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Peace Corps Column The Move of a Lifetime

Editor's Note: Emily Clyne, 23 years old, Westfield resident, attended Manhattan College and is currently serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador. She can be contacted at emilyclyne.com.

I've only ever moved once in my life. Just once. And it was to college. Just 30 minutes from where I grew up. I physically moved there, but I am not sure if you can count that as actually moving-moving, as in starting your life all over again, but it's the closest thing I had to that until now - now I have started my life over. And to be honest I never saw myself living like this.



Emily Clyne

When I applied to the Peace Corps, I imagined myself pumping water from a well in Sub-Saharan Africa surrounded by hipopotami and zebra, living in a mud hut and learning a language my friends never heard of. Instead, I turn on a faucet for my water, am surrounded by chickens and cows, live in a blue cement house, and speak a language some of my friends already know.

No, it is not as exciting as I had originally imagined, but it is better. That is the great thing about the Peace Corps. You do not get to choose where you are going, it takes away any disappointment in the expectations you have for a certain location and leaves an element of surprise.

When I found out that I was going to be moving to El Salvador, I did not know what to think - I barely knew anything about it. But now that I am here, and have been here for 10 months, it is hard to believe that this tiny town, this tiny town, this tiny country was not my first choice, that I did not have an instinct in knowing where to go to be the happiest I could possibly be.

There should be some sort of gravitational pull that matches up people with places so everybody in the world could fall in love with a place like I have. But it was not like this at first. To be honest, my first couple months in El Salvador, I did not know if I would make it, for the Peace Corps required a two year commitment. Training was in a different part of the country and it just was not a perfect fit for me.

It was beautiful, and the people were nice, and I was even living close to other volunteer friends, but it just was not the place for me. Training lasted for only two months and then yet again we were all dispersed to different parts of the country without a choice, and by some stroke of fate I got assigned to my town, the town that I was intended for.

My town is located in the country's most northwestern region. Scattered throughout the rolling hills and mountain peaks are quaint adobe houses, small dirt roads, and people happily going about their day. It is amazing the affect other people can have on somebody; coming straight from New York, I would never have dreamed of greeting strangers, but here not one person is passed on the road without happily asking them how they are and what is new; I never even knew any of my neighbors back home, and this may be common for many places in the United States, but only 10 months in and I can confidently say that I know everybody in this town, and I would not want it any other way.

A five minute walk home may take up to an hour because people always want to know how I am and what I am doing, which makes the day all the more amusing. Because of my gringo status, people want to get to know me, but a lot of it can be credited to the Peace Corps program, complete immersion into a new community and the hands-on work that comes with it. Our job pretty much guarantees that a volunteer will meet and gain trust with most, if not all, community members.

My job is a Rural Health and Sanitation Facilitator. This means that I work with the community to teach about water treatment, HIV/AIDS education, women's health and basic hygiene. Much of this is from house visits or giving talks in the tiny school in hopes that the children will bring the information back to their parents. Also, Peace Corps gives us the option and support to implement side

projects; for example, I'm currently teaching open English classes for anybody interested and working with an American non-governmental organization (NGO) to get computers for the local school.

Although, my biggest project is raising money for a casa comunal. In Latin America, most communities, including small towns, have 'casa comunales,' or community centers. Basically they are just locations where all communal rights of passage can take place - weddings, birthday parties, funerals, town meetings, quinceceras, etc. Casa comunales are really important in Latin culture and I'm really proud to be working with people so motivated, eager to learn, and hardworking for something they feel so passionately about.

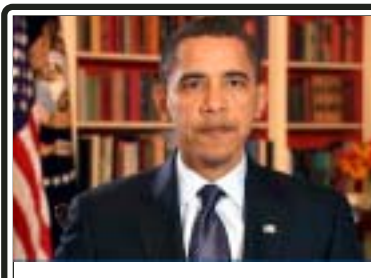
Moreover, it feels amazing to know that I will have aided this community with this project, something they had hoped for - for such a long time, when they have given me so much more money than I could have ever imagined for in such a short time. When I first arrived, two years seemed like a long time, too long even. But, as it goes, there is never too much time in a place you love.

I still have to remind myself every day to open my eyes wider and take in what is around me, not only the beautiful scenery but also the view of children excitedly running down the street to my house, the new born calf that I watched being born, or just my neighbor Checho waving as he walks by on his way to work in the field. Even though the days are slower than what I was used to, they are definitely more memorable. So, this is life as a Peace Corps volunteer - exciting, uncomfortable sometimes, but always warm, genuine.

Now, I cannot picture myself anywhere else and am so thankful to have been placed where I am. With only a little bit more than one year left of my service, it is hard to believe that I will be moving once again, for the second time in my life - this will surely be the hardest move of all. Leaving home for El Salvador, not one tear was shed, but just thinking of leaving here now, I cannot hold the tears back.

If you are interested in more information about my projects or life here in El Salvador, please visit emilyclyne.com.

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Barack Obama

White House News

Executive Order: White House Office Of Urban Affairs

President of the United States

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to take a coordinated and comprehensive approach to developing and implementing an effective strategy concerning urban America, it is hereby ordered as follows: **Section - 1 Policy**

About 80 percent of Americans live in urban areas, and the economic health and social vitality of our urban communities are critically important to the prosperity and quality of life for Americans.

Vibrant cities spawn innovation, economic growth, and cultural enrichment through the businesses, universities, and civic, cultural, religious, and nonprofit institutions they attract.

Forward-looking policies that encourage wise investment and development in our urban areas will create employment and housing opportunities and make our country more competitive, prosperous, and strong.

In the past, insufficient attention has been paid to the problems faced by urban areas and to coordinating the many Federal programs that affect our cities.

A more comprehensive approach is needed, both to develop an effective strategy for urban America and to coordinate the actions of the many executive departments and agencies whose actions impact urban life.

Sec 2 Establishment
There is established within the Executive Office of the President the White House Office of Urban Affairs (the "Office").

Sec 3 Functions
The principal functions of the Office are, to the extent permitted by law: (a) to provide leadership for and coordinate the development of the policy agenda for urban America across executive departments and agencies; (b) to coordinate all aspects of urban policy; (c) to work with executive departments and agencies to ensure that appropriate consideration is given by such departments and agencies to the potential impact of their actions on urban areas; (d) to work with executive departments and agencies, including the Office of Management and Budget, to ensure that Federal Government dollars targeted to urban areas are effectively spent on the highest-impact programs; and more (over) 2 (e) to engage in outreach and work closely with State and local officials, with nonprofit organizations, and with the private sector, both in seeking input regarding the development of a comprehensive urban policy and in

ensuring that the implementation of Federal programs advances the objectives of that policy.

Sec 4 Coordination

In performing its functions, the Office shall work closely with all relevant executive departments and agencies, and offices and councils within the Office of the President, including but not limited to: the Department of the Treasury; the Department of Justice; the Department of Commerce; the Department of Labor; the Department of Health and Human Services; the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the Department of Transportation; the Department of Energy; the Department of Education, and the Environmental Protection Agency

Sec 5 Administration
(a) The Office may work with established or ad hoc committees, task forces, and interagency groups.

(b) The Office shall have a staff headed by the Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Urban Affairs (Director).

The Director shall report jointly to the Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison and to the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy.

The Office shall have such staff and other assistance as may be necessary to carry out the provisions of this order.

(c) All executive departments and agencies shall cooperate with the Office and provide such information, support, and assistance to the Office as the Director may request, to the extent permitted by law.

Sec 6 General Provisions

(a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect: (i) authority granted by law to a department, agency, or the head thereof; or (ii) functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

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Letters to the Editor

Leader Editorial and Cartoon on Fishman Is Unfairly Besmirching

As an over 30 years resident of Westfield, I have never felt compelled to write to *The Westfield Leader* in response to an editorial until I read last week's incredibly biased editorial and accompanying cartoon, which so unfairly besmirched the reputation of the nominee to become this state's next United States Attorney, Paul Fishman.

The editorial implies that Mr. Fishman will not fairly pursue political corruption in the state. It does so based on the unfounded accusation that since over the past few years, while in private practice, his current clients have included an individual concerning whom there have been accusations of political corruption (but whom, to my knowledge, has not been charged with any criminal offense), he will not fairly pursue political corruption cases.

So, what are just a few of the easily ascertainable facts I learned from Google that your editorial chose to leave out? Mr. Fishman is a graduate of Princeton and Harvard Law School, where he was on the Law Review. He thereafter served in a prestigious clerkship with the United States Third Circuit Court of Appeals. More significantly, in regards to the editorial, he served as an Assistant United States Attorney for over 10 years, rising to Chief of the Criminal Division and then First Assistant United States Attorney. If that was not sufficient to allow one to conclude that he is eminently qualified for the position, he thereafter became a Deputy United States Attorney General serving as a Senior Advisor to the Attorney General of the United States.

As a former federal prosecutor in the New Jersey United States Attorney's Office (well in time before both Mr. Fishman and Mr. Christie), I take pride in

the fact that, almost uniformly, who have served as United States Attorneys have vigorously and impartially pursued political corruption, among other crimes. Those in the legal community with whom I have communicated who either know him or of him have every confidence that Mr. Fishman will continue that tradition.

If *The Leader* had performed even a little bit of diligence into his background, it would undoubtedly have come to the same conclusion.

Frederick Polak
Westfield

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