

Peace Corps Vanuatu

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Port Vila, Vanuatu

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PEACE CORPS VANUATU HOLDS CONFERENCE TO IMPROVE VOLUNTEER EFFECTIVENESS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES

PORT VILA, VANUATU, May 10, 2003 -Peace Corps Vanuatu completed their 6th Annual All-Volunteer Conference last week at Trek Island Resort.

Peace Corps Volunteers and Staff at Trek Island



This year's conference, which ran from May 4th-9th, focused on health, nutrition and sanitation practices. The conference is an annual event that brings together all Peace Corps volunteers working in different disciplines including education, environment, youth development, agriculture and small business. The daylong sessions provided the volunteers with information to increase their knowledge base within their field of work. Subsequently, this knowledge will be passed on to the communities in which they work improving the lives of people throughout Vanuatu.

This year's conference included guest speakers from diverse agencies throughout Vanuatu. Diane Sant Angela from the Health Department discussed HIV/AIDS awareness while Hilson Toaliu from Save The Children Fund informed the volunteers on how to establish an aid post in rural communities. Environmental Health Officer Pakoa Raruz gave the volunteers connections on how to establish VIP toilets in their community. The volunteers also received a wonderful presentation from the Health Department's Filarisis team led by Maggie on the prevention and treatment of Lymphatic Filarisis.

Other sessions, led by the volunteers, included such topics as marine aquaculture, community micro-finance, environmental conservation, food preservation, running fowl projects, and how to run an adolescent reproductive health workshop.

“ This year’s Conference is very much about fostering the opportunity for you to promote good health, nutrition and sanitation practices in your community.” said Country Director Kevin George. After stressing the value of volunteer and staff driven workshops George added, “The Conference is also about sharing our time with one another and strengthening our team building.”

The cooperation of Peace Corps volunteers, staff, Vanuatu civil servants, and other organizations with common goals made this year’s All Volunteers Conference a tremendous learning experience. As we are already looking to improve on the effectiveness of this worthwhile conference for next year, we need your help. If your organization would be interested in being involved with the conference for May 2004, please contact the Peace Corp-Vanuatu office at 26160 or e-mail to cd@vu.peacecorps.gov

Since 1961, more than 168,000 volunteers have served in the Peace Corps, working in such diverse fields as education, health, HIV/AIDS education and awareness, information technology, business development, the environment, and agriculture. Peace Corps volunteers must be U.S. citizens and for most assignments a university degree and relevant work experience are required. Peace Corps service is a two-year commitment. There are currently 50 Volunteers serving with partner organizations and communities on sixteen of Vanuatu’s islands. Eighteen more Volunteers arrive in country in June for eleven weeks of language, culture and technical training.