

UC SANTA BARBARA

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Capps Center to Celebrate 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps

In a speech to students at the University of Michigan in the fall of 1960, then-Senator John F. Kennedy exhorted the young scholars to look beyond their individual aspirations and consider advancing global ideals -- such as peace and friendship -- by living and working in developing nations.

That simple challenge led to the adoption a year later of the Peace Corps Act, and the establishment of a federal agency whose purpose is to match men and women of the United States with partnering countries around the world who require their particular talents, abilities, and goodwill.

Since 1961, more than 200,000 Americans -- including 1,472 UC Santa Barbara alumni -- have participated in the Peace Corps, serving in 139 countries. In fact, UCSB received the No. 18 ranking in the annual list of colleges and universities that produced the most Peace Corps volunteers in 2008.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Peace Corps, the Walter H. Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion, and Public Life at UCSB is sponsoring a series of events that includes panel discussions, lectures, a film screening, and book and photo exhibits on campus and in the community. All events are free and open to the public.

"UCSB is among the top schools for the most volunteers since the inception of the program, which makes our institution an ideal one to mark this historic occasion," said Wade Clark Roof, the J.F. Rowney Professor of Religion and Society and the center's director. "The Peace Corps offers a wonderful means of serving the country and the world, and for the Capps Center it is an example of the type of service to others and the betterment of our society that we encourage our students to consider."

The first event, a panel discussion examining the impact of the Peace Corps on the lives of volunteers, will take place on Sunday, September 26. Panel participants will include Sarah Chayes, Gordon L. Radley, and Thomas Tighe. The discussion will begin at 3 p.m. at the Lobero Theatre, 33 E. Canon Perdido St. in Santa Barbara.

A former international correspondent for National Public Radio, author of "The Punishment of Virtue: Inside Afghanistan After the Taliban," and founder of the Arghand Cooperative in Kandahar, Chayes volunteered with the Peace Corps in Morocco from 1984-86.

Radley, formerly president of Lucasfilm Ltd., and a senior executive at major motion picture studios and independent production and distribution companies, served in Malawi from 1968-70, and in Samoa in 1979.

Tighe, president and chief executive officer of Direct Relief International, has also served as associate general counsel of the Peace Corps, as well as its chief of staff and operating officer. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Thailand from 1986-88.

In addition to the panelists, Congresswoman Lois Capps, who represents the 23rd District, and Victoria Juarez, president of the Santa Barbara Peace Corps Association, will also speak.

Other events in the series include a screening of "Frontrunner: The Afghan Woman Who Surprised the World" at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 21, in the UCSB Women's Center; keynote addresses on "The Future of International Service" by Aaron Williams, director of the Peace Corps, and Kevin Quigley, president of the National Peace Corps Association, at 3 p.m. on Sunday, November 21, in Campbell Hall; and an exhibit of books and photos relating to the Peace Corps, on display in the Main Floor Lounge of the UCSB Library throughout the fall.

A complete schedule of the 50th Anniversary events is available at www.cappscenter.ucsb.edu.

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