



Al Guskin, Judy Guskin & Sargent Shriver at the ACWR Conference, March, 1961

From March 29-30, 1961—just six months after Kennedy's speech—the ACWR hosted a joint conference on "Youth Service Abroad" at American University. Sargent Shriver, whom Kennedy appointed to direct the Peace Corps, was in attendance, along with over 400 student attendees from all over the US.

Judy introduced Sargent Shriver and Al introduced Hubert Humphrey at the conference. The 99-page ACWR report was handed out to all speakers and all student delegates.

Sarge and myself at a student conference at American University in DC in March of 1960. Four hundred campuses sent students. I introduced Sarge for his first speech.



Judith Guskin

While finishing her
UM, Judy was Co-

PEACE CORPS

Washington 25, D. C.

June 11, 1962

Dear Judy:

For some time I have been wanting to get out to the field and visit all the groups who have gone overseas during the Peace Corps' first year. It now appears that, while I will get to see some of you, I am not going to be able to see and talk to each of you personally.

Therefore, I am going to use this letter to tell you about some of the things that seem most important to say to you at this point in the history of our organization.

Here at home things are going well. Congress and the press have been very kind to us. But you and I know that, while on the whole things look good for us throughout the world, there are still some tests that have to be met and passed by this Peace Corps idea we all believe in.

Most of these tests are not going to be met by me or the other people working back here in Washington. They are going to be met by you.

You are the pioneers of the Peace Corps.

Maybe that sounds like the beginning of a pompous graduation speech -- but it's literally true. What you are doing and will do during the remainder of your service will establish the traditions of the Peace Corps.

The Peace Corps can still turn out to be a flash-in-the-pan, composed of people who couldn't take it when the going got rough.

The rough going is different, of course, in different places. Sometimes it's hard living. Sometimes (and this is most often true where the living is easiest), it's resisting the temptations to Ugly Americanism produced by living and working conditions that make it difficult to get to know the people of the host country. Sometimes it's seemingly idiotic decisions from Washington or from your host government supervisor. Sometimes it's a counterpart who is lazy, corrupt or afraid to get his hands dirty. Sometimes it's a job that is ill-defined or not exactly right for you. Or maybe it's just simple loneliness.

In any event, your ability to take the rough going -- your ability to respond to the challenges confronting you with imagination and hard work -- will determine whether the Peace Corps idea will endure, whether for the rest of your life you will look back upon this experience and be able to say, "I am glad I was there -- I gave my best to something I believed in -- I helped make it work."

My hopes for you are high and my good wishes are with you every minute.

Sincerely,

Sargent Shriver
Sargent Shriver



Sarge's first visit to Bangkok in August 1962. Al Guskin, Judy Guskin and Harvey Price are facing the camera. Harvey is a lawyer, who married a Thai woman, and is still in Bangkok. On that visit, we told Sarge that he was praising us too much, for we were still new and learning so much. Of course, he needed to tell Congress that we were doing wonderful things.



Judith Guskin and two graduate students, who became important educational researchers in Thailand.



I was in a Thai TV show performed with The Faculty of Education, Chulalongkorn University.



The King of Thailand playing jazz on campus (Chulalongkorn). I met him a few times while I was a volunteer, and later in the 1980's.



Father Theodore Hesburg, President of Notre Dame University, was an early supporter of the Peace Corps. I went to his university to recruit some of the earliest volunteers. This picture was taken during an event in DC which I was filming for the Peace Corps. I believe it was the 45th Anniversary. I produced two documentaries for Peace Corps, one on the 25th, and part of one on the 45th.