

# Partnership

The Newsletter of Peace Corps' Office of Private Sector Initiatives

## The Dominican Republic Community Challenge Fund

It is striking how much good a little bit of money and some dedicated Peace Corps Volunteers can do in communities around the world. This is evident in the Dominican Republic through the Community Challenge Fund. This fund, administered by the RPCV group, the *Friends of the Dominican Republic*, and working through the Peace Corps Partnership Program, has supported numerous community development projects all over the country.

The impetus for this initiative was a former Peace Corps Volunteer who returned to the Dominican Republic with the Crisis Corps in 1999. While serving there he saw an opportunity to do a community latrine and water project and was amazed by how much change the community was able to achieve in a very short time with funds raised from friends and family at home. Returning back to the United States, this RPCV was inspired to replicate this across the Dominican Republic. Now in its fourth year, the Community Challenge Fund has fully funded 20 different community development projects. The RPCV and his father created a matching fund, which donors going through the Friends of the DR helped to double to over \$200,000. The interest accrued on this money will sustain the fund over time. This will allow them to support up to 10 new projects of up to \$2,000 throughout the Dominican Republic every year.

The focus of the Challenge Fund is to improve the standard of living by addressing the



basic needs of the communities it serves. By going through the Partnership Program, the Challenge Fund can get tremendous bang for its buck, as every dollar donated goes to projects. The Peace Corps is able to provide an existing infrastructure for funding projects. And with Volunteers running the projects in partnership with the local communities, the Challenge Fund was able to go directly from raising funds to implementing projects. The Challenge Fund is a big part of why the Dominican Republic is now the most active Peace Corps Partnership country in the world. The Friends of the DR and the Challenge Fund show how it does not take a lot of money to do a lot of good.

Did you know?

## 2.6 Billion

The number of people in the developing world who do not have access to basic sanitation facilities.

\*According to UNICEF and WHO

## Water and Sanitation Fund launched to great success

The Peace Corps Partnership Program has been proud to work with the Wallace Genetic Foundation in creating our new Water and Sanitation Fund. The Wallace Genetic Foundation kicked off this fund by donating \$25,000 and committed to match the next \$25,000 raised for the Fund, which was provided by RPCVs of Madison. The Partnership Program would like to thank the Wallace Genetic Foundation and the RPCVs of Madison for helping to bring the gift of clean water to communities around the world.

## **South African Playground Construction**

Parents all over the world worry about their children not having safe places to play. This is especially an issue in Limpopo, South Africa with so many dangers surrounding the local grade school. Crippled, like much the country, by the effects of TB and HIV/AIDS, Limpopo has a staggering 520 students in preschool through 7<sup>th</sup> grade out of a population of only 921. With so many students the school has become quite cramped. In addition, the lack of recreational facilities made it difficult for students to concentrate on their studies. The parents in the town, consequently, decided that the best solution was to provide a safe, positive outlet for the childrens' energy and create a playground at the school.

The community threw themselves into this project with gusto, receiving amazing support from the Volunteer in their community and donors in America. The result overwhelmed everyone's expectations. They finally felt that their children went to a real school. This experience has inspired the community to take charge of their lives. They are already planning looking forward to what might do next.

## **Romanian Goat Herding Project**

The life of a farmer is marked by unpredictability and self-reliance. This can make it a real struggle to improve their standard of living. This was the dilemma facing farmers in Dambovita County, Romania. In order to cope with poor crop yields and nutrient deficiencies, the community decided they needed an alternative source of income.

The plan they seized upon was to give 23 different families a goat to raise. Each family had to pay for 10% of the cost of the goat, which helped to ensure that they were invested in the plan. By banning the killing of the goats, in order to encourage milk production, this project helped to enrich the community both in their stomachs and pocketbooks. This also helped to really make this project more sustainable. Additionally, every farmer was required to give their first born female goat to a new family, further spreading the impact of this project.



An amazing side effect of this venture was that it really pulled the towns farmers together. As the goat project was administered by a council of farmers, they became used to meeting and making difficult decisions. By bringing the town together, it has now started to actively tackle important issues as a community.

In order to donate, find out more about us, or see a list of projects in need of funding, contact us at:

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