

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **New Peace Corps Trainees Arrive in Botswana**

A group of Peace Corps Trainees will be officially welcomed on the 16th September 2011 in Kanye at the Education Centre. The Honorable Member of Parliament for Kanye South, The District Commissioner for Kanye, and Peace Corps-Botswana Country Director will welcome the new arrivals.

The former President of Botswana, President Mogae, invited Peace Corps to return to Botswana in 2002 to address HIV/AIDS. Previously, Botswana had graduated from Peace Corps' priority needs in 1997 due to the significant development gains Botswana had achieved since its independence. The current focus of the Peace Corps Botswana Program is to strengthen implementation of the Botswana National Strategic Framework II to address the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the placement of Volunteers is done in close collaboration with the National AIDS Coordination Agency (NACA) and the Ministries of Local Government, Health, and Education.

Of the group of 35 starting their training, 24 will work in Government Primary, Junior, and Senior Secondary Schools. Two will work with non-governmental organizations, five will work with clinics or the Social and Community Development Department (S&CD) around the country, and four will work with the District AIDS Coordinating Offices to help in the coordination of activities related to HIV/AIDS.

The youngest Trainee in this group is 21 years old and the oldest is 65 years old; 29% are over the age of 40, and 77% are women. All of them bring a wealth of experience and education to be added to their in-country training that will include a heavy emphasis on language learning and cross-cultural understanding. Among the group members are lawyers, psychologists, and counselors, and nearly all have at least a university degree. The group includes four married couples.

The majority of the group will be assigned to work in schools, as a result of ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Education, to address the need to strengthen the implementation of the Living curriculum in more districts. Volunteers will be placed in Kweneng, as in the past, and added to the two Districts of Southern and Kgalagadi. In Kgalagadi, they will be placed in areas like Tsabong, Kang and Hukunsi while in the Southern; they will be placed in areas like Mabule and Maokane.

More than 2,200 Peace Corps volunteers have served in Botswana from 1966-1997 and 2003 to the present. They serve throughout the country, from villages such as Kachikau and Middlepits

and larger ones such as Ghanzi and Maun. Currently, 86 volunteers are serving, plus the 35 newly-arrived Trainees.

President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps on March 1, 1961, by executive order. Throughout 2011, Peace Corps is commemorating 50 years of promoting peace and friendship around the world. Historically, more than 200,000 Americans have served with the Peace Corps to promote a better understanding between Americans and the people of 139 host countries. Today, 8,655 volunteers are working with local communities in 76 host countries. Peace Corps Volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age. Peace Corps service is a 27-month commitment. Visit [www.peacecorps.gov](http://www.peacecorps.gov) for more information.