

AGNAM 2023
Minutes
September 2023

Attendees: Affiliate Group Leaders

Speakers: Dan Baker, Kristina Owens, Kathleen Sebastian

Youtube Link: <https://youtu.be/e0dFFNc05KA?feature=shared>

Opening statement by Dan Baker, President/CEO of NPCA

- Dan expressed immense honor in introducing Kristina Owens.
- Dan noted that Kristina and the presenter served together as Peace Corps volunteers in Bolivia in the early 2000s. Kristina has been serving as the board member elected Affiliate Group Network Coordinator for the past year, with distinction.
- Dan expressed pleasure and gratitude for Kristina's role and contributions.

Statement by Kristina J. Owens, AGNC and NPCA Board Member

- Encouraged attendees to use the chat for questions, which will be followed up if not addressed immediately.
 - Closed captions are available, and ASL interpreters are present. Confirmed the meeting is being recorded.
 - Introduced Michael Roman, co-chair, and partner over the past few months. Further details on his role will be provided later.
1. Agenda Overview:
 - Approval of the 2022 AGNAM minutes.
 - Overview of agenda items including Best Practices Panel, general announcements, and breakout groups. Participation in breakout groups is optional.
 2. Voting Procedure:
 - Kathleen will provide a link to the minutes in the chat.
 - Voting poll will appear on the Zoom toolbar and be open for most of the meeting.
 3. Updates and Reflections:
 - Expressed gratitude for attendees' participation and inspiration from recent presentations.
 - Quoted Marion Wright Edelman: "Service is the rent we pay for being. It is the very purpose of life, and not something you do in your spare time."
 - Reflected on the past year as an Affiliate Group Network Coordinator, highlighting challenges and inspirations.
 - Role involves representing affiliate group leaders on the NPCA board and being a permanent member of the executive committee.
 4. Advisory Committee:
 - Described the formation and role of the Advisory Committee, including key members and their contributions.
 - Noted significant changes proposed by the committee, including extending member terms to at least two years for better continuity and impact.
 5. Acknowledgements:

- o Expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Advisory Committee and attendees for their support.
- o Announced Kathleen Sebastian's birthday and thanked her for her hard work as the Affiliate Group Network Manager since February.

Conclusion:

- Kristina thanked everyone and expressed excitement for the upcoming year.

Kathleen Sebastian (Affiliate group Network Manager)

1. Welcome and Introduction:

- o Kathleen expressed gratitude and delight in seeing attendees.
- o Acknowledged the inspiring presentations earlier in the meeting.

2. Survey Information:

- o Kathleen provided preliminary highlights from the Affiliate Group Network survey.
- o Mentioned the weekly meeting schedule: Fridays at 11 AM Pacific / 2 PM Eastern. Contact information will be shared in the chat.

3. Survey Background:

- o Clarified that the survey is part of the regular reporting process and not a new requirement.
- o Historically, reports are requested after the first quarter to allow time for annual reports and financials.
- o This year, the survey was more detailed than in previous years, with 101 responses received. Charts presented were based on the first 87 responses due to the volume of data.

4. Survey Highlights:

- o **Response Distribution:** The distribution of responses closely mirrored the distribution of groups: 50% geographic, 36% directory, with similar representation.
- o **501(c)(3) Status:** 62% of groups are registered as 501(c)(3) organizations, though registration is not a requirement for affiliation.
- o **Dues:** Post-2015, 53% of groups have eliminated dues. The next largest category maintains \$15 annual dues. Many groups waive dues for first-year RPCVs.
- o **Event Priorities:** Most important events include annual meetings, happy hours, holiday parties, and picnics. Supporting Peace Corps volunteers and overseas organizations was also a noted priority.

5. Collaboration Insights:

- o The survey assessed collaboration with cause-related groups. Many respondents indicated interest in learning more about collaborations with specific groups.
- o The presenter emphasized the importance of NPCA facilitating these collaborations and will follow up with groups to support these connections.

6. Next Steps:

- o Final survey results will be made available online. Attendees are encouraged to reach out with any questions.
- o Individual responses have been sent to cause-related groups for follow-up and to facilitate further discussions.

7. Understanding Challenges and Support Needs:

- o The presenter addressed the importance of identifying areas where support is needed from NPCA.

- o Noted that some groups indicated they are doing well independently but are seeking more collaboration rather than direct support.
- 8. **Facilitating Collaboration:**
 - o NPCA aims to facilitate collaboration by serving as a clearinghouse for connections between groups.
 - o Efforts this year included creating a webinar series and focusing on preserving Peace Corps memories, inspired by affiliate group suggestions.
 - o Emphasized the importance of sharing best practices through newsletters and utilizing the Facebook affiliate group page for effective communication.
- 9. **Survey Results on Support Needs:**
 - o Major challenges reported include engaging both membership and leadership.
 - o 51 out of 87 respondents highlighted a need for strategies to engage members across various demographics, especially younger members and those balancing family commitments.
 - o The presenter acknowledged the need for practical ideas and solutions, to be explored further in the upcoming Best Practices session.
- 10. **Acknowledgements and Next Steps:**
 - o Expressed gratitude for the contributions to the survey and emphasized the importance of understanding member needs for effective support.
 - o Reminded attendees to complete reaffiliation if not yet done and to contact the presenter with specific comments or questions. Contact information and further details will be shared in the chat.
- 11. **New Logo Introduction:**
 - o Introduced the new high-resolution logo, which is suitable for both digital and print media, and thanked Oren Loop for its creation.
- 12. **Transition to Next Agenda Item:**
 - o Announced the transition to the Best Practices Panel, led by Mike Roman.
 - o Handed over the meeting to Mike Roman for the next segment.

Conclusion:

Kathleen concluded by thanking everyone and inviting questions through the chat or directly. Kathleen concluded by expressing eagerness to assist with collaborations and thanked everyone for their participation.

Mike Roman, Co-chair of Affiliate group advisory committee, NPCA Board Director

In this segment, Mike expresses gratitude for the conference and shares excitement about the upcoming presentations. They introduce three panelists:

1. Justin Tabor - President of the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development. He served in the Philippines from 2008 to 2011.
2. Kim Dixon - President at Partnering for Peace, Friends of Peace Corps, Rotary International. She served in Georgia from 2014 to 2016.
3. Nashem Marks - Co-director of CARB (Cincinnati Area Return Volunteers). She served in Bangladesh from 2003 to 2005.

Each panelist will have five minutes to present their organization and achievements, followed by a Q&A session. The total discussion time will be about 30 minutes, after which participants will move to breakout room number two.

Justin Tabor

Justin Tabor, President of the Peace Corps Alumni Foundation for Philippine Development (PCAFPD), introduces the organization, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year. Founded in 1983, PCAFPD is a nonprofit group based in Washington, D.C., focusing on human development in the Philippines. Its main activities include a scholarship program, which has supported 380 scholars, and a small grant initiative. The organization does not require membership dues but engages with about 354 active individuals. PCAFPD's impact is reflected in improved financial conditions for scholars' families. A dedicated administrative team in the Philippines, consisting of long-term members and former scholars, provides essential support. Justin highlights the importance of collaboration, strong leadership, and adaptability in maintaining successful programs.

Mike Roman's comments

Mike expresses admiration and surprise at the impact and achievements of Justin Tabor and his team, especially highlighting the impressive numbers and positive changes they have accomplished. The speaker then invites Kim to unmute and discuss "partnering for peace."

Kim Dixon

Kim Dixon, President of Partnering for Peace, discusses the organization's mission and alignment with Rotary International and Peace Corps. Founded in 2015, Partnering for Peace connects Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and Rotarians, emphasizing their shared educational, economic development, and health goals. The organization, classified as a 501(c)(4), focuses on awareness, education, and outreach rather than fundraising to avoid competition with other organizations. Kim highlights the collaborative potential between RPCVs and Rotary clubs, noting the variety of cause-based Rotary clubs that RPCVs can engage with. She underscores the value of RPCVs' cultural and linguistic expertise in supporting global projects. Upcoming events, such as Rotary Peace Corps Week, will showcase joint initiatives and promote partnerships. Kim emphasizes the importance of good communication and having a dedicated working board to connect people and support their missions effectively.

Mike Roman's Comments

Mike Roman praises Partnering for Peace as an outstanding organization and mentions his personal connections with friends in Rotary and Rotaract, particularly in New Zealand. He highlights their collaborative efforts with organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO in Kiribati. Mike expresses hope that the Peace Corps will return to Kiribati and that new partnerships will develop there. He then introduces Nashem, who will discuss the revitalization efforts of the Cincinnati area volunteers, referring to it as "2.0" or a restart of their initiatives.

Nashem Marks

Nashem Mark begins by expressing gratitude for being part of the discussion and highlights the various ways Peace Corps volunteers engage with communities. She shares her personal background, noting that she is a second-generation Peace Corps volunteer, following in her mother's footsteps. Nashem reflects on the evolving perceptions of Peace Corps volunteers over the years, contrasting the confusion her mother faced with the more familiar acceptance during her own time of service.

Nashem discusses the efforts of Cincinnati Area Returned Volunteers (CARV) to adapt and reinvigorate their approach, focusing on the needs and interests of newer generations. She emphasizes the importance of connecting with and engaging new Americans, aligning with the Peace Corps' mission to foster cultural understanding. Nashem highlights the challenges of involvement, mentioning that while there are approximately 400 volunteers in the Greater Cincinnati and Dayton area, only about 30 are actively engaged. The group aims to create meaningful ways for volunteers to participate, such as community gatherings and advocacy work.

She also touches on the group's considerations around fundraising, a practice they previously avoided but now see as beneficial for supporting various missions and initiatives. Nashem underscores the importance of raising awareness among political leaders about the value of Peace Corps volunteers. Drawing from her experience working at a regional airport, she reflects on how her passion and work ethic, influenced by her Peace Corps background, might not be fully recognized by her colleagues or local leaders.

In conclusion, Nashem stresses the need for CARV to continue evolving and adapting to ensure the involvement of future generations. She expresses enthusiasm for the ongoing discussions and the potential to address challenges and seize opportunities for the future.

Mike Roman Commentary

The Cincinnati board recently experienced a complete turnover; all the members are new. The new board members are excited and energetic about their roles. They organized an event, contributing a few hundred dollars to rent a farm that featured horses, dogs, cats, and sunflowers. Knowing Nashem's work at the airport, Mike suggests promoting Peace Corps activities at the Cincinnati International Airport. Mike then directed a question to Nashem about how they successfully encouraged members to take on leadership roles within the organization.

Nashem's Answer

Nashem shared that her involvement with the Peace Corps was inspired by her mother, a former Peace Corps volunteer. After college, Nashem pursued a master's in community planning at the University of Cincinnati, where she discovered the Peace Corps Fellows Program, which she hadn't previously known about. This program, which connects Peace Corps volunteers interested in community planning, became a valuable resource. Nashem emphasizes the importance of engaging with universities to understand what returning Peace Corps volunteers want to achieve and how they can contribute.

In recruiting new leaders and members, Nashem suggests focusing on individuals already active and influential in the community. She highlights her collaboration with Katie, a former recruiter and graduate of the university's program, and Kate, now handling the organization's finances. Both are dedicated to maintaining the vibrancy of the Peace Corps community in Cincinnati. Nashem believes identifying leaders involved in various community efforts, such as housing and local development, and leveraging university connections are effective strategies for sustaining and revitalizing Peace Corps initiatives.

Mike's response and next question

Mike thanked Nashem for her input and acknowledged the beautiful weather in Cincinnati. Then, he shifts to a question for Kim, asking how other affiliate groups can get involved with their local Rotary clubs and programs.

Kim Dixon's Response

Kim Dixon suggests that getting involved with local Rotary clubs is straightforward and beneficial for affiliate groups. She recommends reaching out via email at info@partneringforpeace.org for guidance and using online tools to locate nearby Rotary clubs by entering a zip code. Kim shares her personal experience, highlighting the ease of collaboration through grassroots efforts and suggests attending Rotary meetings, offering to speak about shared goals, and participating in joint service projects. She emphasizes the strong synergy between Rotary members and Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) and how these relationships can lead to meaningful community service and project support.

Mike's Response and a question for Kim Dixon

Someone in the chat asked what Rotary Week is

Kim Dixon's response

The event is scheduled for September 18th to the 22nd, with one-hour sessions on different days at different times. The focus is on celebrating connections, and the registration is available on the website www.partneringforpeace.org.

Mike's Next question to Justin

Fundraising in affiliate groups is always a challenge. This is true for everyone, including NPCA. Have you faced similar challenges, considering your astonishing numbers?

Justin's Answer

The organization has a well-established fundraising system with regular mailers driving donations, particularly during the December fundraiser. They are now looking to engage younger and potential donors through a grant program, providing more options for people to donate and see their money being used in ways they support.

Mike's Final thoughts

Thank you all for joining this conversation and providing inspiration. I appreciate all of your amazing work and want to express my heartfelt gratitude. I will now pass it back to Kristina for the closing. Thank you so much.

Kristina's final conclusions

Thank you everybody for joining the call. There are a few important reminders I'd like to share. Firstly, there is a post-event survey which you can access through the link provided by Jonathan in the chat. Also, the Ruby award ballot will be open for a few more days, so make sure to submit your votes. Additionally, there's a group reaffiliation survey that needs to be completed if you haven't done so already. We're thrilled to see many groups actively participating. Don't forget to join and post on our affiliate Facebook group page to share and engage with other affiliate groups. For the next part, there will be breakout rooms with different groups. Group one will feature the Ruby award finalists, so you can ask them questions about their work. There will also be a best practice panel and an affiliate collaboration session. Lastly, if you have any questions about the CRM migration, updates will be provided. We are considering switching breakout rooms every 15 minutes, but you can also choose to move between groups as you like. Thank you all for attending!