



Chicago Area Peace Corps Association

2006 Annual Report

About CAPCA

The Chicago Area Peace Corps Association (CAPCA) brings together Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) in the Chicago area. Organized in 1979 and incorporated in 1991 as a non-profit organization, CAPCA is affiliated with the Washington, D.C. based National Peace Corps Association (NPCA). CAPCA's primary objective is to fulfill, in the Chicago area, the mission of the NPCA – continuing to work for world peace, understanding, and well-being, with an emphasis on bringing the world back home.

CAPCA carries out this mission by providing speakers on global education and cross-cultural understanding to organizations interested in the Peace Corps and international development, participating in volunteer activities throughout the year and raising funds to support Peace Corps Partnership projects that offer leadership and cross-cultural experiences.

CAPCA also provides numerous social and networking opportunities and several communication channels to reach its membership. CAPCA publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, has a well-utilized electronic list serve, and maintains a frequently-visited website – www.capca.org.

Membership

At the end of 2006, CAPCA's had a total of 211 members - comprised of joint CAPCA/NPCA paid memberships, CAPCA/NPCA free memberships (for RPCVs in their first-year back) and CAPCA-only memberships. Of these, 165 are dues paying members in good standing.

CAPCA Board

During 2006, CAPCA expanded its board membership. Theresa Fernandez and Gavin Morgan were appointed to the board to fill vacancies. After elections in September 2006, Shayne Bell, Micah Strand and Eileen Gallagher also joined the CAPCA board.

Completing their terms on the board during 2006 were Donna Braden, Kevin Hogan, Erik Knepper, Kristi Schober and Mary Schuller.

Trina Janes was reelected in September 2006 for a third term as CAPCA President.

CAPCA Activities

Global Education

CAPCA continues to serve as a global education resource to the Chicagoland area. CAPCA members are called on throughout the year to share their global experiences with many school and community groups. Many of these educational sessions are conducted in the first week of March during "Peace Corps Week".

CAPCA members joined forces with The Loyola Museum of Art Junior Curators program. RPCVs were matched with at-risk inner city students who curated an exhibit of RPCV souvenirs.

Ethnic Dinners

CAPCA continued its tradition of hosting monthly dinners at ethnic restaurants throughout the Chicago area. Dinners provide opportunities for RPCVs to meet and network while tasting and learning about the food and traditions of the designated restaurant. They also serve as opportunities for CAPCA members to share information and recruit volunteers for its other activities. In 2006, dinners were held at venues including Mt. Everest (January), Daley's (February), Rodity's (March), Amarit (April), Rock Bottom Brewery (May), Millennium Park Concert (July), Andi's (September), Mama Desta's (October), Oak Park Council on International Affairs Annual Dinner (November), Map Room (November) and our annual holiday potluck at the Corinthian Yacht Club (December). Our March dinner celebrated the 45th anniversary of Peace Corps with special Peace Corps give-aways.

CAPCA has partnered with the Chicago Peace Corps Recruiting Office for several activities. In February, we co-sponsored a “Diversity Dinner” for RPCVs and prospective Peace Corps Volunteers. Additionally, CAPCA underwrote the cost of food for the Peace Corps Office’s annual nomination party in June. The Peace Corps office invites its prospective volunteers and their families to this event that gives them an opportunity to learn more about Peace Corps and answer their questions.

Volunteering

CAPCA aims to organize community service events during each quarter of the year. In January, volunteers joined forces with Chicago social service agency H.O.M.E. for activities that improved the life of low-income seniors. In May, a team of CAPCA volunteers participated in the Friends of the Chicago River Clean Up to spruce up a park at the river’s edge. In October, CAPCA volunteered with Gingko Organics, an organic garden in Uptown that provides food for homeless shelters.

Fundraising

CAPCA’s annual fundraising dinner, Founder’s Day, was held at the Loyola Museum of Art. Keynote speakers were Steve and Suzanne Franklin (Turkey 67-69). Steve is a Chicago Tribune reporter and Suzanne heads a local social service organization. A silent auction was held during the dinner. The event raised \$5,301.

CAPCA also sold 270 Madison RPCV calendars as a fundraising project. For the first time, we instituted two tier pricing and sold calendars to members for \$10 and non-members \$15. Calendar sales generated \$1449.

CAPCA Grants Program

CAPCA has been supporting Peace Corps Partnership projects for many years. In 2005, we formalized the grants program by creating deadlines, guidelines and a promotional brochure. CAPCA representatives spoke to future PCVs at the events sponsored by the Chicago Regional Peace Corps Office including the February Diversity Dinner and June Nomination Party.

In March, we provided the funding needed to complete the fundraising for LaGrange PCV’s Anthony Cotton’s Teacher Bungalow Project in Adanwomase, Ghana. The project will build a dorm for the teachers so they are able to stay overnight near the school. Transportation to the school had been unreliable and teachers missed many days of classes or arrived late. The total amount received from CAPCA donated \$1,848.67. Anthony provided periodic project updates to CAPCA and his mother Ruth spoke at several events.

In December, we gave \$4235 to fund a water system extension project in Orgochor, Kyrgyzstan. The project is managed by a Peace Corps volunteer from Lake Forest. The project will allow the community to extend its potable water supply 11 kilometers from the center of the community to a more remote area where the shepherds live. Due to poor water quality and shortage of water, the sheep wool was poor quality, the lambs were dying of intestinal disease and the cows were producing less milk. Access to potable water will improve the health of the animals result in an overall improvement of the economic health of the community.

In addition to donations through the Peace Corps Partnership program, CAPCA contributed to worthy causes that reflect the Third Goal. In August, we provided a \$500 grant to the Center for Art and Spirituality in International Development. They sponsor a group of high school students from Chicago’s Austin neighborhood who are educating their fellow students on the Millennium Development Goals.

NPCA Activities

NPCA Board

In September, CAPCA President Trina Janes was elected to the board of the National Peace Corps Association as Group Leaders Forum Coordinator. In this role, she also serves on the Executive Committee of the board.

Micro Enterprise Program

CAPCA has participated in NPCA’s micro-enterprise program for several years. In 2006, we doubled our investment from \$1000 to \$2000.

Mentoring

Chicago was selected as one of three cities for a pilot mentoring project managed by NPCA and funded by Peace Corps. Through the program, newly returned RPCVs will be matched with professionally established RPCVs.

Other Activities

CAPCA members are involved in planning several related activities. CAPCA's "Culture Shocks" played softball in the summer and volleyball in the winter. CAPCA members also organize a winter and summer trip to Camp Vista in Dundee, Wisconsin.

In closing, 2006 was a building year. We expanded the breadth of the CAPCA board and began moving forward to promote our activities including our CAPCA Grants Program. We are in a strong financial position and will be able to fund several Peace Corps Partnership projects.