



## KITTY PIERCY

Ethiopia, 1964 - 1966

I served in Asmara, Ethiopia (now in Eritrea). I taught English, poetry and art at Halle Selassie Secondary School, went on a medical safari, volunteered in a TB center, and worked with lepers. I had a library in my home and there was a revolution beginning in the streets. I hitchhiked along the coast of Africa, through Nigeria, Dahomey (now Benin), Togo, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast (now Côte d'Ivoire). I visited the ancient ruins of Lalebela, Axum, and the Queen of Sheba Bath. My Peace Corps service made me a citizen of the world with great appreciation of other cultures and people. It was a great adventure for a girl who had never traveled. My husband David served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Iran.

*Kitty is Mayor of Eugene.*

## JIM BEYER

Panama, 1967 - 1969



Jim worked in rural community development, in the rainforest, on the Caribbean side of Panama. "The memories are numerous of unique difficulties working with community members in a roadless area, with no electricity or modern tools. We spent days sawing and milling all of the lumber to build an

entire school. We mixed cement by hand for school floors. I especially remember digging wells, lowering ourselves into a hole, sometimes as deep as 15 feet, to stand in water and muck and dig like crazy. Panamanians like to make games out of work. We competed with each other to see who could fill the bucket the fastest. My biggest role was simply being a catalyst for change. Communities knew how to organize themselves and they had the technical skills. What they lacked was the impetus to start a project, how to reach out for outside help, and how to stay focused on completion." Jim worked for 27 years for the Oregon Student Assistance Commission, an agency devoted to helping students and families finance higher education. He is now retired.

## CHERYL REINHART

Guinea-Conakry, 1989 - 1990

Cheryl was on a team of three Peace Corps Volunteers trained to work with local women on gardening, development of cooperatives, and agroforestry. They were the first PCVs in their region and called themselves "The Guinea Pigs." During training they were coached to spend the first six months at their site getting to know the community and its needs, in preparation for launching projects using readily available local materials. Within days of their arrival, community members made it clear that what they needed was a motorized irrigation pump and other expensive items. Cheryl says, "the idea of 'grassroots development' didn't sound as good to the villagers as it did to us." Near the end of Cheryl's service there was civil war in nearby Liberia. Cheryl's village was inundated with refugees. Cheryl and her sister own and manage Sweet Life Patisserie in Eugene. She is married and has three children.



## ROBERT THOMPSON

Honduras, 1973 - 1975



Robert taught mechanical engineering at the National University of Honduras, which stimulated his love for teaching. "It provided me with an invaluable cultural perspective and sensitivity as well as knowledge of Spanish which is useful to me today in Eugene with our growing Latino

population." Robert has spoken to high school student groups about the benefits of Peace Corps service. He has been a math and engineering instructor at Lane Community College since 1978 and currently directs Lane's Math Resource Center. His wife is a local glass artist and their two daughters attend the University of Oregon.

## JULIA HARVEY

Tonga, 1990 - 1992



Julia taught science in the Kingdom of Tonga. She says this challenged the stereotype of U.S. women found in the popular media. "I remember the simple living. We ate seasonally. We could not

always count on electricity or running water. There were no computers, cell phones, digital cameras. I remember waiting for the day that the rainy season would start, knowing that our cisterns would fill up again. I remember eating the best mangos in the world. There were no problems of hunger or homelessness because people took care of their extended families. An indelible memory involves food. I decided to eat healthy and cook some taro leaves with eggs for dinner. When I ate my healthy meal, my mouth began to burn. I learned that taro leaves are edible but *giant* taro leaves contain oxalic acid, which causes burning known as *fi fisi* -- a Tongan word that I will never forget." Julia has been teaching science at South Eugene High School for 12 years.

## NANCY AND WALT MEYER

Mexico, 2006 - 2008



Nancy and Walt worked at a government research and development center for electrochemistry and environmental engineering, in Queretaro, three hours northwest of Mexico City. Walt did projects with graduate students and environmental engineers. Nancy taught English to graduate students and center employees. They shared major life events — baptisms, weddings, birthday celebrations, graduations, funerals — and made lifelong friends. Back in Eugene, Walt returned to work at an

environmental engineering consulting firm and Nancy teaches English at Downtown Languages.

## CHRIS CHAPLIN

Kazakhstan, 2007 - 2009



Chris taught English (TEFL) at Korkyt Ata Kyzylorda State University. "I tried not to view my assignment in terms of tangible accomplishments as much as forging relationships, mutual understanding, and trust. In addition to teaching English, I helped establish a small library at the

university, taught baseball, organized a healthy lifestyles conference for orphaned children and college students, and helped translate a major screenplay into Kazakh. One of my proudest moments was when I taught baseball in Kazakh to a group of 5th graders at summer camp. They remembered all the rules and were anxious to play again when I came back the next summer. I was also proud when several of my university students overcame their fear and served admirably as interpreters for Peace Corps presenters at our healthy lifestyles conference. This was an important step for them since many were planning to pursue jobs as translators and interpreters." Chris is pursuing a dual degree in Conflict Resolution and Law at the University of Oregon.

## CASSADY WALTERS

Mali, 2008 - 2010

As a Health Education volunteer, Cassady had a weekly radio show that reached 30,000 listeners. It aired in Bambara, the local language. She says: "I became a source for community members, particularly women, to approach on all health topics, specifically malnutrition, HIV/AIDS, and family planning... And a white woman speaking fluent Bambara was certainly a novelty." How did Peace Corps influence her life? "I learned so much, I made such good friends, I was challenged in such profound ways... I think about food differently, religion differently, love and marriage, my body, my house, my family... I learned I do not want to work in international development, but that I love learning languages and that learning a language is the best way to get to know a culture." Cassady was a political consultant in the 2010 election cycle and is currently studying Arabic at the University of Oregon, with plans for further study in Jordan.

