

**Remarks**  
**Deputy Chief of Mission Thomas Pierce**  
**Peace Corps GUY 25 Swearing In Ceremony**  
**July 3, 2013, 10:00 a.m.**  
**The Guyana International Conference Centre, Liliendaal**

Distinguished guests from:  
the Ministry of Health;  
the Ministry of Education;  
Members of the media;  
Peace Corps Volunteers;  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you, Brannon, for inviting me to address and swear in this new group of volunteers. I had the privilege of administering the oath of allegiance to a new group of volunteers my first year in Guyana as the Charge d'Affaires, and now as I prepare for my own departure after three years, I have the opportunity to speak to you all as you embark on your new journey.

I have long admired the Peace Corps for representing the very best of the United States. The Peace Corps truly reflects the strong sense of volunteerism that marks our nation, our openness to other people and cultures, and a strong spirit of adventure.

While Peace Corps is a U.S. Government agency, its mandate is largely fulfilled by volunteers. Interestingly enough, U.S. foreign assistance does not just come from the U.S. Government. Private groups and individuals from the United States play an important role in the economic and technical development societies, in addition to the role played by the U.S. government. According to a report from the Giving USA Foundation and the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University, the total charitable contributions by individuals, corporations, and foundations to foreign and domestic causes was almost \$300 billion in 2011. No developed country approaches this level.

American support comes in many different forms, through non-governmental organizations, foundations, religious organizations, diaspora associations, the private sector, academia, and individual U.S. citizens who have a sense of service – like Peace Corps Volunteers.

Like so many who have served before, I believe this group of volunteers will find that their work will be challenging as well as rewarding. As many of our volunteers may have already discovered, Guyana is a country for nature lovers and adventure seekers. It has an irresistible combination of fascinating and breathtaking natural beauty, including pristine rainforests; incredible waterfalls; and amazing wildlife, that is joined to a vibrant culture, a diverse and rich heritage, and some of the most hospitable and friendly people in the world.

Despite its intense beauty and tremendous potential, Guyana is also a developing country, and, as such, faces considerable challenges, including poverty, an HIV/AIDS epidemic, ethnic and racial divisions, crime and security threats, and education gaps. The United States has a strong interest in working in partnership with Guyana to support national efforts to meet these challenges.

The United States Government is working hard to forge a closer and more productive partnership with the Government and people of Guyana to help build a more prosperous, secure, democratic, and healthy Guyana. Our talented and hard-working personnel at the U.S. Mission in Guyana seek to achieve this through active diplomatic engagement, targeted development assistance, and an active two-way flow of people, ideas, and information.

Our Mission will continue to work with the Government and people of Guyana to solidify the gains in democratic governance, bolster economic growth, and promote opportunity, particularly for young people and women.

The Peace Corps forms an important part of the U.S. Mission in Guyana. Peace Corps was first welcomed to Guyana in 1966, and served the development interests of the country until 1971. Again in 1995, Peace Corps was invited to Guyana to work as community based promoters in the sectors of health and education. Peace Corps generally seeks to provide the most attention to communities with the greatest development challenges and fewest resources with which to address them.

Though times have changed, Peace Corps has adhered to the unchanged goals of its founding. The first goal is helping the people of interested countries in meeting their need for trained men and women. The second goal is helping promote a better understanding of Americans on the part of peoples served. And lastly, the Peace Corps helps to promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans.

With this group of 29 trainees, about 630 volunteers will have served in Guyana since 1966. Our Peace Corps Volunteers come to Guyana from all fifty states and they represent the ethnic, cultural, religious, and social diversity of the United States. They come from many backgrounds, with a variety of skills and experiences to contribute to their service in Guyana. Peace Corps Volunteers are a cross section of our country with volunteers ranging in age from recent college graduates to one of our newest volunteers who is 69 years old. Three people from this training group are actually in their 60s. For 10 weeks, our trainees have lived with host families in Laluni and Kuru Kururu, in the interior, and in Timehri and Soesdyke, which are located on the coast. Now they are finally ready to begin their service in Guyana.

During its fifty-two year history, Peace Corps has accepted invitations to work in 139 countries across the world, and there are now several generations who have worked in every corner of the world in the pursuit of friendship and peace. Volunteers dedicated themselves to changing the world for the better one person at a time. Peace Corps Volunteers have gone on to continue service to others abroad or in their own country.

They look back with fondness, respect, and understanding for the people with whom they have worked.

I salute all of the new volunteers from GUY25 for continuing this finest of American traditions. Thank you for your willingness to serve and to represent our country here in Guyana. I will now administer the Peace Corps Swearing In Ceremony Oath. Please repeat after me:

**I (state your name) DO SOLEMNLY SWEAR (OR AFFIRM)**

**THAT I WILL SUPPORT AND DEFEND THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES**

**AGAINST ALL ENEMIES FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC**

**THAT I WILL BEAR TRUE FAITH AND ALLEGIANCE TO THE SAME**

**THAT I TAKE THIS OBLIGATION FREELY**

**WITHOUT ANY MENTAL RESERVATION OR PURPOSE OF EVASION**

**AND THAT I WILL WELL AND FAITHFULLY DISCHARGE MY DUTIES IN THE PEACE CORPS**

**SO HELP ME GOD.**