

## MOVE OVER LOUIS VUITTON!

by Vincent D'Agostino, SOJO

**Vincent:** Yes, move over Louis Vuitton, Kate Spade, Dooney & Bourke, Dolce & Gabbana, and the rest of the unoriginal brand name labeled purses! The next famous purse designer will be a Swazi make!

**Blia:** Hello, cart before the horse! First we need sewing machines.

**Vincent:** Well, why don't you tell us how the idea came about?

**Blia:** I had been at site for about 5 months and had been approached by bomake to start a sewing income-generating project. Bomake had started one before I arrived,

however the Sewing Instructor took all the members' joining fees and left them high and dry.

**Vincent:** With so many dead end projects by YOU and other PCV's, aren't you afraid the same thing could happen to this project?

**Blia:** Of course it's one of my concerns as well as the communities, but this time the Sewing Instructor is from the community. The one beforehand was from Manzini and it makes a difference if you are from the community or not. My counterpart, Andile organizes all the meetings and has been integral in writing the proposal for funding. The Sewing Instructor, Gugu has been very active; she's been trying to secure locations for selling the items, has obtained all quotations for the project, and she's well respected by the organization members.

**Vincent:** What about handling the money, and the corruption and jealousy amongst community members?

**Blia:** Our Secretary Gcenekile has already put the money in IMBITA, which is a women's finance trust that promotes financial management for women and gives the bomake an opportunity to take out loans which would be difficult if they joined a regular bank.

**Vincent:** I should have done that with my Health Club. The make who was in charge, also held the money and of course, no, no, no they didn't listen to me, they didn't put the money into a bank account. The make just died, and of course, now no one knows where the money is.

**Blia:** Lindiwe (former Program Manager) had referred me to IMBITA because it is a reputable organization and her sister-in-law works for them. So we invited them to the meeting and bomake decided to join IMBITA.



**Louis Vuitton's Competition: Watch OUT!**

**Vincent:** What kind of products are bomake going to produce?

**Blia:** Bomake are going to make Church uniforms, since there is a large Zionist population in the Nyanyali area, school uniforms, and African print purses.

**Vincent:** How did the idea of the African print purses begin?

**Blia:** Jill Granberg, a former PCV had seen a purse I made Tegan and said I should ask bomake if they were interested in making this product. I made one for my sisi and bomake started inquiring. I taught my sisi how to make one and she taught bomake.

**Vincent:** By the way, you still owe my make a purse.

**Blia:** I'm on strike!

**Vincent:** Whoa! You need a real vacation! Have you always sewn? Or is it something you picked up in the sweat shops?

**Blia:** No, I picked up sewing here. We have a lot of free time here. A couple years back I had attempted to make my niece a Tellytubby costume for Halloween; it ended in disaster. She was a pumpkin that year.

**Vincent:** I wanted to copy your sewing

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**Safety and Security w/Mfanafuthi Vilakati, S&S**

A BIG HELLO goes out to all PC Swaziland Volunteers at their respective sites.

May I also take this time to WELCOME TO SWAZILAND all the Group 4 trainees. It was a great delight for me and PCSSO John Allen to meet them and share information with them. To all serving PCVs, please support the trainees and share your best safety and security practices with them. A big thumbs up to the PCVs who participated in the Safety & Security sessions.

KEEPING WARM is a challenge that everyone in the country is facing and I would like to sound a word of caution to all PCV/Ts that no matter how tempting it may be to bring an *Imbawula* into your room, please DO NOT! *Imbawulas* are fires that are made inside bucket sized tin containers with holes punched on its sides to allow air to come in and promote the combustion. These have caused a loss of many lives because of being left inside a room over the night. These emit carbon dioxide smoke which kills the occupants of the house in their sleep. So please do not be tempted.

To the new PCTs please watch your bags and wallets when on public transport and towns. Avoid looking lost and try to walk as if you know where you are going to. Shopkeepers, security guards and policemen are the best choice you will have to make when asking for directions. Also, please avoid moving around at night. If something seems suspicious or makes you feel unsafe please let us know the first time it happens.

May I once again repeat the new EAP code words just in case someone missed the last issue of the SOJO; the changes are as follows:

- Skateboard is now Record
- Bicycle is now Tape
- Motorcycle is now CD
- Land cruiser is now Ipod
- All clear *remains* All clear

Other S&S short notes from me;

1. Always keep your rooms locked and windows closed when leaving.
2. Do make use of security gadgets for securing your doors.
3. Put empty bottles on the inside of your windows so that an intruder may knock them over and wake you up in the process.
4. Always try to carry loose coins when catching public transport to avoid unnecessary hassles.
5. INYANDZALEYO! means "please help me".

Until next month keep safe. If you have any safety and security concerns or questions, let me or another PC staff member know.

Ngiyabonga/ I thank you.

By Mfanafuthi Vilakati / SSC, PC Swaziland.

**VINCENT'S CAMP**

Vincent D'Agostino is requesting your assistance in making his camp BIGGER and BETTER than Blia's; Vincent is hosting a camp the following week from August 28-Sept 1 at his site, Sitsatsaweni. He needs volunteers for CARNIVAL DAY, OLYMPIC DAY, and MOVIE DAY. Please contact him if you are interested at 624-3754. (oh yeah and Caitlin is having a camp the same week but she has all the help she needs)

**In Brief**

**String Board Games**

If you are in dire need of a String Board Game contact Susan Olson ASAP. She currently has six in stock and a baby one to spare.

**Volleyball Association**

The Volleyball Association Office is located inside the big building with the Chinese Restaurant and the Internet Place. The contact number for the Volleyball Association is 605-6042.

**Volunteer Lounge**

VAC is requesting that you always turn off lights, heater, and computers before you leave. Also, remember to pick up after yourself. In addition, don't use the last copy of any form; khumbula to make copies!!!

**COS DVD**

Blia Yang is requesting that all Group 2 volunteers submit pictures, SMS's, and quotes for the GROUP 2 COS DVD by mid August.

**Blia's Camp**

Blia Yang is requesting your assistance; Blia is hosting a camp from August 21-25 at her site. She needs volunteers to assist in arts and crafts, sports, and logistics. Please contact her if you are interested at 624-3758.

**CHAT and CHAPS**

The CHAT and CHAPS team are requesting any PCV's from GROUP 3 who will be willing to take over the CHAT/CHAPS project. Please submit your requests to Kate Menninger at 624-3622 by mid July.

**The LUCKY Artist**

If you need or want a painting done by the world reknown artist Lucky Mbhamali you can contact him at 638-5938; He lives in Maphugwane near Siteki; Tell him you know Nonthando (Jacque) and Pathi (Luke).

**GROUP 2 COS**

Don't forget to submit your vote GROUP 2 (for the Orion) for Group 2's COS venue by July 3rd.

**NONO'S**

You can now order your NONO's pizza; they deliver now!!! The phone number is 404-8628

**MAILBOXES**

Remember to empty out your mailboxes (Eh-em!-Tegan, Andi, Angela, Alix, and Vincent).

**GROUP 3 T-SHIRTS!**

Please submit designs for your T-shirts via email swazisojournal@yahoo.com or via Justine's or Kim's mailbox by July 24th.

# Director's Chat w/Pattie Austin, CD



Greetings to all PCVs! I have news about the COS Conference for Group Two and Swearing In for Group Four but first, for all PCVs, I want to clarify Peace Corps policy regarding the Young Heroes program. I know that the first group of Volunteers in Swaziland were instrumental in designing the Young Heroes program and that former PCVs are still actively involved. **However, we have been informed that it is a violation of Peace Corps regulations for currently serving PCVs to be actively engaged in Young Heroes activities.** These restrictions are based on Peace Corps policy which prohibit Volunteers from involvement in fund raising and from any appearance of endorsing a particular organization. The prohibited activities include photographing orphans, serving as the middle-men between NERCHA and the families, facilitating financial transactions or monitoring Young Hero family utilization of sponsorship funds. Volunteers CAN identify families by sharing names and locations with NERCHA employees who can follow through (independent of PCVs) to photograph the family. Some Volunteers have raised very valid concerns about expectations created in communities regarding PCV financial assistance, questions and resentments from communities about family selection and queries regarding sustainability when Volunteers leave the country. As a result of policy constraints and PCV concerns, PCVs must limit their Young Heroes involvement to sharing information with NERCHA staff for NERCHA follow through. If you have been actively engaged with Young Heroes activities described above, please stop doing so immediately. I have met on several occasions with Dr Derek Von Wissell of NERCHA to discuss PCV involvement with the program and he understands the limitations placed on PCVs. If you would like to discuss this further or have questions, I am happy to meet with you.

Now, on to COS. Group Two's COS Conference will take place September 7,8 and 9. The venue choice is currently under consideration by Group Two. In early August Group 2 Volunteers will receive a COS Manual which will give information about the Conference and COS activities. Nwando has some important admin issues to discuss with you regarding decisions about your individual travel plans.

Swearing In for Group 4 is scheduled for August 10 at the Royal Swazi Convention Center. We have invited the Inkoshakati La Matsebula and Deputy Minister Ndlovu from the new Ministry of Regional Development and Youth. A limited number of PCVs who have had substantial roles at PST will be invited but regrettably its not an all-volunteer event.

## Angela's Lit Box

by Angela Galletta, PCV, Nhlngano



### ...Most Illuminating

I was going to put off writing about this one until I understood it better, but I'm starting to realize that I'll never have it all figured out, so here goes. My most recent great read was Jonathan Safran Foer's Everything is Illuminated. I think it's safe to say that this is the best book I read while in Swaziland (and I've read quite a few).

Why is it the best? That's hard to say. The plot is confusing (parts of the storyline don't even make sense), half the characters don't speak English, and the author jumps from one time period to another with no warning. Worst of all, the great mysteries that the reader along with the main character is supposed to discover never come to light. So far, doesn't sound very

promising. Most contemporary American novels are characterized by great shocking family secrets that readers can vicariously devour. In this novel, we know the secrets are there but, like our main character Jonathan Safran Foer (not a coincidence I'm sure), we realize that sometimes things are better left in the past. Where they belong. Perhaps our author's title is meant ironically, but I have a feeling it's completely sincere.

To start with, the reader follows a Ukrainian family trying to run a tourist business in not-so-touristy-post WWII- Eastern Europe. Alexander and his grandfather are coerced into leading our "hero" Jonathan around the countryside looking for Augustine, a woman who supposedly saved his grandfather from the Nazis fifty years ago. Along with their adven-

tures, the text is punctuated with letters written between Alexander and Jonathan, all written after their trip. Meanwhile, the reader is intermittently taken to the town of Trachimbrod, the town where Jonathan's grandfather is from, and given the whole legendary, sordid, and crazy history. Throughout all this, there's a sense of foreboding. Somehow we just know that all these stories are going to come together in a terrific explosion...but it never comes. Confused? Me too, and I actually read the book. So why is this my favorite? Because it's not so neatly packaged and distilled like most contemporary American work. It's the best because I haven't figured it out yet, but I really wish I could.

## NEWS & NOTES

### From the Peace Corps Website

WASHINGTON, D.C., June 2, 2006 – When Evangeline Shuler, born in 1906 and who served as a volunteer in the 1960s, arrived at a recent 45th anniversary event for the Peace Corps, it seemed almost everyone in the room wanted to hear her stories. Shuler, of Seattle, turns 100 on June 4, and she is the oldest known returned Peace Corps volunteer alive today. Shuler joined the Peace Corps with her husband in 1967 at the age of 62, serving as an applied nutrition volunteer in India.

Unlike most of today's pre-arranged Peace Corps assignments, at her post in Maharashtra State, the Indian government had given volunteers the option to essentially do whatever it was that the villagers needed. Having spent much of her life dedicated to promoting literacy and starting basic libraries in small towns, Shuler saw this as an opportunity to make a real difference. Shuler urged villagers to plant their own gardens on their small plots of land next to their homes. She taught them to use a sewing machine; to build smokeless chulas (stoves) out of dung, water and mud; and to make "soak pits" which drained their unpaved streets. In addition, Shuler worked with a Rotarian friend in the U.S. to collect money to buy supplies and books for the village school children. Shuler said her biggest accomplishment in the Peace Corps was working with children and women, and helping the villagers make soak pits.

Shuler found the people of her host country to be open and friendly, and because she and her husband were older than the average volunteer in the area, they received special attention. Once, on a typically over-crowded bus, passengers intercepted thieves trying to steal her wallet.

A year and three months into their Peace Corps service, her husband contracted meningitis and died. At that point, Shuler could have easily given up and returned to the U.S., but after a short trip home, she went back to India to fulfill the service and commitment they had begun together. She has not returned since, but admitted she would consider it.

The month has passed very quickly with PST preparations and the arrival of Group 4 trainees on June 9th. Thanks to all PCVs who hosted our new group for the "shadowing" site visits. Your hospitality is very much appreciated and has been the highlight of PST thus far. It was also great to see so many of you at the braai at Ngwane on June 24<sup>th</sup>.

Site development and host family orientations are winding down and the program staff has shifted gears and is in the process of matching PCTs to their future sites in preparation for the Counterpart Workshop and OJT portion of PST beginning on July 19th.

**Update:** In late May, the Baylor COE had planned to offer a one-day workshop on ARV adherence for PCVs and their counterparts who work in the local clinics in their communities. The workshop was cancelled and was to be re-scheduled for July. It now looks as if this could be further delayed. As soon as we get definite dates from Dr. DeLouis, we will get word out to the PCVs who have expressed an interest in this workshop.

Vumile Dlamini at UNICEF has requested that all Group Two PCVs who participated with their counterparts in the String Game workshop in October 2005 reconvene for a one-day workshop. They are interested to hear more about you and your counterparts' experiences in using this education tool in the rural communities. The timing and venue are still to be determined but we will notify you as soon as we know the details.

**Reminder:** There have been a number of PCVs who have forgotten to notify the APCD of their return from leave outside of Swaziland. We absolutely must hear from you the day you return from leave so that we have confirmation of your safe return to site. We cannot remove your name from the whiteboard in the office and cannot assure PC/HQ that we can account of your whereabouts until you have checked in with us. We are counting on PCVs to be responsible in complying with PC leave regulations so that we do not have to be heavy-handed and charge additional leave days for Volunteers who neglected to check in. Thank you.

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income-generating project idea, but I had a dilemma trying to find a needle in a haystack. Literally. I was trying to help start one and we had to locate a "certain" needle in Manzini. I went to Manzini and found the shop. I asked the blind man to help me find the needle. He said, "Can't you see I'm blind?"

**Blia:** Focus here, why are we talking about your non-existent sewing income-generating project?

**Vincent:** You had mentioned that bomake are still trying to obtain sewing machines?

**Blia:** Yes, we are fundraising our project through Peace Corps Partnership, which requires that the community contributes 25% and the 75% will be from donors, friends, and families.

**Vincent:** Any tips on the Peace Corps Partnership proposal?

**Blia:** I would get started early, because it takes about 3 months for funding to be complete depending on the project budget size. Ask Susan for more information; she is the link between you and Drew Pearlstein, who posts your project on the Peace Corps Partnership website.

**Vincent:** What has been successful aspect of this project thus far?

**Blia:** Bomake will come up to me after meetings and ask me about HIV/AIDS, sexual reproductive health; some have even asked me to go with them to get tested. Bomake in the group are my greatest support in the community. They spread the word when there are meetings, not even related to the sewing project, they encourage their kids to attend the Boys & Girls Club we started. Early on when we first began with our meetings 3 bomake had come up to me and had given me these great big hugs. They also began bringing me corn, muffins, and all kinds of food. As you can obviously see,

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# “It’s Not My Issue”

by Vincent D’Agostino, SOJO

When I first considered profiling Arlene Shaffer, aka JABU, or as I pronounce it JABOO, I contemplated leaving the profile blank with just a Jabuesque picture. I know, *how appropriate...* but then I reconsidered. WHY? Well because fact is stranger than fiction and in this case, definitely more entertaining than white space.

She’s the mysterious princess from stateside CALI. She goes by many aliases such as Jabu, Princess Jabu, Arlene, Rosa, and the Mex. Why Jabu? Because that’s the name her host family, whom so happened to be raided for drugs by the community police during training, gave her. Why Princess Jabu? Because she’s a demanding, self-absorbed, oblivious princess. Why Arlene? Because that’s the name her 90 plus year old American Babe assigned to her at her miraculous birth. Why Rosa? Because she’s of Mexican descent. Why Mex? Cause she’s Mexican.

Here’s a girl who’s mum about anything personal. She tends to get lost in space on her own rocketship. She drinks 4-6 litres of water a day and is found at all times with a water bottle. She carries lip balm with her at all times in case there’s a chapped emergency. She sleeps in late leaving notices up on windows. She hides her acts of flatulation by displacing blame onto others. She doesn’t keep in contact with any of her friends; she tends to get “over” them quite easily. She’s a diva who tends to make scenes at drag shows upstaging the DIVA. She’s constantly arriving late, if at all...and unannounced. She likes to scream obscenities from buses when visiting other volunteers’ sites. She’s an animal lover who buys inyama to braai for her little bestfriends; she built an NCP not for orphans but for stray dogs in her backyard. She finally painted her house blue, purple, and black after a year of residence; she lives on her own without a host family in teacher housing because her site was still under construction. She talks as if she’s hearing impaired; loud and vociferous. She talks and walks like a cop; bull legged. In fact, she is the missing link between us and well space. She’s not of our kind, and she’s not of

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I’ve packed on a few kilos; however, I thought the gesture was so special, so sweet. I almost cried!!!

**Vincent:** Please, you are so like Oprah – you can cry on command. So when do you think bomake will start producing the African-print purses?

**Blia:** As soon as we raise enough money through the Peace Corps Partnership.

**Vincent:** Is this some ploy to raise awareness to your project? Are you advertising yourself? Are you selling out?

**Blia:** Your time’s up, LD. I gotta blow this joint, I’m going on a REAL vacation!

Friends and family can go to [www.peacecorps.gov/](http://www.peacecorps.gov/) to donate to Blia Yang’s Sewing Project as well as Francie Picknell, Andi Pietruszka, and Molly Pacenta’s projects.



Working Hard???...Work and Jabu are Antonyms



Jabu’s Working Hard Transferring Skills

this place. She speaks a different language; in fact everything about her is foreign from the rest of this planet.

However, the truth is a many faceted diamond. Sure, it’s the diamond in the rough when it comes to Arlene Shaffer. But the fact remains, she’s still a diamond.

This girl looks younger than most of us despite the fact she’s at the ripe age of 29. Her complexion is flawless, something straight out of Hollywood. Her hair falls perfectly in place as if she’s just walked off a photo shoot. She’s fit, active, and quite the healthy cactus. A world traveler by nature, she signed up for Peace Corps to explore her own horizon beyond hostels to find her niche in the world of development. For the past 21 months, Arlene has preoccupied herself with NCP development for orphans in her community. She’s also worked with a group of bomake to plant sweet potatoes to sell for income generation as well as home consumption. She works closely with Rural Health Motivators in her community visiting patients and running one day workshops for them. Also, she works with the youth in school where she sent the Career Guidance Counselor/Teacher to the Peace Corps Lifeskills Workshop and where she implements the Lifeskills Manual in class. To be quite honest, that’s all I got out of her; she never gave me the rights for her story. This is an unauthorized biography of a recluse, elusive mystery of star quality. She’s an enigma; an anomaly.

One thing’s for certain when it comes to Jabu: if you have an issue, grab a tissue. If you have issues, then you better grab a magazine rack for them; because if it doesn’t concern Jabu, then it was never her issue to begin with.

crossroads

Rebuttal: For the Love of a Nation

by Tegan Callahan and Mel O'Farrell

In reaction to the "For the Love of a Nation" article in the June Sojo, we found ourselves reflecting back on our last 21+ months in Swaziland. As volunteers entering the final months of our service, our conclusions as to "what Swaziland has", "what Swaziland needs," and "what America lacks" are notably different than Ms. Kanney's.

We acknowledge, as Ms Kanney does, the beauty in Swaziland.

Rarely in the States will someone accompany you halfway home, or put down everything and be happy to see you when you drop by unexpectedly. Instead, we Americans say good-bye at the door and pre-arrange our visits. Even the most casual interactions are scheduled.

However, there are probably more things we are relieved to leave behind. Certainly no PCV has enjoyed witnessing excessive corporal punishment. The lack of acknowledgement of the importance child development is equally exasperating. Furthermore, no female volunteer appreciates her status as a second-class citizen, albeit she is elevated above her Swazi counterpart due to her position as a foreigner.

Most importantly, we see PCVs being disturbed and utterly frustrated by the lack of ownership taken for the AIDS situation by most members of our communities. We know it can't be expected that every Babe will be a champion activist on the issue of AIDS. However, despite increased education and targeted intervention attempts, the general population has failed to change their behavior to any extent great enough to turn the epidemic around.

After recently evaluating Swaziland, a prominent AIDS researcher articulated well what we find to be our main frustration. He wrote, "the challenge is to convince people of the danger that the epidemic poses...that HIV/AIDS exists, that it has the potential to spread to individuals including themselves, and that it will pose a credible threat to the nation. Achieving this in Swaziland is still not easy."

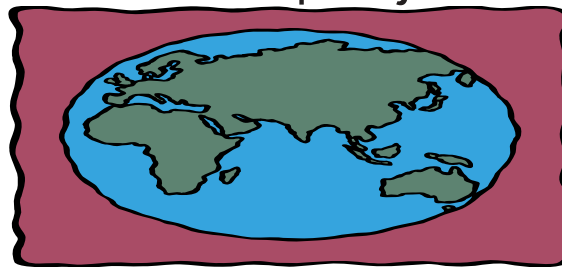
This said, it is not wrong to identify optimism in Swaziland. We all have examples that give us hope. Yet, after nearly two years of talking and teaching about HIV, the absence of response in our communities is enervating. We will close our service holding on to our strands of hope, but ultimately we are tired.

We don't intend to dishearten those of you who are starting your service, or who are at their "hump." Make sure you enjoy all the pleasant moments Swaziland has to offer. But also remember, we are at the epicenter of the global AIDS crisis. It is not easy. As Derek von Wissell told us when we arrived, it's hell. But ultimately, you are here. That is the only thing that can bring you comfort and the only thing you can control.

Kit # 1 Schedule

- Caitlin
Kate
Brigid
Lauren

World Map Project

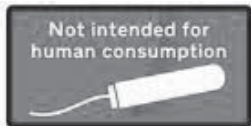


Kit # 2 Schedule

- Jess
Jenny
Will
Jana
Brenda
Derek

World maps have started to pop up in Swaziland! I want to just outline the project for those of you who still might have questions. YES, you can paint a world map if you haven't talked to me before. There is paint for approximately 25 world maps (depending on size). However, there are only two "kits" floating around the country. The kit includes the manual on how to grid the map, a color coded version of the manual, a long level, ruler, tape measurer, pencils and erasers, buckets and small cups for mixing paint, brushes and paint rollers. While paint can be picked up at the office, there is a rough schedule for the kits (see above). Even as some supplies dwindle, volunteers can buy some of their own supplies to fill in the gaps. If you are still interested send me an SMS and I will put you next on the appropriate list!

Thanks, Tegan



Lauren's Advice to the Ladies



Because the medical office recently informed us ladies that they will no longer be supplying us with tampons and other feminine hygiene products, Lauren has submitted a few economical and reusable alternatives. These are a few websites you can check out.

www.mooncup.com - \$34.58 (Takes credit cards and Paypal)

www.divacup.com - \$32.50 + 3.25 S&H (Takes credit cards, but they are cheaper at betterlife.com)

www.keeper.com - \$35.00 + 2.00 S&H (Made of rubber)

This she had to say: "I have a Diva cup and highly recommend it. Diva and Mooncup are made from silicon so they are better for avoiding latex if you are allergic." The cups can apparently last up to ten years if cared for properly. Check it out ladies!

## homeward bound

*Highlights from an email Jacque Eisenberg recently sent home to family and friends preparing them for the reinvented Jacque*

When I see you for the first time after 2 years and tell you how fat you've gotten, please don't be offended. Fat is a compliment here, if I say you've gotten skinny/lost weight-that's when you know I'm being a punk.

If we are in a nice restaurant and I pick up the food with my bare hands and burp and refer to the restroom as "the toilet," please excuse me, I'm a bush girl these days.

If we finish drinking and eating our Circle K snacks and I roll down the car window to dispose of the trash; please remind me that littering is not accepted in the states.

If you introduce me to your male friends and I immediately become a bitch and tell them to \_\_\_\_\_, please excuse me and remind me that there really are trustworthy good men in this world.

If you ask me to meet you at the movies, bar, restaurant after 6pm/dark and I look at you like you're crazy, it's because for the past 2 years it's been unsafe to leave my shelter after dark. Unless, of course, I'm attending the ever popular Friday and Saturday all night events (aka, funerals).

If you have a headache and ask me for some Tylenol and I give you a valium, please excuse my mistake. Every type of pill here, no matter what the use, is referred to as a "tablet."

Let it be known to all prospective husbands out there that I now value myself at 25 cows; anything less would be an insult.

If we're having a slumber party and in the middle of the night I get up and pull out a bucket from under my bed and proceed to go to the bathroom in it and throw it out the window, kindly remind me that (even though it's dark outside) it's safe to walk down the hallway to the bathroom.

If I invite you over and you walk in to find brooms and mops propped up on chairs with my underwear hanging off of them, please don't be offended-I'm not used to hanging my undergarments outside in public (or better yet, using that wonderful invention called a washer and dryer).

If we meet at the beach and you show up in typical beach attire (aka shorts) and I look at you like you're a prostitute, please forgive me. Showing thighs in Africa is like showing breasts in America; my babies haven't seen the light of day in 2 years.

If you ask me a yes or no question and I answer with a booming "YEBO" please remind me that nobody here speaks SiSwati.

Heads up! I go to sleep literally when the cows come home and wake up when the roosters coo and thus gotten quite accustomed to my 10 hours of sleep per night and can't function off anything less.

If you invite me over for a nice dinner party and I make the nice

gesture of bringing boxed wine, please know that it's a compliment. We save boxed wine for special occasions, normally, it's just twist off top wine.

If I race your dog to get the food you've just dropped on the floor, please remind me that it's a "5 second rule" and not the "5 hour/day" rule I've become accustomed to.

I apologize in advance for my disgusting bathroom habits, but I no longer find it necessary to flush the toilet or wash my hands-everytime I use the bathroom. Simply give me some hand sanitizer and I'll be on my way.

If we get into a car and I bust out Celine Dion, Westlife, Phil Collins, Lionel Richie or any other boy band, please remind me that they are not cool and kindly switch the station.

Just like Santa and the Easter Bunny, please also remind me that Worldwide Wrestling Federation (WWF) is in fact NOT REAL.

If I flash you while we are paying for dinner because I have to reach into my bra to collect my money (both paper and coin), please ask me to wait outside and buy me a purse for Christmas.

If I call you and hang up, it means that I'm thinking about you but I think I can't afford the actual call. If it takes 20 text messages to make movie plans with me, please send me one and remind me that phone calls are unlimited/free and text messaging is simply uncool and a waste of time.

If you tell me you've had a flu recently and I corner you and inquire about the last time you were tested for HIV, please remind me that in fact getting a flu/cold in America doesn't automatically mean you've acquired HIV.

If your name has a C or Q in it and I throw in some random click, please excuse my SiSwati. Along those lines, this might help decipher some of our initial communication hang-ups:

Sponge/foam=mattress, boom=gate, private=cars, fish=vans, shame/EISH=sorry that's happening to you.

I apologize in advance for taking extra long to pass/hand/grab/shake hands. I think I can only use one hand (my right) with the left hand lovingly holding the right arm.

If you are one of my million friends who have gotten engaged over the last 2 years, please forgive my engagement present of a live chicken. It's actually quite an honor here. Just give it back to me with a bucket, some boiling water and a somewhat sharp knife and I'll be back in 30min with lunch.

**"Coming in from the outside to hang up posters doesn't work. You have to convince people that they have rights worth fighting for, and that progress is feasible. That's when tests and posters and condoms start to make a difference."-Dr. Peter Piot, director of UNAIDS**

Letter Excerpts from AMERICAN CHILDREN to Blia Yang, A Swaziland PCV

A Watch and A Painting

"I heard that there is no A/C there in Swicherland. So what does it look like in Swicherland. Hmmm? I'm wondering. Well when you get this letter tell me. I miss you and March 26 is my Birthday it's coming up."

"Do you ever worry about Westnice virus infected mosquitoes biting you and giving you the virus?"

"Do you feed the animals there?"

"It is ridiculous how fat America is. Most of the people at Green Wood Lakes Middle School are somewhat over-weight."

"I named my fish Lucky because sometime I forget to feed him for a long time and he still survives."

"I am sorry you are getting home sick...I remember when I went to camp for a week and I got homesick!"

"Why don't you have plumbing?"

"You really don't have electricity and tv? I still don't believe that you must be bored."

"I am sending you a box of Milano cookies. If they are stale give them to the giraffes."

"I would like for you to send me a suviner from Swaziland. Something little not big or too spensive."

"How is it speaking Swahili?"

"Do you like South Park?Do you have a VCR and tv over there? I'll tape the shows and see if Mrs. Ayres can send them."

"You should miss all of your friend a lot since you left them."

"Ben is doing great. He is going yo daycare. He's says word lie die, now, E, Boo..."

"I am very glad to hear you are doing great. I bet it is very hot, bug infested and dirty there. But all over beautiful."

"The sun is shining in Florida and the weather is beautiful don't you wish you were here?"

"About that guy who talked low about you at the meeting remember...Great spirits have always encounted violent opposition from meediocre minds."

Blia's friend, John Sheetz, is a PCV in Ukraine, and he recently sent this poetic email to Blia. Interpret as you may!

Imagine a beautiful, expensive watch. Imagine the workmanship that helped to create it. Each piece and part is precisely crafted, calibrated and fitted. Each piece builds on the others, dropped carefully into place in the proper order, until the last piece, no more critical than the rest and yet no less, is fitted. At that proper moment, when the last piece falls, the clock snaps to life, as if it has always been running and will always run, but when in fact it had a definite moment of completion. The watch will continue to keep time without human interaction, always offering the same usefulness to those who need it, but indifferent to the existence of such a need or to whom has it.

Now imagine a beautiful painting. The artist starts with a blank canvas, exactly like so many others, but yet with some intrinsic, simplistic beauty of its own. He then piles on background, colors on top of colors, sometimes working quickly and at once, sometimes slowly or in pieces over years. Eventually a picture begins to appear, and there is a point, when satisfied or not, the artist will stop, but he knows the work is really never finished. He has poured his soul into his work, but the end goal is to sell his work, and he will call it complete when he thinks someone will buy it.

This is my most current analogy for life in Ukraine. It is a comparison of American and Ukranian project planning. Each ends with a masterpiece, but the process is so different. Trying to place a clock into a painting, without extraordinary talent, will almost certainly look ridiculous. This is often how I feel, an American in a strictly Ukranian context; however while recently planning a project with a Ukranian friend, I noticed that I have slipped slightly and casually over to the dark side of no deadlines and no certainties. Planning here is really a process of ever changing circumstances, and the most successful projects flow with these sometimes precarious situations, instead of trying to swim against them, but that means accepting a great degree of uncertainty and putting objects out for "sale" when you aren't so sure they are done to your liking, but you are pretty sure no one will notice the difference. Like art, project planning here is less of a thing or product and more of a process, an interaction. In America, projects and causes exist because of their own intrinsic worth and try to attract supporters and participants. Here, the cause exists solely to serve its audience. Without an observer, there is no art.

Eldladi Corner: Justine's One-Pot Mexican Black Beans

- Ingredients:
1/2- 3/4 c. Black Beans
1 c. Rice
1 tsp. oil
1 Green pepper (chopped)
1/2 Onion chopped
1 Tomato chopped
1-2 Fresh lemons or 1/2 c. lemon juice
Cumin
Pepper
Salt

Soak beans overnight. Keep the dark, murky bean liquid they are canned or soaked in and boil the beans in this. When they are on the soft side, add the rice and boil them until all the liquid has been absorbed and the rice is done cooking. Add more water if you need it along with some salt. Then, sautee the green peppers and onions in some oil. Add this directly to the bean and rice mixture along with the chopped tomatoes. Squeeze or pour the lemon juice over the mixture, add a generous amount of cumin and black pepper, and voila! Dinner is served!

REMINDER! REMINDER!

Please (sicela) submit all kinds/types of submissions from poetry, short stories, journal entries, gossip, soft & hard corps, news stories, hints, tips, recipes, reviews, etc...anything and everything you could think of that is SOJO worthy!



"You're a nobody unless you've made the SOJO gossip column!"



**Gossip Column**

- Vincent is back on the SOJO staff.
- Jacque's ETing to go back to school.
- Pattie's neutering her cat.
- Justine's puppy ate itself to death.
- RSS has been condemned.
- Justine's searching for love in Paris.
- Kim went back home for a wedding.
- Blia and Jabu are lost in Mozambique on some tropical island.
- Gavin backed out of the Mozambique trip because he didn't realize there was a beach at the islands.
- Justine's dogs have fleas.
- Justine's make had a baby boy.
- Vincent's sisi and life skills teacher passed away.
- Vincent, Caitlin, and Blia are heading to Zambia to meet Uncle Tommy.
- Vincent hosted another movie weekend where he showed Scary Movie 2, Madonna videos, and Old School to Christian boys.
- Caitlin's bringing her workshop to Vincent's community.
- Alyson's 10K run was a success.
- Group 3 is no longer the NEWBIES.
- Group 4 has been officially crowned the NEWBIES.
- One of the 27 NEWBIES ET'd to go back home for a boyfriend.
- One of the 27 NEWBIES ET'd to go back home because site is too isolated.
- Swaziland is under attack by the Invasion of the Asians.
- Pattie and Shirley are sporting new hairdos.
- Justin Knox showed up at the July 4th Braii.
- Vincent graciously washed Justine's red stained panties.
- Derek's friend passed out on him in a kombie.
- A teacher at Blia's school didn't like the fact she painted the Ocean blue for the World Map Project.
- Caitlin and Jacque worked on a World Map in Caitlin's community.
- NoNo's is now delivering.
- Vincent has already packed his suitcase.
- Jana bought down comforters and pillows for her parents; they arrived June 27th.
- Blia has 40 vacation days left.
- Jana's American babe is going on a hunting trip in Kruger while Jana and her American make pamper themselves.
- Kate can catch her own vomit
- Derek and Vincent slept together.

You know you're **HARD CORPS** when...

- ....you've dropped raw meat in your water bucket and still continue to use the water to drink and bathe in.
- ...you still use meat that's been nibbled on by a cat.
- ...you urinate on yourself because the wind blew it in your direction and you fail to clean up the mess.
- ...friends use the same pee bucket.
- ...you've begun to consider a third year to your 27 month prison sentence.



You know you're **Soft Corps** when...

- ...you still tuck your mosquito net in at night.
- ...you purchase down comforter and down pillows for your family that's coming in.
- ...you've begun to pack and give your belongings away.
- ...you've already packed a suitcase and you've still got 5 months left of service.
- ...you begin bathing everyday.
- ...you sleep with 6 blankets.



**TIME CAPSULE**  
Back in the Land of OZ



**Worldwood**

- Saddam Hussein believes the United States will have to seek his help to quell the bloody insurgency in Iraq.

**Americawood**

- In Denver, a gunman opened fire inside a sprawling Safeway Inc. warehouse Sunday, killing one person and wounding five others.
- U.S. Population to hit 300 million in 2006.

- Containment of a 4,200-acre wildfire just north of Sedona, Arizona grew to 50 percent by Sunday night.

- Tennessee executes the second person in 45 years.

**Sportswood**

- Miami Heat won the NBA Championship.

**Sciencewood**

- A 176-year-old tortoise reputedly discovered by Charles Darwin has died in an Australian zoo.

- Xiku the chain-smoking chimpanzee has almost kicked his deadly habit in China, but it has taken a beer or two to help get him through detox.

**Healthwood**

- Impotence common in men with sleep apnea.
- European Muslims resort to virginity ploys such as Hymen repair and fake virginity certificates.

**Hollywood**

- Nicole Kidman married Keith Urban.
- Backstreet Boy Kevin Richardson is leaving the boyband.
- Aaron Spelling died at 83.

**Weirdwood**

- Man gobbles down 22 hotdogs in 12 minutes.
- A former handyman has won more than \$400,000 in a lawsuit over a penile implant that gave him a 10-year erection.
- Saddam Hussein ended hunger strike after just one meal.

July (Kholwane) - Cows in Desperate Times

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30	31					Caitlin&Vincent & Blia leave for Zambia Gavin and Francie leave for Tofu Jessica Returns from Moz.
2 Amy&Lauren&Craig &Michelle&Angela & Alix Return from Mozambique	3	4 Simon's Bday Independence Day (Office Closed)	5 Gavin and Francie Return from Tofu	6	7 German Nite @Happy Valley Hotel Des&Lewis leave for Mozambique	8 Joe Delgiorno Bday
9 Des&Lewis Return from Mozambique	10	11 Kevin Okung Returns Caitlin&BliaReturn from Zambia Julie Z. leaves for JHB	12 Julie Z. Returns from JHB	13 Vincent returns from Zambia Group 3 Grief and Loss WKSHP	14 Justine's Bday Samantha's Bday	15
16 Justine returns from France Jana Returns from Pretoria	17	18	19	20	21 Alyson leaves for Knysa	22
23 Simanga's Bday	24 Caitlin's Peer Educator WKSHP @Sitsatsaweni Alyson Returns from Knysa	25	26 Mfanafuthi's Bday SOJO Production	27 Desiree's Bday	28 Essays for National Girls' Conference Due Angela leaves for Capetown	29 Mel's Bday

The Swazi SoJournal

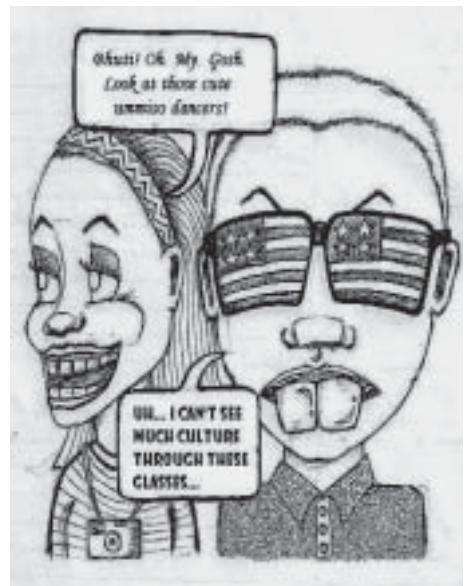
Cliff's Comic Box

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# Adam Kohlrus

**Birthdate:** 6/6/84

**Hometown:** Springfield, Illinois

**Schooling:** Loyola University Chicago

**Favorites:** Lakers, Steelers, Cardinals, Bob Marley, vanilla ice cream, color blue.

**Items you already miss from America:** My bed.

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Change.

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Getting sick.



# Amy Huber

**Birthdate:** March 26, 1984

**Hometown:** West Jefferson, OH

**Schooling:** B.A. Zoology Miami University

**Items you already miss from America:** Mexican Food

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Missing friends & family.



# Amy J. Newsome



**Birthdate:** 09/11/1982

**Hometown:** Albion, NY

**Schooling:** University of Buffalo (Buffalo, NY) Double B.A. in Medical Anthropology and Early Child Development

**Favorites:** Sports team is Brazil's National Soccer Team

**Items you already miss from America:** Gospel Music

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** A personally

humbling experience and an appreciation for little things and relationships in life.

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Forming strong attachments w/host families and having to leave them.

**Anything else you'd like to add:** With God all things are possible and without Him nothing is worth it (in my life).

# Amy Mayer

**Birthdate:** January 28, 1978

**Hometown:** Jamestown, ND

**Schooling:** Jamestown College, Jamestown ND B.A. Biology/Chemistry

**Favorites:** music - Bob Dylan, color - green, movie - The Big Lebowski, PCV you've met so far - Everyone has been great to talk to - thanks for all the advice!

**Items you already miss from**

**America:** Internet/ Movies

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Developing friendships

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Emotional stress/strain



# Becky Pedrotty

**Birthdate:** 2/10/81

**Hometown:** Richmond, VA

**Schooling:** James Madison University

**Favorites:** Books - Catcher in the Rye, Grapes of Wrath, Digital SLR for Dummies

**Items you already miss from America:** My new niece.

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** The relationships.

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** The prospect of stoning a dog - as we were warned.



# Michael Marrone

**Birthdate:** 3/12/82

**Hometown:** San Antonio, TX

**Schooling:** BA Biology, Austin College 2005

**Anything else you'd like to add:** I don't like mayo or mustard.



# Caroline Wheatley

**Birthdate:** 2-25-83  
**Hometown:** St. Louis  
**Schooling:** BA in Psychology, Philosophy & Asian Studies  
**Favorites:** Book - Catcher in the Rye; Movie – Fight Club  
**Items you already miss from America:** People who know me well  
**Anything else you'd like to add:** \*Favorite quote – “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” – Gandhi \*I was a case manager for refugee resettlements for Catholic Charities before I came to Swaziland. \*Hobbies: knitting and running.



# Caroline McPartland

**Birthdate:** 1-24-83  
**Hometown:** Greenville, SC  
**Schooling:** B.A. in Communication & African History, College of Charleston  
**Things I <3:** Hip Hop!; The Bean Trees by Barbara Kingsolver; puppies; meeting new people; and traveling! Shoes! The gourmet cheese aisle at the grocery store; flowers; trivia.  
**Items you already miss from America:** Chick-fil-A; my bed; boys!(What's up with that, Peace Corps!?)  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** That my personal hygiene will suffer monumentally.  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Not changing/growing as a person, or learning from this experience; Sean's credit card test.  
**Anything else you'd like to add:** “O, O, O” to the training class!



# Jerome "Joe" Mayer

**Birthdate:** 17/4/1977  
**Hometown:** Jamestown, ND  
**Schooling:** Jamestown College BA History/Poli Sci  
**Favorites:** Books – Poisonwood Bible, Anything by Hunter S. Thompson, Chuck Klosterman; Movies – Goonies, Big Lebowski, Kill Bill Vol 1&2, Good the Bad & the Ugly, O Brother Where Art Thou?; Musicians – Bob Dylan, Townes Van Zant, Steve Earle, Cat Stevens, Beatles, Neil Young  
**Items you already miss from America:** Internet, Daily News  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Becoming an integrated part of the community and building sustainable projects  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Dealing with deaths in my community, esp. of those whom I become close to.



# Christopher Young

**Birthdate:** 26-Aug-82  
**Hometown:** Watsonville, CA  
**Schooling:** UCSD, University of California, San Diego.  
**Favorites:** Book – The Alchemist, Musician – Randy Travis.  
**Items you already miss from America:** Movies.  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Cooking.  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Not learning, having regrets.  
**Anything else you'd like to add:** It ain't the size of the dog in the fight, it's the size of the fight in the dog.



# Joe DelGiorno



**Birthdate:** 7/8/54  
**Hometown:** Port Richey, FL  
**Schooling:** MA/Counseling – Univ. of S. FL BA-Psych, SUNY/Old Westbury  
**Favorites:** Wizard of Oz, Godfather  
**Items you already miss from America:** My bed  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Making new friends and Swazi People and PCV's.

# Karen Peebles

**Birthdate:** 5/28/1968  
**Hometown:** Denver, CO  
**Schooling:** University of California @ Santa Barbara (UCSB!) BA in film studies



**Favorites:** I'm a movie freak! (I watched 6 on the plane to get my "fix" for the next 2 years!) Played H2O Polo @ UCSB for 3 years.  
**Items you already miss from America:** Nothing... yet!  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2**

**years:** The great challenge mixed in with adventure, discovery, and the meaning of hope.

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:**... the reality of the HIV/AIDS pandemic...up close.

# Kate Anderson

**Birthdate:** 11/23/83  
**Hometown:** Ukiah, North SF in CA  
**Schooling:** The usual B.S. stuff in Psych.  
**Favorites:** I think Wes Anderson movies are swell. Ben Harper's great. So's Bjork. Oh, and Paul Simon. And Radiohead.  
**Items you already miss from America:** The mum. The dad. The bro. The buddies.  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Perfecting ability to read coded messages from Peace Corps through notes attached to carrier pigeons or donkeys, in lieu of using a cell phone.  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Perpetually running for Peace Corps.  
**Anything else you'd like to add:** Group 4 is pretty awesome.



# Karen Lee

**Birthdate:** 2-18-1971  
**Hometown:** Virginia  
**Schooling:** Aast UMA, AA University of Maine BA Metro State of Denver  
**Favorites:** Favorite Book, Les Miserables, Nostgala Music Rolling Stones, Favorite Movie- Black Stallion; Legend of 1900  
**Items you already miss from America:** Dove Ice Cream Bar, dictionary.  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Speaking more siSwati, making friends  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** # of people dying.



# Hanna Lee



**Birthdate:** October 10, 1984  
**Hometown:** Bronx, NY  
**Schooling:** B.A. in Black Studies from Amherst College, Amherst, MA  
**Favorites:** Book – The Citadel, Ice Cream Flavor – oatmeal raisin cookie from Ben and Jerry's, Movie – Boondock Saints, Shrek.  
**Items you already miss from America:** NYC tap water => haha j/k. jeans.  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Make new friends and family. Learn to cook.  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Sean's credit card test!  
**Anything else you'd like to add:** Group 4 Swaziland PCV is going to rock the boat!



## Kendra Oliver

**Birthdate:** 3/17/1983  
**Hometown:** Seattle, Washington  
**Schooling:** University of Washington 2001-2005 B.A. Anthropology

**Favorites:** Book – Choke. Movies – Fight Club, Royal Tenenbaums, Walk the Line, Kill Bill.

**Items you already miss from America:** Flip flops, new music, my friends.

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Promoting positive relations between PCV's and Swazis.

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Spitting cobras in my pit latrine.

## Mark Weng



**Birthdate:** March 14, 1984  
**Hometown:** Atl, Georgia  
**Schooling:** Georgia Tech. B.S., Biomedical Engineering

**Favorites:** Book – The Boxcar

Children, Movie – The Godfather, Athlete – M Jordan, Color – blue, Smell – New car, Ice Cream flavor – Mint Chocolate Chip, PCV you've met so far – Kelly.

**Items you already miss from America:** None

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Learning a lot about random stuff

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Getting sick.

**Anything else you'd like to add:** Rock on.



## Marian Gamboa

**Birthdate:** 5/13/1982  
**Hometown:** Edison, NJ  
**Schooling:** Rutgers University

**Favorites:** Book – The Namesake, Love in the Time of Cholera, & anything by Roald Dahl. Movie: The Fight Club. Color – green.

**Items you already miss from America:** A washing machine.

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Learning siSwati.

## Polly Chen



**Birthdate:** Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1981  
**Hometown:** San Jose, California.  
**Schooling:** Biochem & Public Health from UC San Diego  
**Favorites:** The God of Small Things by Arandhati Ray, mocha

almond fudge ice cream.

**Items you already miss from America:** My beagle.

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Lots of amaaaazing memories.

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Not learning language.

## Mary Ann Hall

**Birthdate:** 08-16-56  
**Hometown:** Chicago, Illinois  
**Schooling:** Bachelor of Science Nursing, Cardiopulmonary Technology, General Sciences.  
**Favorites:** Movie – The Princess Bride, We're No Angels, Stealing Heaven. Book – The Bible, Illusions by Richard Bach. Love to walk. The color blue.



**Items you already miss from**

**America:** My son George. My friends. Semi-sweet chocolate.

**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Working hard. Experiencing everything. Love the PCV's, especially my roomies.

**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Not much of anything.

**Anything else you'd like to add:** I look towards the necessary and the eternal. This is the instrument of my peace.

# Roselane Miller



A.K.A. Brasil  
**Birthdate:** 9-2-1981  
**Hometown:** St. John, V.I./  
 Corvallis, OR/Seattle, WA  
**Schooling:** B.A. Human  
 Services  
**Favorites:** Movies –Cool  
 Runnings, All Spike Lee  
 movies. Music: Hip hop,  
 R&B, Dancehall, Reggaeton,  
 Reggae, World Music, Old  
 School 90's. Books – James

Baldwin, Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, I love to read all  
 kind of books. Sports.  
**Items you already miss from America:** Ice cream, hot  
 fudge, Ben and Jerry's Brownie Batter, Seattle Public  
 Library, easy access to Internet, family/friends.  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** Having a  
 better understanding of HIV/AIDS and finding tools to  
 assist all stakeholders in prevention, education and continue  
 in this fight.  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** My biggest fear  
 is my health changing in the sense I might catch something  
 that would be a health issue in the future.

# Virginia Gervin



**Birthdate:** 10/30/1979  
**Hometown:** Chattanooga,  
 TN  
**Schooling:** BS in film  
 from Boston University

**Favorites:** I love old movies, especially Hitchcock and  
 Billy Wilder. My favorite author is Graham Greene. I heart  
 Curt Schilling and Peyton Manning.  
**Items you already miss from America:** BASEBALL!!!  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:** After  
 living in NYC for 4 years where people are hard and cold, I  
 am looking forward to being in a place where people care  
 about each other and what is happening to the communities  
 around them.  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** The deaths  
 around me.

# Samantha Adams



**Birthdate:** 14 July 1982  
**Hometown:** Lindsburg,  
 Kansas  
**Schooling:** BS  
 Meteorology, Florida State  
 University  
**Favorites:** Book – Dune;  
 Movie – Star Wars;  
 Character – Captain Jack

Sparrow (Johnny Depp); Color – purple; Food -  
 chocolate  
**Items you already miss from America:** Internet  
 Access  
**What you anticipate most in the next 2 years:**  
 Learning to bake in a stovetop oven.  
**What you fear most in the next 2 years:** Being  
 thought stuck up or snobby when I'm really just shy.

# Tommy Rimbach



**Birthdate:** May 25,  
 1984  
**Hometown:** Raleigh,  
 NC  
**Schooling:** UNC – Chapel Hill, BA in Public Policy  
 and International Studies  
**Favorites:** Book – Giovanni's Room by James  
 Baldwin, Movie – 28 Days Later, PCV – Jenny  
 Jones, Smell – The pool, Food – Korean BBQ.  
**Items you already miss from America:** Sparks,  
 Wendy's spicy chicken sandwich, The Hills  
**What you fear most in the next years:** Sean's  
 credit card.  
 Anything else you'd like to add: I'm toxic, baby,  
 like Britney Spears.

## DIVERSITY

Just like previous years, there will be a PSN book compiled to be  
 given to the new group of volunteers, but this year it will also con-  
 tain a section that deals with the Diversity Committee. Currently we  
 are looking for PCVs and/or staff to write (length is no matter)  
 about their experience about being \_\_\_\_\_ (white, black, old, gay,  
 Asian, etc) in Swaziland.

If you have some free time, and we all know that you do, write  
 your compelling testimonial and send it to  
[trainexpating@yahoo.com](mailto:trainexpating@yahoo.com). They can be anonymous so please  
 aid your fellow PCVs to acculturate a little bit better. Thank you.  
 Will Treese.

# APCD breaks it down 4 U

**PEPFAR:** As anticipated, PC/Swaziland has indeed received \$20,000 in PEPFAR funding to support PCV proposals directly related to HIV/AIDS education and mitigation. We expect PC/HQ to transfer these funds to post in late July or early August. Many Volunteers have asked for more information on how they can tap into this new resource known as the VAST (Volunteer Activity Support & Training) program. The Country Director will need to set up a VAST proposal review committee in the coming weeks in order to review and implement this new program. In addition, we will be preparing the forms necessary to submit proposals to the VAST Review Committee. These should be ready by the end of July. Please take a look at the general guidelines provided below. If you have further questions you can ask Susan or Pattie. Otherwise, stayed tuned for more details in the August issue of the Sojo on how the program will be implemented.

## Purpose of the Volunteer Activity Support and Training (VAST) Program

Peace Corps/Swaziland was awarded VAST funding in order to provide additional financial and human resource capacity to Peace Corps partner organizations, schools and communities. This program is designed to provide financial and technical support to community groups and grassroots initiatives in the communities in which Peace Corps Volunteers serve. The VAST program will enable Peace Corps to engage specialists, trainers and technical experts, as well as provide limited financial resources (i.e., from \$500 to \$1,000 per grant) for community and NGO initiated activities.

The overall goal of the VAST program is to enable community HIV/AIDS initiatives with which Peace Corps Volunteers are involved to access training and informational resources, small (micro) grants and technical assistance, supporting them to expand their reach and the quality of services delivered to people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS. For example, PCVs could use VAST funds to support HIV/AIDS camps for youth and/or OVCs during school breaks, assist the communities to construct low-cost OVC cooking or educational structures, defray costs of HIV/AIDS education workshops for community leaders, teachers, etc.

The specific objectives of the VAST program are to:

- Support NGOs/CBOs, school personnel and PCVs to access periodic training and support for developing HIV/AIDS materials and presentations, or to train trainers or community-based service providers on topical content areas and/or technical service delivery areas (e.g. home based care);
- Enable community groups and PCVs to design, coordinate and deliver workshops, clinics, camps etc. for people at risk, living with, or affected by HIV/AIDS;
- Ensure that NGOs, CBOs and schools have the necessary materials and equipment to provide support to people infected, affected or at risk of HIV/AIDS; and
- Provide In Service Training for PCVs and their Counterparts which covers project design and management, life skills, negotiating accreditation for formal courses, monitoring and evaluation, support for orphans and vulnerable children and/or HIV/AIDS mainstreaming.

The VAST program will provide either financial support or technical assistance and training to Volunteers, their counterparts and/or their communities.

## VAST Funding Criteria

Volunteers should work with their communities, schools and organizations to submit proposals under the VAST program. Any current Volunteer may apply for support from the VAST program; however, PCVs who are within 6 months of their COS date should take this into consideration when determining proposed project completion timelines. PCVs must be in place to assist with the completion of the proposed activity or project and must submit a final report. The VAST award committee cannot approve funding for activities where there is not a reasonable assurance that the PCV will be available to properly close-out the activities and account for how the funding was spent.

There are a number of criteria that must be met for a project to be awarded a grant. These criteria are set out below.

- The project, and the Volunteer's involvement, must be approved by both the APCD and Bucopho (or other community leader).
- The project must contribute directly to the PEPFAR goals (7 million new infections prevented, 2 million people receiving ART, 10 million people receiving care and support) and the proposal must specifically state how it does so.
- Project activities must fall within the VAST program objectives outlined above.
- Projects must demonstrate community initiative and commitment, through their management and sustainability plans and through a 25% financial or in-kind contribution from the beneficiary community (see below).
- Projects must be conceived, implemented and managed by a local community or group in conjunction with the PCV.
- Projects must promote sustainable community development activities and should involve training and capacity building to that end. Projects should build local self-reliance and not encourage future dependency.
- The requested budget from VAST should not exceed USD \$1,500. It is expected that the majority of grants made will be in the US \$500 – US \$1,000 range.



- Projects must be scheduled for completion within one year of the award, and within a reasonable time of the PCV's COS date. No PCV will be awarded more than one VAST grant.

Proposals submitted to the VAST committee should demonstrate how the project meets all of the criteria.

### Restrictions on Fund Use

In addition to the criteria above, Volunteers should be aware that there are restrictions with respect to the use of VAST funds. These are listed below.

- VAST **cannot fund Volunteer costs** (e.g. travel & per diem).
- VAST Grants can fund HCN travel, lodging & per diem up to **the total amount of USD 250** – exceptions are made in the case of camp activities.
- VAST funds **may NOT be used for the purchase & distribution of t-shirts, mugs, etc** – including those given as prizes;
- VAST funds **may not be used to purchase land or vehicles**;
- VAST funds **may not be used for recurrent organizational costs** (e.g. rent, electricity, etc.)

### Application Process and Procedure

Volunteers are encouraged to seek VAST support for secondary projects and/or discreet activities within their primary area of assignment. Broadly, the following steps should be followed by Volunteers and staff:

1. Volunteers should work with their community to establish need/opportunity and project response.
2. PCVs should discuss their ideas with their APCD, counterpart and site supervisor (bucopho), as appropriate.
3. Following broad approval, Volunteers should work with their community/group to develop a proposal & budget. A proposal format is available from your APCD.
4. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposal their APCD and/or VAST Coordinator (Mahlubi Hadebe) prior to submission. This gives them the opportunity to make revisions, as appropriate.
5. Volunteers should submit proposals and accompanying VAST forms to their APCD, along with a letter of support from the community/group and site supervisor. Once the APCD concurs with the proposed project, s/he will submit the proposal to the VAST Coordinator for consideration by the Committee.
6. A Grants Committee will be convened on at least a monthly basis to consider proposals. Decisions will be communicated to PCVs as soon as possible;
7. Funding should be disbursed within 8 weeks of approval.

### Reporting Requirements

Volunteers and communities will be required to keep meticulous financial and programmatic records of the use of funds and the project's activities and achievements.

Volunteers must be able to account for all VAST funds used during the course of project implementation. With few exceptions, funds will be deposited into the Volunteer's bank account, and s/he will assume personal liability for their use. Volunteers must keep the following financial records for review by the VAST Coordinator and Cashier prior to COS:

1. Budget to Actual expenditure summary sheet for expenditure categories;
2. Detailed expenditure records for each expenditure category;
3. Supporting documents (invoices, receipts, signed attendance registers, etc) for each expenditure incurred.

Failure to properly report on funds used will result in the unaccounted amount being deducted from the Volunteer's readjustment allowance.

Volunteers will also be expected to report on activities undertaken and their results. Narrative reports should cover the detail of actual activities undertaken and how/if this differs from activities planned. In addition, Volunteers are expected to provide a detailed analysis of the results, benefits and impact of the project, including an accurate reflection of the numbers of people reached through various aspects of the project.