

Friends Of Jamaica

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FALL

2010

NEWSLETTER

FOJ Grant Projects: Weh De Money A Go?

Mocho Primary School 4-H club sought to enhance the garden program with the help of FOJ. I am happy to report that this project was a success. The project benefited two 4-H Club advisors, one administrator, 16 4-H students, and six volunteers.



Vermi-composting

Goat Pen



Pineapple Planting

Seed Activity

Mocho Primary and 4-H Project

Participants gained experience variously in grant writing, basic accounting, and of course sustainable agricultural education. The learning will continue for years to come using the goat pen, vermi-compost bin and pineapple terracing as teaching tools. All participants had a good time and learned quite a bit. Thanks for giving these students an amazing opportunity!

Brixton Hill Primary School would like to thank you for your donation. With the \$50 US you provided we were able to plant four fruit tree seedlings in our schoolyard. The entire 4-H Club participated. Additionally, scores of other children took time out of their lunch breaks to lend a hand in the tree planting effort. Now these children can look forward to eating June plum, mango, avocado pear and Jamaican apple for many years to come.



Brixton Hill Primary School Fruit Tree Seedling Planting

Specifically, your donation was spent on purchasing fruit tree seedlings from a local farmer and some chicken wire fencing to protect them from goats. The P.T.A. and community members donated all the labor for this project, including: digging the holes, building the fences and instructing the students. Chicken manure planted with the seedlings was donated by Lennon High School, and nails to tack up the chicken wire was donated by the PTA.

Aeolus Valley All Age School received the shipment of books from FOJ.



Boxes of Books delivered to Aeolus All/Age School

FOJ funded a \$500 for books to be shipped to Aeolus All/Ages and \$300 for 1000 books sent to PCs from First Book.

The students and teachers are excited about the new reading materials and school supplies and now the teachers can use a new book every week for story time instead of repeating the same ones.

The students have a wider variety of books to check out. This is especially important for the beginning level readers. We plan in the upcoming months to start a library expansion in order to create a proper library space.

The expansion will include a reading area for the students and better shelving for the books, as well as an enrichment area.

We are grateful for your donation and would have been unable to complete the project without your support. We thank you again for going above and beyond. We will keep you updated on the library.

A Message from the FOJ Vice President

Welcome to another Friends of Jamaica Newsletter! We have a lot of exciting news, so let me give some highlights from the last few months and what we're looking at going forward.

As always, we have sent out grants to projects across the island, including one for a school garden at Mocho Primary and Infant School's 4-H club.

We're looking forward to the Peace Corps 50th anniversary celebrations which will overlap with Jamaica celebrating its own 50 years with Peace Corps. To celebrate that, Friends of Jamaica is helping to organize a batch of 50 small projects island-wide over the next year. Drop by <http://ServeJamaica.org> if you want to get involved.

Betty Karplus continues to be an amazing supporter of Peace Corps projects and contributes amazing amounts to keep topping up the Betty Karplus fund, which supports small volunteer project start-up costs.

Your membership money goes straight to these grants, so please remember to pay your dues, and spread the word to any RPCV/Ja friends who aren't members yet!

Similarly, if you have contacts on island who might benefit from a Friends of Jamaica grant, send them to <http://ServeJamaica.org>. We're always looking for new and exciting projects to help fund.

A Message from the Treasurer

Our time served was only a beginning. While our pictures and stories are poignant, they are a reflection on the past.

Most important is how our actions influence the days to come. With this in mind, we need to continue renewing our membership and leadership.

Please take a moment to consider if you might have time to contribute. If not, make sure that current and former Peace Corps Volunteers know we are here and welcome contributions of time and money.

Your involvement is what made the difference during your service, and this same involvement will be what makes the difference tomorrow for future Peace Corps Volunteers and Jamaica.

Web Yuh Deh? *New Members of the Board*



Jennifer Bert Group 77 (2006-2008) Environment, Castleton Gardens

Jennifer worked with the Castleton Development Committee for two years, developing the visitor attraction Castleton Gardens into a public garden, a project which received a small project assistance grant from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).



Shannon Rease Group 77 (2006-2008) Environment, Port Antonio

Shannon arrived in Port Antonio, to begin her Peace Corps assignment at the Portland Environment Protection Association. She completed a variety of environmental education projects in the local schools and secondary projects at an infirmary and in literacy education at a primary school. In 2009, she served as a PCVL in Kingston and spent ten months developing a literacy education training manual.

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary:

We were hoping you, the readers, donators, shakers of your communities, would like to suggest ideas to help celebrate the Peace Corps 50th Anniversary. Please submit all ideas the FOJ Yahoo User Group: secretary@servejamaica.org Subject 50th Anniversary

FOJ Project: Update:



Southern Regional Health Authority Chapelton Hospital

1 Muirhead Avenue,
Denbigh, Clarendon
Telephone: 986-4548/7869/9649
Facsimile: 986-9713

February 24, 2010
Ian Gottsman

Dear Ian:
The pedometers and tape measures are in full use right now, with a waiting list of twelve for those wanting to get into the rotation. One woman has lost 20 pounds in two months and is now in maintenance mode before she attempts to lose another in a year. Some are struggling to be consistent about their activity and dietary habits but are still wearing the pedometers, measuring their waist girths daily, and maintaining logs of that data. Clearly, their consciousness about their overweight/obesity has been raised. Once my husband and I get his health issues stabilized I hope to send pictures of happy clients.

Thank you to the Friends of Jamaica for their generous \$210 donation for this project. As I anticipated, the pedometers and tape measures are strong motivators as they provide objective ongoing information to the Jamaicans about their activity and fitness levels.
Sincerely,

Margaret Skrinar
US Peace Corps
Chapelton Hospital
Chapelton PO
Clarendon, JM, WI



Prime Minister Bruce Golding welcomed new Country Director of the United States Peace Corps, Carla Ellis, during her courtesy call at his office on Thursday, August 19. Ellis, who was formerly assigned to Suriname, is looking forward to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the corps in Jamaica next year.

FOJ is excited to welcome the new Peace Corps Jamaica Country Director Carla Ellis. We hope to have the opportunity to work closely the Peace Corps Office. Welcome Ms. Ellis.

Jamaica Brief by Deb Schultz Hi RPCVs

Group 80 and 81 are on island as well as a group of 16 RPCVs. It has been a challenging time for group as we have had our Country Director ET, have had the Health Sector eliminated and with that elimination, have lost two long time PC personnel (Joy Carey and Genevieve McDaniel). We are now settling into our new groups: Youth as Promised and Green Initiative. Our new Director is Carla Ellis. She transferred over from Suriname.

Some of the projects we are hearing about across the island seem to be working well although we still have to remind ourselves TJJ (this is Jamaica) when the meetings start an hour late or no one shows up if there isn't food (things don't change too much, do they?) There is a big push for fish sanctuaries, the reefs need our help so several volunteers are either in the process of starting one or trying to keep the Lion Fish population out of others. We have attended several fish cook outs highlighting the good taste of Lion Fish so hopefully they will catch on and allow the Parrot Fish a chance at survival. Other projects have been the Environmental Summer Camp in Robin's Bay (teaching about the sea, birds, land, plants, etc.), trail building in and around Portland, and eco tourism for the Blue Mountain and Negril.

Literacy and Sport are the focus of the Youth as Promise group and all island volunteers, after trying for months to establish projects in other areas, seem to end up in the classroom teaching reading. Good for Jamaica! A Ganar, a program that has traveled its way from Brazil north through much of South America and has landed on Jamaican shores, is being piloted as a way to educated those youth of 17-24 years of age using football (soccer) to build teamwork, self esteem and vocational skills.

My husband, Jeff and I have been working with Parenting Partners of the Caribbean to train trainers to lead Parenting Workshops. They have been wonderfully, eye opening experiences that we hope are sustainable.

Darian Book Aid has been terrific about sending PCVs books and most of us have taken advantage of this. Volunteers have opened up long forgotten libraries in schools, started reading corners at health centers and done peer reading activities.

You'll be happy to note that many of your projects have survived. I have measured foundations for the PC designed houses at Food for the Poor, worked the Jake's Triathlon to benefit the BREDS program in Treasure Beach (the Women's Center is thriving there as well), attended the Kite Festival in Ocho Rios, and visited PC established Literacy Centers. Well done all of you!

Update from the Treasurer

Checking Account (as of 2/28/2010)	2,583.91
Project (January 2010)	(646.99)
New Members (3/1/2010 to present)	665.00
Betty Karplus Fund	500.00
Checking Account (as of 10/11/2010)	3,101.92

Making a Difference -- The third goal of your Peace Corps service is to share your experience with people back home. [FirstPerson.com](http://www.FirstPerson.com) is providing you this opportunity. Go to the following link : <http://bit.ly/bvz1mo> to submit your pictures and story from your service in Jamaica. If you decide to post, send us a note and we will try to include your contribution in our next FOJ newsletter.

To join the Friends of Jamaica, and continue to support the Peace Corps in Jamaica, please make a contribution in one of two ways:

- Go to www.servejamaica.org/join.html, fill out the application, and mail your completed application and check to:
Mark Bellinger
2700 13th Road South, #385, Arlington, Virginia, 22204.
- Join the National Peace Corps Association and join the Friends of Jamaica too! Go to www.peacecorpsconnect.org/membership/, and use their secure website to pay by credit card. Not only do you become a member of the National Peace Corps Association, but you can join and contribute to the Friends of Jamaica as well.