

The excitement was building once we had a view of Thaba Bosiu. As we neared the end, we walked in organized rows, our molamu (walking sticks) held together in a horizontal line, and we danced and sang our way to the finish, celebrating our completion at a ceremony. The spirit of the group at the end made the rough patches worthwhile, and this experience was a memorable one.

For those whom are interested, I learned of two more organized walks. The Heritage Park walk in the Northwest Province of South Africa, that goes through game reserves (June), as well as the Sehlabathebe hike (March) - if you are keen on carrying your own gear. Feel free to contact me for survival tips 101, should you decide to sign up for this walk, or if you want to read the 8-page version of this experience. [wendystein@gmail.com](mailto:wendystein@gmail.com)

### The Interview

A new column in the Khotso! Each month, we invite PCVs to interview someone who has a Peace Corps story to tell. PCV **Shawna Cain** starts us off by sharing her interview with

### RPCV Linda Henry 1980 -1982



A couple of months ago I was walking around my village when a sister from a nearby Catholic church grabbed me and said I should come and meet her "visitor". Imagine my surprise when I found out that the "visitor" across the street from my site was actually a RPCV who would be living and volunteering across the street from me for the next 6 months! The more time we spend together, the more I learn about the old Peace Corps and about

RPCV life in the States. It has been incredibly rewarding to meet Linda and share our stories, comparing and laughing our way through the changes and similarities of three decades of PC service in Lesotho. At the suggestion of PCV Bonnie Lawrence, I interviewed Linda so we could all get to know the woman we call 'M'e Mathabo.

### You were a PCV from '80 - '82, what was your main job at site?

I was an Agriculture volunteer in Matsieng at Moshoeshe II High School. I ran the farm that produced eggs, chicken meat, milk and some vegetables for the boarding students. I also taught some Agric classes and developed a demonstration garden but my biggest project involved installing battery cages for 100's of laying hens. Technically my supervisor was the King, Moshoeshe II. He and I became good friends and I was invited to the Palace multiple times. He even threw me a going away bash at the Palace when I COS'ed!

### Comparing PC now with PC early '80s, what would you say is the biggest difference?

Since I am not a PCV now I can only comment on what I have observed meeting a number of you in the Molele's Hoek district. Of course the first thing that jumps to mind is how connected PCVs are to each other, to home and to the PC office in Maseru. We didn't have that luxury. We were dropped at our sites after Swearing-In and pretty much fended for ourselves after that. PC would ask us to come to Maseru every few months to check in for medical, but other than that communication was by the PC grapevine, which consisted mainly of bush

notes - sending notes via whoever was going to the PC office in Maseru.

Another simplistic observation is that we didn't have many regulations regarding what we could or could not do. The only rule I remember was that if you were riding a motorcycle and you got caught without a helmet you could be sent home. Most PCVs had motorcycles, vehicles or horses to get around. I had a Land Rover to use for the farm that I also shared with the school.



Figure 1 PCVs getting a lift from Peace Corps in the 1980s

### What hasn't changed much?

PCVs enjoying each other's company, bonding and gossiping for entertainment. I think all Volunteers share a love of adventure, which makes for a very interesting and enjoyable bunch of people.

### Tell me about one funny story or adventure you experienced during your PC service:

I had many laying hens at my project. One of my close PCV friends, Rebecca, wanted me to bring laying hens to her village of Ha Matabeng near Qacha's Nek. Together we got funding to fly me and about 25 laying hens to Matabeng.

I made some containers for the hens using cardboard boxes reinforced with sticks and baling twine. As you know, everything takes time in Lesotho. By the time we loaded the boxes into the back of the 8-seater Lesotho Airways plane, I realized the bottoms of the boxes were quite saturated with poop. I'd been generously invited by the friendly South African pilot to sit up front with him. As there was little as I could do from the pit of the plane, I ignored the chicken box issue and we talked to whole way to Matabeng via headphones.

At one point I turned around and was horrified to see a couple of my hens had escaped and were roosting on the back of the seats behind me. By the time we landed they had all escaped from their wet boxes and were quite loose in the plane. The pilot was shocked at the mess they had made of his plane he unsympathetically grabbed each one and threw them out onto the runway where, of course, they all scattered. Fortunately, there were lots of kids that had run to meet the plane. The kids ran around frantically catching all the hens and proudly carried them into the village in their arms.

Years later, I'm so happy to have snagged of photo of this memorable day...

You met your future husband in Peace Corps. After your service





Figure 2 Above: PCV Rebecca and the Mathabeng bana with the wild escaping hens

you married in the states and supported your husband "Chip" in law school and eventually to become an Ohio State Senator and a probate court judge. Do you think that your service in Peace

Corps lead you two to pursue a life of public service?

*Absolutely! Though I think that Chip, in particular, was bent on public service long before he joined Peace Corps as he was a Big Brother and community volunteer in college.*

In what ways do you think your experiences in PC helped you and Chip to become public leaders in your home communities?

*Our Peace Corps background was always a part of our resumes and bios for any board or project we participated in. We were always proud to say that we had completed our PC service. I think Peace Corps will always affect how I view community dynamics no matter where the community is.*

Throughout the years, you and Chip have remained close friends with your RPCV community, even attending each other's family festivities such as weddings and graduations. When you were a PCV, did you anticipate such lasting friendships?

*I'm not sure. Before Facebook and computers, we tried to keep in touch with everyone, but we were all raising our families. It wasn't until the advent of email (I know, this makes me sound really ancient) that we could easily keep in touch with each other. Our training group of 23 is still a family to me. When we visit each other it is like no time has passed, we are PCVs again and always have a ball.*

Does keeping in contact with your RPCV community help you to stay connected to Lesotho?

*Yes. Our group has reunions where we pull out our photos, reminisce and vow to organize ourselves for Lesotho projects. About 8 years ago, two of our RPCV group, Joel and Sherry Hellenkamp in Tacoma, Washington started TLC, The Lesotho Connection ([www.thelesothoconnection.org](http://www.thelesothoconnection.org)). TLC has fun-runs and other fundraisers to sponsor school scholarships in Lesotho and the St. Camillus Centre for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Mphahle'sHoek. I am here for 6*

*months representing TLC while we build a new building for the Centre.*

You have two grown children. Do you think having RPCV parents positively impacted their lives? If so, in which ways?

*I think so. It's funny because our kids, as well as the kids of our RPCV friends, will always whine that they hear the same stories and are drilled on how important PC was to us. But a number of them have now become PCV's or are following careers in social work and public service.*

*My son Adam, at age 28, is already serving in a number of community organizations and just got named to a local Foundation Board. My daughter Kim, age 25, is serving in the Ohio Senate as a legislative aide and is interested in public service. She volunteered with a private organization in Honduras in 2010 for 4 months. I am very proud of both of them and how they are able to find their own ways of leading positive lifestyles and being leaders in community service.*

In 2011 your husband Chip passed away in a tragic accident. Chip was admired and loved by his community in America and his host community of Lesotho. He was an inspiration to most everyone whom his life touched. Lesotho has played a special role in both of your lives. You met, served together and became engaged in-country. You even returned to Lesotho for your 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. In a way, your returning to Lesotho to serve is a way to honor Chip's life and his dedication to helping the less fortunate. How do you think Chip would feel if he saw you back here now?

*We had always planned to return together to work in Lesotho. We were waiting for his retirement and had hoped he could retire early so we could get started soon. He definitely would approve of my coming and doing what I can here. Lesotho got into our blood and never left. We spoke Sesotho to each other all these years so that we wouldn't forget the language.*



Figure 3 TLC and RPCV Linda Henry with her new family at St. Camillus Orphanage in Mphahle's Hoek

Now, decades after your first came to Lesotho, a world wiser and stronger, you have again returned to Lesotho to volunteer. What would you tell your 20-something year old self?

*Hmmm, really good question. I guess the obvious answer is that no matter what it looks like, the time goes very quickly and to not waste a second of it. Experience all you can, don't take this time for granted as it will be over too soon. There is plenty of time for everything else once you return to the States. I would also say don't be judgmental regarding the Basotho and how things are*



done here. Just do your part and enjoy the experience.

### District AIDS Representatives (DAR)

#### DAR survey by Janelle Leza ED 2012



Happy September to you all! By now I am sure Education volunteers are well settled into the semester, CHEDs are continuing with their work that is hopefully picking up now that the coldest part of winter is behind us (knock on wood), and HYs are beginning to settle into their new communities. I recently came up with a short/simple survey to give to my life skills students. After speaking with my fellow DAR member, Heather Mangan, we thought it might be interesting to have as many PCVs throughout the country give this same survey so that we might compile and compare the results.

So I am reaching out to all of you and asking that you satisfy my curiosity by having youth in your community complete this survey. It does not necessarily have to be students, but can be any youth from your community. I hope that you see this as an opportunity to learn more about your students or youth in your community, as well as youth around the nation.

Results will be compiled and posted in the November Khotso. Please email results that are collected from your community by October 5<sup>th</sup> to me at [janelle.leza@gmail.com](mailto:janelle.leza@gmail.com)  
Kea leboha!!!

1. Age

- A) 10-12 B) 13-15  
C) 16-18 D) 19 or older

2. Sex

- A) Female B) Male

3. Are you currently attending school?

- A) Yes B) No

4. Whom do you feel MOST comfortable talking to about Life Skills topics?

- A) Teacher B) Parent  
C) Sibling D) Friend  
E) Other (i.e. Peace Corps Volunteer, clinic worker, someone from outside of your own community, etc.)

5. From who have you learned the most information about Life Skills topics?

- A) Teacher B) Parent  
C) Sibling D) Friend  
E) Other (i.e. Peace Corps Volunteer, clinic worker, someone from outside of your own community, etc.)

6. Which Life Skills topic do you feel you know the MOST about?

- A) HIV/AIDS and STDs  
B) Communication Skills  
C) Decision-Making Skills  
D) Relationship Skills  
E) Other (please specify)

7. Which Life Skills topic would you MOST like to learn more about?

- A) HIV/AIDS and STDs  
B) Communication Skills  
C) Decision-Making Skills  
D) Relationship Skills  
E) Other (please specify)

### Diversity

#### Korean-American in Lesotho By Peggy Kang (ED 12)



Lesotho is a homogenous society, a lot like South Korea, where my parents emigrated from. Although there are a few different ethnic (African) groups as Sadie mentioned in the previous Khotso, for me, it's difficult to distinguish them from one another. Likewise, for Basotho it's nearly impossible to immediately classify me as an American because my physical features are most similar to the Chinese.

Since I live in a village about two hours away from my camp town of Qacha's Nek, for those who have never seen me before (that would be many!) it's easy to mistake me as someone here with a business. I have to admit, at first it was annoying when people referred me as "Lechaena" (Chinese person) and caught me off guard when asked if I had a business; but I quickly came to accept this common mistake. I've accepted that the word itself is a reference term to an "(east) Asian person" and since the only (east) Asian people the majority of Basotho have seen are the Chinese here for business (supermarkets, hardware/electronic stores, clothes stores, etc.), confusion is inevitable.

Apart from those I work with and community members, people are puzzled when I'm with other volunteers, speak English fluently and mix and mingle with locals. I even catch public transport - so that's quite mind blowing - but it's not difficult to explain or show people with fun and ease (including expats) why I'm here. I've put Korea on the map for many. On a brighter note, those from the capital or near it are a little more familiar with countries of Asia so I've been asked if I was Filipino, Korean and Japanese by a few. Also, with the development of Asian countries, Asian presence is much more common. Last year I met two UNESCO volunteers from South Korea. Thanks to them, I could practice Korean and expanded my network of amazing volunteers. Exciting, right?!

Back home in Hawaii, I always blended in and my ethnicity was never an issue. I've never been so aware of my physical features and the perception people have of me because of it until coming here. One thing for sure is that I overcame my insecurities through the support of my fellow volunteers, family and friends here and in America. In the end, my Peace Corps Lesotho experience - based on the context that I live in the person that I am - has brought invaluable personal insight, making me a prouder individual of my country and heritage.

