

Peace Corps House

Social services, social justice

February 2017 Expanded Version

Executive Director

Settlement houses are traditional institutions located in an inner-city neighborhood providing such social services as daycare, health care clinics, youth guidance and learning, workforce development, crime intervention, family and senior programs and other services to the community such as good food, recreation, entertainment, and cultural programs to help improve the lives of the people.

Mission of Peace Corps House

- (1) To help make its neighborhood a more livable and better place to grow up.
- (2) To serve the people in its neighborhood with effective social services.
- (3) To advocate for social justice.

Policy goals and strategies

In search of social justice the leadership of Peace Corps House will pursue these:

- (1) To deliberately and forcefully declare that Peace Corps House will advocate for causes which benefit our community and our constituents as much as it is to conduct quality programs.
- (2) To challenge our neighbors and our elected officials to pursue a social justice agenda.
- (3) To educate people that there is little or nothing to fear by addressing the key challenges that confronts them daily.
- (4) Therefore, Peace Corps House cannot, as Jane Addams said, “lose its flexibility, its power of quick adaptation, its readiness to change its methods as its environment may demand.”

PURPOSES

Peace Corps House (PCH) will serve people of all ages, races and ethnicities while supporting the viability and development of the chosen neighborhood. It is committed to understanding the emerging needs and challenges of the diverse groups it serves and translating those into programs that engage, empower, and create a sense of belonging and purpose. PCH will offer residents opportunities to enhance their lives and become active participants and leaders in their larger communities. It envisions its future home as an empowered community that values diversity, respect and mutual responsibility.

It is envisioned that PCH will provide a range of child, youth, adult, and older adult services throughout its community. It is hoped that Peace Corps House will grow to be an important social service agency in Washington D.C. and will eventually be recognized as such by government agencies, private foundations, and fellow social service organizations. But it will always focus its energies towards advocacy and education around fundamentally important universal issues and NOT be satisfied with just conducting quality programs.

A SPECIAL HISTORY FOLLOWED BY 13 ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

The Peace Corps itself had these essentials present at its birth, which will inform the birth of PCH:

1. Organizational freedom
2. Commitment to a fast start
3. An *entrepreneurial* leader of determination and scope to give the program lift.

THEREFORE, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR WILL . . .

Get to reality quickly. Fast track — create/build/establish while planning.

Imagine a finished Peace Corps House in great detail, fill it with tangible consequences, build in multipliers, and the interests of all the major players.

Establish open planning to build a constituency and will have faith in collaboration and creativity and will get everyone in a room: Your problem is my problem.

Avoid single-thread development, which tends to break. The Director will state project goals very carefully and will work with a heartfelt vision at the center that promotes healing, creates wholeness. Remember: No vision, no development.

Secure, upfront, all formal agreements required for the project's completion. The Director must know and appreciate the project's complex politics. Or else incumbent shall fail.

Use an easel, pads, and Magic Markers, always. No PowerPoint, ever.

Chase progress relentlessly. Tuesday afternoon Critical Issues Meetings with written and dated commitments are essential. Puts Slow Goers and Holdfasts of Power on notice. But embrace problems with coffee, Scottish tarts, and cinnamon buns. And laughter.

Circulate project background and progress materials religiously, up, out, and over. The Executive Director will make it a community learning experience.

Utilize the strength of Weekly Activities Reports. On Friday afternoon, the Executive Director will want to know what staff had accomplished during the week and what is intended for next week. By Monday morning the Director will compile a full Report for staff, the RPCV/W, the NPCA, and the Board of Directors, and others as desired.

Fasttrack what you can. Build while you plan — the parallel processes play off one another.

Developing a plan with branches, yes, but get to reality quickly!

Develop the project with special touches that will give it a roundness and create community.

Acknowledge mistakes and push on.

Be audacious, take risks, and . . .

Make it an adventure for all, and hopefully, have fun—a wonderful time—while creating a convivial and congenial institution that the National Peace Corps Association, the RPCVS of Washington, the Peace Corps, and the community will be proud of.

INITIAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS POSITION

Among the first tasks of the Executive Director is the creation of a Board of Directors with a large, diverse, flexible mix of local leaders, and social workers, and good souls. But especially the Board members are sponsors, they give money and they raise money. They are welcoming of change, able to mobilize volunteers, are PCH ambassadors who interpret the mission of PCH, they defend it, they represent it in their constituencies and the community. Some are also consultants with professional skills who can give answers to important questions. Finally, they are governors not managers who, while they generally stay out of day-to-operations, they will ensure that the Mission is carried out.

Once the Board is established, the Executive Director will be reporting to its president and working side-by-side with the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Washington, the NPCA, municipal government, government agencies and especially the community Peace Corps House will serve, the Executive Director will be responsible for bringing Peace Corps House “out of the ground,” raising money while opening its doors as quickly as possible. This position will offer the successful candidate the opportunity to then continue developing Peace Corps House and cultivating new areas of capability so as to meet the changing needs of its chosen neighborhood.

However, the best way forward is to start small and thereby “get to reality quickly.” This is of critical importance. Therefore, the first task of the Executive Director might be to simply open a small office somewhere, hang a sign on the door, order up some business cards and letterhead, find someplace convivial to hang out and starting meeting with local interests. Including existing human service organizations that might be interested in a new home place for their operations. With this approach, Peace Corps House could end up working out of a series of smaller but gradually larger facilities as it found footing and traction. It starts with an office door, a desk and file cabinet. Not so overwhelming. But that’s just one picture of its possible birth. It could, and probably will, happen much differently.

Once a working model has been developed, the Executive Director will lead a team to find and develop a building suitable for conversion into a proper settlement house. It will likely involve working with a local development corporation that will carry a long-term lease. Of course, fundraising is critical. But, perhaps, its first “house” will be a rental.

Soon after a building is identified, the Executive Director will organize a facility design *charrette*, which is a French term for a short, intensive workshop designed to stimulate ideas and involve *all* stakeholders in the facility planning/design/layout process. Because a charrette is a visually engaging, interactive, and collaborative process, it is a valuable tool for the development of a strategic plan.

A design charrette both asks and answers these questions: “What do you as users and clients of this project *really* want? What would be best for the community? What are some potential funding sources? What would make it all come alive?”

A charrette doesn’t begin until the stakeholders and the decision makers and the design team are all in the same room, generally for a weekend. Lots of coffee, Magic Markers, easels and wall-sheets, and long hours.

From a long-time director of a very successful settlement house some essential advice when opening one: “Base it on a careful analysis of the community’s initial assets, needs, and wants, and then inventory and secure all possible government funding. And, pursue it with passion!”

AN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY

In practical terms, clearly, such purpose and local visibility requires *accountability* — a carefully managed institution operating from a formal rulebook, which the Director will develop.

In the negotiations with Peace Corps resulting in the March 11, 2016 letter of support from Director Carrie Hessler-Radelet, this notion of accountability was noted in a *Talking Points Memo* summarizing an important February 11 telephone conversation:

An understanding that the words “Peace Corps” in its name is absolutely essential. Of course, if the management of PCH was to go awry at some point, become a liability, Peace Corps would be within its rights to say, “Shape up or shut down.”

For guidance, Peace Corps House’s By-laws and Charter contain the required stipulations made by Peace Corps which the Executive Director will abide by.

OPERATIONAL DUTIES and RESPONSIBILITIES

After the doors are open at Peace Corps House, the Executive Director will be responsible for the organization's consistent achievement of its mission and financial objectives. The Executive Director will lead the organization into its next phase of growth by leveraging the good work the organization has already accomplished to raise the profile and awareness of PCH. The primary responsibilities of this position include providing organizational vision and strategy in collaboration with the Board of Directors; spearheading development and fundraising plans that support the mission and programs; deploying effective financial management practices; supporting an independent Peace Corps Café and Hostel; leading and managing the staff to ensure successful acquisition and implementation of programs; and cultivating and fostering public, community, and government relations and organizational partnerships as well as continuing efforts in advocacy and social justice.

LEADERSHIP and VISION

Assure that the organization has a long-range strategy which achieves its mission and its vision, and toward which it makes consistent and timely progress.

Work closely with local RPCVs and their organizations, the NPCA, the Peace Corps, and other institutions as useful and necessary.

See that its Board is kept fully informed on the condition of the organization and all-important factors influencing it.

Provide leadership in developing program and organizational and financial plans with the Board and staff, and carry out plans and policies authorized by the Board.

Promote active and broad participation by a large cadre of volunteers in all areas of the organization's work, as part of a larger goal of leadership development.

Promote active and broad participation by staff, volunteers and program participants in the organization’s advocacy efforts.

Maintain a working knowledge of significant developments and trends in the field.

FUNDRAISING and DEVELOPMENT

Oversee development and fundraising efforts with an eye towards expanding and diversifying PCH’s funding streams to include Government, Private and Family Foundations, Individual Donors and Corporate Sponsorships.

Create and implement annual fundraising plan with Board and support the Board in its fund raising efforts.

Create and implement plans to increase awareness of PCH ensuring that its brand is well known throughout its ward and city.

Cultivate and maintain relationships with major donors and key funders.

Oversee the execution of special events based upon detailed Event Profiles.

MANAGEMENT

Maintain a climate, which attracts, keeps, and motivates a diverse staff of top quality people; foster a bottom-up shared style of leadership.

Take ultimate responsibility for the recruitment, employment, and release of all personnel, both paid staff and volunteers.

Encourage staff and volunteer development and education, and assist program staff in relating their specialized work to the total program of the organization.

Ensure adequate funds are available to permit PCH to carry out its work.

Directly supervise Associate Director, Finance Director, Development Director, Human Resources Manager and Executive Assistant and have ultimate responsibility for the performance of all staff, students, and volunteers.

Exercise major responsibility for preparation and administration of PCH budget, including any necessary modification.

Maintain official records/documents and ensure compliance with federal and local regs

Ensure finances are maintained in accordance with GAAP accounting principles and Board policy, financial systems are well controlled, and disbursements are properly accounted for.

Ensure appropriate professional development of managers and staff.

See that an effective management team, with provision for succession, is in place.

BUDGETING / FINANCE / TECHNOLOGY

Work with the staff/consultants, the Board Finance Committee, and the board in preparing a budget and see that PCH operates within budget guidelines.

Continue to ensure the fiscal stability of the organization.

Continue to update systems to better connect databases for more efficient collections.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS / COMMUNICATIONS

Establish sound working relationships and cooperative/collaborative arrangements with community groups and social service organizations.

Publicize the activities of the organization, its programs and goals.

Represent the programs and point-of-view of the organization to agencies, organizations, and the general public emphasizing PCH's commitment to advocacy and social justice.

Be directly responsible for timely preparation of contracts for services and grant applications. Maintain communications with and be aware of funding sources, changes in contract requirements, foundation guidelines, etc.

Perform activities necessary to ensure effectiveness of service delivery, such that clients are served and staff has the tools, equipment and facilities to perform to the best of the agency's ability.

PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Master's Degree in Social Work, Public or Business Administration or in a related field with a minimum of 7 years of nonprofit experience. **Or**, an appropriate combination of education, experience and proven leadership, communication, and management skills, preferably in a non-profit agency, as defined by the Board.

Scoping down, senior management experience with a track record of effectively leading a multi-faceted organization with a wide breadth of programs in multiple sites including demonstrated capability to network with a variety of stakeholders to promote the organization including

access to and connections within corporations, foundations and government that can be leveraged to further PCH's interests with:

Ability to develop and implement a fundraising strategy that includes funding from diverse sources and experience with developing a marketing and branding campaign to raise the profile and image of the PCH brand;

Unwavering commitment to quality programs and demonstrated ability to take the objectives developed with and set forth by the Board and create a roadmap for achieving and executing them at Peace Corps House;

Excellence in organizational management with the ability to coach, manage, and develop a high performing staff in a collaborative inclusive manner;

Fiscal management sensibilities to ensure financial health of PCH;

Ability to maintain professional boundaries and confidentiality;

Past success working with a Board of Directors with the ability to cultivate existing and future board member relationships;

Experience in community organizing and advocacy; and

Culturally responsive.

PERSONAL

Demonstrated commitment to and passion for PCH's mission, vision and the communities it serves

Strong presentation skills, both written and verbal

Excellent interpersonal and collaborative skills

Compassionate, positive, self-directed

Dynamic, high energy level, risk-taking

Patience to cultivate rather than force change

Transparency and integrity

Entrepreneurial, enjoys start-ups

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: