



# AZƏRBAYCAN SÜLH KORPUSU

## Media Advisory

### Ninth Group of U.S. Peace Corps Volunteers Begin Service December 8, 2011

44 new Peace Corps Volunteers will begin serving two year assignments in Azerbaijan after participating in a Swearing-In Ceremony at Baku's Grand Hotel Europe on December 8. The new volunteers will work in 24 Azerbaijani rayons, applying their knowledge, skills and experience to the development of Azerbaijani communities and organizations.

Peace Corps is a U.S. Government organization established in 1961 by former U.S. President John F. Kennedy. Peace Corps builds peace and friendship by helping people of developing countries build their skills and knowledge by sending qualified Americans, and to promote a better understanding between different countries through cultural exchange. Since then, nearly 200,000 Peace Corps Volunteers have served in 139 countries around the world.

U.S. Ambassador to Azerbaijan, Matthew Bryza, who administered the oath to the volunteers, urged volunteers to share American values, belief, and experiences. Reminding them of the richness of Azerbaijani culture, Bryza predicted that the Peace Corps experience will, "enrich the lives of many Azerbaijanis, as well as your own." In addition to Bryza and Peace Corps Azerbaijan Director Macie Whittington, the ceremony was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Economic Development, and the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

The Peace Corps Azerbaijan Program was established in 2003 and currently has three programs in Azerbaijan – 1) Community Economic Development; 2) Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL); 3) Youth Development. Since the first group arrived into the country, 389 Volunteers have served.

The ninth group of Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Azerbaijan in late September 2011. 11 will serve as a Community Economic Development Volunteers; 10 will serve as Youth Development Volunteers and 23 will serve as teachers of english They began a 10-week long Pre-service Training program, living with Azerbaijani families in the communities of Saray, Khirdalan, Masazir, and Ceyranbatan.

In her remarks, Peace Corps Azerbaijan Director Macie Whitting thanked all its partners who helped prepare the Volunteers during their training, including the Sumgayit and Absheron Executive Power Administrations, their representatives in the four local communities, the Sumgayit City Municipality, Heads of Education Departments of both Sumgayit city and the Absheron rayon, and the many practicum organizations, host families and school directors who supported and participated in preparing these new Peace Corps Volunteers for their two years of service in Azerbaijan.

**Duration of Ceremony: 12:00-14:00**