Dear BARPCV Community,

Just weeks after returning from my service in Benin, I attended my first BARPCV event. I knew almost no one in Boston, but the BARPCV was an immediate source of friendship and comfort as I re-acclimated to life in the United States. Over the years, I continued to participate in events and eventually joined the board, first as treasurer, and now as president. It has been my honor to lead this organization as we continue to provide a community for RPCVs. As we reflect on 2017, I would like to recognize the opportunities and challenges presented to our organization this past year.

The country celebrated President Kennedy’s life during his centennial year, and BARPCV had the pleasure to partner with the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) to hold a day-long event at the JFK Library in Boston to celebrate his life, the legacy of Peace Corps, and it’s future in an ever-changing world. Our own Community Service Chair, Marta Hodgkins-Sumner, then a newly returned volunteer, spoke on a panel alongside fellow volunteers and staff from across Peace Corps’ history.

Afterwards, attendees of the event were invited on a boat cruise around Boston Harbor. While the evening was chilly, seventy-five RPCVs shared stories of almost fifty-six years of Peace Corps service with friends and family while taking in the Boston skyline.

In addition to special events, BARPCV continues to provide monthly and annual gatherings for our membership. The monthly happy hour and regular community service events have provided opportunities for area RPCVs to socialize, network, and give back to our community. Our bi-annual Spring and Fall Welcome Back/Send-Off (WBSOs) salute new volunteers as they embark on their journey and offer a warm embrace to those just returned.

Behind the scenes, the Board’s communications and social-media chairs increased BARPCV’s presence on Facebook and Instagram. We appreciate your continued support on Facebook (@barpcv) and Instagram (@barpcv). Taking action to like, share, comment, and tag BARPCV posts and photos helps to make our organization more visible to prospective new members and the greater public alike. On the financial side, our treasurer, fundraising, and merchandise chairs also worked to diversify revenue streams, so that we can continue to host events and support organizational initiatives - like the Community Grants awards.

The board went through a transitional period in 2017 as my predecessor, Erica Baker, stepped down after many years of dedicated service. Six other board members also stepped down throughout the year, and while some of the vacant positions took time to fill, we begin 2018 with a fully staffed board and the addition of a new Third Goal Chair.

In closing, I would like to thank our current members for their continued support of our organization. I hope that you will join me in my eager anticipation of the coming year and the BARPCV’s continued mission of community and friendship.

Yours in service,

Alicia Charleston
RPCV Benin 2008-2010
President, BARPCV
Boston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, Inc. (BARPCV) is a non-profit, membership-based organization, founded in 1978, that serves as a support for newly returned and prospective volunteers, and for those who have served. BARPCV also serves as an educational resource by connecting local communities with the unique experiences of members who gained important insight from living and working abroad. As BARPCV members, we share our skills and knowledge gained through Peace Corps, life and professional experiences with our friends, families and the greater community, in hopes of promoting a better understanding of each other and the world.
OUTGOING CHAIRS

We thank the following board members, who stepped down from the BARPCV Board of Directors during 2017, for their service to the organization:

- **Erica Baker**  
  President 2015-2017  
  Sports Chair 2013-2015

- **Brooke Barker**  
  Sports Chair 2016-2017

- **Rose Cheyette**  
  Events Chair 2014-2017

- **Justine Egan**  
  Secretary 2016-2017

- **Daniel Holman**  
  Membership Chair 2016-17  
  Sports Chair 2016

- **Ben Palmer**  
  Communications Co-Chair 2016-2016

- **Justin Senter**  
  Photo Contest Chair 2015-2017
COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletters are sent on a biweekly basis to BARPCV Members (monthly during the summer months). Newsletters include general announcements, promotions of upcoming BARPCV events, and links to the BARPCV website and social media accounts. In 2017, BARPCV distributed 25 Newsletters through Mailchimp to an average of 201 members (membership fluctuated throughout the year, ranging from 161 - 237 members per newsletter). Special announcements and event updates, including reminders about the WBSOs, Harbor Cruise, and Boston Marathon events were also sent to BARPCV’s database of over 1,000 current and former members. Emails sent to this larger database were viewed by 30-40% of recipients. Emails and newsletters sent directly to members fared much better: throughout the year, the open rate amongst BARPCV members ranged from 43% - 61%, while the click rate fluctuated between 1.2% and 15%. The emails with the lowest view rates were secondary event reminders (a first special event email would fare better than a follow-up email with similar content) and membership renewal reminders; however, the highest-viewed email of the whole year was a membership renewal reminder delivered to a large audience after a significant period of time without membership updates or renewal reminders being sent.

Facebook posts engage around 500 people on average and are published at least weekly to the 1,038 BARPCV Members who have “liked” our Facebook page. Posts include general announcements about upcoming BARPCV events including TGIF, Welcome Back Send Off (WBSO), Volunteering Opportunities, Photo Contest, and other events hosted throughout the year.

Our Instagram profile (@BARPCV) has increased its number of followers from 133 to 172 as of December 2017. We average 16 impressions, reaching on average 40 viewers per post, although this number is increasing as we gain more followers and engage with other Peace Corps affiliated Instagram accounts.

In addition to our ongoing social media, a new BARPCV Forum was launched in 2017. This forum is hosted on the facebook platform, and allows for members of the forum to engage directly with one another. BARPCV continues to publish events through the forum as well.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

In 2017 BARPCV kept up a regular schedule of service events at a variety of nonprofits around Boston, with over 100 BARPCV volunteers contributing over 630 total hours of service. BARPCV members organized clothing and school supplies with Cradles to Crayons; prepared meals for the critically and chronically ill with Community Servings; helped Science Club for Girls get ready for the fall semester; and sorted food donations at the Greater Boston Food Bank. Two other highlights included our mile 23 Boston Marathon Hydration Station, made possible by over 70 BARPCV volunteers, and a morning spent serving at Christmas in the City, a holiday event for about 5,000 homeless children. We are planning to return to many of these great organizations in 2018, while also expanding the service opportunities available to our members.
EVENTS

Welcome Back/ Send Off (WBSO)
Each April or May and again in December, BARPCV brings together volunteers who recently completed their service and those who are preparing to begin their service. Our spring WBSO was hosted at the City Year Headquarters in Boston with recruiters from the Peace Corps New England region. The keynote speaker was Ben Berman, a Boston-based poet who served in Zimbabwe. We also connected with the New York WBSO over Skype. In December, the WBSO was held at The Bell in Hand Tavern for its second year. We had a wonderful turnout with about 10 recently returned volunteers and 50 volunteers who served across many decades, and welcomed guest speaker, Pamela Civens, RPCV Nepal.

Peace Corps Week
Every year we try to celebrate Peace Corps week by hosting a variety of events each night. This year Peace Corps week was February 27-March 4. We explored Ethiopian food at Asmara in Cambridge and Peruvian at Machu Chicken in Somerville. We attended trivia night at Joe Sent Me in Cambridge, and went candlepin bowling at Saco Bowl in Somerville. The week ended with an event at the JFK Library hosted by the Peace Corps Office of Third Goal.

New Members Party
Annually in September, BARPCV member, former BARPCV Board Member, and RPCV Morocco, David Sears hosts the New Members party at his home in Cambridge. As always, this was a nice event for those who are newly returned, or new to the city to mingle. David opened up his backyard, and also his home due to the inclement weather. Despite the intermittent rain, it was a great event that brought a lot of new faces and members to the BARPCV community.

JFK Centennial at JFK Library (JFK100)
BARPCV supported NPCA in the celebration of President Kennedy and his legacy of Peace Corps. The event was open to the public and had multiple panels of speakers who served and worked over the years since Peace Corps was founded. Questions about the future of Peace Corps were asked by members of the audience were fielded by panelists. A reception was held in the library, and the audience was invited on a boat cruise of the harbor following the event.

Other events
In addition to our annual and special events, we had a number of other fun events this year. A tour of the Taza Chocolate Factory took place in the spring. BARPCV organized a group outing and spent a night out at Fenway Park. Members also attended A Guide for the Homesick at the Huntington Theater, a play that followed a character coming back home to Boston from an assignment as a health and humanitarian aid worker in Uganda, and reflected on the experiences and relationships formed there. These are events we hope to continue to host on an annual basis!
FUNDRAISING
BARPCV membership dues and the sale of calendars and other merchandise provided the majority of the organization’s operating and grant budget in 2017, while several new activities and events raised additional funds. Drawing on the success of the fundraising raffle in 2016, we raffled two tickets to a Boston Red Socks game, which were generously donated by former Peace Corps staffer, James Arena-DeRosa, during the December Welcome Back/Send Off party at Bell in Hand Tavern in Boston. This year we also organized the JFK 100 Harbor Cruise following an event at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum celebrating what would have been President Kennedy’s 100th birthday. Approximately 75 RPCVs enjoyed hors d’oeuvres and drinks while cruising through Boston Harbor. We received several generous donations from individuals too. If you would like to donate or help fundraise for BARPCV, please be in touch with Eric Roberts at fundraising@barpcv.org. All financial support is redistributed through our small grant program or used for BARPCV member events.

GRANTS
As part of our mission of supporting Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, we fund a community grant of $500 twice annually, in the spring and fall. We strive to increase participation in our communities, and to address needs and opportunities consistent with our members’ values both in the greater Boston area and internationally.

Spring 2017
Our Spring BARPCV Community Grant recipient was Emily Goldsmith, RPCV Togo, 2010-2012. Emily applied for the grant on behalf of Pathways Togo, an international NGO that specializes in gender and female empowerment by delivering a dynamic and holistic scholarship and leadership training program for select young women throughout the country of Togo. Now in its seventh year, Pathways Togo is proud to sponsor 61 young women throughout Togo with a comprehensive and holistic scholarship program with four main components: Conferences, Leadership and Life Skills, Mentoring, and Scholarships.
In 2017, Pathways Togo is introduced a new component to its programs: the provision of school breakfast/lunch to its scholars. Over the past seven years, the program has seen that many of its scholars are not able to afford breakfast or lunch during the school week. This has a negative impact on the scholars’ ability to focus in school, learn, and fully realize their academic potential. As a result, in 2017, Pathways Togo piloted a school breakfast and lunch program for its middle school and high school scholars. The BARPCV grant contributed to this pilot program and provided school breakfast and lunch to four scholars for 3 months.

Fall 2017
Our Fall 2017 BARPCV Community Grant recipient was Christine Ryan, RPCV Mongolia, 1998-2000. For the past two years, Christine has been volunteering as Executive Secretary with a non-profit in Boston that serves youth music education, Inspire Arts & Music (IAM). One of the main goals of IAM is to focus on ways to enhance music education for inner-city children in Boston. In 2015, IAM started the Hyde Park Youth Percussion Ensemble, (HYPE), with the goal of bringing a world percussion program to the children at the Hyde Park Community Center. IAM’s goal is to bring the joy of drumming and performing to children of all grades, regardless of economic background. IAM provides access to the arts through music education to populations who don’t typically have ready access and by fostering respect for cultural traditions that may differ from the students’ background. The majority of these students are not able to afford music or dance classes. The cost for the students to participate in the HYPE program is $1. In 2016, IAM expanded the percussion lessons to include horn lessons and also began offering recorder classes to young students at the Dorchester Boys and Girls Club as a first step in teaching young students how to read music. In 2017, they have expanded their reach into other Performance Arts by focusing on Dance and Art programs at the Hyde Park Community Center. By the year 2020, their goal is to have 30 HYPE programs in community centers all over the city of Boston. The BARPCV grant contributed to HYPE's total operating costs (mostly for music teacher salaries and supplies), which come entirely from donations.

MEMBERSHIP
BARPCV maintained about 200 members over 2017. The organization has actively worked to recruit new members and re-engage former members. We plan to continue to grow our membership over 2018. We look forward to activating a new membership model using a platform through NPCA.

MERCHANDISE
BARPCV continues to sell small items to raise funds to support our community grants and costs of hosting events. The Peace Corps photo calendar has been the focus of this work for a number of years. In 2017, we reduced our calendar volume again, to reflect decreasing popularity of paper calendars in this digital age.
PHOTO CONTEST
The BARPCV Photo Contest continues to be a great opportunity to showcase RPCVs’ countries of service, and to connect with local cafes in the Boston community. There was an increased number of submissions in 2017 from volunteers and posts all around the world as well as an increase in older photo submissions from before the digital age. The annual voting process was tight and narrowed the photo submissions down to 10 amazing photos. The winning photos were proudly displayed at Ula Café in Jamaica Plain and Simon’s Café in Porter Square.

The top three photos (shown above) were announced during the opening display at Ula Cafe.

SPEAKERS BUREAU
BARPCV Speakers Bureau continues to facilitate Peace Corps’ third goal by connecting local schools and organizations to RPCVs willing to speak about their experiences abroad and host country cultures and traditions. The Speakers’ Bureau also supports the Peace Corps Regional office with recruitment events.

SPORTS AND RECREATION
2017 was another full and fun year for BARPCV sports. Annual events, like the ski trip and canoe trip, were held again. The ski trip visited Waterville Valley over President’s Day Weekend, while the canoe trip, in July, was spent camping and canoeing down the Saco River in Maine. The BARPCV softball team had another great year, with the best team spirit in the league! We also went candlepin bowling and visited an indoor trampoline park. We plan to continue these events on an annual basis while also trying new events and sports.

TGIF
The last Friday of the month, BARPCV has continued their tradition of TGIF at the Asgard in Cambridge. It has continued to be a successful way for RPCVs in the Boston region to get together, meet new people, network, or just enjoy a nice drink with each other. In the summer months, BARPCV took TGIF to the outdoor spaces around the city for a change of scenery. These included Lawn on D in the Seaport and Naco Taco in Cambridge.
WEBSITE

The BARPCV website serves as a source of information for our membership, and for prospective and serving Peace Corps volunteers and their families. The website is a hub for local BARPCV events and a source of career and volunteer information. 3,550 people visited the barpcv.org website last year; of these, 72% were new visitors. Visitors remained on our website for an average of two minutes and visited about three pages while there. The website continues to publish event information, community service and job opportunities, organized sporting events, contests, grants and information from and about our members.

TREASURER’S REPORT

BARPCV ended the 2017 fiscal year with a cash equivalent balance of $15,803.89. For fiscal year 2017 BARPCV’s expenses were $11,164.72 and the organization’s income was $11,368.00, leaving BARPCV with a $203.69 positive cash flow for the year. A detailed profit and loss statement has been provided on the table below.

Profit and Loss Statement
January 1, 2017 - December 31, 2017

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<th>Revenue</th>
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<td>Donations</td>
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<td>BARPCV online Memberships</td>
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<td>NPCA Memberships</td>
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<td>Red Sox Ticket Sales</td>
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<td><strong>Gross Profit</strong></td>
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<table>
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<th>Expenses</th>
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<tr>
<td>Events</td>
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BOARD MEMBERS 2017

Lynn Arsenault, Vanuatu 2012-2014, Events Chair
Lynn served as an English Literacy Trainer and Teacher in the small island nation of Vanuatu in the South Pacific from 2012 to 2014. In addition to teaching and teacher-training, some of Lynn’s secondary projects included helping her village acquire solar energy, networking with international NGOs to obtain special needs equipment for local children, conducting youth leadership workshop, painting two world map mural projects, and the helping the island develop a natural disaster committee on the island to mitigate destruction during cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, or other natural disasters. Since returning, Lynn spent a few years teaching in both Boston and Houston, and pursued an MBA in Nonprofit in Nonprofit Leadership. Now, Lynn is the Communications Manager at the United Nations Association of Greater Boston.

Alicia Charleston, Benin 2008-2010, President
Alicia, originally from Wisconsin, served as a Small Enterprise Development Volunteer working with the Artisans Coalition of Natitingou. She took on secondary projects with student groups that educated their peers on relevant health issues like malaria prevention and treatment, hygiene, and sexual health. Upon returning to the states, Alicia obtained her Masters in Public Health from Boston University. She currently works as a Research Manager at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute. Alicia joined the board as Treasurer in September 2014 and has been President since January 2017.

Marta Hodgkins-Summer, Kosovo 2014-2016, Community Service Chair
Marta served in Kosovo from 2014-2016, teaching English as part of the inaugural class of Peace Corps Volunteers. For her primary project, she taught and developed curriculum for grades 1-9, started her school’s first English library collection, and secured a grant for school improvement. She also co-founded Kosovo’s first English Spelling Bee, and served on Peace Corps Kosovo’s Volunteer Advisory and Gender & Diversity Committees. Prior to Peace Corps, she worked in academic administration in Boston, and as an English teacher in South Korea. She is currently the Director of Membership & Programs at the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, and is working on a Master’s in International and Urban Development from the University of Toronto.

Tiffany Jaimes, St. Kitts 2006-2008, Membership Chair
Tiffany served as a Youth Development Volunteer in St. Kitts & Nevis, a beautiful dual island Federation in the Eastern Caribbean, from 2009-2011. She worked with local primary schools in her host village of St. Pauls and neighboring Newton Ground, to develop After School Leadership programs for girls in grades 4-6. Additionally she taught an Arts, Crafts, and Culture class at Charles E. Mills Secondary School. So enamored with her host country islands, Tiffany stayed an addition 3 years beyond Peace Corps Service, working in the private sector as the Director of the Lyn Jeffers School in Nevis. Following her time in the Caribbean, Tiffany relocated to Central America. She split her time teaching ESL between Costa Rica and Honduras, until she made the swift decision to join JetBlue Airways as a flight attendant. Stationed in Boston since April 2015, she is happy to maintain her travel lifestyle while making Boston her new home base.

Jennifer Leigh, Haiti 2002-2004, Webmaster
Jennifer served as an agro-forestry volunteer in the southern department of Haiti from 2002-2004. She worked with a local community group to expand their tree nursery and promote reforestation and erosion control projects. She also helped oversee the setup of the second rural computer center in the country. She focused on training local instructors on basic computer skills and software applications, while also providing technical and
teaching support. Jennifer currently works at the Harvard Business School as a business and reporting analyst. She is also pursuing a graduate degree in information management systems from the Harvard Extension School. She joined the board in 2015.

Michelle Paul, Western Samoa 2012-2014, Photos Chair
Michelle, originally from North Carolina, served as a Rural Literacy Specialist in Western Samoa from 2012-2014. She worked with primary school students in years 4 through 6, teaching skills such as phonics, letter relationships, and reading skills. She worked with teachers to produce sustainable teaching policies that moved them from teacher-centered lesson plans to student-centered. After Peace Corps, Michelle moved to Boston and soon after completed her Masters in Public Health from BU, studying epidemiology and biostatistics. She’s currently working in epidemiologic research in hospital settings. She joined the BARPCV board in 2015.

Eric J. Roberts, Paraguay 2005-2008, Fundraising & Merchandise Chair
From 2005-2008, Eric served as an Agroforestry Extension volunteer in Ka’apukumi-Franco Isla, Paraguay, where he primarily worked with farmers to integrate agroforestry practices into traditional agriculture plots and with school instructors and non-profit organizations to teach conservation biology. He also co-hosted a weekly radio show called Mba’e La Porte Norte, became a certified Paraguayan tour guide while assisting in the development of an ecotourism project, delivered HIV/AIDS prevention education trainings, and drank gallons of tereré with Paraguayans in the cool shade of mango trees. Based in the Boston area since 2012, he now works at The Nature Conservancy. Eric joined the BARPCV as the Fundraising Chair in November 2014.

Shane Runquist, Mexico 2008-2010, Vice President
Shane served as a GIS and Knowledge Management Specialist in the Mexican government agency responsible for natural resource management in the states of Querétaro and Puebla. He made process improvements in forestry data management, provided training in GIS and GPS usage, and performed satellite imagery analysis to detect forest loss over time. Prior to his Peace Corps service, Shane worked as an embedded software engineer and manager at Garmin International. Following his service, he accepted a job with the MITRE Corporation which brought him to Boston to work as senior software systems engineer working in the public interest, primarily in mobile software security. Shane joined the BARPCV board in September 2014 as the merchandise chair, and transitioned to Vice President in 2016.

Elise Simons, Zambia 2010-2013, Communications Chair
Elise served as an Agriculture and Environment Volunteer in Zambia. She taught agroforestry, organic gardening, conservation farming, and tree planting to farmers in her village in order to promote better health and nutrition as well as environmental sustainability. She also took on secondary projects in appropriate technology innovation training and HIV/AIDS prevention education. Elise extended for a third year as PCVL, leading workshops and providing volunteer support. Upon returning to Boston, Elise started working at the Product Stewardship Institute as a waste management policy and programs associate. She earned her graduate degree in urban and environmental planning from Tufts University and now works at the EPA.

Colleen Staatz, Zambia 2007-2010, Grants and Speakers Bureau Chair
Colleen served as a health volunteer in northern Zambia. For her first two years, she trained village health committees on a variety of health topics, including water and sanitation, malaria, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, child health and nutrition, and reproductive health. She then extended her service for a third year and moved to the capital city, Lusaka, where she worked with Catholic Relief Services on a microfinance project for caregivers of HIV-positive patients. Upon returning from Zambia, Colleen received her Masters in Public Health from Emory.
University and worked for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for several years. She now works as a Health Analyst at Mathematica Policy Research in Cambridge, where she works mostly on domestic public health projects.

**Karina Valenzuela, Burkina Faso 2011-2013, Social Media Chair**

Karina served as a Girls Education and Empowerment Volunteer in Yoro, Burkina Faso. She worked with the community to form life skills groups, tutoring and soccer clubs for girls attending primary school. She also worked on hygiene and nutrition projects with the local community health center. Her secondary projects included facilitating a two week summer camp for boys and girls called "Girls and Guys Leading Our World" and a training of trainers entitled "Men as Partners" to encourage the men of the community to become partners and encourage girls education. Karina also served as Vice President of the USAID West Africa Food Security Task Force. After completing her service Karina remained in Burkina Faso to work with an NGO to provide camp management in the Malian Refugee Camps. Upon her return to the U.S. Karina moved to Boston in 2014 and received a Masters in Coexistence and Conflict Management/ Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Response from Brandeis University. She currently works at JVS as a Refugee Employment Specialist and Financial Coach.

**BARPCV HISTORY**

BARPCV was founded by Carol Ball, Marjorie Harrison and Nancy Tiedeman in 1978.

**PRESIDENTS OF BARPCV**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>President</th>
<th>Years</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Ehmann</td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Walsh</td>
<td>1981 - 1982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad MacDonald</td>
<td>1983</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pixie Martin-Sharifzadeh</td>
<td>1984 - 1985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Janet Ghattas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Doherty</td>
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<td>Sue Kuder</td>
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<td>Doane Perry</td>
<td>1994 - 2006</td>
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<td>Kendra Gray</td>
<td>2007 - 2009</td>
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<td>Christine Claypoole</td>
<td>2010 - 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lisa Frederick</td>
<td>2012 - 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica Baker</td>
<td>2015 - 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alicia Charleston</td>
<td>2017 - Present</td>
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Boston Area Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, Inc. (BARPCV) is a non-profit organization founded in 1978 with approximately 400 members concentrated in Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. BARPCV seeks to connect with and support Returned Peace Corps Volunteers as well as those thinking of serving and to carry out the third goal of the Peace Corps, as stated in the 1961 Peace Corps Act: “to promote a better understanding of other people on the part of American people.”

BARPCV is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with employer identification number 04-9036514. All charitable contributions are fully tax-deductible to the extent of the law. Proceeds support our small grants program and programming for members.

Contact us at info@barpcv.org.

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