

# Que Pasa

Fondo Quisqueya ☐ 1991

## Fondo Quisqueya Update

First the good news: Fondo Quisqueya is alive and well. Many generous friends have sent money over the past year, and the Fondo bank account is looking mighty fine. Perhaps the most encouraging development was the arrival in the Dominican Republic of staff who recognize the fund's potential and are willing to lend a hand locally by passing out Fondo literature at PC orientations and conferences and by channeling appli-

cations to the Dominican committee. This alone is bound to increase the number of applications, which have been thin on the ground for quite some time. (That's the bad news.) Often, months went by without a request—never a happy circumstance for a donor group. But those days appear to be over (read on for specifics). Thanks and kudos to the Dominican Republic staff, volunteers, and the local D.R. Committee!

## Another Look at the Fund

If this is your first look at *Que Pasa*—and you're asking yourself, Fondo who?—please read on. If you do remember us but wouldn't mind a refresher, the following is text that we have prepared as an orientation for Dominican volunteers.

### What is it?

Fondo Quisqueya (FQ) is a fund that helps provide in-country education and training to low-income Dominican nationals. Its grant monies come from ex-PCVs, ex-staff, and other friends of the Dominican Republic.

### How may the money be spent?

FQ grants may be used for any purpose that will help groups or individuals learn new skills. For example, the fund encourages activities that strengthen local institutions; thus, applications to support training (bookkeeping skills for co-op members, audiovisual techniques for teachers, operation and maintenance procedures for people in charge of community water systems, etc.) would be attractive to the Fondo committee.

Grants may also be awarded to individuals: tuition, transportation, or room and board while enrolled in a training program would all be eligible expenditures, as would school uniforms and/or books for a child who otherwise could not attend school.

*The possibilities mentioned here are merely examples!* Volunteers should feel free to propose any candidate(s) they believe to be eligible and deserving. If the activity or purchase supports learning and if the learning will benefit both candidate and community (or country) in some way, go for it. Fondo Quisqueya has only two hard and fast rules: (1) training must be taken in-country and (2) no funds may support traditional four-year university education.

Do bear in mind, however, that if limited funds were to force Fondo committee members to choose among competing applications, they might favor agricultural or primary health training over a computer course, for example, or group training over individual education. Also, the committee would probably always give added weight to activities for women and other groups that have less access to opportunities and resources.

Don't let that prospect discourage you from nominating candidates! If everyone cannot be funded at a given time, the committee will reconsider eligible applications as more funds become available.

### How large are the grants?

Three grant categories exist:

1. Grants of US \$50 and under, which may be awarded at the discretion of the country Peace Corps office.
2. Grants of US \$51 to \$250, which are awarded by the Dominican committee.
3. Grants above US \$250, which the Dominican committee awards with the approval of the U.S. committee.

Grants may not exceed \$250 per person per year without special approval.

### How often is the money available?

The committee will try to act upon applications within 60 days. If the candidate requires more-immediate action, please note this on the application.

### How does someone apply for a grant?

Each candidate must be sponsored by a member of the community or by a Peace Corps volunteer. Application forms, available from the Peace Corps office in Santo Domingo, must be filled out by the sponsor and returned to the APCD for Training, who will forward them to the Dominican committee.

Sponsors should give careful thought to the application questions and include all information requested. Feel free to include any background that would help the committee make its decision, whether or not the form requests that particular information. (Remember that some of the data would also be of interest to Fondo supporters and could help our fundraising.) Please include a black-and-white photograph of the candidate if you can.

# Mail Bag



Please let us hear from you! This space is reserved for readers to share ideas, offer suggestions and criticism, get in touch with other RPCVs—whatever. If possible, we will include all letters as written. When space is limited, we will edit, but only in ways that preserve their message and tone.

Please address letters for publication to:

Editor  
*Que Pasa*  
c/o Fondo Quisqueya  
P.O. Box 20653  
Alexandria, VA 22320

*Dear Que Pasa,*

I write with great sadness to advise the community of Dominican Republic RPCVs that our compadre Tom King of DR-26 (1969-71) died of cancer on September 14th.

I think most of you know that after Tom's three and a half years in his beloved Dajabón, he stayed in the D.R. another two years on the Peace Corps staff (1973 to 1975). Those of us lucky enough to have known him well in Peace Corps knew that he had a dedication to international development service equalled by few others. It was a dedication he never abandoned, going on to serve with USAID in Barbados, El Salvador, and Washington, where he worked the Caribbean desk.

Some of his friends have set up a Tomás King Memorial Scholarship Fund within Fondo Quisqueya. To those of you who have already donated, his family and many friends send their thanks. If any of Tom's friends

who had heard neither of his death nor of the memorial fund wish to make a donation, please be sure to indicate that your check is for Tom's fund. That way, his parents will hear of your donation. Thanks again from all of us.

—Roger LaBrucherie

As of this issue, \$1,115 had been donated to the Tom King Memorial Fund (at the Fondo Quisqueya address). The FQ committee joins Roger in sending thanks to those generous donors. The next issue of *Que Pasa* will serve as a Tomás King memorial issue and will be largely devoted to the grants made possible by these donations.



The following is from Jim Schenck, who serves as the Deputy Director and Program and Training Officer of the D.R. Peace Corps program. Because it describes his own background and also that of the PC Director and his wife, we have printed the entire letter.

*Dear Que Pasa,*

Let me introduce myself. I'm the new PTO/Deputy Director for the Peace Corps in the Dominican Republic. The new country Director, Dan Salcedo, and I arrived in August of 1989. Dan and his wife, Marijke, formed a private voluntary organization, Pueblo to People, and worked a number of years in Guatemala and Honduras. Although Dan never served as a Peace Corps volunteer, PCVs worked for Pueblo to People in Honduras. I came to the D.R. after spending the last two years running a PVO training program for INCAE (*Instituto Centroamericano de Administración de Empresas*). Before that I was with International Voluntary Services in Ecuador. I served as a Peace Corps volunteer with my wife, Michaela, in Paraguay and worked as a Peace Corps recruiter in Los Angeles. I've also had the opportunity to live and work in Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala.

Dan and I have been getting to know both the Dominican Republic and the Peace Corps program here. As PTO, I've had a chance to work with both John Stebel and Mike Benson and talk about Fondo Quisqueya with them. I believe we have already established systems to improve communication with PCVs concerning the fund.

Another area of possible interest for you and/or other returned Peace Corps volunteers from the D.R. is the formation of a Friends of the Dominican Republic group. Many recent RPCVs for the D.R. did not know of your existence nor did the National Council of RPCVs. For example, I'm a member of the Friends of Paraguay, which is affiliated with the National Council. One advantage of this affiliation is that volunteers ending their service receive a brochure from the Council that lets them join it and a country-specific group at the same time. I don't know all the details, but would suggest that you contact the Council through the Peace Corps in Washington (the Council is independent of Peace Corps).  
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## Que Pasa



*Que Pasa*, published now and then by Fondo Quisqueya volunteers in Alexandria, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., serves as a channel of communication for FQ supporters and friends.

*Que Pasa* is produced through donated services.

Please send your comments and suggestions to:

*Que Pasa*  
P.O. Box 20653  
Alexandria, VA 22320

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I look forward to a continuing relationship with **Fondo Quisqueya** and appreciate the interest of D.R. RPCVs in continuing to promote grassroots development in the Dominican Republic.

—*Jim Schenck*

We are in the process of affiliating **Fondo Quisqueya** with the National Council of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (NCRPCV), as a means to broaden our access to ex-volunteers from the D.R.

To become a member of NCRPCV itself, write to 2119 "S" Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20008. Annual dues are \$35.00

**Jim Schenck, right, at a recent meeting with Minor Anderson, a Fondo Quisqueya volunteer.**



## Pueblo to People

—*Jim Schenck's letter on page 2.*

Pueblo to People, a nonprofit organization, provides training, technical support, and marketing opportunities to craft and agricultural cooperatives of very low income people in Latin America. Pueblo's catalog is packed with beautiful and reasonably priced artesanía—textiles, glass, wood products, coffee, and wonderful greeting cards—and provides background on some of the artisan groups. Of each sales dollar, 40 to 45 cents go to the producers; since its inception in 1979, Pueblo has paid over \$4,000,000 to craft and food producers in Latin America. In most cases Pueblo pays producers more than would be obtainable elsewhere; in many cases they are providing a market that would not otherwise exist. For a catalog, write

Pueblo to People, 1616 Montrose #4400, Houston, TX 77006.

## Resource Report

As of May 1991, the stateside account contains \$5,715 (including the Tom King funds); the Dominican committee has about \$2,000, which will be gradually disbursed. *The current exchange rate is US \$1 to RD \$12-13.*

## Help Wanted

### Fondo Coordinator (unpaid)

A self-starter and go-getter is urgently needed to take over the management of **Fondo Quisqueya**. This position would require several hats: CEO, treasurer, secretary, and nagging person, as you would be keeping track of the money that comes in and sending acknowledgments; coordinating with the Dominican committee and sending funds when requested; keeping track of grant information and perhaps doing brief (or not-so-brief) write-ups for the newsletter; helping to establish a newsletter schedule and prodding the editor (writing articles if so inclined); tracking down ex-voluntarios not on our mailing list; thinking of creative fundraising ideas; etc. It would be convenient if this person lived in the DC area, but it is by no means essential in this age of modems and fax machines. The only real requirement is that the person HAVE SOME FREE TIME:

it would be good, also, if he or she were not into procrastination as a life style, although this is probably negotiable. Please let us know if you are interested.

### Committee Members (also unpaid)

Anyone who would like to join the local committee and contribute some new blood and fresh ideas would be greeted with glad cries and tears of joy. The "standing" committee comprises a handful of too-busy people who cannot properly cover all of the bases and would sure love to have some help. If you think you might be interested and can spare the time, write or call Minor Anderson (703) 960-3395 or Lynda Edwards (703) 548-4783. (Please bear in mind that you would need to come to the infrequent meetings; however, these could include a fiesta now and then, so we're not talking **all** work and no play here . . .)

# Where Did the Money Go?

Since the last newsletter, 11 Dominicans have received grants for either personal or group training, and 3 grants have been approved but not yet disbursed. One of the latter involves a number of people. Following are write-ups for a few of the grantees.

## **Rosanna Pinales — Playa Najayo**

Rosanna is a recent recipient of DR \$2,000 to help her attend nursing school. At the age of 12, Rosanna was very seriously burned, and her exposure to medical care led to her interest in a nursing career. She has completed one-third of the program, which includes on-the-job training. Rosanna says she feels fulfilled when working with hospitalized patients and is particularly interested in the psychological side of patient care.

Rosanna, one of 11 children in a rural family, is the first to pursue higher education. Because Playa Najayo has no high school, students must travel to the school in San Cristobal. Since secondary education requires travel money, most families find high school education too burdensome an expense. Rosanna, however, financed her own high school education by organizing and conducting a preschool for which she charged two pesos a month per student.

I first noticed Rosanna because she studied from dawn to early morning under the mango tree outside my house—then seemingly disappeared for the rest of the day. Only later did I discover that early morning was the only time she could study because she attended class in the afternoons and held a part-time job caring for an elderly woman on week-ends.

Both Rosanna and I feel especially grateful for the financial help she has received at this time. The current gasoline crisis and inflation have tripled the cost of transportation, and this summer Playa Najayo suffered a drought that left a very poor harvest. Thus, Rosanna's family had no extra income to help her this semester. Muchas gracias. **Fondo Quisqueya.**

—Deidre Healy



Rosanna studying under the mango tree.

## **Catalina Benjamin — Samaná**

"Julia," as she is better known, has spent all of her 22 years in the small community of Thesón, Sección Acosta, in Samaná. She went to the primary school in Acosta until eighth grade, then went to high school in Samaná, walking the 5 kilometers with a small group of students from Acosta.

Her community participation has been long and varied. Since its founding, Julia has been an active member of the local youth club in Thesón (one year as corresponding secretary). The youth club has become affiliated with a larger Dominican association, *Jacasa*, and is very active throughout the Samaná area. Julia is one of only two members of the youth club to participate in its adult literacy program. She received *Jacasa*-sponsored training from literacy professionals and for the past two years has taught and promoted literacy (as a volunteer) in the community.

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Julia is viewed as a sort of teacher within the community. In addition to substituting sometimes for primary teachers who are ill, she has taught an informal type of pre-school for many years. Parents send their very young children to her, and she teaches them letters, numbers, colors, and also how to sit quietly and listen.

Thanks to **Fondo Quisqueya**, Julia is now enrolled in a two-year course to become an executive secretary. (Her family could not fully finance her studies—her mother works as a cook for a family in Samaná, and her father sells lottery tickets and is a subsistence farmer. Also, Julia is but one of eight children, five of whom are younger.) Because the course is unavailable in Samaná, Julia has moved to San Pedro de Macoris to study at El Instituto Nuevo Horizonte. She is living with extended family members while in San Pedro.

Julia has always been a very serious student, and I believe she is earnest in her future plans. Julia is as fond of her community as they are of her. There are several opportunities for secretarial work in the provincial capital of Samaná, and I believe she will seek these out after her studies. She also understands what her parents have gone through in the past in order to buy her books and materials, and she wishes to help them out when she is working in a steady job.

—John Galli

"Julia" Benjamin



### **Juan Montón — community unstated**

*(Abstracted from the application form)*

The purpose of this letter is to nominate Juan Montón as a recipient of a **Fondo Quisqueya** grant. He is an outstanding candidate for several reasons. He is recognized by local teachers as a worthy recipient and student, and his academic record and personal desire demonstrate his likelihood of success. At great personal and family expense, he attended technical school but had to terminate due to lack of funds.

His father, Ramo Montón, has taught 29 years in the local school, demonstrating the family's commitment to the community. Juan would like to restart school, working toward a technical degree in drafting at UTESA, the technical school in Santiago. I recommend a grant of RD \$500 (\$250 each quarter) to cover tuition expenses. Juan will spend an equal amount on daily transportation, demonstrating his commitment and his family's financial contribution.

—David Swazko

### **Ferneliz Feliz Carrabello (Viejín), Milciades Cuevas Mesa (Milcia), and Moglis Feliz Medina (Chulo) — La Ciénaga de Barahona**

I became acquainted with these young men through a latrine project, during which I discovered them to be responsible and competent workers. As we were finishing up the project, I asked each of them if they would be interested in attending the vocational school just outside of Barahona. Without hesitation they asked how to apply, as they wished to learn more about masonry. All three passed the entrance exam and started class the third week of February.

The school operates from 8:00 a.m. Monday through noon on Friday. The routine for the men who live at the school (as do Viejín, Milcia, and Chulo) begins at 4:30 a.m. with calisthenics and continues with breakfast

and class until the midday meal. The afternoon session ends around 5:00, with dinner following and then free time for study. The school provides vocational training in 13 different areas divided into three levels of difficulty. The first level, for those with a sixth grade education, includes masonry, body shop, floristry, and pastry baking. The second level, for those with an eighth grade education, includes carpentry, nursing, plumbing, and welding. The highest level available is for those with a high school education: this level offers cosmetology, domestic electrical training, diesel mechanics, general mechanics, and refrigeration systems repair.

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**Milciades Cuevas Mesa**  
(Milcia) Age 23



**Moglis Feliz Medina**  
(Chulo) Age 19



**Ferneliz Feliz Carrabello**  
(Viejín) Age 19

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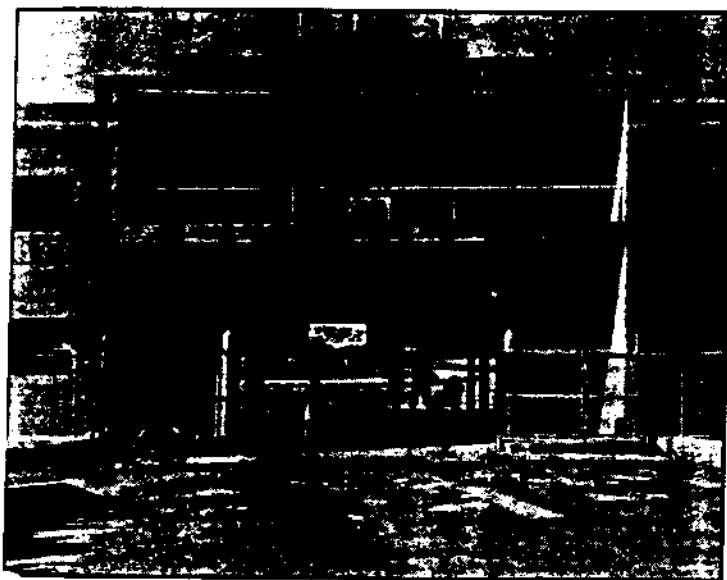
The courses are split into theory (conducted in the classrooms) and practicum (done either in the school or at worksites). For example, the nursing students visit regional clinics for experience, and the masonry students go to actual job sites for hands-on experience. The mechanics and carpentry courses have workshops on the school grounds.

The school is the only one of its type in the Southwest. In a time when migration to the capital is at an all-time high, it allows graduates a good possibility of living and working in their own hometowns. When these three young men graduate and pass the final exam, they will receive a certificate of completion and a letter of recommendation from the school. Hopefully, this

will enable Chulo, Viejín, and Milcia to remain in the Southwest to live and find work as masons. All three have their own savings accounts at the Banco de Reservas in Barahona. They are working together and supporting each other at school, as they did as friends in La Cienaga.

When I speak with them on weekends in La Cienaga, they seem enthusiastic about the school and their new friends. The FO grants are vital to their program because, although tuition is free, a large outlay is necessary to purchase student supplies; in addition, an allowance for weekend transportation and supplemental food costs must be provided by each student. Chulo, Viejín, and Milcia have asked me to convey their gratitude to Fondo Quisqueya for sponsoring them.

—Harry Stevenson



the entrance to the vocational school attended by Chulo, Viejín, and Milcia. It is the only school of its type in the Southwest.



From left to right, the second lieutenant in charge of food service, the commandant of the school, and the supervisor of student affairs stand in the school yard.

## **Héctor Chavez and Rafael Guzmán — Villa Lobos Adentro, Guayubín, Monte Cristi**

These two gentlemen were nominated by their community development group (*Unidos Venceremos*) to attend a two-day goat-raising workshop in La Vega sponsored by Heifer International. Although we have little information about the grantees other than what appeared on the application form, we are presenting a short write-up because this is a type of grant we wish to encourage.

The training took place in anticipation of a USAID-assisted

goat-raising project programmed by *Unidos Venceremos*, and our small grant for transportation, food, and lodging thereby became part of a possible three-way collaboration. (We do not yet know whether "Venceremos" received USAID support, but the group planned to pursue other possibilities if the funding did not materialize.)

Héctor Chavez, coordinator of "Venceremos," is the driving force of the local humor and culture club. Married, with no

children, Héctor works whenever he can at odd jobs in the community.

Rafael Guzmán is a married farmer with two children. According to his sponsor, PCV William Threlkeld, Rafael is a very hard worker. Illiterate, he nonetheless has taught himself math and is eager to learn whatever he can—"He is curious about everything!" Bill Threlkeld believes both candidates to be dedicated to helping themselves and their communities.

## **Fundación de Salud Y Benestar — community unstated**

Approved but still to be disbursed is a grant to the Health and Welfare Foundation to fund a home garden workshop; here again is the type of grant that *Fondo Quisqueya* encourages, so we are including a brief write-up.

Workshop participants, belonging to the community councils that relate to the foundation, were selected by their

fellow council members in part as recognition of their contributions to community welfare. Also influencing their selection, however, was the participants' present involvement in gardening and nutrition programs.

The 12-day experiential workshop is designed to take place in six phases: two days every two weeks. Facilitated by the Secretary of Agriculture, a

foundation staff member, and a private consultant, the workshop will train participants in gardening techniques, improve family nutrition, and reduce family expenditures for food. According to grant sponsor, PCV David Meyercord, the curriculum includes 13 topics ranging from soil preparation to compost piles and organic pesticides.

***This is what we're all about: people helping other people improve their own lives and, by extension, those of their families and countrymen.***

***The next issue of Que Pasa (the Tomás King memorial issue) will present more grant reports for you to read and, we hope, cheer. None of them would be possible without the Fondo's generous coalition of donors,***

***D.R. Peace Corps staff and volunteers, and Dominican-based committee. Hats off to you all.***

### ***A Picture's Worth . . .***

Thanks to the technology that has produced instamatic cameras, overnight processing, desktop publishing, and scanners, we are now able to incorporate photos into *Que Pasa*. Indeed, some of the pictures aren't "studio" quality, but we don't expect the folks in the field to be professional photographers. Also, all of the original photos in this issue were color snapshots—after all, most everybody uses color film—and we had to fiddle a bit to make them work in a black-and-white publication. Black-and-white photos do make things easier. But, hey, we'll take whatever comes our way. If the focus is a little off or the composition somewhat ajar—it doesn't matter. We'll do our best to bring you pictures of the faces and places that mean so much to *Fondo Quisqueya*.