Coming Soon: Sunset Cliffs Restoration, MLK All People's Celebration Breakfast, Book Club, and more!

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San Diego Peace Corps Association E-Newsletter

Pacific Waves

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Greetings all,

Happy New Year! I wish everyone a joyous and adventurous 2026.

Following a great year of activities and gatherings I look forward to seeing you at upcoming events in 2026. The year starts off with a busy January having kicked off with Zoom Trivia on January 7th. Looking ahead, we have a Sunset Cliffs restoration and planting event on the 10th, the MLK All People Breakfast on the 19th (tickets still available), and Book Club on January 28th. Check these out in the newsletter and keep an eye out for invitations.

Do you make New Years Resolutions? I have always avoided them so as not to be disappointed but this year I made one. I have resolved to manage my time better. In an effort to keep busy in retirement, I have completely overloaded myself with things I enjoy doing and need to get organized. Let's all resolve to make 2026 another active, meaningful and fun year for SDPCA.

Have a great January.

Brad
Mauritania, 79-81

UPCOMING EVENTS



Sunset Cliffs Habitat Restoration



705 Cornish Dr., San Diego, CA, 92107
RSVP: https://evite.me/ydju5RUQ46

THIS SATURDAY, join SDPCA for a memorable morning of habitat restoration at Sunset Cliffs Natural Park.

We'll be planting, tackling invasive plants, clearing noxious weeds, and smoothing out the main trail to showcase the natural beauty of this space.

No experience necessary. Please bring gardening gloves, close-toe shoes, and a water bottle. Hats and sunscreen are highly recommended; all other tools will be provided.

Meet us in the parking lot (entrance at Ladera St. and Cornish Dr.) and look for the Peace Corps banner. Hope to see you there!

SDPCA hosts: Leon Scales and Sara Russell

Annual All People's Celebration on MLK Day

Monday, January 19th, 2026 @ 9-11AM
Balboa Park Activity Center
2145 Park Blvd, San Diego 92101
RSVP: https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=VJF86ZAFDFWQN



TICKETS STILL AVAILABLE!! GET YOURS TODAY!

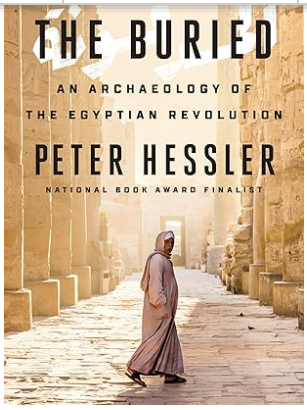
Please join the SDPCA table at the All People's Celebration on MLK day.

Alliance San Diego will host 1000 guests at the 38th All Peoples Celebration to honor the living legacy of Dr. King in an uplifting program that features inspiring performances and keynote speeches at the Balboa Park Activity Center at 2145 Park Blvd, San Diego 92101. The theme this year is Choose Courage.

This will be SDPCA's third year at this wonderful event. We have reserved a table for ten tickets, which are $61 each, payable with PayPal (click here).

Reserve your spot today!

SDPCA Hosts: Laura Streichert and Michele Lagoy



Wednesday, January 28th, 2026 @ 7PM
Zoom
RSVP: https://evite.me/34bp2hwDYD

Join us for Book Club! We're reading *The Buried: An Archaeology of the Egyptian Revolution* by Peter Hessler (RPCV China). We'll meet on Zoom.

SDPCA Host: Sharon Kennedy

Valentines Day Card Painting

Thursday, February 5th, 2026 @ 6-8PM
Linda's Place
1551 Union Street, San Diego, CA
RSVP: https://evite.me/dhqKtTuEkh



Bring your creativity and learn to paint a watercolor Valentine's Day card. No experience necessary, supplies will be provided.

SDPCA Hosts: Linda Vene



SDPCA Happy Hour

Saturday, February 19th, 2026 @ 4:30-7:00PM
Carruth Cellars Liberty Station
2710 Historic Decatur San Diego, 92106 Barrack 17
RSVP: https://evite.me/gQDv48xy99

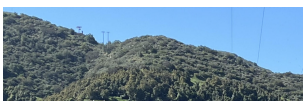
Join SDPCA for an evening of connection over wine. Carruth Cellars has a nice wine and light foods menu. Parking is available in a parking lot in front of the shop and there are large tables with heat lamps for us to gather. We'll have our SDPCA flag so you can find us in the courtyard!

Any questions? Email Nina at ninapruyn@gmail.com

SDPCA Host: Nina Pruyn

Habitat Restoration - San Dieguito River Park

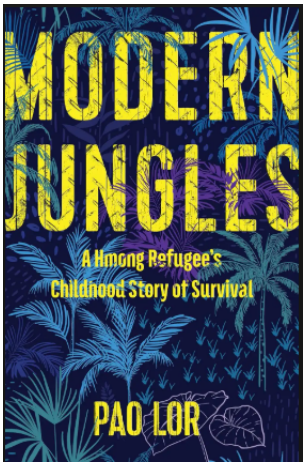
Saturday, February 21st, 2026 @ 9AM-12PM





Join us for a habitat restoration project with the San Dieguito River Park on Saturday, Feb 21 from 9am to noon. While the exact location of the work has not been determined yet, we anticipate that it will likely be in the Bernardo Mountain/Lake Hodges area. A San Dieguito River Park ranger will bring tools and extra gloves and instructions on the work to be done. More details will be forthcoming as the date gets closer.

SDPCA Host: Paul Courtright



Book Club: *Modern Jungles*
Wednesday, February 25th, 2026 @ 7PM
Zoom
RSVP: https://evite.me/nExkc3QxUv

Join us for Book Club! We're reading *Modern Jungles* by Pao Lor.

We'll meet on Zoom.

SDPCA Host: Sharon Kennedy

SAVE THE DATE for these other major SDPCA events in the coming year!



Taste the World - Saturday, March 7th

Annual Meeting and Peace Picnic - Saturday, May 16th

CHEFS WANTED FOR SDPCA'S 9TH ANNUAL TASTE THE WORLD

Our amazing Taste the World event depends on the soup and stew donations by our wonderful RPCV community! We welcome you to make a pot of soup (from your country of service or elsewhere) and donate it to our event! You are invited to serve your dish or we'll find someone to serve for you.

If you are interested in making a dish please contact Nina at ninapruyn@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your delicious contribution!

WHAT'S NEW?

International Support Fund Donation Update

Thank you to everyone who attended the 2025 SDPCA Holiday Party and Silent Auction and voted on which projects to support using SDPCA's International Support Fund (ISF). Based on the votes, SDPCA has made donations to the following projects:

New Maternal Ward in Senegal
Peace Corps Volunteer: Katherine Campbell from Colorado
Donation Amount: $750

This project aims to improve maternal and child health services in a rural village in southern Senegal by constructing a new maternity ward and strengthening the skills of local Community Health Workers. A key focus of the project is training—ensuring that health workers are equipped with up-to-date knowledge on maternal care, childcare, and hygiene. These trained workers will then share what they've learned with families in their own communities, helping to spread healthy practices more widely.



The current maternity ward serves nearly 3,000 people but lacks essential resources such as running water, electricity, an internal bathroom, and enough beds. It also has no measures to reduce extreme indoor heat, which regularly exceeds 93°F. The new facility will include running water, electricity, a bathroom, proper beds, and heat- reducing features like electric fans and a suspended ceiling. These improvements will create a safer, more comfortable environment for mothers and newborns.

This project is a community-led effort to address a locally identified need. The community

trainings for health workers will be held twice a year. This sustainable approach ensures long-term impact by building both infrastructure and local capacity.

Ceramics School in Colombia
Peace Corps Volunteer: Nolan Carson from Oregon
Donation Amount: $250

This grant will support the creation of a permanent ceramics school that provides free, hands-on training in pottery and entrepreneurship. The primary goal is to equip community members with practical skills in ceramics production while fostering sustainable economic opportunities and cultural revitalization. Classes will be held twice a week for both youth and adults, covering every stage of the ceramics process—from clay preparation to the creation of market-ready pieces.

The school will be fully equipped with essential tools, including a gas kiln and pottery wheels, to ensure a functional and professional learning environment. Through this training, participants will gain the skills needed to produce high-quality ceramic goods and explore pathways to income generation. The project emphasizes skill-building and knowledge transfer as a foundation for long-term impact.

This initiative responds to a community-identified priority: to reclaim a nearly lost tradition of pottery and make use of a valuable local resource—porcelain-quality clay—that is currently underutilized. Community members have come together to lead and support this effort, recognizing ceramics as both a cultural expression and a means of economic development. The project will result in a fully operational ceramics school, regular classes, and measurable progress through student-created pieces.

Contributions to this project will help unlock the potential of local resources and strengthen community identity through sustainable, skills-based development.

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In addition to these projects, many more PCVs throughout the world are still seeking support and funding for their projects. Learn more about these projects or make a donation by clicking the link below.

Current Peace Corps Volunteer Projects

SDPCA Membership Matters

And the new year is off to a fast start! The SDPCA Blue Sky hike was a great chance to chat while exercising in a beautiful setting.

Whenever we have a Peace Corps event, I like to wear my Peace Corps shirt. By identifying our group, we show that we continue to "bring it home" with pride. To get



This month we feature long-time SDPCA Member, Brian Midkiff, who was a volunteer in Ukraine. He is also an SDPCA Board Member serving as Co-Chair of the Membership Committee, so you might see messages from either Laura or Brian, pictured here at the holiday party.

Hope to see you at the next event!
Laura
RPCV Nepal, 1981-1983
SDPCA Co-Membership Chair

Is your SDPCA membership up to date? You can be sure by taking our membership survey. Just scan the QR code above or click here.

Member Spotlight
Get to know: Brian Midkiff



Peace Corps countries and years served:
Ukraine 2008-2010

What did you do as a volunteer?
I was a Youth & Community Development Volunteer at a small village school and supported the development of school curricula and community programs that benefited students, families, teachers and administrators, and other local government agencies. I mentored a cohort of ten high school students in leadership and advocacy and taught after-school classes on English language, photography, art, American pop culture. I spent my second year of service implementing a PEPFAR HIV-AIDS curricula that taught students and parents about health, empathy, self-determination, and youth empowerment.

What is your profession/current occupation?
Nonprofit Administration

What is a favorite memory or experience from your time in the Peace Corps?
I developed a five-day Summer Camp for my high school students where they engaged in activities and discussions on social advocacy, leadership, environmental conservation, healthy lifestyles, and career preparation. These students then spent the next school year mentoring younger students and creating their own class activities, some of which were adopted by the regional government agencies, including a PEPFAR-funded HIV-AIDS curriculum.

Do you have a special souvenir you brought home from Peace Corps?
There were two handmade gifts from my school that the Ukraine post office stole from the box I mailed home…

Annual Point in Time Count (advocacy for those experiencing homelessness), I Love A Clean San Diego (environmental education and advocacy), and ElderHelp San Diego (social support for older adults and caregivers)

Photo 1: Brian with Olga, School Counterpart, in 2010

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If you would like to be considered for a SDPCA Member Spotlight, please submit a short questionnaire here: https://forms.gle/G83DZTGJsYE2c4S77 (Have 1 recent and 1 Peace Corps era photo handy)

Is your SDPCA membership up to date? You can be sure by taking our membership survey. Just click here.

Help SDPCA support the Peace Corps Park in Washington D.C.!



The US Parks department has designated some land in Washington DC near the Capitol and National Mall to create a Peace Corps Memorial. A foundation has been created to raise the funds for the monument. They have already raised half the funds but still need our help. The SDPCA board has decided to donate $500 and will match another $500.

Click the following link for more information or scan the QR code for more information or to make a donation:
SDPCA Make a Donation

PAST EVENTS



Holiday Party, December 6th



Holiday Card Painting, December 10th



Star Theatre musical: Annie, December 12th





Brewskies Happy Hour, December 19th













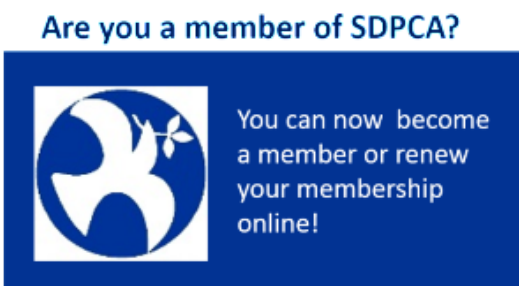


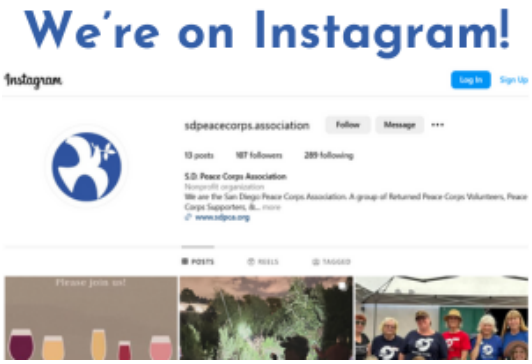


Virtual Trivia, January 7th

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