

Winter (almost) 2021



"To provide for low income Dominicans in the Dominican Republic, grants for educational and training purposes designed to assist them in bettering their lives and designed to help them attain personal development, skills and advancement." Fondo Quisqueya Bylaws 2005

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Message from Tito (aka "The Big Dog")

Sitting here in limbo

***But I know it won't be long
Sitting here in limbo
Like a bird without a song
Well, they're putting up a resistance
But I know that my faith will lead me on....***

***Sitting here in limbo
Waiting for the dice to roll
Yeah, now, sitting here in limbo
Got some time to search my soul
Well, they're putting up a resistance
But I know that my faith will lead me on...
Jimmy Cliff, 1971 (The Harder They Come)***

This tune has been running through my head this year as we wait and scan for signs of stability and progress. Fifty years after this song became an instant anthem for world music and cultures, it is still fresh and

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relevant, and neither the beat nor the message are dated. YouTube it!

Covid continues to throw curve balls around the globe, and the world heaves and sighs with new challenges in all categories big and small. What is FQ doing!!??

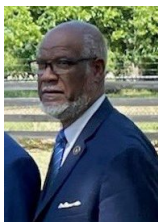
Last year, FQ focused on adapting and seeking new ways to fulfill its mission:

expanding educational opportunity for those in most need in the Dominican Republic. Everyone is adapting to the quick exit of Peace Corps worldwide, to education systems at all levels shutting down and evolving during COVID, and looking for new opportunities to support the most vulnerable young leaders. Transportation grants for the ITSC students (see story below) evolved into internet access grants for students faced with only online learning opportunities. FQ continued the new partnership with Entrena's USAID *Alerta Joven* program with the purchase of tablets and access for selected leadership candidates in that program.

As 2021 closes, there is renewed hope that Peace Corps/DR will be welcoming back volunteers soon, and that the ITSC programs will get back on track with in person classes and new students beginning their vocational careers. And now the Covid Omicron variant news has run a new red flag across the globe, so we wait patiently. Like Socrates, what we do know for certain is that we don't know what we would like to know.

There is great need across the world right now, and we recognize that your own communities now have many at risk and heavily affected by the pandemic, and many of us have become engaged in our local community responses to the pandemic.

As we remain in limbo and watch for the next round of opportunities to support the FQ mission, it is important to keep a long-term focus, and maintain our momentum. We are poised to support the Peace Corps/DR reopening (see update below) and look forward to increased momentum. We can only ask that you stay with us during this period and consider continued support for our programs so that we may continue to support current and future needs.



President Biden has nominated Calvin Smrye to be **US Ambassador to the Dominican Republic**. Mr.

Smrye is a distinguished, long-time Georgia legislator. Here is a link to his Wikipedia page:

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Calvin_Smyre&oldid=1047284494

Rik Laird

Robert Tafelski

Mary Ferrand

Please support Fondo Quisqueya with your contributions. In this era of the pandemic and Peace Corps hiatus, your contributions are needed more than ever. Our address and a link to our website are at the end of this newsletter. Thank you

Looking for someone? Have news about a former PCV? Trying to communicate with someone? Or do you just have something to say? We're more than happy to include your thoughts or questions in our newsletter. Simply drop us an email at the address below.

"DEATH BY A THOUSAND CUTS"

In this documentary, a Dominican Park Ranger in the Sierra de Bahoruco National Park was found brutally murdered. At the time, he was believed to have been on patrol investigating an illegal charcoal production site often run by Haitians coming across the border into protected Dominican forests. This murder becomes the metaphor for the larger story of increasing tension between Haiti and the Dominican Republic over illicit charcoal exploitation and mass deforestation. The film can be seen on Amazon Prime.

Thank you to all our 2021 donors. There's still time to join this august group. Please consider a donation now.

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FQ Continues to Support Instituto Técnico Superior Comunitario (ITSC)

Fondo Quisqueya is supporting 40 students with transportation and Internet connectivity. These students are majoring in 18 career areas, including medical, auto mechanics, IT and others. Students hail from communities throughout the country. Their average GPA is 3.33. FQ has been supporting ITSC for a number of years and continues to look for new and innovative ways to expand this support.



Staying in Touch with Our Purpose and Core Mission

During this second year of the pandemic, and despite the March 2020 evacuation of Volunteers from the DR, FQ's close connection to PC/DR remains. As FQ President Tito Coleman said at the beginning of the year, "So we begin the third decade of the New Millennium reminded vividly why the mission of the US Peace Corps remains so important. Empathy, Compassion, Understanding, Strong Positive Relationships, Trust, Shared Values, Solidarity.

To accomplish that, we continued exploring alternate ways to support our shared mission. Forced to suspend our traditional pre-covid board visits to the DR to meet with Peace Corps staff, Volunteers, and our partner institutions, we replaced them with frequent zoom meetings, phone calls and email reports! And, we relied heavily on our intrepid *Man in Santo Domingo*, Mike Benson, to be in contact with the scholars we're funding and with our Peace Corps Colleagues.

Peace Corps Director, Jennifer McGowan has participated in several board meetings and a special zoom meeting in November to discuss potential future joint projects. During the June Annual Meeting, she updated us on the estimated date for Volunteers' resuming their work and on their communities who are eager for their return. At the time of the meeting, 50 percent of the staff were back at work in the new offices and engaged in limited travel to school sites to ascertain readiness. She also described the ongoing staff work to evaluate and redesign the PCV training programs in anticipation of the Volunteers' return.

"Hola Estimados y Distinguidos de la Junta de Fondo Quisqueya" was Jennifer's greeting as we began the November zoom meeting to discuss the way forward and define and focus efforts for new joint activities. It felt like no time had passed, as she greeted us enthusiastically, saying, "How wonderful meeting with you all! What a joy to see your faces after many months away from FQ."

PC/DR is currently working with Rotary International on a book donation program and FQ is exploring ways to support the program. PC/DR staff described their visit to Las Cañitas, where "we saw the little library that they have created and many of the books from Rotary were being used by the kids. It is amazing how we take for granted something so simple and usual as a book!" FQ has reached out to the Rotary coordinator who indicated that "Rotary would love to work with FQ." Peace Corps is also exploring new programming ideas and will consider new ways for Fondo Quisqueya to provide support.

FQ's mission is relevant in today's world and the partnership with Peace Corps will continue to be strong.