears to the speakers. Yet, I shall admit that the knowledge we got were at the bare minimum; yet, I am still grateful for we are aware how the university give their best effort to this; as it manifests through our professors' dedication and passion while teaching.

Hence, although there are doubt and fears within our hearts, we are still hoping that our batch would become competitive graduates and professionals in the future. As what I believe in, we shall not solely depend on the university's capability to provide education; rather, we have to do our part too by doing the best that we can in gathering enough amount of knowledge we crave ever since. We are the ones who create our path, after all.

Pushing Through

Kyle Sanes is pursuing a degree in Medical Technology from Southwestern University PHINMA

I always believed that behind every successful person is a purpose that pushes them to go further despite the stumbling block they encounter. And I feel that I have found mine during this semester.

The workloads and pressures this semester were quite heavy for me because of having most of the laboratory classes during this period. It was very new because for lecture classes to be online, it was easy. After all, we will only be discussing and learning theories regarding the subjects. But for laboratory classes, it was different because you have to see the experiments first-hand to understand the whole concept. It was similar to how we had our classes during the first semester; we were given tasks to finish and quizzes to answer in short periods, without even having enough time to go over the books and learn everything. Some other experiments were only being explained through videos sent by some teachers

while others were not even performed, so we would find videos from other sites such as YouTube to grasp the concepts. One thing that made it difficult was the exams that we had where they ask us results of tests and experiments which we haven't even seen and only would be based on several theoretical results. It would have been easier to remember it if we performed it.

I was slowly losing interest because the lessons that I have been trying to learn have become more difficult to understand with the new method of education. In the previous school years, laboratory classes were much more fun; because we were evaluated on how well we could perform specific tasks useful for the laboratory. But this time, it seems that we are only taught to imagine the procedures and the results afterward. We would be assessed as well on how well we could draw the steps and the results. I also had the chance to talk to several of my classmates about how they felt about our classes during the semester, and I would always hear the same answers. Most comments would be how the new type of learning was not compelling to how our teachers were not even exerting much effort to teach us.

Weeks after, one of our professors noticed how most students are not as engaged in learning as we are the past few months, and he suggested that we have a small talk with him. He asked us first about our concerns regarding our lack of spur to try and master the topics given to us. After that, he told us a story of how he complained and questioned himself about his profession after he graduated. He told us that the low salary grade of a Medical Technologist in our country urged him to try and look for a different job. But a month after working in the Medical Laboratory, he saw how important his profession is in medicine and diagnostics. Without Medical Technologists, bodily fluids and other specimens will not be tested, and the doctors will have no idea how to treat patients. He told us that one that touched his heart the most was saving a young kid's life who had an extreme illness. And now that we are currently fighting a pandemic, our teacher told us how difficult the hospital situations are; and how much more front liners are

needed because we play a key responsibility in saving the lives of our countrymen.

I think that the small talk that we had with him was beneficial to all of us. It made us understand how big of a role is waiting for us after we graduate. It made us think twice about slacking off and not pushing ourselves to give our best. Because we are learning all of these not only to be successful and have a better individual life but also one thing that we should be putting in mind is how we can help our future patients. Of all my experience this semester, I feel that what he told us was the most relevant because it aided me to see the purpose that signifies the values of a medical professional; to save lives for others to thrive. And that allowed me to continue pushing through.

“Online Class Setting, Still Fighting...”

Anjie Baldo is pursuing a BA in Financial Management at Adamson University

It's almost a year and a half already since this pandemic occur. Many lives have been devastated, companies have been shut down which led to unemployment, and some students was forced to discontinue their studies due to financial and emotional concern.

As one of the students who was able to witness the new normal setting for almost three (3) semesters, I could say that many of us are not yet able to fully adopt of the said situation. Even professors had a hard time in conducting online classes. Many temptations are being faced by the students in this online setting. Some of these are: we could just use our phone while having a class, can do online games, can go over our social media accounts, for most of the teachers cannot monitor their students on what we are doing behind the camera. We could even sleep even if the class is still ongoing. Thus, face-face class is far different from this online one in terms of the knowledge that the student could have gain.

Nevertheless, I am still looking forward that everything will be in place again soon. Every mourning hearts will be healed, our economy will rise again, and students will be able to go back to school once more. For now, I am grateful that I still able to continue my studies even in the middle of these circumstances. I am forever indebted to Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (PCAFPD) for the continuous support through their scholarship program. Through the help of PCAFPD, we chose to look on a brighter side knowing that we are beyond blessed for we can continue our studies amidst crises.

May the Almighty God Bless all the people behind this foundation for they are indeed a blessing to many. May the Lord God keep us all safe, heal all the people in the entire world and the world itself.

PCAFPD Human Development Grant in Action

By Justin Tabor, PCAFPD Grants Manager

I recently had the chance to check in with Emma Sarcol, a Philippines RPCV currently living in Cebu and working for the Glory Reborn organization, one of PCAFPD's inaugural Human Development grant recipients. Since being awarded nearly \$1500 in June, Glory Reborn has started the implementation of their project and had some exciting windfalls. Through the kindness of their trainer, what was supposed to initially be a two-person Lamaze coach training was expanded to include all 12 of the organization's clinical staff. One of their staff had this to say of their newfound knowledge, "I just recently applied what I learned from the Lamaze seminar to one of the births of our patient at Glory Reborn. It was such a beautiful and emotional experience. Already I see a big difference, despite a big baby, an easier delivery, less

postpartum pain and a happier experience for mom too!"



Pictured: Doc Nina Yang stands with her Lamaze training certificate.

With their training complete, two of Glory Reborn's staff are reviewing for their Lamaze certification exam. We wish them and this project continued success! And thank you to all of our PCAFPD supporters for making this grant program possible. If you are interested in learning more about Glory Reborn's work or supporting their efforts feel free to reach out to our Grants Manager at PCAFPD.grants@gmail.com.

Join us for another 60th Anniversary webinar event.

Join us for a 30 min Q&A with Peace Corps Philippines Country Director, Jenner Edelman, followed by a virtual Holiday Social where you can mingle and chat with fellow RPCVs and PC Philippines staff.

Wednesday, December 8th at 8pm ET

Register online at:

<http://www.rpcvphilippines.org/get-involved/>

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