



OREGON
HISTORY MUSEUM
AT THE OREGON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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**Celebrate a Legacy of Service with the New Oregon History Museum Exhibit
Peace Corps: 50 Years of Service and Bringing the World Home**

March 1 – June 12, 2011

Portland, OR – February 16, 2011— Have you ever wondered what it is like to live and work in the most isolated corners of the globe? This March, Peace Corps volunteers bring the world to Oregon with a new exhibit celebrating the 50th anniversary of this iconic organization, Peace Corps: 50 Years of Service and Bringing the World Home, open March 1 – June 12, 2011.

After working with returned Peace Corps volunteers and immersing herself in the history of the organization, Marsha Matthews, Exhibit Manager and Director of Public Services at the Oregon Historical Society understands the excitement generated 50 years ago when John F. Kennedy gave an impromptu speech about the importance of service.

“I have personally come to know many returned Peace Corps volunteers, spanning from 1961 to 2010 and from Belize to Ethiopia, Uzbekistan to the Solomon Islands, and all points in between” she says, “the exhibit is truly their experiences in their own words — told through journals, letters, photographs, stories, memories, video interviews, and artifacts. They share a commonality of dedication to service — to the mission and goals of the Peace Corps — and to self discovery. Those convictions gave them the courage to drop themselves into an undeveloped country for two years and the will to stay.”

For the past year, the Oregon Historical Society has been working with the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience and Pacific Northwest Returning Peace Corps volunteers to develop an exhibit that gives visitors the chance to share in the Peace Corps experience without leaving the state. Their photographs, testimonials, artifacts, and personal correspondence will give visitors a peek at the rich cultures and wild places experienced by Peace Corps volunteers.

The Oregon Historical Society is celebrating the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps and the opening of the new exhibit with a special reception on March 1. John Platt, returned Peace Corps volunteer and owner of well known Portland restaurant, Andina, is partnering with OHS to provide their trademark *bocaditos*, Peruvian hors d'oeuvres, to reception guests.

“It was quite new then,” John Platt says of his own decision to join the Peace Corps and go to Peru, “I had wanderlust, and felt that if we were going to go out and try to understand and help the world, we should start with our own neighbors.” The Peace Corps and his experience in Peru led him to the love of his life — a woman from Cajamarca named Doris Rodriguez — and eventually to a day when both they and their sons John and Victor would help son Peter found and operate one of Oregon’s most loved restaurants, and one of the best Peruvian restaurants anywhere.

Full of stories like John’s, *Peace Corps: 50 Years of Service and Bringing the World Home* is as much about volunteers’ time abroad as it is about how their experiences have changed their lives long after they return. “This isn’t a slightly dull, 50-year history of a federal agency” Matthews says, “two hundred thousand Peace Corps volunteers have served in 139 countries in 50 years — come meet 79 of them.”

Peace Corps: 50 Years of Service and Bringing the World Home is supported by our generous sponsors Ray and Jean Auel, the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience, and KINK FM.

If you are interested in attending the opening reception, please call 503-306-5211 to RSVP. The reception will run from 5:30-8:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 1. Oregon Historical Society members are free, and non members are \$10 to attend. Space is limited.

Museum hours are Tuesday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., and Sunday, Noon to 5:00 p.m. Visit WWW.OHS.ORG for more information.

About the Oregon Historical Society

The Society has served since 1898 as Oregon’s primary research collection and museum about Oregon history. OHS has an extensive collection of historical pieces, including over 85,000 artifacts and 3 million photographs and films. It safeguards and presents Oregon’s history through a museum, research library, traveling exhibits, school programs and website content.