



مرحبتين !

Marhabtain!

The Official Newsletter of the Friends of Jordan Association

Spring 2007

WANTED: NEWSLETTER EDITOR!

You might have noticed that this issue of *Marhabtain!* is coming out a bit behind schedule. This, friends, is because we have yet to fill the position of Newsletter Editor on our officer roster! Might you be interested in the job? With members scattered around the world, our association newsletter is a critical tool to keeping us in touch with each other and with Jordan. The editor job is a fun one – you get to exercise your creativity while collaborating with Peace Corps Volunteers in Jordan, former volunteers in far-flung locations, and like-minded organizations. Are you up for it? Or just want to hear more about what the job is like? Contact Kathleen at president@friendsofjordan.org.

Friends of Jordan Welcomes New Officers!

It may seem like old news already, but in March, 2007, our Friends of Jordan Association welcomed its new group of officers. The new board has many familiar faces from the last few years, as well as a new face in Naureen Mohammad (J7), our Fundraising Coordinator. We are excited to have a more recently returned volunteer working with us, and we hope that Naureen's involvement will lead to more J7-10 participation.

In the presidential seat, we now have Kathleen Sheridan (J4), who's fit for the role after two years as Vice President. Karina O'Meara (J3) stepped up to the plate as Vice President, and she has transitioned smoothly into the role after her experience as Secretary. Our outgoing President, Rose Kyprianou (J2), is still supporting the association but in a new role as our Secretary. David Rosenberg (J2), Camellia El-Antably (J2), and Kae Gerhard (J1), are serving for the third straight year as Program Coordinator, Treasurer, and Webmaster, respectively. And, as was already mentioned, Naureen Mohammad (J7) is busy planning some fundraising activities for later this year as our new Fundraising Coordinator.

We thank these dedicated individuals for keeping our organization running smoothly and reaching out to PCVs, RPCVs, and the community at large.

If you'd like to get involved or know someone else who would, the Newsletter Editor and Membership Coordinator positions are still vacant. Don't wait! Contact any of the officers today to express your interest!

Email **Photos of Jordan**
to:

pictures@friendsofjordan.org
with a caption and date for
submission to our upcoming
online photo gallery.

Send a **Jordanian recipe**
to:

cookbook@friendsofjordan.org
for inclusion in our outreach
packet.

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Five Years Later - A photo journey through a J4's return to Jordan – Sarah Antaya, J4



J4s Robyn (Hyle) White, Sarah Antaya, Tricia (Brownfield) Bulmer, and Rebecca Jordan travel to Jordan five years after completing their service.



Rebecca at the world's largest Starbucks. New (to us). Next to the Blue Fig in Abdoun.



The new King's Academy near Madaba. Modeled on the boarding school in Massachusetts that King Abdullah attended, Deerfield Academy.



Not really evident in this picture, but one thing we saw much more of was TRAFFIC. So many more cars and traffic jams on the road.



The spectacular view, including the Jordanian flag, from the new Wild Jordan (gift shop, cafe, educational center) in Jebel Amman. A project of the RSCN.



The reservoir ("Lake Mujib") created by the new dam in Wadi Mujib. You will drive over it if you travel down the King's Highway.



My great friend and tutor has become more conservative in her dress since I left. She has opened a preschool in the village where academic, religious, and social lessons are taught. The lessons I learned while visiting her classroom: "Don't keep eating if you are full!" and "Cover your mouth when you yawn so that the devil cannot get in!"

Get Involved!

Below are three ways for you to get involved in efforts related to Friends of Jordan or Peace Corps. Thanks to those of you who have already volunteered! If others of you are interested, please contact the organizers directly or let us know if you have any questions – fojordan@friendsofjordan.org.

1. Kids Around the World - The National Peace Corps Association is looking for someone to contribute some information about Jordan to their Kids Around the World website (www.katw.org). The site is geared towards children in elementary school, and it serves as an introduction to the lives of children around the world for young students in the U.S. They have a profile from a child in Jordan—a currently serving PCV did the interview—and are in need of some basic information to create the profile page for Jordan. If you are interested in helping them populate their Jordan page, please contact Ellen Frierson at NPCA (ellen@rpcv.org). Or, if you know of any Jordan-related kid-friendly or education-oriented websites, please send those to her too!

2. World Wise Schools Connect - Are you a teacher? Or do you know any teachers who would like to educate their students about life in Jordan? The Coverdell World Wise Schools Correspondence Match program is looking for 12 interested US educators to connect with a Jordan Peace Corps Volunteer. Through this connection, participating PCVs share photos, stories, and artifacts from Jordan with their designated US classroom. If you are interested in participating or might know a teacher/educator who is, please contact Rob Fournier at rfournier@peacecorps.gov.

3. Serve as a resource for invitees to Peace Corps Jordan! The Jordan Desk Officer at Peace Corps headquarters has requested a list of Jordan RPCVs who are interested in responding to questions from invitees to Jordan. As many of you know from your experience, it would greatly benefit the invitees to have a conversation with someone who served in Jordan before traveling. There is a group leaving for Jordan in July, so volunteer now! Please send your name, date of service, email address and/or phone number to Kathleen at president@friendsofjordan.org.

Operation Smile – Daniel O’Brien, J9

Background: Operation Smile is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to repair childhood facial deformities while advocating for sustainable healthcare systems for children and families. In April of this year, Operation Smile brought 89 Iraqi patients, each with a caretaker, to Jordan to undergo their operations. For the second year in a row, a group of Peace Corps Volunteers, most working in alternating 48 hour shifts, coordinated their 8-day visit - supporting the families, entertaining the patients, and liaising between the Iraqi families and the Jordanian hotel and hospital facilities.

During Operation Smile, the Peace Corps Volunteer’s job is to worry about everything outside the hospital so that those who organize the operations, the doctors, and the medical volunteers can focus on the reason for the trip. First on our list was the check-in of the patients. The process of the patient check-in during Operation Smile is much of the reason that Peace Corps Volunteers are so valuable to the operation. We had a team of 8 volunteers waiting at the hotel for the first of two planes to arrive carrying the patients. After preparing a system to facilitate the check-in as smoothly as possible, we could only wait. Although it seemed we had prepared for everything, we all knew that once the patients arrive we would be wrapped up in a cloud of confusion.

This time, more than half of the patients were from the Kurdish-speaking North of Iraq, nullifying our ability to communicate with most of them in anything more than hand signals, pointing, and the most basic English or Arabic phrases. 89 patients arrived, each with a guardian. Adding doctors and ministry of health officials, there were approximately 200 people who needed to be checked into the hotel. After we went over the rehearsed plan countless times and made revisions, the first bus of patients arrived. *(Continued on next page)*



Dan O'Brien (J9) and Andy Lehto (J9) smile for the camera with a father of an Iraqi Operation Smile photo. Right, Katie Strohm Dahl (J9), poses with four Iraqi patients. More than 20 Peace Corps volunteers participated in the effort in April, 2007, and they will coordinate another group of surgeries in June.

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The system we developed for funneling the patients in and recording their information before assigning them a room worked moderately well, or as well as could be expected given the circumstances. It was the patience and humanity of the Peace Corps Volunteers, though, that truly made the process run. In a maelstrom of baggage, crying children, exhausted parents and not the least confusing, the languages - English, Arabic (both the Jordanian and Iraqi versions), and Kurdish - the volunteers, some of whom were witnessing this process for the first time, worked diligently. Questions were directed at them in the various languages by crowds of people who continually encircled them always pressing closer, each request sounding more urgent than the last. Requests for water, diapers, room changes, food, baby formula. The doctors requested that all the patients be seen before going to their rooms, so a makeshift clinic was set up in the hotel lobby on the spot. All the while, volunteers were responsible for taking passports, passport numbers, names, and then assigning a patient number and a room number. It was a difficult job but one that can be performed by those who have a strong work ethic and a grasp of the Arabic language.

What sets the Peace Corps volunteers apart is what I previously described as their humanity. I stood back in the hotel lobby and took 5 seconds to survey the scene, and I'd never been more proud to be a Peace Corps Volunteer. Despite the mass of bodies, the rapid fire questions and requests by the Iraqi families, and the pleas of the hotel staff to take care of the latest issue, the volunteers I worked with handled every patient and every problem individually, as if the Iraqis were members of their own families. Taking a minute to reassure a scared little girl as she was about to take her first elevator ride to her room, making sure each family has bottled water after their long trip, taking the extra minute to help a grandmom with her luggage or hold a crying baby for an overwhelmed father playing Mr. Mom by himself for the first time in his life.

These are the tiny gestures that show that it is more than just a job. When, in the midst of a personally stressful situation you're able to look at someone else and empathize with them, to me that's what defines Peace Corps as well as the Operation Smile experience - creating this inspired collaboration through the ideals of selflessness and dedication.

The check-in was completed and the rest of the week was filled with more of the same. Late night calls to see sick children, games and activities to fill up the long days for pre-op and post-op children, and making sure the patients were fed and on time to the hospital for their operations. While it was happening they felt like the longest days of my life, but upon reflection it went by too fast.

Alf Shukr (Thanks) to our Grant Reviewers!

2007 has been very busy for the Small Grants Program, and we could not do it without the following reliable reviewers!

Bernadette Michel (J4), Jen Peterson (J4), Kathleen Sheridan (J4), Karina O'Meara (J3), Kate Ramsey (J2), Rose Kyprianou (J2), Camellia El-Antably (J2), and Carl Kirk.

Peace Corps Jordan News

- Congrats to the **J9s on their COS conference** in early June, 2007!
- Welcome to the new Peace Corps **Jordan Country Director, Alex Boston!** Alex goes to Jordan from a CD position at PC Turkmenistan.
- The newest group of Jordan volunteers, the J11s, leaves Washington, DC, for Jordan on July 8, 2007.

Thanks to our 2006 donors!

Rose Kyprianou (J2)
Margaret Sollitto (J3)
Karina O'Meara (J3)
Bernadette Michel (J4)
Jacquelyn Duclos (J4)
Kathleen Sheridan (J4)
Audra & Jeremy Vann (J7)
Charles & Jacquelyn Dailey
And other anonymous donors...

With these donations, FOJ gave 13 grants to RPCV projects in Jordan in 2006 and has already given 10 in 2007.

FOJ Member News

J2

Kim Ross Beasley and her husband, Mark, are living in Atlanta, Georgia, and are expecting boy and girl twins in July! They look forward to sending an announcement and pictures when the twins make their grand entrance.

Thomas Sabol is working as a biologist on Marine Corps Base-Camp Pendleton, California, trying to save as many plant and animal species as possible from the urban sprawl, strip malls, and general covering of everything with asphalt and humanity.

J3

Margaret DeLorme Sollitto, in Long Beach, CA, was happy to hear that the books she mailed to her school in Beit Ides arrived after a 3.5 month journey! She was also able to secure a donated set of encyclopedias for the village doctor, who has been studiously visiting her former school to read the set that was donated during Margaret's service. Since an operation on her shoulder in October, Margaret has been home on disability, but she's hoping for a successful recovery before she moves to New York in late August to go to Teachers College, Columbia University for a two year masters degree program in TESOL.

J4

Kristen Elsholz is living in Oxford, Michigan, and working in Elementary Special Education at Rochester Community Schools. She and her fiancé, Keith, bought their first home last summer and recently adopted an excitable puppy named Brady. They are excited about their upcoming wedding on July 28th at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas.

Let everyone know what you are up to! Share your news and catch up with other members. Send the following information to fojordan@friendsofjordan.org with the subject line "FOJ News."

- First Name
- Last Name (and surname before marriage, if different)
- Mailing Address, City, State, Zip
- Email Address
- Employer
- Title
- Your News

EMAIL CONTACT INFORMATION for the Friends of Jordan 2007 Officers

Kathleen Sheridan, <i>President</i>	president@friendsofjordan.org
Karina O’Meara, <i>Vice President</i>	vicepresident@friendsofjordan.org
Rose Kyprianou, <i>Secretary</i>	secretary@friendsofjordan.org
Camellia El-Antably, <i>Treasurer</i>	treasurer@friendsofjordan.org
Naureen Mohammad, <i>Fundraising Coordinator</i>	fundraising@friendsofjordan.org
David Rosenberg, <i>Program Coordinator</i>	program@friendsofjordan.org
Kae Gerhard, <i>Webmaster</i>	webmaster@friendsofjordan.org
VACANT, <i>Membership Coordinator</i>	membership@friendsofjordan.org
VACANT, <i>Newsletter Editor</i>	newsletter@friendsofjordan.org

You can also reach all of us at fojordan@friendsofjordan.com

FRIENDS OF JORDAN ASSOCIATION – NEW AND RENEWAL MEMBERSHIP FORM

Contact Information (New and Renewing Members)	Peace Corps Service Information (New Members Only – if applicable)
Name: _____	Years Served in Peace Corps: _____
Address: _____	Site in Jordan: _____
City, State, Zip: _____	Training Group Number (J1, J2, J3, etc.): _____
Phone:* _____	_____
Email: _____	Type of Volunteer: _____
Nat’l Peace Corps Assn. Number: _____ (Renewing Members of NPCA Only)	
Current Employer or Profession:* _____ (New and Renewing Members)	

*optional information

Please check all items that apply:

- I would like to renew my affiliation with the Friends of Jordan for one year and am enclosing a check for \$15 or \$25 for family (to extend my membership for **one year**).
- I would like to renew my affiliation with the Friends of Jordan for three years and am enclosing a check for \$45 for an individual or \$75 for a family (to extend my membership for **three years**).
- I would like to renew my membership with the National Peace Corps Association and am enclosing an additional \$35 for a total amount of \$50 for **one years’** membership (effective January 1, 2007, new memberships and renewals in NPCA will only be available to individuals on an annual basis).
- I agree to allow Friends of Jordan Association to share the information I have provided with other Association members for networking purposes only. I understand that Friends of Jordan will not transfer, sell, or make this information available to any outside party except when required by law. [*Please check to be included in the FOJ Networking List.*]

Please make checks payable to the “Friends of Jordan.” Checks and the membership form should be mailed to:

Friends of Jordan Association, c/o Camellia El-Antably, 314 E 1st Ave, Cheyenne, WY 82001