



From the President's Corner

Greetings,

I trust this finds everyone having enjoyed a good summer. Fondo Quisqueya recently held its annual Board of Directors meeting at Tom and Sue Gittins' home in Falls Church, Virginia. We had a good turnout, lots of good food, conversation, and fun. I encourage you to consider joining us at the annual meeting next year. This year we were pleased that Steve and Vicki Murphy joined us. Steve, at picnic time the Regional Director for the Inter-America and Pacific Region, has encouraged FQ in its work, and he has told PCDR incoming Country Director Javier Garza about our program. Subsequently, Steve accepted a position heading up a new foundation to assist children in Latin America.

Elections results were as follows: Stu Frisch was elected to the FQ board for a three year term; Sara Padilla was elected to complete the last year of Jorge Navarro's term; and, Bill Threlkeld, Gene Lane, and I were elected for three year terms.

We want to welcome Fondo Q's new DR Peace Corps liaison, third year PCV Tom Goodwin. Tom replaces Jennifer Dedrich who is leaving the DR for other opportunities. We wish Jennifer the very best, and we thank her for all her good work. Please see the article, below, which introduces Tom. Each year, the DR Peace Corps Director assigns a third year PCV to help with the Fondo Q scholarship selection and administration. Tom has already been very helpful with our web page and in getting information together for our annual meeting. Tom is also helping us strategize on how to spread the word so that even more grants can be given out. Thanks also go to Diane Partl and the other members of Fondo Q's Local DR Committee for screening grant applicants and for making decisions on grants of up to US\$250.



Steve and Vicki Murphy join FQ board members Janet Kerley and Stu Frisch for barbecue for barbecue at Fondo Q's Annual Meeting at Tom & Sue Gittins' home.

By the way, if you have not checked out our web page, please do so at www.fondoq.org. I hope you like it. Suggestions for additions are always welcome. In the near future, we hope to have a donation button on the web page.

Some of us recently had a chance to meet the new DR Peace Corps Director, Javier Garza. I enjoyed meeting him, and I think he will be an excellent Director. We look forward to working with him. He arrives in the DR in mid July. See the inside article for additional information.

I also want to thank the outgoing DR Peace Corps Director, Anita Friedman, for all of her support and help with the Fondo. Each year, we get more organized, and Anita has been a great support by assigning a third year volunteer to help us and also by having Mike McCabe, the DR Peace Corps Deputy Director, as our liaison. Mike deserves many thanks for all of his great help.

In terms of passages, I want to mention that we lost a fine friend this past spring. Some of you may remember Paul Bell who was Peace Corps' Chief of Caribbean operations and who was present with us in the DR in 1965 for the first week of the DR revolution. I'm sad to report that he passed away in Costa Rica where he had been USAID's long-time director of disaster preparedness and relief for Latin America.

In closing, I need to mention that Fondo Q can only survive, grow, and continue to give out scholarships and grants to low income Dominicans with your help.



For those of you who are long-time supporters, I thank you on behalf of all of us. For those of you who have yet to make your first contribution, I encourage you to do so. It is only with the continued support of all of us that Fondo Q can achieve its mission. I encourage you to help. Please see the articles in this newsletter on some of the more recent scholarship awardees. You can continue to be proud to be helping Dominicans achieve a better life!

All the best,
BJ Warren
President

Tom Goodwin, 3rd year PCV, sent FQ a brief personal sketch.

Para que sepa. I am Tom Goodwin the new Peace Corps Volunteer Coordinator working with Fondo Quisqueya this year. I hail from Portland, Oregon and have seven siblings and very exhausted parents. I graduated from Santa Clara University with degrees in Biology and Environmental Studies. I have just completed a year and a half in Los Fríos, Azua (in the hills over Bohchío). There I constructed five tree nurseries and amplified two others. I also helped create a guide group to bring eco-tourism into the South West corner of the Jose del Carmen Ramirez National Park. Besides my duties with FQ I am the PCVC for the environment sector working with Alberto Rodriguez and am currently developing several side projects in addition as acting as a support for the Agro forestry and Environmental Awareness Education volunteers. In my free time I like to read, exercise, and watch movies.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Lou Ferrand, FQ Treasurer

In the last 18 months (Jan. 1, 2002 – June 30, 2003), Fondo Q has given out 57 grants and scholarships to low-income Dominicans, and we expect to give at least 20 more before the end of 2003. In the 28-month time period, we received donations from more than 110 individuals and institutions, (not counting spouses and significant others).

Some of the donations were made in memory of or in honor of another person, and some were made in the name of former D.R. P.C. Groups. See the Honor Roll of Donors in 2002 and in 2003 in this Newsletter.

Among the special earmarked donations this year were a gift of four US\$250 scholarships to fund computer training or nursing scholarships for women, and a four-year commitment in memory of Felipa Maria Aiyabar to fund four US\$250 scholarships per year, with two grants or scholarships per year to low income Dominicans in Felipa Maria's home town, and two grants or scholarships per year for general Fondo Q grants.

We currently have US\$14,870 available for grants and scholarships in the remainder of 2003. This amount will allow Fondo Q to meet its goal of giving out at least US\$10,000 in grants and scholarships to approximately 40 Dominicans each year.

Most of Fondo Q's scholarships are for US\$250 or less, and often they are accompanied by matching funds. We would like to expand the number of grants each year. If we achieve a steady, larger contribution base, I think that we should be able to do that and also to make more money available for individual grants.

Remember, your donation is tax deductible. Have a great rest of the year!



**Honor Role of Donors to
Fondo Quisqueya
By Lou Ferrand**

A special "Thank You" to each of you who donated to Fondo Quisqueya at any time from January 1, 2002 to the present. However, the following "Honor Roll" lists only those who donated between January 1, 2002 - December 31, 2002, and between January 1, 2003 and June 27, 2003. Those of you who have donated since June 27, 2003 are also thanked. Your names will be listed in the next Fondo Q Newsletter.

Donors Between January 1, 2002 and December 31, 2002

I. GENERAL DONORS: AH&A, Inc. (Skip Andrew); Merry Christine Alt; Minor & Linda Anderson; Guy T. Baeur; Marjorie Bautista; Joe Blackburn; Thomas & Barbara Bobol; Christopher Brey; Mila Brooks; Cathi Kroon; Gene & Susan Delatorre; Joseph Delaurer; Michael J. Dillon; Pete and Joy Duarte; Kyle Dumler; John & Jean Epler; John Evans; Dennis Fenwick; Lou & Mary Ferrand; James A. Findlay; John C. Frank; Anthony F. Gasbarro; Tom & Sue Gittins; Yvonne J. Greene; Kathryn Hanowell; Art Hansen; Lucy B. Hart; Heritage High School; Andres Hernandez; Michael Hirsch; Davis & Charo Jones; David & Anita Kaufman; Harry Keramidis; Janet Kerley; Mary Kritz; Stephen Kurzman; Cathi Kroon; Jerry Lagra; Rick Laird & Pat Rambaset; Gene Lane; William R. Large, Jr.; Jonathan and Elly Lash; David Lawrence; Judith Light; J. Gary Linn; Gerald Lutes; Julianne & Peter Mattson; David H. McCord; Robert E. Meyers; Stephen E. Murphy; Joseph Mutale; Mary Catherine O'Donnell; David & Kathryn Padilla; James M. Peterson; John & Amparo Prusia; Alan Randall; Peter Schott; Lola Smith; John Sterling; Jess Stone & Francis A. Hedrick; V. Dianne Streeter; Judith Johnson Thomas; Stephen Johnson; Bill Threlkeld; Peter John Vitakis; Becky Vortheen; Mary Ann Walker; Travis Ward; BJ Warren; Jewel Wegs; Rosalie Wolf; and Wanda Wynne.

II. DONORS IN MEMORY OF KRISTIN FISKE

D.R. Group 26: Roger La Brucherie & Janice Neisinger
Gail VanderLinde

III. DONORS IN MEMORY OF CAROLYN PEYTON

DR. Group 11: HRS Water Consultants - Bob Tafelski; Anne Ternes

IV. DONORS IN MEMORY OF PHILIP B. TAYLOR III

Diane Brause

V. DONORS IN HONOR OF STEVEN KNEEPKENS

Donald Kneepkens

VI. DONORS IN HONOR OF BJ WARREN'S BIRTHDAY

Janet Kerley & Martha & Charles Tamer

Between January 1, 2003 and June 27, 2003

I. GENERAL DONORS: Debra K. Alba & Antonio Jose Alba; Roberta Albracht; Dan and Mary Armour; Barbara Bobal; Jeanne Bruno; Harold Case; David Clary; ; Community Foundation, The (Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Reilly); James Daugherty & Apornpan Dougherty; Richard Elrauch; Marion H. Ford; Tom & Sue Gittins; Kathryn Hanowell; Edward L. Hummel; International Products Group (Earl McClure); Susan and Roger Johnston; Janet Kerley; Mary M. Kritz; Judy Struve Moncrief; Ronald D. Morgan; James and Anne O'Connor; Anne Robson-Dice & Matthew Dice; M. Z. Robson & James D. Robson; Cecilia & Joel Roth; John and Linda Scott; Sherwood Seigel; Nicole Tembrock; Anne Ternes; Judith Thoms; John and Helen Torphy; Herb Trossman; Travis Ward; and Virginia Williams.

II. DONORS IN MEMORY OF FELIPA MARIA AIYABAR

Ann Robson-Dice

III. DONORS IN HONOR OF BJ WARREN'S BIRTHDAY

Judith Light



Food for Thought By Patti Rambasek

Patti Rambasek, FQ member and wife of Board member Rick Laird, is an experienced fundraiser for various not for profit undertakings. She authored these pieces for the Unitarian - Universalist Church of the North Hills, Pennsylvania and has generously offered them to FQ for our members. While intended for the church audience, the ideas are germane to us all.

It Keeps Giving and Giving and Giving By Patti Rambasek

The pink rabbit in the long-lasting battery commercial reminds me of the enduring character of an endowment fund. Once established, it just keeps paying out money year after year after year. But unlike the battery that eventually runs down, the endowment fund lasts in perpetuity.

The permanence of an endowment is exactly what attracts some of our members to this means of supporting the Unitarian Universalist Church of the North Hills. Many of you may remember **Elinor Allen**, a long-time member of UUCNH, who died in February 1995. Her generous gift to our community through a bequest established our Endowment Fund. The principal of her gift stays intact while a part of the income from the endowment is used to support activities in our church. Elinor's gift allowed her to positively influence an institution that she felt keenly about.

Like Elinor, other members realize that someday they no longer be with us. Their outright annual gifts will no longer be available to help meet congregation's current needs. But through an endowment, their gift will keep making annual contributions. Some endowment donors are attracted to the opportunity an endowment gives to memorialize a loved one or honor a respected person. Other thoughtful members may want to establish an endowment in their own name as a means of placing themselves on permanent record as persons who believe in and support the UU mission and the Unitarian Universalist Church of the North Hills.

An endowment can be created during life, or at death, through a bequest or trust remainder. Your gift can be restricted to specific needs of our church or unrestricted for general use. You can create your own endowment or contribute to one that already exists. Endowments can be made at once, with a single gift, or established over time with periodic gifts. Endowments can originate from a one source or through the efforts and support of many persons.

Meaningful Gifts for Every Occasion By Patti Rambasek

What are Memorials and Tributes? Memorials are gifts made to a charity usually when a person dies. Many obituaries include a note that "in lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to the American Heart Association" or some other charity. Tributes, on the other hand, are gifts made to celebrate an occasion in a person's life such as a graduation, Mother's Day or Father's Day; the birth of a child or grandchild; a birthday, wedding, anniversary, or other notable occasions like Christmas or Hanukkah.

Gifts made in memory or in honor of someone are among the most personal of expressions and ones that often occur during very emotional circumstances. By making a memorial or tribute gift you show a great deal of thought and care was put into your gift. These gifts are also a unique way to remember or honor members of our congregation.

In addition to using cash for a Memorial or Tribute gift, here's another suggestion for you. Do you own obsolete life insurance policies that have cash value but are no longer needed for their original purposes? These can make convenient tax-deductible charitable gifts and provide an excellent way to make a gift in honor or memory of a loved one.

So, during the next holiday season, instead of asking for another dress, tie, book or CD, why not put a Tribute gift at the top of your holiday wish list? No need to worry about color, size or standing in the gift exchange line. And remember, a Memorial or Tribute gift has a double life. Not only is it a gift for the one honored or remembered, it is a lasting gift as well. What a deal!



RPCV starts a Commemorative Scholarship Fund with FQ

Anne Robson-Dice, DR RPCV from 1990-1992, visited the D.R. this past February to visit her P.C. community of Los Cocos de Jaragua and start a scholarship fund to honor her dear friend Mary Aiyabar. Mary and Anne developed a close friendship that started when Mary's family "adopted" Anne as a brand new volunteer struggling to get her feet on the ground. How many of us can remember with gratitude and fondness our own 'Peace Corps families'?

In 2002, when Mary died at the young age of 40, Anne was determined to honor her friend by supporting four annual scholarships in her name. She turned to FQ for assistance in setting up the scholarship fund. With Anne's permission, we have excerpted two letters in which she talks about Mary and the scholarships. The text is accompanied by pictures of Mary's family, a meeting with the Los Cocos community, and of the 10th annual RPCV reunion of Anne's group.



Mary Aiyabar's family includes Jairo, Antia, husband Antonio Lora, and Antoni.

"January 15, 2003

Dear Lou, (FQ Treasurer),

...Enclosed please find a check to start a scholarship fund in memory of my friend and neighbor from the Dominican Republic.

Felipa Maria Altagracia Aiyabar, better known as Mary was born on May 1, 1962. Her husband Antonio Lora described her as "una gran esposa, madre y hija". I would add "amiga" to that list. When I arrived at my site of Los Cocos de Jacagua in the fall of 1990 I knew very little Spanish and was quite nervous to be dropped off in a community where I knew no one. I was very blessed to have Mary and her family as my neighbors. They immediately welcomed me and made me part of their family. I hung out with them every night playing dominos, practicing my Spanish, eating eggs and yucca and discussing community and global events. Mary taught me all the ins and outs of the Dominican culture and would discretely correct my Spanish and tell me when I made

a faux pas. Mary and her family invited me to all of their family gatherings and remembered me on all the holidays. I'll never forget one year on Valentine's Day they thought I would be missing my boyfriend, who is now my husband, more than usual, so they bought me a beautiful vase. I was so appreciative of her friendship and will never forget her huge smile, generosity, and hospitality.

Mary had ten years of education and was a very active volunteer in the community. Two years before her death she became director of the elementary school in the community. She was a huge female role model in the community and very well liked and respected. Antonio and she had three children, two of which are currently going to universities in Santiago. She is terribly missed by her family, friends, and the community.

My family and I would like to start a scholarship fund in her memory. We would like to donate \$1,000 a year to provide 4 scholarships of \$250. We would like two of these scholarships to be given to students of the community of Los Cocos de Jacagua and two to be given to other Dominican students in communities decided by Fondo Quisqueya.

We will be visiting the community February 11-14. If possible we would like a Peace Corps Volunteer or other representative of Fondo Quisqueya to make a small presentation at the community center on February 12th or 13th at 6pm.

I would like the Fondo Quisqueya representative to explain to the community the application process, the deadlines, who is eligible, and a little history of Fondo Quisqueya. If possible I will have the girl who received a scholarship while I was serving in the community give a testimony. I would also like to say some comments about Mary and hope to arrange a reception after the talk.

...Mary was such a special and loving person. I hope that we can honor her and if possible, create something positive from her death. Thank you for your time and help with this.

Sincerely,

Anne Robson-Dice"



Pedro Pablo Peña describes the FQ scholarship program and the Mary Aiyabar fund to members of the Los Cocos community.



"June 7, 2003

Dear B.J.,

Greetings from South Jersey! Thank you so very much for your help, enthusiasm and direction to start a scholarship in memory of Mary Aiyabar. Please extend my thanks to Lou and Bill as well.

... We had an awesome trip to the Dominican Republic in February. Over 250 community members from Los Cocos attended a meeting where Bill's friend Pedro Pablo Pena spoke on behalf of Fondo Quisqueya. Hopefully the community will take advantage of the opportunity.

This Memorial Day weekend was our 10th annual reunion with the Peace Corps Volunteers with whom I served in the Dominican Republic from 1990-1992. We brought back some Dominican souvenirs from our trip to the DR in February and combined them with some delicious treats from the Ocean City boardwalk which my sister-in-law donated from her business Boardwalk Baskets, to have a "rifa" to raise money for Fondo Quisqueya. Enclosed are the funds that we raised from the rifa.

Also enclosed are a few photos from the meeting held in Los Cocos and our Memorial Day weekend reunion.

... Once again, thank you for all of your help and interest.

Sincerely,

Anne Robson-Dice "

Anne's initiative underscores a meaningful way to honor longstanding friendships while encouraging young Dominicans to recognize outstanding people in their communities and to follow similar paths. Accolades to her!



D.R. RPCVs enjoy a 10th annual reunion over the Memorial Day weekend in Ocean City, Md.

New Peace Corps Director for the D.R. Lunches with FQ Board Members

Javier Garza, President and CEO of Meals on Wheels and More in Austin, Texas for the past 16 years, has accepted the position of Country Director for the Dominican Republic.

FQ Board members B.J. Warren, Tom Gittins, Anne Ternes, and Bill Threlkeld had lunch with Javier on June 24th and they described the Fondo Quisqueya program to him. Board members stressed the important contribution that the assignment of a third year PCV and the effective liaison of Deputy Mike McCabe have made to FQ operations.

Javier showed much interest in the FQ scholarship program, and he pledged his continued support as the next caretaker of the D.R. Peace Corps. As a tangible and very useful indicator of his good will, he sent a contribution to F.Q.

Javier has a B.A. from the University of Texas at Austin and an M.P.A. from the George Washington University. He came to Meals on Wheels and More from the Cooperative Housing Foundation ("CHF"), an entity providing management and financial assistance to low cost housing loan programs. At CHF, he worked extensively in many Central and South American countries. Early in his career, Javier was a PCV in Peru and is very happy to have a second tour in a new country.



Javier Garza, the new Peace Corps D.R. Director.

Last year Javier won the prestigious Ernst and Young's Entrepreneur of the Year award in the non-profit category for his business approach and management style. He says that his most rewarding volunteer job while in Austin was to serve as a Spanish translator for patients and doctors at the Volunteer Healthcare Clinic. On Fridays, he customarily delivered meals to Meals on Wheels clients as a means of staying acquainted with the people served and of identifying ways to improve the program.

(*FQ made grateful use of biographical information and the photo of Javier that appeared in the Friends of the D.R. news bulletin.)



D.R. RPCV Celebrates Javier's Leadership with a Donation

Robbie Albracht (D.R. 1972-1974), sent a donation to FQ with the following note, dated May 2003.

"I learned this week that Javier Garza will be the new director in the D.R. I have known Javier for many years. As a social worker here in Austin, I know he has served 1000s of people with his competent leadership of Meals on Wheels. The D.R. is lucky to have him and I am thrilled he got the job. I did not know he applied.

Please accept this small contribution in his honor and to congratulate him and wish him well. I would appreciate your letting him know.

Your work is excellent and done with such heart.

The Dominican people are always near to my heart.

Great job!!

Regards,

Robbie Albracht

P.S. the interim director while I served has lived in Austin for 25 years. His name is Joe Oliveri."

Fondo Quisqueya Final 2002 and 2003 First Quarter Grantees & Grantee News

We are pleased to provide you with information about Fondo Q's grantees in the last quarter of 2002 and the first quarter of 2003. Your donations make this possible!

End of 2002 Grantees:

1. María Altagracia Barbon

Arroyo Blanco, Altamira, Puerto Plata

PCV Sponsor – Mark Hofmeister

Maria, 20 years old, is a recent high school graduate whose goal is to obtain a university degree in computer systems in Santiago. As a first step toward her goal, she will enroll in a basic computer course that covers Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and the Internet. With these skills, she will find work and begin her university studies.

2. Marianela Soriano Mananzillo

Barrio El Tanque, La Victoria

PCV Sponsor – Jennifer Dederich

Marianela will take the eight month basic computer skills course at the Centro de Tecnología Universal (CENTU). Her goal is to find a good job and continue her studies.

3. Vellis Tanio Teveda Mateo

Barrio El Tanque, La Victoria

PCV Sponsor – Jennifer Dederich

Vellis is graduating from high school and has plans to study law. After taking the eight month basic computer skills course at the Centro de Tecnología Universal (CENTU), he will work part time to support his university studies.

1st Quarter 2003 Grantees

4. Miguel Presinal Presinal

Plinio Lara Sánchez

Rafael Bolívar Echavarría

Severino Presinal Echavarría

El Limón, San José de Ocoa

PCV Sponsor – Tico Cross

A supplement was made to these students to complete their driver's education training.

5. Centro de Madres María Dolores

El Tamarindo, Loma de Cabrera

PCV Sponsor – Justin Overdevest

The members of the mother's club are keen to learn how to make curtains and mattresses. Their goal is to supplement their family incomes by making products and selling them in the Dajabon market. FQ support will purchase materials and pay the instructor. The women will use the club's three sewing machines for the course.

6. Hansel de los Santos

Villa Altagracia

PCV Sponsor – Rachel Locey (author of this summary)

Hansel, seventeen years old, is the only child living with his grandmother, but he is surrounded by extended family. This year he helped to construct two houses adjacent to his own (for his aunt's family of five and his uncle's family of six). Hansel has been working to earn money for the family since he was a small child shining shoes in the park. He now has a variety of work experience, which includes automotive repair and restoration, building construction, and self-employment as a micro-entrepreneur. Sadly, the unstable Dominican economy has led to severely high levels of unemployment and underemployment in the town of Villa Altagracia. Hansel has experienced first-hand how often companies fold and jobs disappear.

Hansel says he is determined to finish his education before starting his own family. His goal is to become a systems engineer; he seems to have a natural gift for computerized electronics. A solid foundation in computer studies from INFOTEP should open up future opportunities for steady employment that will allow Hansel to finance his own university education. Hansel will take four months of courses at INFOTEP.

In November Hansel attended the National Youth Conference *Futuro Brillante*, sponsored by Peace Corps' Youth Development Committee. In preparation for the conference, he interviewed a systems engineer (someone with the type of career that he would like to have one day) to find out more about the requirements for the job, and then Hansel spent a day at work with that professional.



Hansel is a motivated youth. He has applied to INFOTEP in the past, but has not been "called back." He hopes that the backing of a program such as *Fondo Quisqueya* will help him get accepted. (He believes that although INFOTEP purports to be an equal-opportunity program, selection may be political in some sense, and that he will more likely be chosen to attend if he is a *Fondo Quisqueya* Scholarship recipient with proof of the means for regular transportation.)

7. Nady Wirka Vallejo Vargas

Barrio Miramar, Barahona, Pedernales
PCV Sponsor – Elizabeth Gruber

Nady will take computer training for 25 weeks at the Centro Educativo Walman in Barahona. Her goal is to gain skills that will make her more employable and able to assist her family when she is employed.

8. Mirurgía Novas

Barrio La Cuarenta, Jimaní
PCV Sponsor – Rosemay Admiral (author of this report)

Mirurgía is a 40 yr. old mother of 5. She supports all her children, plus one grandchild, in a two-bedroom home on the outskirts of Jimaní. On RD\$1,600 a month, she keeps all her children in school. She has completed two Peace Corps computer class in her community, and continues to visit the lab in her spare time to practice her skills, but this is not enough to make her competitive for employment in Jimaní.

Mirurgía has requested FQ assistance for a nine-month course in computer software: MS-DOS, Windows 98, and Word 97 at Instituto Santa Maria para el Desarrollo Tecnológico, in Barahona.

In her current job, with a high school diploma, Mirurgía earns only 1,600 pesos a month. Hopefully, the course will make Mirurgía eligible for a raise at her current place of employment, COOPECRENE, a savings cooperative based in Neyba. If not, it would make Mirurgía a competitive applicant for a secretarial or other administrative position, which earns between 3,000 and 6,000 pesos monthly. Jimaní, the capital of Independencia, has many government, education, and NGO-related jobs. With the proper training, Mirurgía could find more profitable employment without having to leave the town.

9-11. Letter from PCV Courtney Martin, with background information on three grants:

"I am currently nominating Ana Maria Perez Ferrera, Kendy Alexander Ramirez Batista and Will de Jesus Nasario Bueno to receive educational grants from Fondo Quisqueya. The grants will be utilized to complete a series of five computer courses that will initially teach basic skills, and will culminate with computer reparation and simple accounting systems. All courses will be completed at the Instituto Catolico Tecnológico de Barahona (ICATEBA) which has a reputation as one of the better educational institutions in the region.

As a volunteer I have worked for over a year with the Pastoral Juvenil youth group in Tamayo. Ana Maria, Kendy and Will have all been active members and have additionally assumed leadership roles during the past two years. Kendy is currently serving as group coordinator and last year was the treasurer, Ana Maria filled the role of secretary and the group has voted Will to be the "alternate" this year, filling the role of coordinator, secretary or treasurer as needed. Will was also a member of the "Computer Committee", which we formed within the Pastoral Juvenil group for members interested in learning basic computer skills and experimenting doing small typing projects. We were using an old computer that a community member had donated to us, but since has malfunctioned and is out of service.

These three youth then approached me with the idea of locally soliciting resources, with the goal of purchasing a computer that their group can utilize in the church. The computer courses they will be taking at ICATEBA will first capacitate these individuals, and upon completion they will be sharing this information with other interested members of the Pastoral Juvenil.

The information will be shared in the form of small workshops or courses held on a weekly basis. Assuming we have been successful in fundraising enough money to buy a computer, the tentative initiation for the courses with the youth group is late August.

If Fondo Quisqueya awards the grants to Kendy, Ana Maria and Will they have all expressed interest in opening their own bank accounts in order to manage the money. Additionally they realize that they will have to contribute to the costs of transportation in between Tamayo and Barahona, as the funds will not cover all expenditures.

Throughout this past year Kendy, Ana Maria and Will have consistently proved to be mature, studious, and responsible youth. They have not only been concerned about their personal development, but have served as role models for their peers as well. I fully support them in this endeavor to increase their knowledge, improve their computer skills, and contribute to the better of the Pastoral Juvenil by offering computer courses to the other members. Sincerely, Courtney Martin, PCV Community Economic Development, Tamayo, Baoruco"

Editor's note: all recipients reside in Tamayo, Barahona

12. Pablo Ramon Tejada Díaz

Esperanza, Valverde
PCV Sponsor – Chris Dietrich
Pablo Ramon will take basic computer courses at INFOCOM in Esperanza. Knowledge of computers will help Ramon improve his job in the free zone.

13. Alexandra Polanco

Licey al Medio, Santiago
RPCV Sponsor – Anneliese Kutek



Letter from RPCV Anneliese Katek, with background information on the grant for Alexandra Polanco:

"I nominate Alexandra Polanco for the Fondo Quisqueya grant because in my two years working with her she has shown herself to be an outstanding young woman who blossoms when an opportunity presents itself and is willing to put in the work necessary to achieve her goals.

When I first met Alexandra she was one of the few young women at the Liceo Palo Quemado who, when presented with opportunity to do something good for her community and herself, not only jumped at the opportunity but stuck with it when she discovered how much work it was going to be. I have seen the power of opportunity work its magic on Alexandra. When she first joined the Alianza Juvenil, a youth group working in HIV/AIDS education that I founded together with a small group of high school students, in May of 2001, I was thrilled by her desire to participate, however, I was concerned by her lack of skill in the beginning to the point of wondering if she would ever be able to master the material and present a charla with the group. Fortunately, Alexandra was willing to go the extra mile and, recognizing that she was not as naturally talented as the other members of the group, to my suggestions to study and practice extra hard. Alexandra came to be one of the most dedicated and strongest members of the group. She was there for every activity and every charla and she took new members under her wing. Watching her present her part of the charla one would never have guessed how weak it had been when she had begun and she was more than eager to learn to present other parts of the charla when her colleagues were absent.

One of the most rewarding experiences of my Peace Corps service occurred when Alexandra and I attended an HIV/AIDS conference. She was one of the most outgoing and active participants in the conference, which in itself was rewarding when I looked back on the timid girl she once was. However, it was even more rewarding when she herself gave a testimonial to how working in HIV/AIDS education had transformed her. She confessed that when she first started she was very afraid of taking risks and had very low self-confidence, but now, apart from mastering the presentation of the charla, she felt she could take on the world. She also encouraged others not to let their fear intimidate them because of the wonderful things that could be awaiting them. I had never been more impressed with her than I was on that day.

Aside from the personal challenges that I described above, Alexandra has had to overcome many situational and economic challenges. While attending the Liceo Palo Quemado Alexandra lived with her family in the community of Sonador, about 20 km away. Because days when the Alianza Juvenil met she often had to



Alexandra Polanco, working with friends in HIV/Aids education.

hitchhike home in the dark or make extra trips out to Palo Quemado where all the other members lived. Being the oldest daughter in her family, Alexandra had a lot of extra responsibilities. Her mother was often away for a week at a time working in the city and Alexandra had to take care of the household. It was often difficult for her to get away in order to participate in the group's activities.

However, she negotiated with her father and her family's strict traditions and rarely missed a group activity. In fact, having come so far, sometimes she was the only one to show up.

Alexandra would like to take two courses, one an English course and the other a Secretary and Computer training course. The English course is a 31 month course with a total of approximately 140 classroom hours. This course would help Alexandra to achieve a professional level of skill in speaking, reading and writing English. English would be a particularly useful skill for Alexandra because her family lives in the province of Puerto Plata and the majority of employment opportunities are to be found in the city of Puerto Plata and surrounding tourist towns. The Secretary and Computer training course is a six month course with a total of 96 classroom hours. This course would teach Alexandra basic professional office skills and capacitate her in the use of the computer, skills that she could use to get a wide variety of jobs. It is very important that Alexandra have some kind of continued education because high school has not given her the skills necessary to be competitive in the job market. Unfortunately, her economic situation is very poor, and while she is working as a live-in maid, the money she earns goes toward her daily needs and helps to support her family's income.

Even though I have completed my Peace Corps service, Alexandra and I wanted her to have to opportunity to apply for this educational grant. Together we spoke with Padre Rafael Beltrán, who knows Alexandra well and is willing to be her in-country sponsor. I have confidence that he would do a good job in monitoring Alexandra's use of the grant. I, myself, plan on being in close contact with both Alexandra and Padre Beltrán, should Alexandra be selected. In the application I have included both Padre Beltrán's and my contact information.



I hope that you will consider Alexandra for a Fondo Quisqueya grant. She is a very deserving young women and I am sure that she would make the most out of the opportunity to further her education. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Anneliese Katek

14. Karen Vasquez Crivera

Puerto Plata

PCV Sponsor – Amanda Bucci

Amanda summarized Karen's circumstances as follows: "Karen is a 13 year old youth in an at-risk situation. She is one of 10 children in a small apartment with her single mother. At school Karen is working hard to maintain her excellent grades. Though she carries responsibilities within the household, she is anxious to begin taking a dance class regularly. An opportunity to develop her physical body, coordination and creativity is crucial in the development of her self-esteem. Taking a Jazz dance class twice a week will not only give Karen a positive after school activity, but will empower her immeasurably. The long-term benefits of a technical training in dance will be evident in her physical strength, as well as the opportunities she will be given through the studio and throughout her life."

Mid-term and Final Reports:

A. In February, PCV Mark Hofmeister wrote about Gissel Altigracia Ventura from Puerto Plata.

Due to Navidad, Gissel could not start her computer course until January of 2003. The class is 5 months long and goes until May of this year. As of now Gissel is studying the first part of the course, the basics of windows. Gissel is always very excited to talk about the computer course she is taking. Whenever I pass her house, she keeps me updated on what she is studying; she just finished the first part of the course last week. She told me she just learned how to change the background color of her screen, make folders, to print, and to save. She is always eager to learn and eager to ask me questions on what ever she has difficulty understanding. Gissel is very interested in learning about all the aspects of the computer, and she tells me that the course is one of the highlights of her week. Not only is she learning computers, she is also able to explore Santiago which is opening up new ideas of what she wants to do with her life. Prior to her class, she was never able to visit Santiago as she lives in the campo.



Miguel Presinal, Plinio Sánchez, and Rafael Echavarría next to the community association truck they can now drive.

B. In February, PCV Roderick Cross sent four final reports on his driver's education quartet from El Limon, San Jose de Ocoa.

Miguel Presinal Presinal

Me siento muy agradecido al Fondo Quisqueya por habernos facilitado el apoyo para obtener la licencia de conducir, la cual se obtuvo en el fin de enero. Particularmente, los recursos adicionales que se aportó nos permitió a seguir con las clases y cumplir con nuestra meta.

Siento un orgullo por haberme capacitado en como ser chofer. En este año espero elevar la categoría de mi licencia para manejar nuestro camión comunitario. Así, puedo cumplir con mi responsabilidad al bienestar de la comunidad.

Gracias por todo de parte de mí, mi familia, y la comunidad de El Limón.

PCV note -

Miguel has completed the driving school and successfully acquired his license. His determination to serve the community is evident and he is proud he will be able to drive the community truck. It seems that having a driver's license was something that appeared beyond his possibilities, however, this accomplishment has served as an inspiration for himself, his family, and the community as a whole.

Plinio Lara Sánchez

Primeramente, le quiero darles las gracias por brindarnos la oportunidad de lograr un objetivo que antes no teníamos conocimiento. La enmienda que se aprobó impartió la facilidad de continuar apropiadamente con el aprendizaje de choferismo. A los fines de enero adquirí la licencia de conducir a través de la escuela de choferes que estábamos asistiendo.

Me siento muy bien porque he adquirido nuevos conocimientos los cuales se reconoce por la licencia. Incluso, pienso seguir elevando mi capacidad de chofer en este año para poder conducir nuestro camión. Aspiro poner en práctica este beneficio para el bien de la comunidad y mi profesión personal en el futuro.