

Macalester moves to the No. 3 spot on Peace Corps' annual Top Schools list



St. Paul, Minn. – Macalester holds the No. 3 spot among small colleges on Peace Corps' annual Top Volunteer-Producing Schools list. Currently, there are 17 Macalester graduates serving abroad.

This year, the college moved up two spots from last year's fifth place ranking. Since the agency was created in 1961, 368 Macalester alums have served overseas.

One Macalester graduate making a difference abroad is Benjamin Lavin, 23, who has been serving as a community economic development volunteer since June 2014 in Benin, a French-speaking West African nation. Lavin, from New York, N.Y., runs a trash collection business in his community and also works with various women's groups on food preservation techniques.

Throughout his undergraduate career at Macalester, Lavin was challenged in development politics courses and his study abroad experience in India, which ultimately inspired him to serve internationally.

"My Macalester experience played a large role in my decision to become a Peace Corps volunteer," said the 2014 graduate. "The semester I studied abroad helped prepare me to face large cultural differences in an often challenging setting. Being in a diverse international community made me want to go out of my comfort zone and have new experiences and challenges."



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This year's rankings follow a 40-year high in applications for the Peace Corps in 2015. This number comes a full year after the agency implemented historic reforms allowing applicants to choose the countries and assignments they'd like to be considered for.

Minnesota-based Peace Corps recruiter Brian Green, a returned volunteer who served in Costa Rica, advises Macalester candidates and can be reached at bgreen@peacecorps.gov (<mailto:bgreen@peacecorps.gov>). Visit www.peacecorps.gov/events (<http://www.peacecorps.gov/events>) to learn of in-person and online opportunities to chat with a recruiter.

The Peace Corps sends the best and brightest Americans abroad on behalf of the United States to address the most pressing needs of people around the world. Volunteers work with their community members at the grassroots level to develop sustainable solutions to challenges in education, health, economic development, agriculture, environment and youth development. Through their service, volunteers gain a unique cultural understanding and a life-long commitment to service that positions them to succeed in today's global economy. Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps in 1961, more than 220,000 Americans of all ages have served in 141 countries worldwide. For more information, visit www.peacecorps.gov (<http://www.peacecorps.gov/>).

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,138 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at [macalester.edu](http://www.macalester.edu) (<http://www.macalester.edu/>)

February 18 2016

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