Macalester earns spot on Peace Corps’ annual Top Schools rankings

St. Paul, Minn. – For the eighth year in a row, Macalester College has earned a spot on Peace Corps’ annual list of the top volunteer-producing small colleges and universities across the country. With 15 alumni currently serving overseas as Peace Corps volunteers, the school ranks No. 18 and remains a solid source of individuals committed to making a difference at home and abroad. Since the agency was created in 1961, 350 Macalester graduates have served as Peace Corps volunteers.

Peace Corps Volunteer Kaija Bergen, of Fort Collins, Colo., graduated from Macalester in May 2011 with a degree in International Studies and English. As an education volunteer currently serving in Cambodia, Bergen teaches English to college students in training to become primary school teachers. She also teamed up with another Peace Corps volunteer to teach students 20 hands-on science experiments that the students, in turn, shared with incoming new students – a strategy that guarantees Bergen’s work is sustainable and will continue to make a difference after she finishes service.

The hallmark of Peace Corps service is the two-way cultural exchange that benefits both the volunteer and the host country, and Bergen says she appreciates that all the more because of her time at Macalester.

“I think more than anything, Macalester shaped how I think about the world, and particularly how I relate to and understand other countries and people,” Bergen, 23, said. “Because of everything I learned at Macalester, I was drawn to Peace Corps and the value it places on integration and cultural understanding.”

More than 8,000 volunteers representing all 50 states and more than a thousand colleges are working with communities in 76 host countries on sustainable development projects related to agriculture, community economic development, education, environment, health and youth development.

Peace Corps service makes a difference not only to the communities served, but also to the volunteers themselves, who return home as global citizens with cross-cultural, leadership, language, teaching and community development skills that position them for advanced education and professional opportunities in today’s global job market. Ninety percent of volunteer positions require a bachelor's degree. Volunteers receive paid living expenses and full health and dental coverage while overseas, and upon completing their 27-month service they are eligible for graduate school programs and federal hiring benefits.

Since President John F. Kennedy established the Peace Corps by executive order on March 1, 1961, more than 210,000 Americans have served in 139 host countries. Today, 8,073 volunteers are working with local communities in 76 host countries in agriculture, community economic development, education, environment,
health and youth in development. Peace Corps volunteers must be U.S. citizens and at least 18 years of age.

Macalester College, founded in 1874, is a national liberal arts college with a full-time enrollment of 2,035 students. Macalester is nationally recognized for its long-standing commitment to academic excellence, internationalism, multiculturalism, and civic engagement. Learn more at macalester.edu
(https://www.macalester.edu/)

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