

from the

# FIELD

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Take Care of the Earth  
and She Will Take Care of You

Senior CD PCVs have summer camp

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# Take Care of the Earth and She Will Take Care of You

**M**an created the plastic bag and the aluminum can and this was good ... And soon the earth was covered with plastic bags and aluminum cans and there was nowhere to sit down or walk, and Man shook his head and cried: "Look at this God awful mess." ~Art Buchwald, 1970

In Ukraine it is popular to spend time outdoors hiking, camping, or having a picnic. But how many Ukrainians have the ecological consciousness and understand the importance of not throwing garbage around the forest, river banks and even on the streets? It is easy to say: "Yes, it's a problem. We should care about the environment. We should change our mentality". But the activist is not the person who says the river is dirty. The activist is the person who cleans it up.

A recent demonstration of effective civic activism was the collaboration of Carpathian Paths Foundation (Kalush), PricewaterhouseCoopers (Kyiv), PreCarpathian Forestry College (Bolehiv), and PCVs Jim Eleazer, Chris MacKay, Rob DeKay, and Bob Ireland. Almost 50 people worked together during the weekend of May 27-29 to improve the "Plysce" cabin, and collect and remove over 25 bags of trash.

Some volunteers share their experience and impressions:

Natalia Blyznuk, Head of Tourism Department, European Integration, Foreign Relations and Investments of Ivano-Frankivsk Regional State Administration

**This environmental action showed how united efforts of the people result in many good things**

*"It was a great example for the tourists who travel to the Carpathian Mountains and will encourage a caring attitude to nature. For only by the combined efforts of each individual can we preserve the clean and attractive nature of the mountains. It is important not only to clean, but to raise environmental awareness among tourists and the younger generation, to recruit a wider range of tourists and locals to participate in variety of ecological projects, and to widely*

*introduce environmental actions through the media. People should realize how important their behavior in nature is."*

Hryhoriy Melnyk, Deputy Head of the Tourism Department from Ivano-Frankivsk

*"I was struck by the enthusiastic girls and boys from "PwC" (PricewaterhouseCoopers) who worked very hard. I am thankful to the Director of PreCarpathian Forestry College for bringing his students. This environmental action showed how united efforts of the people*



The rebuilt house up the mountains



Students from Dolyna joined the team

*result in many good things and it had a positive influence on people's environmental consciousness."*

Olena Hrynchyshyn, member of Carpathian Paths Foundation

*"Jim Eleazer is a very interesting, energetic, sincere and open person! For him, this year's event was the third in which he participated. He was actually the organizer of the volunteers! All worked hard with a caring attitude to nature and mountains."*

Yuriy Hudyma, member of Carpathian Paths Foundation

*"We had several new members of the older generation from Kalush who worked at the level of the young and are great prospects for future actions. I would like to see more community people participating in future eco-actions."*

Henry Shymonovych, staff member from Peace Corps Ukraine Kyiv Headquarters

*"I think every member of this project was able to feel how great it is to hike by marked routes with an opportunity to take a rest in a nice mountain hut. It's a great thing that more people think about environmental protection, and willing to take care of it."*

Yuriy Chernevyy, Director of PreCarpathian Forestry College

*"The work was hard, but all volunteers worked actively, regardless of age. It is great that so many of our students wanted to participate in this environmental action. We had 23 people. We made new friends from Peace Corps in Ukraine and from Carpathian Paths Foundation and will be happy to take part in future environmental actions."*

**"The work was hard, but all volunteers worked actively, regardless of age. It is great that so many of our students wanted to participate in this environmental action."**

Please browse our website to see more photos:

<http://ukraine.peacecorps.gov/attachments/Photos/Making%20a%20Difference%20-%20Jim%20Eleazer/index.htm>

and a VOA video: <http://youtu.be/hYgsbLaWHuk>

# Senior CD PCVs Do Summer Camp

Seniors at summer camp? Community Development PCVs at summer camp? Really?? You bet! That's exactly what six of Volunteers did in June. Five "seniors" and one honorary senior worked in Khotyn at two of the schools' camps during the two weeks after Last Bell.

A couple of Volunteers had toyed with the thought of offering a camp in Khotyn for 2nd, 3rd, and 4th graders, but their model would have entailed a 3-week commitment, securing a location, confirming dates, getting lots of signed and stamped permissions, and so on. Goodness, who needs to go through all that in order to offer to help some children.

Deciding that there must be a smarter way to proceed, the Volunteers let the idea sit idle and ferment for a while. How can we pull this off? What can we offer? What do we know about children and camps? And then, things started to jell - as so often happens during a Peace Corps experience.

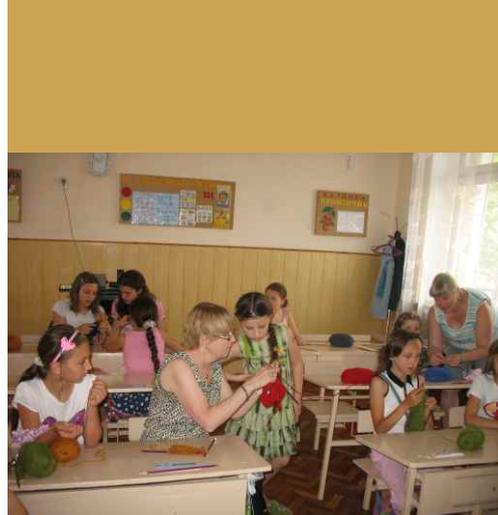
*"We're seniors - we know a lot about children, having raised families, been teachers, worked at summer camps in the US, and volunteered in children's organizations. We have loads of experience to offer - we play games, we knit, we dance, we teach, we play, we plan, we organize, we network, we're active Baby Boomers, we know how to ask for support from our friends both in our Ukraine communities and in our communities at home. Once we set our minds to do something, it gets done - and done well," say the Volunteers.*

So they offered to be part of the summer camp at one school - teaching baseball and knitting. This quickly expanded to working at two schools, and then to include teaching square dancing. The Volunteers would work at one school in the morning, the other in the afternoon.

Then they set about with their preparations. Baseball equipment could be purchased and sent from the US, with a Rotary Club acting as the conduit for the funds and the shipping done by a wonderfully organized service-oriented young woman. Square dance music - selected through the wonders of the internet by PCV Bernie Cheriff, a 80-year old square dance maestro, and downloaded onto his computer. As for the knitting materials, PCV Megan O'Connor, former part-owner of a knitting store, put out the word to her friends at home and received multiple mailings of needles and yarn.

Two more seniors were enlisted, knitter Laura Bestor and Mr. Enthusiasm Jim Buell, and honorary senior Kim Rosado to join the adventure. They also enlisted the help of 10th form English students at one of the schools to be translators, for which they received school credit.

Imagine up to 40 children who have never heard of square dancing converging on the dance studio in the House of Culture to find out what this American dance



Knitters at work



The baseball experience turned out to be an adventure

is all about - and truly enjoying themselves as they learned to do-si-do and promenade left and right and stamp their feet. This brought a satisfied grin to maestro Cheriff as he matched the children's gusto and exclaimed about how much fun he was having.

Knitters O'Connor and Bestor ended up with some very committed students at Khotyn School 5. After sometimes having to literally pry the children's fingers from the needles and watching the children undo work they were not satisfied with, these patient seniors won over their classes. They brought in American music "to knit by" and found ways to continually challenge the better knitters in their group. Fond hugs marked the last day of their classes.

The baseball experience turned out to be an adventure combining T Ball with wiffle ball. Envision T Ball with 10-14 year olds, who so often behaved just like the young T Ball players in the US. PCV Buell delighted in leading the warm up drills, complete with US military chants, which he modified to use with the children. He and PCVs Rosado and McLaughlin actually held up well, often having more energy than the final afternoon group of students - not bad for seniors!

While most Ukrainians do not expect the senior PCVs to have the energy necessary to offer lively and focused activities for children, this group of CD PCVs truly exhibited their typical American approach to a camp experience - keep it moving and keep it fun, both for the children and themselves. Seniors at summer camp? Community Development PCVs at summer camp? Really?? You bet!

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## Osmoloda, Ukraine

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by the last week of each month.

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