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RPCV NENY May Newsletter

1 message

Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of NENY <rpcvneny@gmail.com>

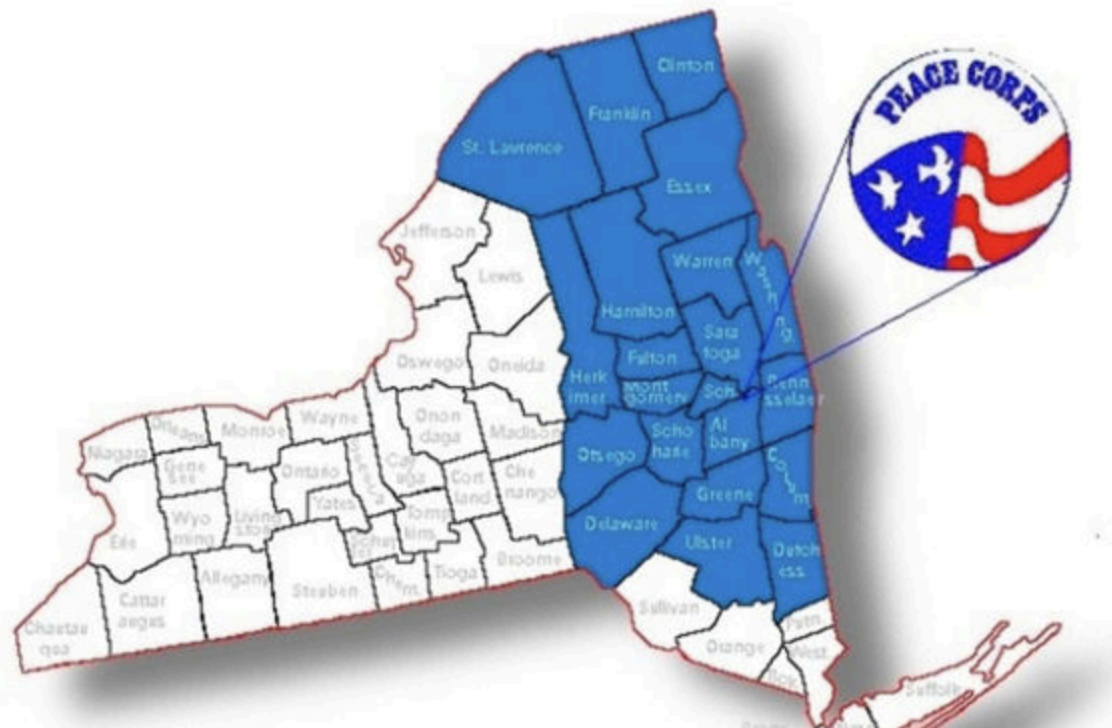
Mon, May 26, 2025 at 12:17 PM

Reply-To: "rpcvneny@gmail.com" <rpcvneny@gmail.com>

To: Anthony Swingruber <aswingruber@gmail.com>

RETURNED PEACE CORPS VOLUNTEERS OF NORTHEASTERN NEW YORK

MAY 2025 NEWSLETTER



Next RPCV NENY Meeting: Tuesday, June 3, 2025, 6-8pm

The meeting will be at the home of Jan Altschuler, [2170 Morrow Avenue, Niskayuna, NY 12309](#). Jan is the life partner of RPCV Rich White-Smith who passed away in February. This will be a special meeting with a portion devoted to remembrances of Rich.

RPCV Shawn Eddy will then speak about his PC service in Zambia. Business and advocacy updates will follow.

[The meeting is a potluck – please bring food or drink to share and a lawn chair to sit outdoors.](#)

[African marimba \(message from Jan\)](#)

An African marimba instrument was given to Rich as a thank you for his service either in the Peace Corps or for the Red Cross during the Biafra War. It is worth at least \$200, and I would like to sell it to someone who will appreciate its history for \$100 or, preferably, for a donation of at least a \$200 to the National Peace Corps Association. The highest bidder wins! To see the marimba in person, come to the June meeting. (see photo at the end of the newsletter)

A Great May Meeting at SUNY Albany

Big thanks to the SUNY Albany Center for Global Health and the Center for International Education and Global Strategy for hosting the May 6 RPCV NENY meeting on campus. The meeting went very well. There was a great exchange between our members and Peace Corps Prep student participants. No issues with parking. Also many thanks to Anne Williams, regional PC recruiter, for providing pizza and PC updates! (photo at the end of the newsletter)

Peace Corps Advocacy

We are coordinating visits to our congressional representatives across all the districts of RPCVs NENY for June 18-20th, (6/19 being a holiday), so mark your calendars. A signup sheet will circulate at the June meeting to get us started.

Bring your best penmanship to the meeting...you'll have the opportunity to create a handwritten letter to your elected representatives! Addresses, paper and writing instruments will be provided.

With news of significant restructuring and staff reductions planned at the Peace Corps, RPCV Congressman John Garamendi (D-CA) and Delegate Amata Radewagen

(R-American Samoa) urged their colleagues to sign a letter to the leaders of the House Appropriations Committee, requesting \$479 million for the Peace Corps in Fiscal Year 2026—an increase from the current funding level of \$430.5 million. The final count was 126 signatures, 14 more than last year. Something to celebrate. Those who signed from NYS are: Clarke, Lawler, Mannion, Meeks, Ryan, Tonko, Torres, and Velazquez

An effort is underway to urge Congress to introduce legislation that would honor the Peace Corps and its volunteers as a group with a Congressional Gold Medal. The Gold Medal is highest civilian honor provided by Congress. It's a perfect time to urge recognition of the Peace Corps, as 2026 is the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Peace Corps. NPCA is beginning to identify leaders in the Senate and House to introduce this legislation.

Victoria Dougherty, Advocacy Coordinator

Congratulations Melissa

Let's celebrate an RPCV grad! Melissa Puicon-Healey (RPCV Dominican Republic and UAlbany Coverdell Fellow) graduated from UAlbany's College of Integrated Health Sciences this month with a Master of Public Health (MPH) degree and a Graduate Certificate in Global Health Studies. Shown here with David Gittelman (RPCV DR Congo). Melissa is a public health nurse with the NYS Department of Health. Congratulations Melissa! (photo at end of newsletter)

Service & Social: Patroon Land Farm - June 14th, 2025

Join us for our next "Service & Social" event on Saturday, June 14th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at Patroon Land Farm in Voorheesville!

We'll be helping with weeding and planting at this important farm that grows vegetables to supply the Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York. This is a great opportunity to make a direct impact on food security in our region while connecting with fellow RPCVs.

Location: Patroon Land Farm, [132 Ketcham Rd, Voorheesville, NY 12186](#)

What to expect: Farm work including weeding and planting - dress for outdoor work and bring work gloves if you have them.

Bonus: After our service work, we're planning an impromptu picnic at nearby Thacher Park to continue the fellowship!

We need to provide a final headcount to the farm, so please **RSVP by June 11** to rpcvneny@gmail.com if you plan to attend.

Come ready to get your hands dirty for a great cause! Questions? Contact Anthony at rpcvneny@gmail.com

Member Spotlight: Steve Gottlieb Speaks Out on the Importance of Promoting Intercultural Understanding

RPCV-NENY member Steve Gottlieb recently published a powerful commentary piece on WAMC.org titled "Trumping the Peace Corps" that draws on his Peace Corps experience in Iran to address current threats to America's international agencies. You can read the full commentary at: <https://www.wamc.org/commentary-opinion/2025-04-29/trumping-the-peace-corps>.

Questions/Comments/To unsubscribe: rpcvneny@gmail.com

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