

# The Breeze variety

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT NEWSPAPER

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## Keeping the Peace

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by Maria Nosal / *contributing writer*

Peru, Ecuador, Vanuatu and Namibia aren't destinations too many students consider after college. For those joining the Peace Corps, however, these places are just a few of the stops they may take on their journey.

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"Increasingly more and more JMU alumni are going into the Peace Corps," said Rich Harris, director of Community Service-Learning. The Community Service-Learning Center brings a recruiter to JMU for students to learn more about the long-term service. "We average about 40 students a year serving and about 20 are new students. After working with Alternative Spring Break and Community Service-Learning, students want to continue doing work."

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The Peace Corps, initially established in 1961, has served 137 countries with 170,000 volunteers. JMU is ranked No. 8 nationally for volunteers from a mid-sized university, according to Harris. Volunteers serve two years working with such issues as AIDS education, information, technology and environmental preservation.

Some students join the Peace Corps right after graduating, while others decide to join later in life.

"The reason I left my corporate job to work for Peace Corps is because my business job was unfulfilling and had nothing to do with motivating for positive social change in the world," Jordan Mallah ('99) said. "I was living in a rat race life without time to fully enjoy all the bliss that life has to offer — when one makes intentional time to live each moment fully."

Mallah currently is serving in La Grama, Peru. "My experience here is teaching me patience, including how to be a gentler human being and less of a perfectionist with others and myself," Mallah said. "Two essential ingredients that formulate this magical journey are the immense personal and professional growth that takes place when one is removed from their comfort zone." Mallah now shares a neighborhood with four sheep, two donkeys, goats, wild chickens, a mother pig with seven piglets — not a typical scene.

"I wanted to travel and be submersed in another culture," said Jason Kane, regional recruiter for the Peace Corp. "In addition, it was important to me to do something that had a positive impact on the world. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Lithuania, I taught in a secondary school, helped create a textbook that was used nationally, aided in the creation of their national exam and trained teachers."

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## What Is This?

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After serving three years in Lithuania, Kane now works as a recruiter. To get involved in the Peace Corps, students are encouraged to come Monday Sept. 27 from 7 to 9 p.m. in Sonner Hall for an information session Kane will lead.

**Sidebar:** There are 56 JMU graduates currently serving in 39 countries around the world including: Honduras, Bolivia, Kazakstan, Thailand, Bangladesh, Vanuatu, Jordan and Tanzania. .

255 JMU alums have worked worldwide since the agency was established in 1961.

Five more alumni have accepted assignments and will be departing for assignments in Vanuatu, Namibia, Ukraine, Lesotho and Malawi this fall.

These individuals are recent graduates as well as well as an alum who graduated 27 years ago.

JMU athletics coach Matt Barany served in Kenya.