

**From:** Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida [Rpcvsf@wildapricot.org](mailto:Rpcvsf@wildapricot.org)  
**Subject:** RPCVSF's Jan-Feb 2021 Newsletter For the Website  
**Date:** January 17, 2021 at 12:32 PM  
**To:** Marvin Hancock [tmhr@me.com](mailto:tmhr@me.com)

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Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of South Florida is *your* group—please join us for fun get-togethers, community service activities, job/life networking, great events, stimulating conversation, and much more. Read on and get involved!



# *Tropical Currents*

**The RPCVSF Newsletter**

**January 2021**

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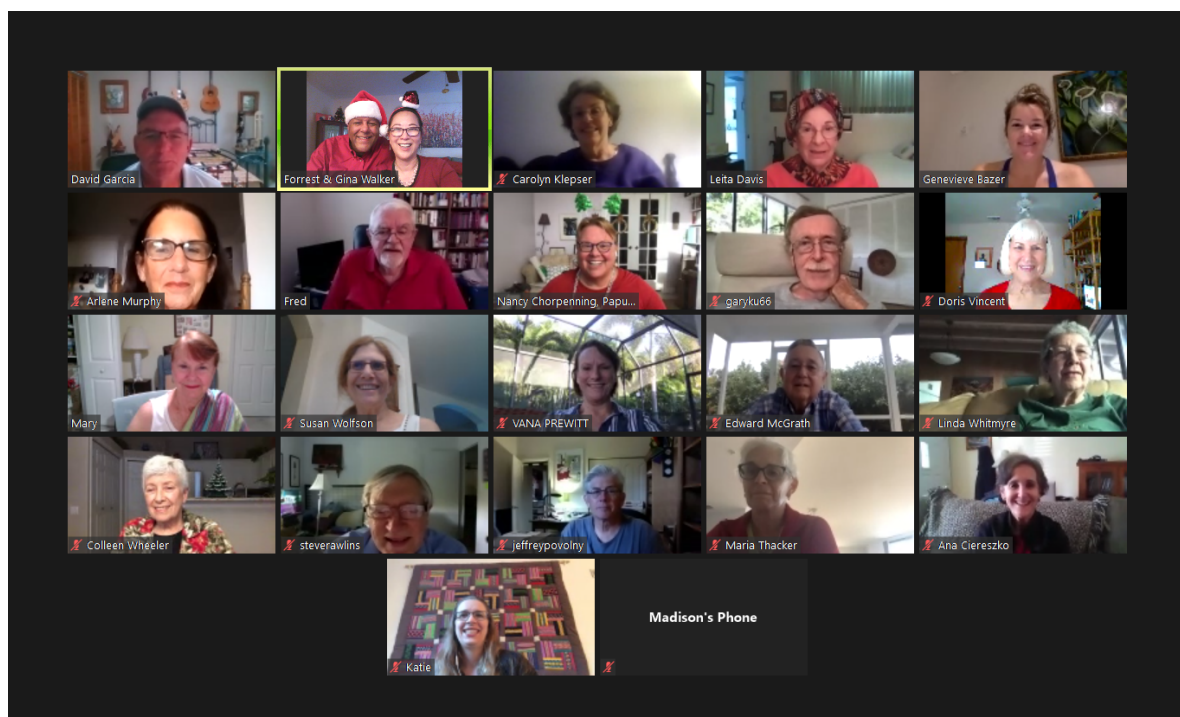
**Welcome  
2021**





## We've Been Zooming

On December 20th, RPCVGC and RPCVSF joined together on Zoom to celebrate the holidays and share stories of Christmases past in countries where they served. By all accounts it won't be the last such get together.



## Kiss the Ground Film and Panel

On January 6, some of us viewed the “school version” of this film about regenerative agriculture. After rather lengthy introductions of the panelists, we heard from each of them individually as they described their roles in working with regenerative agriculture in different parts of the world. There was some discussion about the US Farm Bill with hopes that there might be support for this type of agriculture at the federal level. It's an interesting approach to farming and the film itself is well done, showcasing some very significant projects around the world. The full-length version can still be seen on Netflix. Visit this link for more information. <https://farmersfootprint.us/>

## HELP Bernard Fils-Aime Scholars

### Update on HELP!!!

HELP, Haitian Education and Leadership Program, has been hosting a series of virtual "meet and greet" webinars. The December 22nd webinar showcased the Bernard Fils-Aimé Memorial Scholarship Fund. Bernard, among many other endeavors, was HELP's Board President who sadly passed away last August due to Covid-19. As of December 22nd, the Fund had fully endowed scholarships for all years of undergraduate study for three students and was well on its way to endow a fourth. We met with the Fils-Aime family, the three scholars and HELP staff in Haiti. It provided great on-the-ground knowledge and insight into HELP and its impact on the students.

To highlight another aspect of its program, HELP's next "meet and greet" event focusses on Career Services. It is scheduled for Thursday Jan 28 at noon EST. You can register for the event at the link below.

HELP

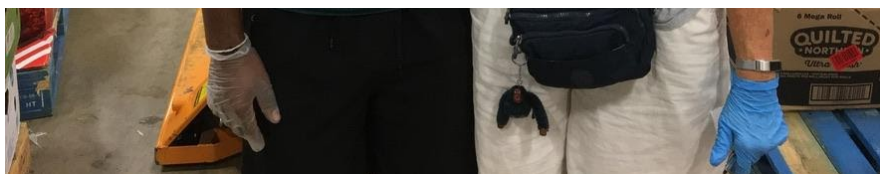
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## Volunteering at Feeding South Florida

**Why is this charity important?** From their website, I got the following information: "We provide more than 119 million pounds of food (99 million meals) each year. Food must be inspected and sorted before we can distribute it."

**Has RPCVSF participated?** Yes. On Saturday, November 14, 2020, some of us volunteered at the Pembroke Park facility, where we met Martin Alexis, a new RPCVSF, who saw Mary's RPCVSF t-shirt and introduced himself.





**What does volunteering entail?** This depends on the day of the week. On Saturdays there are 3 groups divided into volunteers who sort expired items, sorters who categorize items and volunteers who pack recycled banana boxes with like items such as juices, canned meats & nut butters, pasta and sauces.

**How long does a shift last?** Shifts are two hours long and include a brief training and breaks. During the COVID pandemic, volunteers wear masks and gloves.

If you are interested in volunteering, please use this website: <https://feedingsouthflorida.org/volunteer/>. You must create a profile for yourself unless you are part of a team.

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We'd like to get to know our members by featuring a new volunteer each newsletter. To introduce yourself and share your experiences email [genb714@gmail.com](mailto:genb714@gmail.com) and we'll send you a questionnaire.

## Meet Wendy Stein

Lesotho 2012-2014

### **What is your favorite memory from your time in the Peace Corps?**

At the end of a long day, I enjoyed watching the sunset with my neighbors. The mountains had gorgeous views. It was a time of day when we felt full from finishing our activities, and a bit tired and ready to settle in for dinner and quiet evenings. We usually watched it in silence, and it was special to take the time and appreciate such beauty and togetherness.

### **Describe your proudest moment or accomplishment in the Peace**

**Describe your proudest moment or accomplishment in the Peace Corps?**

My proudest accomplishment was in organizing and running a multi-day camp in my village to teach the youth about HIV/AIDS. It was through the Grassroots Soccer program, where we used a soccer ball to set up games that demonstrated principles about HIV transmission, shame, gender-based violence, while promoting healthy communities.

Using a soccer ball and field activities made the topic fun, so the students were engaged in participating and learning. We tested the student's knowledge before and after the workshop and tracked an increase in knowledge gained. A great thing about it is that they shared what they learned with other youth, whom were not in attendance. It was also an opportunity for me to work together with other Peace Corps volunteers and members of the community.

**What was the biggest challenge you faced as a Peace Corps Volunteer?**

A big challenge I had was weather. It got very cold where I lived, in the mountains of Africa, and it even snowed. It was tough to keep warm during the winter months, and I would only wash my hair during mid-day, using water that I fetched and carried on my head from the pump, and boiled. Due to the weather and availability of arable land, food choices were also extremely limited. How many different ways do you know, to season cabbage?

**What's one local custom from your country of service that you wish Americans would adopt?**

This isn't really a local custom, as it was just one child that did this. In the morning, I could hear the call of the doves, the chickens, the cows, and finally, the roosters. And then, there was the neighbor's boy who made up his own morning call (as if he had spent his lifetime listening to free-jazz). Every morning before 6am he sang to his heart's content. At first, I found it annoying. Yet with time, I began to question why the rest of us don't sing from our hearts to the rising sun.

**What's a local language miscommunication you'll never forget?**

In language training, we learned that the word "josasa" means tomorrow. It's not entirely true. The more common usage is much more laid-back, such as whenever the person gets around to it, which could even be never. I didn't know that when I arrived in my village.

During my first week of arriving at my site, I went around the village to meet people and see what sorts of possibilities there were for working on projects together. Each person I spoke with said I should come back...you guessed it, "josasa." I took it literally, and exhausted myself returning to each person the next day, and they each responded with "josasa" again. Finally, my host father told me that the villagers found me excessively eager, and we discovered that I simply didn't know the true meaning of "josasa."

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## **Chapman Partnership Dinner**

In early December, the RPCVSF Board sponsored a dinner for all 300 residents at Chapman Partnership in Homestead, FL.

Chapman Partnership empowers its homeless residents to build a positive future through multiple programs and services. For more information on how to help, please visit <https://chapmanpartnership.org>



## Welcome to RPCVSF's Online Fair Trade Market!

**Linda Whitmyre**

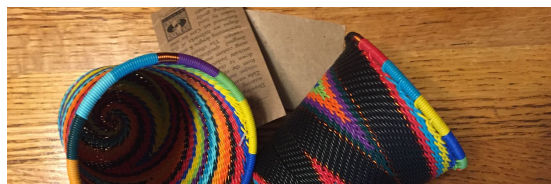
### **Fair Trade Market is up and running.**

Shipping/delivery is free within a 15-mile radius of Biscayne Blvd and 79th Street in Miami. Outside of that radius, the shipping cost will be \$5.50.

100% of the profits will be donated to Haitian Education and Leadership Program (<https://uhelp.net>).

Please email [ftm@rpcvsf.org](mailto:ftm@rpcvsf.org) with questions.

**Here's the link to shop for some of the items that have been especially popular over the years.**





[Shop Fair Trade Online](#)

**And** .... just in time for Valentine's Day ... a Beaded Heart ornament from Kenya. Although it is designed as an ornament, it can be repurposed into a bookmark or even a blingy necklace. \$12.50 includes shipping and handling. It can be purchased from our online store:



[Shop Fair Trade](#)

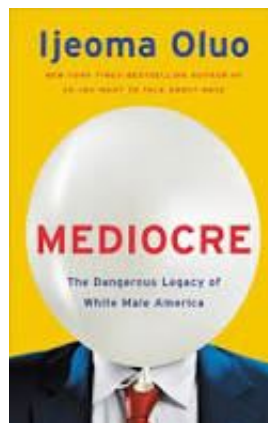
[Email Fair Trade  
Market](#)

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## Pascal's Way

Eight months ago, Ari Poholek, a RPCV in our community suffered a tremendous loss to his family with the death of his son Pascal. Pascal was a

tremendous loss to his family with the death of his son Pascal. Pascal was a remarkable young man who cared for people and for issues that mattered to him, like animal rights, environment advocacy, and social justice. Compassion and empathy for others was Pascal's Way. On February 2nd from 3-6pm, a community service event will take place at Harry Harris Park in Tavernier to honor Pascal. Please plan to join if you are able.



## Book Review

by Mary Lamberts

*Mediocre: The Dangerous Legacy of White Male America* by Ijeoma Oluo, published in 2020

This book describes what has happened to various groups of people and the environment because White male Americans have been the primary decision makers at the expense of the various groups (human and animal) listed below followed by the chapter title in quotes:

- Native Americans and bison – “Cowboys and patriots: how the West was won”
- People of color and women of all races – “For your benefit, in our image: the centering of White men in social justice movements”
- College students, especially those from non-affluent families – “The Ivy League and the tax eaters: White men’s assault on higher education”
- Blacks (men and women) – “We have far too many Negroes: White people’s bitter dependency on people of color”
- Women – “Fire the women: the convenient use and abuse of women in the workplace”
- Women of color – “Socialists and quota queens: when women of color challenge the political status quo
- Black football players – “Go f—king play: football and the fear of Black men”
- “Conclusion: can White manhood be more than this?”

This book is eloquently written and well researched. It is a litany of what has happened to the U.S. because many White men felt that they “deserve” more than they have received in terms of recognition, promotions, place in society and so on. The author ends by offering some hope for this country if White men can be convinced that their current approach to life is harming everyone, including them.



## Travel

By Greg Zell (Nigeria)

Prepping to Go in the New Year

## Prepping to Go in the New Year

The coming weeks are going to bring great changes in the travel industry with the advent of the vaccine. *Travel* thinks it will be a requirement from several sources. First, the USA with its virus record may not let us out without proof of vaccination; then countries may not let us in without proof; finally, airlines may require proof, especially on international flights.

*Travel* is monitoring all news sources to keep us updated. If you get some juicy info, be sure to share. We are all in this together. The pause has given us plenty of time to think. We hope to go somewhere the last third of 2021. *Travel* has 2 packages, one to Namibia, another to Victoria Falls, to rework and reschedule. 2 more trips under consideration: Senegal for a taste of French North Africa and The Gambia, to add a British touch; secondly, Belize, British but in Central America. A hoot: you better Belize it.

The vaccine is not the only med in the news. Early Peace Corps Volunteers in malaria countries were given hydroxychloroquine related drugs. It killed malaria and only made us ill in bed about half a day. Now it no longer kills malaria and has no effect on the virus. *Travel* will not venture into malaria country with any traveler who is not taking anti-malaria medication. *Travel* assists you in obtaining a prescription for a milder, short term drug, a generic version of Malarone.

Food and water are other avenues to illness in international travel. No one in any group going with *Travel* has ever got sick. We follow the science of CDC guidelines for Peace Corps Volunteers. This has caused titters from travelers in other groups. They had several queasy (or worse) days which

we avoided. It is all laid out in a printed sheet you will get. *Travel* is personally in charge of water distribution.

*Travel* is not a travel agent. Our itineraries and arrangements are made through very experienced travel agencies. Together we make sure you see all you should see in a time frame of 13 to 15 days to accommodate

working people when a couple of weekends are included. This makes our land package a bit less costly. Living out of a suitcase longer is not fun either. *Travel* is not a guide. Our travel agent outfits our package with the finest available. Our trips are designed for adults of all ages. They are not strenuous with a minimum of walking. The longest walk is usually to the airport gate. *Travel* uses the airport wheelchair service which races *Travel* and everyone with me through security. If you have trouble getting in or out of a vehicle, there is always a large gentleman nearby to assist. You will never find a land package identical to ours on the internet

and a land package identical to ours on the internet.

Scheduling in the new year is going to be tricky after dealing with all the virus issues. Every country in the world has its own high tourist season. We avoid that: too much \$\$\$\$. We choose “bridge” seasons on either side of high season. Airlines should be offering all sorts of “bargoons” as incentives. Then there are weather considerations. Animals and tourists do not like rain. The drama of Victoria Falls depends on the rainfall in the north reaching the