

## UNIVERSITY

# Peace Corps offers cultural education

By Mandy Baucum  
Emerald Reporter

Although three former Peace Corps volunteers had different reasons for making the journey overseas, they say experience changed their lives.

President John F. Kennedy's challenge asking Americans to do what they can for their country prompted David Povey, professor and director of urban and regional planning, to enter the Peace Corps in 1962.

Kennedy created the Peace Corps that year as an opportunity for America to give technical assistance to developing nations and to bring about a cultural exchange between the U.S. and the rest of the world.

The Peace Corps sends 3,000 volunteers overseas annually and 6,000 volunteers are currently serving in over 100 countries. The Peace Corps is now in Eastern Europe, a newer development since the end of the Soviet Union.

Povey and his wife were sent to the Philippines as part of the seventh group of Peace Corps volunteers to enter the country.

Povey was sent to a remote Philippine island where the nearest Peace Corps volunteers were an hour away by plane. He and his wife were given supplies by plane or boat once a week.

Their mission was to teach English as a second language and science to elementary school children, but Povey said he later came to realize the job was much more.

On one occasion, a native boy drowned in a stream and the people did not know how to resuscitate him. Povey tried in vain to revive the boy, but he said he thought his efforts helped strengthen the trust of the people.

"I tried to share that we (Americans) were caring peo-



Gerry Fry

ple," Povey said. "Our job was to come work side by side with the people and share with them skills and technology to improve their way of life."

Also while in the Philippines, Povey said he noticed that some powdered milk sent over for relief efforts was being used to mark plane fields and landing strips. The milk was being used much as the U.S. would use lime to line baseball fields.

The Filipinos knew the powder was milk, but wouldn't drink it and so found their own use for it.

The incident for Povey was one that opened his eyes to the complexities of change.

"(The Peace Corps experience) allows you to have a different perspective of the world," Povey said. "You learn about how slow change comes in general."

Laura Streichert, a thirty-three-year-old post-doctoral fellow in the University's institute of neuro-science, went to Nepal as a Peace Corps volunteer in 1981-83.

"It's affected my whole life. I sort of look at life as a cross-cultural experience," Streichert said. "You really can't know

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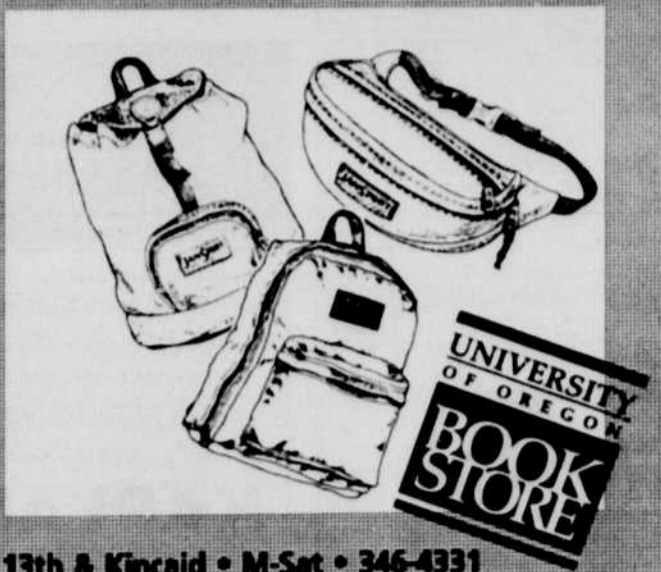
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