

THE
PEACE
CORPS
IN CHILE
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THE PEACE CORPS IN CHILE 1961–1998

Introduction

On November 2, 1960, in the waning hours of the campaign that was to bring him the presidency, Senator John F. Kennedy spelled out his proposal for mobilizing the young of America in the cause of peace. A few months later, the new president signed an executive order creating the Peace Corps, an overseas voluntary service organization that has harnessed the enthusiasm, skills and talents of over 200,000 American citizens. On signing the executive order President Kennedy declared:

Life in the Peace Corps will not be easy. There will be no salary and allowances will be at a level sufficient only to maintain health and meet basic needs. Men and women will be expected to work and live alongside the nationals of the country in which they are stationed -- doing the same work, eating the same food, talking the same language. But if the life will not be easy, it will be rich and satisfying. For every young American who participates in the Peace Corps -- who works in a foreign land -- will know that he or she is sharing in the great common task of bringing to man that decent way of life which is the foundation of freedom and a condition of peace.

To this day, Americans at home strongly support the Peace Corps, host country officials openly welcome it, and those who serve continue to be enriched by it.

The three goals of the Peace Corps, unchanged to this day, are to provide skilled personnel to assist developing nations, to enable people in other countries to know and better understand ordinary Americans, and to provide Americans with the opportunity for increased knowledge of other countries and cultures.

In its founding year, the Peace Corps sent Volunteers to Chile, the fifth nation in the world to receive Peace Corps Volunteers. The Peace Corps presence in Chile was officially sanctioned by an exchange of letters of understanding signed on July 27, 1962, by

President Alessandri's minister of foreign affairs, based on a bilateral agreement signed by the United States and Chile in 1951.

The first Volunteers arrived in Chile in October 1961, and over 2,500 Volunteers served in Chile over two periods totaling almost 30 years: 1961 to 1982, and 1991 to 1998. The Volunteers worked side-by-side for two years with Chilean agency counterparts in tasks identified by these agencies and at the invitation of the Chilean government. Volunteers served in rural areas and urban centers throughout the country. They provided technical assistance and training for local people in projects ranging from fisheries, forestry, nutrition and agriculture, to education, youth development, health, and self-help housing. Volunteers also worked in cooperative development, credit union organization, industrial training, nurses training, urban planning, rural and urban community development, national park planning, wildlife protection and use, sports management, and small business development. They taught in universities and small rural schools, provided advice to associations and community groups, and worked in national government agencies, municipalities, and research institutes.

Peace Corps Volunteers have always represented a cross section of idealistic but pragmatic members of American society. They went to Chile to do a job, share knowledge, and learn more about the life and culture of another nation to take back with them in an ever-widening circle of understanding.

1961–1970

In the early 1960s, under President Alessandri, Chile was a large recipient of foreign assistance from the United States under the Alliance for Progress. In this environment of close bilateral relations, the first group of 45 Volunteers arrived, assigned to work with the Instituto de Educación Rural (IER), an autonomous non-profit development organization closely tied to the Catholic Church. These Volunteers were trained for their Peace Corps service at the University of Notre Dame, under the personal guidance of Father Theodore Hesburgh, a strong supporter of the Peace Corps to this day:

The Peace Corps is one of the most significant legacies of the Kennedy administration. President Kennedy brought the glow of youthful enthusiasm to the country,

and the thousands of Volunteers in the Peace Corps came away with the experience and knowledge that people can do good...and in so doing reap the personal gratification and satisfaction of knowing they have helped their fellow men.

These first Volunteers lived throughout Chile, from Los Andes in the north to Chiloé in the south, coordinating community development projects through rural schools for young adults. They worked with their Chilean counterparts to improve nutrition, sanitation, business management, hygiene and teaching methods in the rural life skills of mechanics, carpentry, agriculture, animal husbandry, and crop production. The Volunteers and their IER counterparts emphasized outreach to the neglected and underserved native Mapuche population.

One of the major problems in rural Chile was the isolation of people from each other. The IER addressed this problem by operating a series of rural training centers for teen-aged boys and girls, combined with roaming teams of community organizers who developed community projects in scattered villages.

Volunteers assigned to the IER made an immediate notable contribution in cooperative organization. At the time the Volunteers arrived, multipurpose consumer, credit and production co-operatives for smallholder farmers did not exist in Chile. Due in part to Volunteer efforts, three such cooperatives began operation within two years. Volunteers also initiated or significantly contributed to the successful operation of approximately 35 smaller rural cooperatives. Volunteers at the IER central office in Santiago helped develop a photography laboratory and significantly expanded the audio-visual department. A film distribution program was added and radio school instruction was promoted for rural children.

Subsequent groups of Volunteers worked with the YWCA, helping create youth clubs and day camps, nursery schools, mothers' clubs and community centers, and with TECHO Movimiento Habitacional Cristiano, a non-governmental non-profit agency set up to organize urban community development programs. Peace Corps Volunteers were involved in one of the first TECHO-sponsored programs in Santiago's Población La Victoria where a Volunteer helped establish a trousers-making shop in which 52 women were employed. The project expanded to include a nursery school, first aid station and library. Other Volunteers began projects with production cooperatives such as one for wastepaper collectors and

helped set up mothers' centers. Volunteers in Antofagasta were associated with major self-help housing construction. These programs expanded to a major rural community development program, and the numbers of Volunteers grew to 100 in 1963 and 268 in 1964.

The Frei Montalva government, beginning in 1964, increased direct service and self-help programs for the poor, and requested Volunteers to assist with these programs. By 1965 there were 383 Volunteers in Chile. Volunteers with college degrees were trained further in particular skills and the Spanish language prior to arriving in Chile. This training, provided mostly in US universities, was usually for a 3- to 4-month period, and included Chilean history and cross-cultural orientation.

Many Volunteers during this period worked directly with rural communities, helping townspeople overcome problems of access to basic needs, and identifying small income-generating activities to supplement meager incomes. One notable accomplishment was the actual relocation of the flood-prone village of Trovolhue in southern Chile. Several Volunteers were assigned to Mapuche communities, helping to create a widespread artisan products business that persists to this day.

TROVOLHUE, CHILE— A PEACE CORPS STORY

Trovolhue, a small town in southern Chile, was badly hit by the earthquake of 1960. The town sank several feet, so it flooded every year when the river rose.

In 1965, Peace Corps Volunteer Brian Loveman, joined by civil engineer Phil Burgi and master carpenter Larry Kness helped design and implement a plan to move the town to safer ground. With the town leaders, they obtained the required official approvals and heavy earthmoving equipment and financing to build a new access bridge. They surveyed and laid out the town streets, home sites, and essential services.

Public agencies and private organizations all contributed to move 100 families, who dismantled the existing homes and buildings and rebuilt them on the new site. Volunteer Sharon Loveman worked with townswomen to improve nutrition and health, and to increase income through home-based food preservation and clothes making.

After the Peace Corps Volunteers left in 1968, townspeople and the Chilean government continued to improve streets, built a new school and police station, and many more families moved to the new town site.

PRESERVING MAPUCHE CULTURAL HERITAGE

In the mid-1960s, in the Quetrahue, Ilaíma, and Icalma areas of the Araucanía region of southern Chile, Peace Corps Volunteers worked closely with Mapuche leaders and artisans to create an opportunity for families to supplement their income through the sale of traditional arts and crafts. They helped to identify reliable market outlets for Mapuche products first in nearby Temuco, and then in Osorno and Santiago. Mapuche artisan groups formed across the region as a result. The Volunteers advised the artisans in these new groups on quality control of weavings and woodcarvings, and helped them set up sales and bookkeeping systems.

Sales of traditional blankets, saddlebags, and belts increased and new products were introduced such as shoulder bags with traditional Mapuche designs, which, to this day, grace the artisan markets throughout Chile and in cities worldwide.

The partnership between the Peace Corps and the Mapuche resulted in more income and pride in the communities, and contributed to a broader and deeper understanding of the Mapuche cultural heritage.

In late 1964, Peace Corps Chile launched a major effort in forestry, which eventually evolved into a large-scale, multi-year program. Volunteers were assigned to the Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero (SAG), working directly in promotion of reforestation with government extension agents throughout central Chile. They promoted on-farm tree planting and assisted with the establishment of tree nurseries to support rapidly expanding tree planting campaigns. Later Volunteers worked in more technical areas like forest inventory, forest protection from pests and diseases, wood products engineering, and forest fire suppression. Highly trained forestry Volunteers were assigned to a 15-year program to develop the forestry curriculum at the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH) in Valdivia and to the Instituto Forestal (INFOR) to support applied research in native forest management, wood products engineering, and plantation forestry silviculture.

From 1964 to 1967, Peace Corps Volunteer nurses worked closely with the Servicio Nacional de Salud and the new school of nursing at the UACH, to improve health conditions in Valdivia, a city recovering from the devastating 1960 earthquake. Volunteer

UNIVERSIDAD AUSTRAL DE CHILE AND THE PEACE CORPS: A PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP IN FOREST SCIENCES

In 1964 the Universidad Austral de Chile (UACH) requested help from the Peace Corps. Although there was a well developed forestry industry in the southern region of Chile there were few professionals who were university trained in forestry. Between 1964 and 1975, four graduate forestry scientists were sent by the Peace Corps to help build UACH's forest engineering faculty in forest pathology, silviculture, and entomology.

During their tenure at UACH, one of the Volunteers and his Chilean colleagues identified a potentially dangerous fungal disease of a very important tree species used extensively in Chile's nascent tree planting program (Monterey pine). Research was begun on possible controls.

Volunteers also initiated the forest entomology course and carried out research projects on forest insects with Chilean scientists that resulted in a national pest protection program involving the universities and the national forest service.

The Volunteers participated in research projects with Chilean colleagues on the structure and dynamics of native forests and the ecology of Monterey pine plantations. They started research on how best to reforest areas that were denuded due to human activities and were instrumental in creating the forest genetics-tree improvement program at UACH, resulting in huge dividends in the Chilean industrial forest sector.

nurses also served in Antofagasta to train Chilean nurses at the regional hospital, and in Tocopilla to work in a tuberculosis program.

Volunteers served in small rural fishing villages, working mainly with artisan fishing cooperatives in southern Chile to improve their fish capture methods and business practices. Involvement of the Peace Corps in the fisheries sector would continue into and through the 1970s and expand into a wide range of scientific activities.

In 1966, over 400 Volunteers were working from Arica to Punta Arenas in 23 of Chile's 26 provinces. During the late 1960s, the number of Peace Corps Volunteers in Chile reached almost 500. In 1967, the Peace Corps began to concentrate the placement of Volunteers in the sectors and specific working environments most amenable to successful volunteer service. The number of Volunteers in Chile was reduced to approximately 300 Volunteers at any one time throughout the country. The Chilean counterpart organizations

ARTISAN FISHERIES DEVELOPMENT: A LIFETIME COMMITMENT

In 1967, Peter Wadsworth began advising local fishermen in the port of San Antonio on business matters. He was asked to help a group of independent artisan fishermen form their own co-operative, which was authorized in a year.

The co-op rented a small boatyard and sold spare parts and paint to the members to finance their operations. With Peter providing a helping hand with organizational matters the co-op leadership obtained their legal charter, and by August 1968, when Peter left Chile, the co-op had begun to expand their activities.

Peter came back to San Antonio in April 1974. The co-op he had helped form had a refrigerated truck which generated enough revenue to cover their fixed costs, and they had begun to sell diesel fuel to their members. Peter set up a fish exporting business and started exporting fish in 1976 and built a small freezing plant.

In 1982, he and his Chilean partners devised a new way to catch swordfish that worked so well the artisan fishing fleet in San Antonio grew by quantum leaps, and the total annual catch of swordfish went from 140 tons in 1978 to 6500 tons in 1992. Many of the fishermen made excellent profits during that time, known locally as *el boom de la albacora*. Some invested their profits wisely and today are successful *empresarios pesqueros*. Peter continues to process and export fish which he buys exclusively from the artisan fishermen in San Antonio who have grown old along with him, and now he buys from their sons as well.

were identifying more sophisticated and targeted assignments for the Volunteers, so the Peace Corps began to focus program areas more tightly.

This period of restructuring produced a more coordinated and organized approach to programming. Peace Corps always had signed specific program agreements with the Chilean agencies where Volunteers were assigned, but now Chilean authorities and Peace Corps staff defined more precisely and supervised more closely Volunteers' assignments. In addition to Chilean government agencies, solid collaboration was established with third party agencies such as CARE, Catholic Relief Services, and Adventist and Methodist groups, for the placement of Volunteers to assist with their programs. The program operated within

three broad priority areas identified by Chilean agencies and agreed upon by Peace Corps: rural and urban community development, education, and cooperative development.

Rural and urban community development Volunteers worked in self-help housing construction, nutrition and health education, forestry, fisheries, arts and crafts education and direct social assistance.

Volunteers were involved in the transformational introduction of Coho and Chinook salmon to Chile, an undeniable contribution to what became one of Chile's growth sectors. Highly trained marine biologists worked in the Instituto de Fomento Pesquero (IFOP) laboratories

SELF-HELP HOUSING: THE CINVA RAM AND ASSISTING CHILE'S LOW-INCOME FAMILIES ACHIEVE A SECURE AND HEALTHY LIVING ENVIRONMENT

President Frei created the Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo (MINVU) and the autonomous unit, Corporación de Servicios Habitacionales (CORHABIT), to specifically address Chile's low-income housing problem. CORHABIT launched Operación Sitio in 1965 as the principal programmatic vehicle to provide low-income housing using self-help techniques. The Peace Corps agreed to support this initiative.

Peace Corps support to CORHABIT's Operación Sitio commenced with the presentation of a "CINVA Ram," a manually operated machine that compresses soil, cement and water to produce building blocks. Volunteer David Fisk helped organize the men of Nueva Palena to get together every Saturday morning and produce about 1,000 blocks, enough for a 120 square foot house. They built their own houses and houses for special needs members of the community.

After this initial success, 15 self-help housing Volunteers in 1967 joined low-income families in the communities of Maipu, Nuñoa, La Florida, Buin, Paine, Coquimbo and Temuco to construct their own housing. The Volunteers assembled small houses (*media aguas*) on site where they would live for two years. The aim of the Volunteers was to assist CORHABIT's project manager to organize the community into self-help groups, impart training to construct basic, individual, pre-fabricated wood frame houses, and work with the community during the construction phase.

Most of the new housing on the Volunteers' sites was completed by the end of their two-year assignments. Anecdotal evidence from Volunteers returning to their sites years later indicates many of their communities are flourishing and that the original basic units have often more than doubled in size.

and field research sites contributing to science-based management of marketable species of Chilean seafood.

Education Volunteers taught engineering, mathematics, music and electronics at the university and technical school levels. Volunteers in cooperative development provided assistance in cooperative education and administration, acting as coordinators and organizers for courses mostly given by the Instituto de Educación Cooperativo (ICECOOP), and in projects funded by the Instituto de Desarrollo Agropecuario (INDAP) for fishing, smallholder farmer, and artisan cooperatives.

PEACE CORPS AND THE INTRODUCTION OF SALMON TO CHILE

During the memorable 1960s a visionary North American, Timothy Joyner, sailed around the world in the oceanographic ship "The Hero". When he landed on the Chilean coast in the Straights of Magellan, he commented to Irma Vila, a Chilean marine scientist who was travelling with him, that this coastal region of Chile was so similar to the northern Pacific that the same Pacific salmon thriving there should also thrive in these Chilean waters. This idea took hold in 1967, when the Departamento de Pesca y Caza of the Servicio Agrícola y Ganadero and the Peace Corps developed a plan to introduce and raise wild populations of salmon in Chile.

Impetus was provided to this plan when a donation of 600,000 eggs of *Oncorhynchus kisutch* (silver salmon) arrived from the Washington State Department of Fisheries, the first salmon eggs to arrive in Chile. They were taken to the hatchery in Rio Blanco, near Santiago. The survival rate of this first tranche of salmon eggs set off a most important fish culture program that has resulted in Chile reaching the top of the world fish export business. The success of this early program led to an expansion of fish culture programs in lakes, rivers and sea waters throughout Chile. The Peace Corps sent several more Volunteers over the years to continue the work begun with the introduction of silver salmon to Chile. Later volunteers, still working closely with Irma Vila, explored the far reaches of the country identifying sites for introduction of fish species, they helped set up the first fisheries library, and they cared for the fingerlings transferred to hatcheries in Lautaro and Polcura. They identified sites to seed the young salmon, such as Las Zorras and Reloncaví near Puerto Montt. This work resulted in the first scientific publication on salmon culture in Chile.

1970–1974

Nineteen seventy presented a difficult and challenging period for the Peace Corps. The organization was publically accused of espionage by the Chilean Communist Party, leading to an investigation by the Chilean Congress. Volunteers were called to testify on their activities. President Allende had made a campaign promise to close the Peace Corps once elected. Instead, a full-scale examination was carried out by the Oficina de Planificación Nacional (ODEPLAN) that concluded the Peace Corps was providing valuable services and should continue in Chile.

In 1970 about 60% of regular program requests for PC Volunteers worldwide were for specialists and by 1971 the percentage had grown to almost 70%. At the same time, the Peace Corps began to hire host country nationals for program and administrative staffing, providing substantial continuity and knowledgeable collaboration that has been an invaluable characteristic of the Peace Corps ever since.

Towards the end of the prior Frei Montalva administration the Chilean government agencies had begun to request more specialized Volunteers with higher technical degrees. This trend became stronger during the Allende presidency, leading to a period when Peace Corps had difficulty recruiting enough Volunteers with the skill level being requested by Chilean agencies. The numbers of Volunteers consequently decreased to 50 in 1970 and then down to 26 in 1973. Rather than bringing groups of Volunteers to work in programs, the Peace Corps at this point was recruiting Volunteers for individual placement in specific assignments.

During this period, the Peace Corps was successful in bringing in very highly skilled Volunteers in sports coaching at the national level, Volunteers with Masters and PhD degrees in various specialties in forestry and fisheries, and very experienced Volunteers in sanitary engineering, nutrition, and wildlife biology. Volunteers worked in specific projects with pre-identified counterparts; their positions were similar to those of a Chilean professional.

The Peace Corps remained in Chile throughout the Allende presidency. During the waning days of the Allende government, a substantial amount of success was visible in programs involving Peace Corps Volunteers. The Departamento de Conservación y

COACH DAN PETERSON

In 1972, in response to a special request from the government of Chile, Peace Corps Volunteer Dan Peterson arrived in Santiago to coach the Chilean National Basketball team. Already an accomplished coach, Peterson left his mark on Chilean basketball that is remembered to this day by players and coaches who began their careers at that same time.

Peterson organized a 50-game tour for the Chilean national team to the United States. Francisco “Kiko” Valenzuela, one of Chile’s champion basketball players, referring to Peterson’s impact on Chilean basketball, remembers that “Dan Peterson in the early 1970s was like the Bielsa of today. He revolutionized Chilean basketball with methods we were not yet familiar with. He lived basketball 24 hours a day, and taught us to do the same”.

Dan Peterson went on to a successful career as coach and sportscaster in Italy where he is today, still coaching one of Italy’s professional basketball teams.

Parques Nacionales of the Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF) was established, in part to implement management plans and environmental education programs contributed to by Volunteers for many of the most important national parks, and to implement recommendations of the pioneering scientific studies for some of the most important endangered species of Chilean wildlife. In the health sector, a pilot project to combat child malnutrition, in which many Volunteers worked, was later implemented at the national level.

1974–1982

In spite of the drastic change in Chile’s government in 1973, and the turmoil and institutional revision that occurred, the rather small number (26) of Peace Corps Volunteers working in Chile at the time were able to function quite normally under the circumstances. Because their positions were so technically oriented, it was possible for them to complete their projects. The Peace Corps staff worked to renew links with different organizations and identify potential program areas for future Volunteers. By 1975 there were over 40 Volunteers

SUSTAINABLE FISHERIES

From 1968 to 1972, Peace Corps Volunteers were assigned to the Instituto de Fomento Pesquero (IFOP) to help provide applied research upon which to develop Chile's abundant but fragile seafood resource. Volunteers worked on a king crab project in Punta Arenas, a hake management project, and on oyster culture at the IFOP field station on Butachaugues Island in Chiloé.

During the 1970s, Peace Corps Volunteers provided technical support to Chile's efforts to develop techniques for protection and culture of important commercial species like mussels, scallops, Chilean abalone, and oysters. Volunteers contributed to pioneering work on the artificial cultivation of the Chilean bay scallop at a site on Mejillones Bay in northern Chile, which included collecting native scallops from the wild and experimenting with three different methods of growing them.

Volunteers worked at the Centro de Investigaciones Submarinas of the Universidad Del Norte on biological studies of barnacles to provide the basis for developing a barnacle repellent paint for Chilean ships. Another Volunteer analyzed the bacteria on krill, to determine whether it could meet export standards, at the Universidad de Chile in Puerto Montt in southern Chile where he also taught classes in fish diseases and helped start a hatchery to raise trout artificially.

These Volunteers contributed significantly to the first successful programs to protect, manage, and sustainably harvest several commercially important species of Chilean seafood.

in Chile, over 60 in 1976 and close to 90 in 1977, all placed in programs authorized by the Comisión Nacional de Investigación Científica y Tecnológica (CONICYT), the Chilean government's agency responsible for bilateral technical assistance. In 1974-75, programs were established with the Ministerio de Educación for teacher training in physical education and special education.

A new Chilean government regionalization policy gave responsibilities to regional and local authorities for identification of needs and implementation of some programs, so in the late 1970s a small-business and cooperative extension program provided Volunteers who advised on small business practices, product development, processing, and marketing to the newly created Corporación Industrial para el Desarrollo del Area Metropolitana (CIDEME)

in Santiago, and the Corporación Industrial para el Desarrollo Regional (CIDERE) in Concepción and La Serena. Peace Corps Volunteers worked closely with CIDEME counterparts to organize labor-intensive, low-capital, income-generating projects in the poorest areas around Santiago. Volunteers helped set up studios in the Carrascal neighborhood of Santiago to prepare embroideries of original paintings of Hector Herrera, shops in Macúl for production of embroideries made by organized women's groups, and exportation arrangements for 600 crocheted bedspreads to Japan.

Volunteers continued to work with CONAF in national parks planning and wildlife management. The Peace Corps focused a great deal of its work on the forestry sector, supported by contracts with the University of Washington and the Smithsonian Institution to recruit highly skilled forestry and environmental sciences Volunteers. Beginning in the last half of the 1960s, Volunteers played a key role in the design of Chile's first National Parks of Tolhuaca, Vicente Perez Rosales, and Puyehue. From 1975-79, Peace Corps environmental specialists worked closely with Chilean national park managers and educators in Temuco to create education programs in national parks for school children. This model program first tested in Conguillio N.P. led to a formal agreement between CONAF and the Ministerio de Educación for environmental education programs for schools in several gateway towns to national parks. Formal environmental education in national parks spread throughout Chile and many variations of the Volunteer-initiated program operate in Chile's schools today.

Volunteers worked closely with CONAF colleagues in the protection of natural habitats for endangered Chilean wildlife species including the guanaco, the chinchilla and the huemúl.

In 1977, the initial bases for a rural health and nutrition education program with the Servicio Nacional de Salud (SNS) and an environmental education program with the Ministerio de Educación were established. The agricultural extension program, working with the Confederación de Cooperativas Campesinas (CAMPOCOOP) was reaching some of the poorest small farmer cooperatives in the central agricultural region of Chile. From 1976 to 1981, over a dozen Volunteers worked with smallholder cooperatives throughout Chile's central agricultural zone. They provided agricultural production and marketing advice to smallholders on behalf of CAMPOCOOP, as well as assisted CAMPOCOOP to reach out to a global system of development organizations, bringing important resources and attention to the smallholder agricultural sector in Chile.

The special education Volunteers with the Ministerio de Educación began to make an impact, and for the first time since the late 1960s Volunteers were assigned again to artisan fisherman cooperatives in small fishing villages. By 1978, the number of Volunteers in Chile had reached 100, the level at which the program was to remain for the next few years.

PROTECTING CHILE'S VALUABLE WILDLIFE

In the mid-1970s, the Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF) had visionary leaders concerned about threats to the natural habitats of two endangered Chilean wildlife species: the Chilean chinchilla of commercial importance, and the huemúl, co-star with the condor on the Chilean national emblem. Peace Corps Volunteers Connie Mohlis and Tony Povilitis were trained wildlife biologists who have committed their energies and expertise for years to the protection of these iconic Chilean species.

Mohlis worked closely with CONAF colleagues in the rugged, rocky slopes of Chile's northern coastal mountain range, near the small town of Salamanca. With her field partner Baldomero Peña, a former chinchilla hunter turned park guard for CONAF, they gathered valuable scientific data needed to establish the borders of an officially sanctioned protected area. In 1983, the national reserve for the chinchilla was established.

In late 1974, working with local CONAF field officials, traversing miles of terrain in central and Patagonian Chile, Povilitis recorded a historical sighting of a huemúl in the backcountry Nevados de Chillán. During the 1980s and 1990s Povilitis organized EARTHWATCH and university teams to help with huemúl surveys and led the first formal study of the animal's social behavior, working closely with colleagues at CONAF and Chile's Comité Nacional Pro Defensa de la Fauna y Flora (CODEFF). In 2010, the area was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO.

Mohlis and Povilitis now live in the U.S. Connie still provides suggestions on research and management to support the chinchilla reserve and Tony continues to lobby globally for conservation of the huemúl in Chile. They return to Chile regularly to visit and advise their CONAF colleagues. Connie was publicly recognized in 2008 by the Municipality of Illapel, for her contribution to the creation of the chinchilla reserve, and Povilitis was featured recently in an extensive article in "La Discusión", a Chillán newspaper, for his role in protecting the huemúl.

During the period 1979–1981, Peace Corps Chile made a special effort to place Volunteers in programs to address the needs of the poorest and neediest Chileans. Volunteers were recruited to work in rural health and nutrition, agricultural extension and youth rehabilitation. An integrated rural development program was designed to address the basic needs of rural Chileans. This program addressed health, nutrition, agriculture, cooperative extension, fisheries development and university education in a team-oriented effort. Volunteers were trained in their individual specialties and assigned to regions in multi-skill team clusters to work in a more integrated manner.

The youth development and rehabilitation program included group homes and special education teacher training programs. From Iquique to Coyhaique Volunteers trained Chileans in administration of special education schools, helped establish diagnostic centers, and developed programs with parents and vocational training to facilitate participation in the community of children with special needs. Volunteers working with the Servicio Nacional de Menores, the Ministerio de Justicia and several religious organizations trained social workers and teachers in conduct modification, recreation, sports, and small business development in youth homes.

About 65 Volunteers served in integrated rural development and 35 in youth development and rehabilitation each year during this period.

However, on October 23, 1981, almost 20 years to the day after the first Peace Corps Volunteers arrived in Chile, the US announced the closing of the Peace Corps program in Chile. The US government stated it was closing the program due to a domestic budget crisis in the United States, a consequent reordering of national priorities for government spending and an obvious and pronounced advancement in the level of economic development in Chile relative to other countries where Peace Corps was present.

The announcement was a disappointment to many who were working side-by-side with Peace Corps Volunteers, and who had watched the Peace Corps weather some very difficult times in Chilean political history. Many letters of gratitude and expressions of dismay to be losing the assistance were received in the Peace Corps office in Santiago. It was a heart-warming out-pouring of sincere thanks from Chilean partners and colleagues.

The Peace Corps Chile program was phased out smoothly by the dedicated staff in Santiago, many of whom had committed years to the Peace Corps. Of the 120 Volunteers in Chile at the time of the phase-out, about a third were transferred to programs in Paraguay, Ecuador,

Honduras, Dominican Republic, Costa Rica and Belize. The rest either returned to the US or stayed on in Chile living and working on their own. The last staff member left in April 1982.

Thus, this 20-year period in the history of the Peace Corps in Chile came to an end. When the Peace Corps doors closed at this point, tangible results of the program were evident in the continuation of programs Volunteers had been working on at the time in several Chilean agencies, especially the ministries of health and education, several universities, and CONAF. Equally important were the tangible effects Peace Corps Volunteers had left on numerous communities, self-help organizations, co-operatives, citizen groups, and individuals throughout Chile.

1991–1995

In 1990, the Peace Corps Director in Washington was determined to expand Peace Corps into more advanced developing countries, such as Hungary, Poland, Argentina, Uruguay and again in Chile. Contacts in Chile, both public and private, took place during the second half of 1990, culminating in a formal request from the Government of Chile, presented by the Ministerio de Bienes Nacionales, for the return of the Peace Corps. A new country agreement was concluded based on the basic US/Chile cooperation agreement that launched the Alliance for Progress in Chile in 1961. The Peace Corps responded immediately by identifying environmental protection and small business development as the best options for Volunteer assistance.

By the time the first group of 25 Volunteers arrived in mid-1991, the Peace Corps had established an office, hired a mostly Chilean staff, and identified placements for the new Volunteers with Chilean public and private institutions. The swearing-in ceremony in Santiago for this group of Volunteers was presided over by Senator Richard Lugar, then Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Chilean officials.

The Peace Corps signed cooperation agreements with 35 public and private institutions throughout Chile. Renewed contacts were made with institutions, such as CONAF and the INFOR. Both harbored positive memories of the Peace Corps from the 1960s and 1970s. Relationships were renewed with the Universities of Chile, Talca, Concepción, De la Frontera in Temuco, and UACH in Valdivia. Highly skilled forestry and environmental Volunteers were assigned to most of these institutions, as well as to several municipalities.

The return of the Peace Corps to Chile was greeted very warmly by the Chilean people, who embraced the opportunity to interact at the working level with U.S. citizen volunteers. Chile's push to connect with the world through commerce and culture found expression in the relationships provided by Peace Corps Volunteers, especially in provincial towns and rural areas.

Small business Volunteers were assigned primarily to the Servicio de Cooperación Técnica (SERCOTEC), the government's principal small business assistance program, and to a range of private institutions that provided technical assistance and credit to small and micro enterprises, such as Fundación Trabajo Para un Hermano, PROPESA, Fundación Miguel Kast, and Sur Consultores.

Chile was once more taking steps towards decentralization, this time including the direct election of mayors and city councils. More Volunteers were recruited for the environment and small business programs, and for municipal management. Volunteers worked with local government officials to plan and execute programs to promote infrastructure development, social equity and economic development. In Lota, the Peace Corps spearheaded the implementation of an economic revitalization plan, leading to the creation of an industrial park and training programs for the local workforce. Volunteers throughout Chile focused on providing local officials the tools to develop participatory processes for planning and budgeting that led to the more effective allocation of national and local resources targeting Chile's poorest communities. These Volunteers, besides impacting positively on planning at the municipal level, developed training programs in urban and regional planning in the Universidad de Bío Bío.

Peace Corps Volunteers assigned to municipalities throughout Chile helped design over the period 1996 to 1998 a national environmental education curriculum that is still an important resource for environmental education instruction in Chile.

By the end of 1995, the Peace Corps program in Chile had 85 Volunteers. During the 1990s, the Peace Corps program was seen as a pilot for US Volunteer programs in advanced developing countries. The focus was on assisting institutional capacity building at the local level, relying on older more experienced Volunteers with proven management skills. These Volunteers collaborated with the development of plans at the municipal and NGO levels meant to enhance citizen participation in local decision-making

ECOLIDERES: A RESOURCE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Peace Corps Volunteers and their Chilean Counterparts created a national environmental education curriculum for first through sixth grade. Work began in 1996 and saw final publication in 1998 under the title *Ecolideres: Estrategias Innovadoras para Contagiar el Amor por el Medioambiente*. Eleven municipalities from all over Chile and one non-governmental organization were involved in creating this two-volume set containing background information and hands-on, creative activities to engage students in learning to value and care for the environment.

Each volunteer worked with one or two teachers from their municipality to write, design, and test classroom lessons under the subheadings of water, soil, air, biodiversity, solid waste, and energy. All lessons and background information were then compiled and edited first through Peace Corps Chile and then edited again and published in final form through the Santiago-based non-governmental organization Casa de la Paz. This curriculum is still an important resource used for environmental education in Chile and since 2008 it has been available on the web.

Servicio País, a Chilean domestic volunteer organization patterned in part after the US Peace Corps, was becoming very active at this time, an indication that the volunteer spirit was taking root in Chile. This very positive development, plus the fact that Chile was clearly headed towards eventually joining the OECD group of developed economies, led to the decision in 1998 by the US government to again close the Chile Peace Corps program.

In April of 1998, in Santiago, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton joined with a large contingent of Volunteers from prior years and the last group of Volunteers serving in Chile in a bittersweet closing ceremony; this was also a celebration of the Chilean - United States partnerships and friendships developed over the years Peace Corps Volunteers served in Chile. On that occasion she stated:

We have much to celebrate today, the work of the Peace Corps and our long and harmonious relationship with Chile. In spite of the economic success in the past few years in Chile and the United States, we still have people in both coun-

tries who are left out of the development process and living in poverty. So using the example of the Peace Corps, both of our countries are taking that model that works so well, and bringing it home...

I am proud to be here to honor the commitment of both our countries to service, our dedication to social justice, and our resolve to do all that we can to overcome the effects of poverty. Even though the Peace Corps will officially leave Chile in August, the relationships of course will continue, and more than that the spirit of partnership and friendships represented, I hope, will grow even stronger in the years to come. So, thank you all for the model you are, for the examples you have set, and the continued challenge you propose to leaders, governments, businesses, and all sectors of society, to continue in the spirit of service until we have done all we can to make our countries the best nations they can be.

At a farewell reception later that year for the Peace Corps staff, the last few Volunteers remaining in Chile, and Chilean partner organization representatives, US Ambassador John O'Leary declared:

The world is changing rapidly, becoming smaller and smaller, as the speed of communication technology and transportation increases. We cannot afford isolation. We must avail ourselves of every opportunity to know each other better. The Peace Corps has helped broaden the United States' view of the world, and I trust the Volunteers have given Chile a better understanding of the United States. The best friends that Chile has in the United States are the 2,500 Peace Corps Volunteers who served in Chile, who proudly tell all who will listen, "I worked for the Peace Corps in Chile.

On that note, the proud and productive Peace Corps program in Chile finally came to an end.



On September 24, 2011, the Embassy of Chile in Washington, DC, hosted a reception for Volunteers who had served in Chile, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. The following message was received from Father Theodore Hesburgh and read at that reception.

A Greeting to the Men and Women Who Served in Chile as Peace Corps Volunteers

The Peace Corps was a brilliant idea when it was created by the young and visionary President John F. Kennedy, 50 years ago. My university played a role in the earliest beginnings of the program and Notre Dame trained the first group of 45 to go to Chile. I visited them in Chile, and they visit me in Notre Dame regularly. When they went in the Peace Corps, they were some of the greatest youngsters I had ever known. And they still are; they continue to contribute, build, right wrongs, and inspire.

More than 2,500 fortunate Americans have served in the Peace Corps in Chile, applying their skills and energies to the development of a country that over the past 50 years has experienced extraordinary growth and modernization.

Now you have come together to celebrate 50 marvelous years of the Peace Corps. Each and every one of you has a personal story to tell about your time in Chile. You helped Chile grow, and at the same time your experience led to your personal growth and that of our nation. Because of you and your service in the Peace Corps, we are a society more aware and sensitive to the broader world around us, and this contributes to world peace.

Thank you for your service in the Peace Corps. Don't ever forget why you went, and always cherish and share what you brought back with you.

Theodore M. Hesburgh, C.S.C.,
President Emeritus, University of Notre Dame

