

Dear Peace Corps Family,

Currently, millions of Muslims around the world are observing the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. One of the Five Pillars of Islam, Ramadan continues this year until August 7, concluding with a holiday, Eid ul-Fitr, marked by a feast and prayer.

About 17% of all current Peace Corps Volunteers are in the special position to observe and share in the tradition of Ramadan. These Volunteers serve in 11 countries with Muslim populations of more than 40%. The countries span the globe, from Indonesia in the Pacific to Albania in Europe, from Jordan in the Middle East to The Gambia in Africa.

Among those observing Ramadan this month is Peace Corps staff member Jenny Adams. In Adams' words, Ramadan is "the Muslim month of the Quran ... It's known for fasting, but it is also a month of reading and reflection and thinking about key points in life." For Adams, Ramadan is a reminder to "have an open heart and to speak kindly, even if people use harsh words with you." It is a time to consider "how do I treat the people around me?" and to ponder the many things one normally takes for granted.

A joyous Muslim woman, quick with a smile, Adams wanted to work for the Peace Corps because she liked the idea of "doing what I can." Like so many members of the Peace Corps family, Adams does what she can in her daily life to be of service to others and to meet people's needs.

As Adams and millions of others around the world are observing the Muslim holy month, so too can Volunteers and returned Volunteers ponder the blessings they have in their lives, the importance of taking time out for reflection, and the value of showing kindness to other people.

Best wishes,

Carrie Hessler-Radelet Peace Corps Deputy Director RPCV/Western Samoa, 1981-83