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Peace Corps  
Paul D. Coverdell Peace Corps Headquarters  
1111 20th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20526

Dear Carrie:

I wanted to write and lend my full and committed support to Tom Hebert's (Nigeria 1962-64) bold concept for Peace Corps House, a settlement house to be located in SE/SW Washington. This is a brilliant idea for the agency that truly speaks to the aims of the Third Goal.

Tom Hebert has already received formal support from the National Peace Corps Association and leading settlement house professionals and others related to this project. More is due.

Tom is suggesting—and I agree—that if you initiated a luncheon meeting with the First Lady, in an Anacostia restaurant, and included progressive women involved with the city like Mayor Marial Bowser, Catherine Buel, director of St. Elizabeths East, Denise Turner Roth head of the GSA and Congresswoman Norton, that the commitment from these leaders could quickly help make Peace Corps House a reality and be your “signature project,” another star on your successful tenure at Peace Corps Director.

Tom Hebert brings to this project, vast experience, and a life time of working through major problems. For example, he has taken the skills he learned as a master's student in theatre directly into an amazing career as a PCV in Africa where he was known as an original Super Vol, becoming national tour manager of the University of Ibadan's Shakespeare program which toured the nation for 3000 miles bringing an exciting Theatre-On-Wheels to tens of thousands of people in 23 cities and towns.

Finishing his tour, he immediately went to Vietnam with the USO, establishing several combat base USO service clubs, and eventually directing USO Saigon, the world's largest club at the height of the war. For this work he received several formal commendations including one from a Marine commander. Returning home in 1967, in the first days of the Biafran War Tom was among several RPCVs selected by UNICEF to work on relief work for that war-torn country. Then in 1991, Tom was recalled to USO service to work in Bahrain. In that work he received a commendation from the Admiral in charge of the military's Southern Command for his work on a Christmas party paid for by that Moslem country. This work was also “Mentioned in Dispatches” to the Chief of Naval Operations (CNO).

Back in January 1970 Harris Wofford, then the first president of the then-experimental State University of New York College at Old Westbury, hired Tom as a consultant to design the student living and learning environment for that new college. This is where I met him. We went

on to co-author three books together. He was hired later by Antioch College to help develop a new campus for that progressive school.

During these years he was also working with Warren Wiggins at the famous DC firm of TransCentury. But he was soon hired away from TransCentury in the mid-seventies by the Tennessee Valley Authority. He moved to Chattanooga where he eventually formulated TVA's entire 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary valley-wide celebration, then created TVA's Energy Conservation & Solar Institute, which doubled as TVA's think tank, right in the central city. Finally, he was selected by TVA's general manager to lead a turnaround team for that then beleaguered organization. In 2013 his work in the turnaround of Chattanooga was recognized by the Historical Society and a doctoral candidate who wrote her dissertation about those days. "You had a tremendous influence on what happened. No doubt about it, Chattanooga Venture transformed Chattanooga. Not bad for a drama major."

Now in Pendleton, Oregon, he is a leading consultant in the renewal of that western frontier city, working with both the city council and the Umatilla Indian reservation where he has lived for almost two decades. Currently he is involved in a project called Cowgirl College to bring back young women once more into the world of rodeo competition.

Also, Congressman John Garamendi of California has asked Tom to work with his staff on a new program for his home district. Tom had worked with John previously when the congressman was running for Governor of California.

And Christmas day—and perhaps most surprisingly—the foremost book publisher in Nigeria telephoned Tom in Oregon and commissioned him to write a book to be called "Remembering Nigeria," a look back at the time Tom lived in Ibadan which Tom believes was the most exciting and challenging city in Africa. (The Forward will be written by Nobel laureate, Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka.) Ibadan today has the largest metropolitan geographical area in Africa and after Cairo and Johannesburg, is the third most populous city in Africa. The publisher and Soyinka believe that this book will move.

As an active and involved RPCV for decades, Tom is committed to advancing the growth and development of the Peace Corps and the success of the Third Goal. To this end, he has recently spent several months working with NPCA's Glenn Blumhorst. As a result, Tom has developed a far reaching, detailed and thoughtful proposal for the Peace Corps and the NPCA that, as he says, "Only a RPCV Peace Corps Director would understand and make possible."

This is an opportunity, I believe, for you to add to the importance of the agency for the country in this decade, and especially, for Washington, D.C.

I hope that you will give the Peace Corps House in Ward 8 your full support in your last remaining and very important months as Peace Corps Director.

Thank you,

*John*

John Coyne