

PCPF

Peace Corps Panama Friends

Dear Peace Corps Panama Friend,

More than two decades ago a group of Panama RPCVs joined together to form Peace Corps Panama Friends, a registered 501c3 nonprofit organization. The organization dedicated itself to promoting the goals of Peace Corps, particularly the third goal. PCPF was a communication platform for returned Panama volunteers and their families. It was a way for members to stay connected to one another and to Panama. Throughout the years PCPF expanded its scope by incorporating a partnership with Patronato de la Luz and the Bud Keith Fund for the Blind and by creating an annual calendar fundraiser to generate capital for volunteer projects.

Fast forward twenty plus years and PCPF has found itself struggling to adapt to a changing landscape. Improvements in technology and the development of social media have decreased the organization's role as communication facilitator; members no longer need PCPF to remain in touch. Changes in Peace Corps national policy limit the nonprofits' ability to directly support volunteers through grants. PCPF is at a crossroads. With decreasing member interest and participation, the organization must decide if it is time to dissolve or restructure and refocus the mission.

If PCPF is to continue it will need a fresh board of enthusiastic, dedicated members to step up. PCPF issued a call for board member nomination but received no feedback. We are asking those who want to see the organization survive to become involved. The fate of the organization is in your hands, the hands of the membership. There are two choices:

1. Remaining or unused PCPF assets will be distributed to another nonprofit organization with a similar mission. *
2. Thrive and nominate new candidates for a fresh board consisting of enthusiastic members.

* A lack of nominations will be interpreted as direction to discontinue the organization.

If you are interested in serving on the PCPF board, please read on for instructions on how to nominate yourself! No prior experience is necessary in any of the positions, and anyone who has a meaningful connection to Peace Corps Panama can apply- even if you weren't a volunteer yourself. Read a brief description of the positions up for election below, as well as a short blurb from each Board Member about their experience in that role.

To nominate yourself, fill out this [Nomination Form](#) (only self-nominations please, but encourage friends to apply!). If you would like more information about PCPF, or the specific positions, please read below and feel free to email any of the current board members. For any other requests or questions, you can email me, Annie, at president@panamapcv.net.

Board Position Descriptions:

Vice President

The Vice President works with and supports the President in reaching the goals of PCPF and acts as president in the President's absence. S/he works with the board in planning, developing and enforcing policies and objectives to maintain the organizations values and goals. The Vice President represents PCPF in NPCA dealings, including attending NPCA meetings and cross-communicate PCPF and NPCA agendas. The Vice President oversees public awareness initiatives and ensures that PCPF is visible, either through social media or other activities initiated by committees or chair.

For any specific questions regarding this position, email Katie at vicepresident@panamapcv.net

Secretary

The Secretary maintains the PCPF calendar, arranges and communicates board meeting details with board and all appropriate persons. S/he records and distributes meeting minutes, ensuring that a record is accessible via Google Drive, as well as ensuring that an up-to-date copy of the bylaws are available at all meetings. The Secretary coordinates event reports and maintains archives of PCPF events. S/he assists the President and Vice President in ensuring that all board and committee chairs adhere to policies and practices as outlined in bylaws.

For any specific questions regarding this position, email Annie at president@panamapcv.net

Treasurer

The Treasurer is the chief financial officer of the corporation and shall keep and maintain, or cause to be kept and maintained, adequate and correct accounts of the properties and business transactions of the corporation. The books of account shall at all times be open to inspection by any director and/or alternate. The Treasures drafts PCPF budget, maintains financial records, prepares monthly and annual financial reports, and oversees the financial aspects of PCPF activities. S/he ensures proper IRS reporting and maintains the PCPF Guidestar account.

For any specific questions regarding this position, email Kendall at treasurer@panamapcv.net

Panama Liaison

The Panama Liaison should reside primarily in the country of Panama and be knowledgeable of the current affairs of the country. The Liaison shall develop and maintain communications with Panamanian entities, to include the Peace Corps office and Panamanian Embassy in

Washington, DC. S/he should manage and disseminate information on Panamanian current events to PCPF as well as manage development and dissemination of communications with volunteers who are swearing-in and closing service to generate knowledge of PCPF.

For any specific questions regarding this position, email Amy at panamaliaison@panamapcv.net

President

The President of PCPF is in charge of direct strategic planning and ensuring that the board is taking action to meet goals and that all activities support PCPF's mission and purpose. The President presides over meetings, and conducts board business and meetings effectively and efficiently. S/he ensures that all Board Members comply with their responsibilities and applicable bylaws. Working with the Treasurer, the President ensures that financial budgets and financial responsibilities are compliant with state and federal guidelines. S/he responds to general inquiries and represents PCPF in media and to other organizations.

The President submits reports to the board and PCPF members quarterly via El Bochinche newsletter. S/he ensures that structures and procedures are in place for securing resources and for all fundraising activities.

Comments from Existing Board Members

President, Annie O'Donnell

Even before I left Panama, I was looking for ways to give back to Peace Corps. I became President with no knowledge of how to run a non-profit board, equipped with only my Peace Corps attitude- 'Sure, I can do this'. The board stuck with me through thick and thin, teaching me and learning with me. I am so thankful for their indefatigable hope as we worked together to serve over 2,000 PCPF members. This coming year, the final year of my term, I am looking forward to learning from a new board as we initiate a new strategic direction to engage even more new members and provide services to support their needs.

Vice-President, Katie Simpson

"My initial decision to serve on the Peace Corps Panama Friends board was rooted in my desire to gain experience in board governance and to develop better understanding of the nonprofit legal environment. PCPF provided context while I finished my Master of Nonprofit Administration degree. The past three years have been both stimulating and challenging. Throughout my service with PCPF I have had the opportunity to work along side a diverse group of very knowledgeable individuals. Together we have strengthened PCPF's organizational foundations by adopting bylaws and enacting mechanisms to ensure legal compliance with state and federal law, and by strengthening internal communication. The experience,

connections and tangible skills I have acquired with PCPF are invaluable to my personal and professional growth. Most importantly, I have had the opportunity to serve on a board that laid the groundwork necessary to take PCPF to the next level and fortify our impact. I strongly encourage anyone interested in building their own experiences and professional portfolio while giving back to Panamanians and Peace Corps to get involved in Peace Corps Panama Friends."

Treasurer, Kendall Mau

"Being the Treasurer of PCPF is fun and challenging for any member who is slightly left-brained and has basic knowledge of bookkeeping and accounting. You get to see who donates to the organization and how the donations are put to good use in Panama and how annual calendars are produced and sold to generate money for VAC projects and partially fund PCPF administrative costs.

The books are now kept on Quickbooks on-line, a fully automated General Ledger system. The new Treasurer can continue using this fairly advanced small business system or the books can be converted to other bookkeeping software or manual system. Lots of accounting entries are required during the period of December-January each year when we sell calendars. The rest of the year is very quiet.

Donation and calendar money is sent down to Panama two to three times per year. To do that I need to train the new Treasurer about the international banking intricacies required by our bank. Once set up, it takes about 10 minutes to actually do an international wire.

Filing annual Federal and State taxes takes less than half an hour per year. The former done on-line just declaring that the organization received less than \$50,000 revenue per year and the latter done equally fast with the help of a former Panama RPCV who resides in Michigan where our articles of incorporation are registered.

I've enjoyed working with Annie and the rest of the board the last 2.5 years. Please apply if you're interested. I live in the San Francisco Bay Area and can train you via Internet, phone, or you can spend a few days at my place learning the ropes. "

Panama Liaison, Amy Stypa

"Being the PCPF Panama Liaison gave me the opportunity to connect current volunteers, office staff and RPCVs. While not always easy to meet with the board in a number of time zones, we were always able to find time to discuss PCPF. Being part of the board is a great networking opportunity and gives RPCVs the chance to remain an active part of Panama."

More about PCPF

Peace Corps Panama Friends is an organization that works to serve YOU, whether you are a returned volunteer, a family or friend of Peace Corps Panama, or a current volunteer in country. Over the years (PCPF started in a bar in 1989), our activities have varied but our overall purpose has stayed the same- to help our members continue their commitment to international service and understanding, to support the Peace Corps mission in Panama, and to share knowledge of Panama and the Peace Corps with others.

These last two years, we've spent a LOT of time setting and reestablishing some of the groundwork that ensures PCPF is legitimate, transparent, sustainable and inclusive and most importantly, promotes a culture of service. Some of these measures include:

- updating our financial reports into QuickBooks
- revamping the Mission and Vision Statement to align with the wants and needs of the members
- renovating social media tools including our website (panamapcv.net), Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and GoogleDrive
- transferring our database systems to Constant Contacts for concurrency and reliability

Bud Keith Scholarship Fund for the Blind

Last but certainly not least, RPCV Jerry Lutes continues to work tirelessly as Committee Chair of The Bud Keith Scholarship Fund for the Blind, a program to enable disadvantaged, visually-impaired Panamanians become financially self-sufficient. This effort was started by Bud Keith, a blind Panama RCPV who showed Panama and the world that disability is not inability. We are so proud to support this important work, and grateful to Jerry for his dedication to the cause.

But the best is yet to come; and there is lots of work to be done! PCPF needs fresh ideas, new insight and a diverse team to continue in our hopes to serve Peace Corps Panama Friends the best way we can. And all the boring stuff has already been done! This is your opportunity to be part of something worthwhile, inspiring and hopeful- we hope you will consider joining PCPF.

All the best,

Annie O'Donnell (President)
Peace Corps Panama Friends