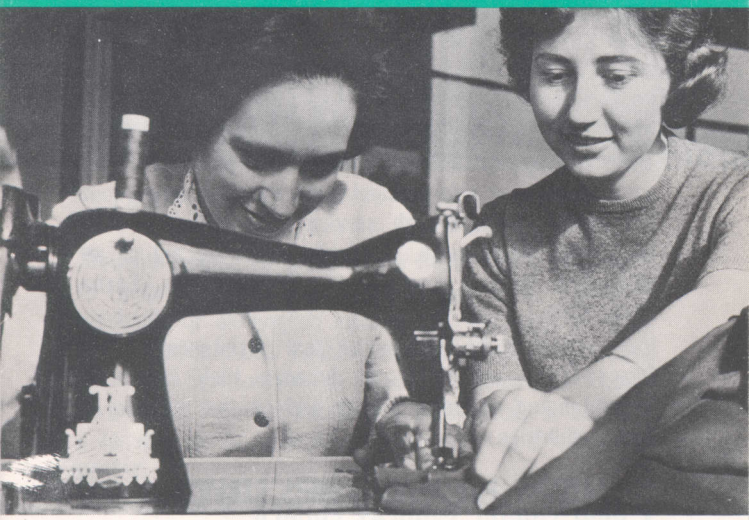
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THE PEACE CORPS



HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND THE PEACE CORPS

Since the formation of the Peace Corps in March 1961, high school students across the country have been writing Washington to ask, "What can we do — we want to help, now, even though we can't yet sign up as Peace Corps Volunteers!"

High school Peace Corps clubs have been springing up from Brooklyn, New York, to Oswego, Oregon and from Muskegon, Michigan to Austin, Texas.

Behind the stream of letters reaching Washington is a deep interest in international service on the part of large numbers of American high school students. Examples abound. In the spring of 1962, for instance, over 1,500 New York State high school class presidents filled out a questionnaire for a state banking association. Sixty percent of the class presidents replied "yes" to the question, "If you had the opportunity, would you like to join the Peace Corps?"

There **are** steps which high school students can take, now, to prepare for future Peace Corps service. There are also ways of helping the Peace Corps, now, in its work of building international understanding throughout the world — even though service as a Volunteer may be several years away. Students, with the aid of an interested teacher, can form a high school "Peace Corps Club."

High school clubs can be of real assistance to the Peace Corps, and they can broaden their members' understanding of world affairs and of the peoples of other countries.

TO PREPARE FOR PEACE CORPS SERVICE A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SHOULD . . .

■ **Develop one or more skills which will be useful in the world's less developed areas.** Teachers, agricultural and community development workers, nurses and medical aides, home economists, engineers and surveyors, physical education instructors and recreation workers, mechanics, carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, and "do-it-yourself" builders are among those who will be needed. The Peace Corps Office of Public Affairs (Washington 25, D. C.) can inform students of needs within their chosen vocational fields. Volunteers with needed skills and maturity can be admitted to the Peace Corps at age 18, but in most cases college or vocational training would greatly boost their potential contribution.

Students hoping to serve in the Peace Corps may want to acquire more than one needed skill. Even a mechanic or an English teacher, for instance, is likely to be a more useful Peace Corps Volunteer if he or she has also been active in a 4-H Club or the Future Farmers or Future Homemakers of America, or has had a summer job in a hospital, on a farm or at a recreation center.

■ **Study the language and culture of one of the areas where Peace Corps Volunteers are at work.** Most U. S. high school students have many such opportunities, if they will but take advantage of them. French is spoken in a score of African and Asian nations, Spanish in most Latin American nations. More and more high schools are making it possible for students to learn about all the world, and not just Europe and North America, in social studies, history, literature and geography courses. Educational radio and television stations, as well as the major networks, sponsor an increasing number of programs dealing with Africa, Asia and Latin America. Community world affairs organizations in many cities welcome the participation of interested high school students. Many local libraries offer lists of recommended books on the world's new nations.

■ **Become personally acquainted with young Asians, Africans and Latin Americans.** This is easier than many people think.

The Experiment in International Living (Putney, Vermont) is seeking American host families with whom newly-arrived foreign students and visitors may stay, as family members, for a month. State 4-H Club headquarters (c/o the state's land-grant college or university) arrange for foreign participants in the International Farm Youth Exchange to live with American farm families for three-week periods. The American Field Service (313 East 43rd St., New York City 16) selects U. S. families with whom foreign young people live while attending a year of high school in the U. S.

By contacting Foreign Student Advisors at nearby colleges and universities, a family may arrange to offer friendship and hospitality to a foreign student from a particular country or area.

World Affairs Councils and other community organizations often make arrangements for foreign visitors to stay in local homes, or to be escorted on local tours by volunteer guides. The National Council for Community Services to International Visitors (1630 Crescent Place, N.W., Washington 9, D. C.) can provide names and addresses of such organizations.

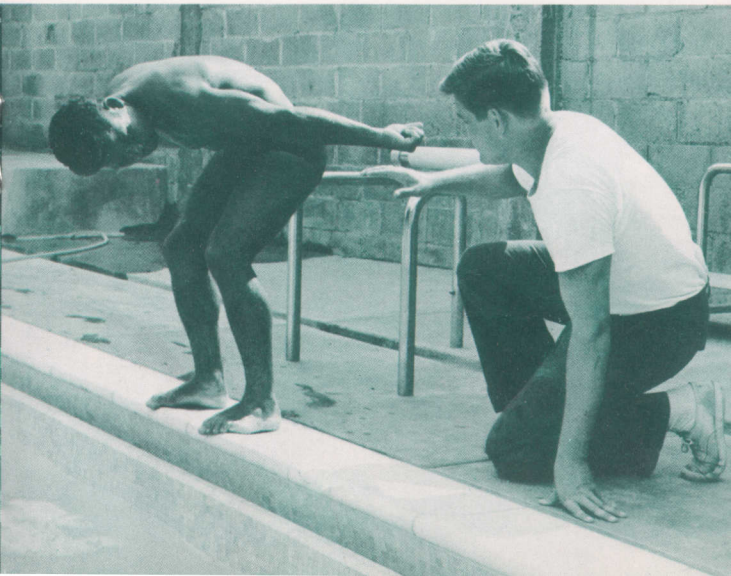
International pen-pal relationships may be arranged through the People-to-People Letter Exchange (2401 Grand Ave., Kansas City 8, Mo.). Those who wish to write students in overseas high schools where Peace Corps Volunteers are teaching may contact the Peace Corps Community Relations Section (Washington 25, D.C.)

■ **Build a first-hand knowledge and understanding of**

the principles, achievements and problems of American democracy. Peace Corps Volunteers overseas face questions about America by the dozen — from questioners both curious and critical. The broader a Volunteer's background, the greater his personal experience with Americans of all social-economic and ethnic groups, the more successful he can be in interpreting American democracy to others.

Courses in civics, history and social studies and the reading of magazines and newspapers offering good national and world affairs coverage can be a start. They may be supplemented by extracurricular and summer participation in student volunteer workcamps, social service projects, citizenship seminars and political campaigns, and visits to legislative bodies, business, farm and labor organizations. The achievements of American civic and social welfare organizations are admired throughout the world. First-hand experience in such groups can be of great value to Peace Corps Volunteers.

■ **Take part in athletic, camping, or other outdoor activities that will help assure physical fitness and provide experience in "roughing it."** A Peace Corps Volunteer is called upon to work hard, sometimes under difficult climactic conditions. Every effort is made to protect his health, but one of the Volunteer's best assurances of the strength and stamina to do his job well will be his previous concern for physical fitness. Summer jobs on farms or in factories are good experience. Athletic skills will be useful, too, for many overseas Volunteers find local youngsters eager to take part in spare-time sports activities.



Peace Corps Volunteers who have been high school athletes, or campers, hikers, canoeists, Boy or Girl Scouts or youth hostelers will find their experience helpful during Peace Corps training and on the job.

TO FORM AN ACTIVE PEACE CORPS CLUB, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CAN . . .

- **Ask a high school teacher — or librarian or guidance counselor — to serve as club advisor and to help a club officer handle correspondence with the Peace Corps Community Relations Section.** The Community Relations Section will provide literature, films, and other materials, and answer questions concerning both the Peace Corps and high school Peace Corps club activities.
- **Make arrangements for high school assembly programs and bulletin board displays on the Peace Corps, and for providing stories on club activities to high school and community newspapers as well as radio and television stations.** The aid of the high school librarian and the journalism teacher may be helpful here. News stories should be checked by a teacher before being released.
- **Consult civics, social studies, history, geography, language and literature teachers to ask for assignments or special projects dealing with countries in which Peace Corps Volunteers are at work.** The World Affairs Center (UN Plaza, New York City 17) and the Washington, D. C. embassies of the countries in which students are interested can provide information on sources of needed materials.

■ **Offer to assist a graduate of their high school or someone from their state who is now an overseas Peace Corps Volunteer.** An overseas Volunteer may be able to suggest particular ways in which a high school club could help. Names and addresses of Volunteers may be obtained from the Peace Corps Community Relations Section. Students shouldn't forget, however, that Volunteers are far too busy to handle a deluge of mail!

■ **Ask their high school principal and student council to consider a "sister-school" affiliation with an overseas high school where a Peace Corps Volunteer is teaching.** This can lead to exchange of tape recordings, letters, books and magazines, art and photography exhibits, scrapbooks and stamp collections, and to a host of other cooperative projects. The Peace Corps Community Relations Section can help locate an interested high school overseas.

■ **With the help of interested adults, arrange for a local radio or television station to produce a series of foreign affairs broadcasts specially beamed to simultaneous meetings of a number of high school clubs.** High School students, along with foreign students from local colleges, can take part in such broadcasts. Such an experiment has proven a success in Michigan. The Peace Corps Community Relations Section can provide details.

■ **Contact Peace Corps Liaison Officers on the faculties of nearby colleges and universities.** They will be glad to inform interested high school students of meetings and other Peace Corps activities on their campuses. A list of college and university Peace Corps Liaison Officers may be obtained from the Peace Corps College and University Division (Washington 25, D. C.).

■ **Send the Peace Corps Community Relations Section a list of names and addresses of club members, and interested teachers, if they wish to receive Peace Corps mailings.** This will help keep club members and advisors informed of Peace Corps activities. To keep the Peace Corps informed of high school club activities, club officers are urged to send carbon copies of their official correspondence, and copies of newspaper stories about the club, to the Peace Corps Community Relations Section.

NINE COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PEACE CORPS . . .

Who's eligible? Any U. S. citizen, man or woman, 18 years or older, may fill out a Peace Corps Questionnaire and take the Placement Test. People with one or more of a wide variety of skills are needed. If the Peace Corps finds your background and skills qualify you for a particular Peace Corps

project, you will be invited to join a training program to prepare you for that project.

How long do you serve? Peace Corps Volunteers serve for two years, including an initial two or three months' training at an American college or university, generally followed by 10 days of home leave before departure for overseas.

In what countries can you work? Peace Corps Volunteers will soon be at work in over 40 nations in Asia, Africa and Latin America. A list of countries and projects is available from the Peace Corps. You may indicate a preference on your Questionnaire — although if your skills are needed elsewhere you may be invited to train for a different project or country.

Are Volunteers paid? Peace Corps Volunteers receive a living allowance to cover food, housing, clothing and incidental expenses. Funds for their transportation and medical expenses are provided by the Peace Corps. Upon completion of Peace Corps service, Volunteers receive a termination payment of $75 for each month of satisfactory service, including training ($1,800 after two years).

Is a college education necessary? A college degree is not required for many Peace Corps assignments. In most positions, however, college training will greatly increase your usefulness. Vocational training is also very helpful.

Are there adequate health safeguards? All Volunteers are required to pass physical examinations and are given all necessary innoculations as well as physical training and instruction on how to protect their health overseas. Peace Corps doctors overseas periodically visit Volunteers, and provide medical care when needed. Peace Corps Volunteers have health and accident coverage under the Federal Employees Compensation Act.

What about draft status? You may receive a selective service deferment during Peace Corps service, but it will not exempt you from the draft. Deferments are up to local draft boards, but General Hershey, Director of Selective Service, has declared that Peace Corps service is classified as "within the national interest." After Peace Corps service, Volunteers may of course be eligible for further deferment. Check with your local draft board for details.

Do Volunteers really accomplish anything? Wherever Volunteers have been at work, host governments are so enthusiastic they have already asked for more Volunteers. Cabinet ministers, educators, editors and people at the grass roots overseas have praised both the Peace Corps idea and the work of the Volunteers. Peace Corps Volunteers are broadening their own knowledge and understanding of life, as well as giving a much-appreciated boost to the economic and educational progress of the non-Western majority of mankind.

Where do you get more information? Peace Corps information, Questionnaires, and literature — including additional copies of this leaflet — are available from

PEACE CORPS

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.