Coming Soon: Happy Hour, Holiday Party, Book Club, Hiking, and More!

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San Diego Peace Corps Association E-Newsletter

Pacific Waves

Volume 39, Number 9 November 2026

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello SDPCA Members!



Welcome to the holiday season... yes, with Thanksgiving around the corner and Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year's right behind it, there is no denying it even if we are still having this warm, beautiful weather!

We have finally ironed out our SDPCA website (https://www.sdpca.org/) and email issues thanks to Colleen and Trisha on the Board. We are so grateful for all the work they've put in to make technology work for us. You can find your Board members at:
president@sdpca.org - President, Nina Pruyn
admin@sdpca.org - Secretary, Colleen Garrett
membership@sdpca.org - Membership Leads, Laura Streichert and Brian Midkiff
newsletter@sdpca.org - Newsletter Editor, Sara Stock née Russell
advocacy@sdpca.org - Advocacy Lead, Brad Favor

The SDPCA Board has started working in earnest with the NPCA for the PC Connect+ Conference in June 2027 here in San Diego. We will need your help for a variety of activities, such as hosting the welcome happy hour, hosting newly returned volunteers to stay in members' homes, and volunteering at the event. If you are willing and interested in helping out, please email conference sub-committee at advocacy@sdpca.org.

Last month we had a great time at the Annual Bonfire in October! Thanks to all that came out, both old and new members. We were delighted to see so many recently returned and new-to-San Diego RPCVs! I hope you all are enjoying the variety of activities we've held (including Sunset Cliffs restoration and an escape room) in the last few weeks. We are so looking forward to upcoming events, including a couple of happy hours, the Annual Holiday Party Potluck and Silent Auction, and the New Year's Hike at Eagle Rock! See below for details.

party!

All the best,
Nina Pruyn, Board President
Costa Rica 93-95

UPCOMING EVENTS



Aperitivo! Happy Hour

Thursday, November 19th, 2026 @ 4-7PM
Slowly
1520 Garnet Ave San Diego, CA 92109
RSVP: https://evite.me/4ynykxSzsQ

Join us for Happy Hour at Aperitivo!

What is Aperitivo?
Aperitivo is an Italian tradition similar to happy hour, where you enjoy a drink and receive complimentary small bites. It's meant to be light, social, and relaxing — not a full meal, just a great way to unwind.

What kind of food is served?
Expect small, flavorful Italian bites such as crostini, focaccia, small pasta tastings, and seasonal appetizers.

The selection changes, so there's always something new.

SDPCA Host: Dana Weimar

SDPCA Annual Holiday Party & Silent Auction

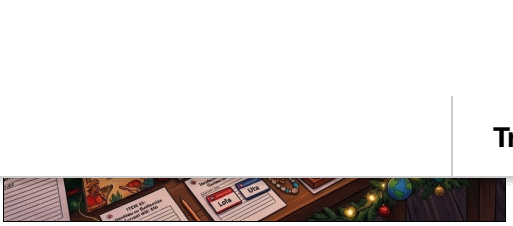
Saturday, December 5th, 2026 @ 11AM - 2PM
San Diego First Church of the Brethren
3850 Westgate Pl, San Diego, CA 92105
RSVP: https://evite.me/yQXguyE63e



May our days be Merry & Bright!

Please join us for an afternoon full of food, fun, and friendship... & treasures!

We plan to have the party outdoors* so please bring sunscreen and a sweater. Lunch is a potluck and we



Our famous Silent Auction BEGINS PROMPTLY at 11:00 am AND ENDS at 12:15 pm.

(Remember no auction items are accepted day of the party.)

If you have something to donate, please contact Shannon at: 267-304-2160 or shannonmcbride512@gmail.com. (Remember no auction items are accepted the day of the party.)

We will play Peace Corps trivia/games and hear some funny, heartwarming holiday stories. We will also vote for our next International Support Fund donations.

There is plenty of parking at the church and play space for kids.

Note: We will move indoors in case of rain.

SDPCA Hosts: Shannon McBride Mahan, Lynne Graham, & Trisha Langlois

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SDPCA Happy Hour at Gravity Heights in Mission Valley

Thursday, December 17th, 2026 @ 4 - 7PM
Gravity Heights
525 Camino De La Reina, Suite 101
RSVP: evite coming soon



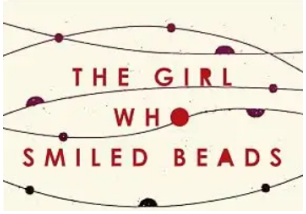
Join us for a festive December happy hour at Gravity Heights, a brewery with a full restaurant and bar.

We've reserved a spot with seating around a fire pit. Come by anytime from 4 to 7 PM, or stay later.

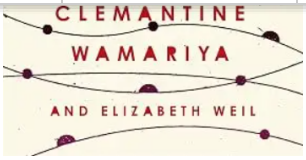
Parking is in front of the brewery and on Camino de la Reina behind it. After 3 PM you can also park across the street at Tower 591, even if the signs say tow zone.

Questions? Email Brad at bfavor@gmail.com

SDPCA Host: Brad Favor



Book Club: *The Girl Who Smiled Beads*
Wednesday, December 30, 2026 @ 7-8pm
Zoom
RSVP: https://evite.me/spjdEwQFzF



SDPCA Host: Sharon Kennedy

New Year Hike to Eagle Rock
Saturday, January 2nd, 2026 @ 9:30AM
Warner Springs Fire Station
31049 CA-79, Warner Springs, CA 92086
RSVP: https://evite.me/P8K7mBCgCq



Join us for a refreshing 6.4 mile round trip hike on the Pacific Crest Trail to Eagle Rock!! We'll walk through picturesque boulders, grassy plains, and coast live oak trees. The total elevation gain is 700 feet. At the halfway point, we'll break for lunch/snacks at the impressive rock pile that resembles an eagle spreading its wings.

Wear hiking boots or sturdy tennis shoes and bring a hat, sunscreen, a jacket, plenty of water, and snacks or lunch for the mid point stop.

The hike will start at 9:30am. The address listed above is for the fire station right next to the trailhead. Parking is available on the street or at the community center across the street.

For those who want to carpool to the trailhead, we'll meet at 8:30am in Ramona: parking lot near the Bank of America, 1407 Main St, Ramona, CA 92065. From here, it is about a 40 minute drive to the trailhead.

Rain cancels.

Email Sharon with any questions: sharonkennedya@gmail.com

SDPCA Host: Sharon Kennedy



All People's Celebration on MLK Day
Monday, January 18th, 2027
9:00 AM Community Space Opens, 9:55 AM Ticketed Program Starts
Balboa Park Activity Center
2145 Park Blvd, San Diego 92101
Reserve a spot: https://www.paypal.com/ncp/payment/J6HZ6Y9WAV3QC

event to honor the living legacy of Dr. King in an uplifting program that features stirring performances and keynote speeches. The theme this year is: People First. A delicious continental breakfast is served in the courtyard.

SDPCA has reserved a table for ten. Tickets are $61 each, payable with PayPal
Reserve your spot today!

SDPCA Hosts: Laura Streichert and Michele Lagoy

WHAT'S NEW?



SDPCA Supports Peace Corps Volunteer Projects Around the World

The San Diego Peace Corps Association (SDPCA) is excited to share some wonderful news about our International Support Fund (ISF) and the impact of our community's support for Peace Corps Volunteers around the world!

Following a vote by members attending our recent bonfire, SDPCA awarded **$1,000 grants to two deserving Peace Corps Volunteer (PCV) projects**.

Improving Access to Safe Sanitation in Ghana:

Asha, a Peace Corps Volunteer from Redlands, California, is working with a community in Ghana to improve access to safe sanitation through the construction of 20 household biodigesting toilets.

The project will help address the health and hygiene risks associated with open defecation, particularly for elderly community members who face challenges accessing existing facilities. In addition to construction, participating households will receive training on sanitation and proper toilet maintenance. A community committee has also been formed to help ensure the project's long-term sustainability.

SDPCA is proud to support Asha and her community's efforts to improve access to safe sanitation and promote long-term health and hygiene.

Growing Economic Opportunities in Nepal:



Elizabeth Holliday, a Peace Corps Volunteer from Howard County, Maryland, is working with a community forest group in Kaski, Nepal, to support an income-



The project will establish an irrigation system for 350 mango trees, including a water pump, 2,500 meters of piping, and water storage drums. Reliable irrigation will help protect young trees from unpredictable rainfall, pests, disease, and other effects of climate change.

Beyond supporting the orchard, the project will create local economic opportunities by sourcing labor and supplies within the community. Once established, the orchard will provide the community forest group's 278 members with opportunities to generate income through future mango harvests.

SDPCA is proud to support Elizabeth and her community partners as they strengthen climate resilience and create sustainable income opportunities for the future.

Help Us Support More Peace Corps Volunteers!

These projects demonstrate the meaningful work Peace Corps Volunteers are doing alongside their host communities around the world. They also show how our SDPCA community can make a difference, whether through financial contributions, sharing project opportunities, or connecting volunteers with potential supporters.

There are many ways to help SDPCA continue supporting Peace Corps Volunteers and community-led projects around the world. Keeping your SDPCA membership current and attending and participating in our events and fundraisers throughout the year help sustain these efforts. We hope you'll join us for our upcoming **Holiday Party and Silent Auction on December 5!**

We look forward to continuing the conversation about the International Support Fund and exploring additional ways to promote and support PCV projects.

Thank you to everyone who continues to be part of our Peace Corps community!

Interested in supporting other Peace Corps Volunteer projects? Explore projects around the world at the Peace Corps Projects page.

SDPCA Membership Matters

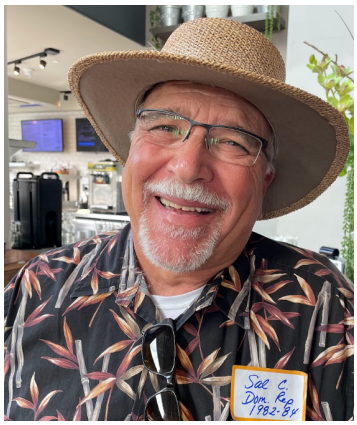
Namaste Everyone! Yesterday began the Nepali festival of Tihar (aka Diwali). A big part is Kukur Tihar, which honors the dogs. They get decked out in flowers and fed special food. It is quite a scene!

As we think about what to do for the holidays this year, however we celebrate them, it is fun to think back at the cultural experiences we had in our Peace Corps service. We have much to be grateful for!

Hope to see you at an upcoming event!

Laura Streichert
RPCV Nepal, N-106, 1981–1983
SDPCA Membership Co-Chair

Membership Spotlight
Get to know: Sal (Salvatore) Castellitto



Peace Corps country and years served:
Dominican Republic 1982-84

What did you do as a volunteer?
Business Marketing Lead Volunteer for Planarte Arts & Crafts Domestic sales.

Your profession/current occupation?
International Relations-US Department of Homeland Security-CBPO Federal Officer.



What is a favorite memory or experience from your time in the Peace Corps?
Working with and teaching single moms about running a small business.

Do you have a special souvenir you brought home from Peace Corps?
Ceramic figurines of la mujer tipica.

Please recommend activities you enjoy that other SDPCA members might be interested in.
Volunteer for many gardening and flower growing societies in San Diego/Balboa Park.

Interested in being featured in an upcoming member spotlight? Learn more here: https://forms.gle/G83DZTGJsYE2c4S77

PAST EVENTS



SDPCA Annual Beach Bonfire, October 17th



Sunset Cliffs Habitat Restoration, October 24th



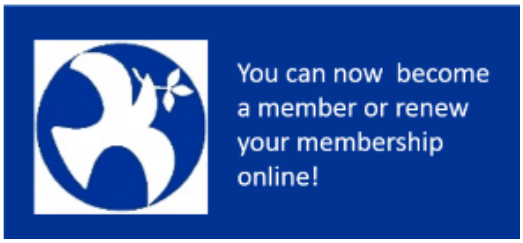
Book Club: *Fiddler on the Roof of Africa*, October 28th

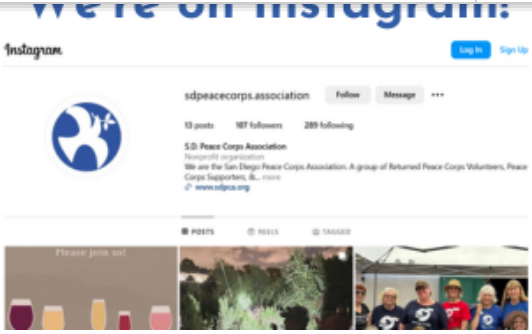


SDPCA Escape Room Night, November 4th

Follow SDPCA on Instagram and Facebook!

https://www.instagram.com/sdpeacecorps.association/
https://www.facebook.com/SDPCA/





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