



# USAID Alumni Association

February 2015 UAA Newsletter

## Mark your Calendars for Upcoming UAA Events

**Friday, March 6, 2015 - 11:30 am to 2:00 pm - UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue - "International Family Planning: Where we have been and where we are going"** Presentation by **Scott Radloff**, now Senior Scientist at the Gates Institute at the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health and former Director of USAID's Office of Population and Reproductive Health.

**Monday, March 23, 2015 - 10:00 am to Noon - UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue - "USAID's Vision of Ending Extreme Poverty"** - Presentation by **Stephen A. O'Connell**, Chief Economist, USAID. This event will be held at DACOR, 1801 F St. NW. There will be a **\$5 entrance charge for coffee and tea (i.e. this will not be a luncheon event)**.

**Friday, May 15, 2015 - 11:30 - 2:00 - UAA/DACOR Development Dialogue - "Reassessing United States' Leadership of the Global Economy."** **Javed Burki**, former Finance Minister of Pakistan and long time senior World Bank official, believes that the deep concern of some prominent economists for the decline of U.S. economy is very misleading. He will discuss why the future development of technology and new corporation types gives the U.S. enormous advantages which will lead the global economy in an entirely different - and positive - direction.

**Sunday, May 31, 2015 - Annual UAA Spring Reception** - More information to follow soon.

**\*\*\*Save the Date! 2015 UAA Annual General Meeting\*\*\***

We're excited to announce that the 2015 UAA Annual General Meeting will be held on **October 23, 2015** at the **Center for Global Development headquarters in Washington, DC**. The tentative theme for the meeting is:

**"Building a new consensus for development and the role of foreign assistance."**

## New on USAIDALUMNI.org

- Obituaries: There are several recent obituaries that have been added to the [Tributes](#) page. Recent obituaries (those appearing since the previous UAA Newsletter) are marked as "New!".
  - On our recently created page [Books and Papers Recently Published by USAID Alumni](#), you can learn about John Holley's book Consulting in International Development: a Primer.
  - The ever-popular [Where in the World](#) section of USAID transfers, promotions, retirements, etc. is now updated through January.
  - Want to check if your UAA membership is paid up for 2015? You can find out [here](#).
  - With the ever-wise guidance of Jim Michel, UAA has completed an [2015-17 update of its Strategic Plan](#).
  - Take a look at UAA's [redesigned and updated brochure](#).
  - In [Jobs and Volunteer Opportunities](#), there is one newly posted opportunity.
  - Read a [summary evaluation of UAA's October 2014 Annual General Meeting \(AGM\)](#).
  - On February 19, 2015, Pauline Baker, President Emeritus of The Fund for Peace, led a discussion on assessing the potential for resiliency in fragile states. You can [listen to full presentation here](#).
  - In the [Forum](#), view some opinion pieces on Administrator Shah's USAID legacy.
  - Read [Articles](#) about 1) the issue of too much control in USAID (the first of a seven part series by alum Diana Ohlbaum), 2) the Shah legacy (multiple items), 3) a brief video by President Obama on what most Americans get wrong about foreign aid, 4) country winners and losers in Obama's 2016 aid budget, 5) the role of aid in an update of the U.S. foreign policy statement, 6) the rapid deterioration of the Ronald Reagan Building, and 7) the impact of the newly proposed budget on foreign assistance.
  - In the [Web Links](#) section, take a look at the most recent 1) Frontlines, and 2) USAID Impact newsletter.
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Do you have news, an article or event you would like to share? Please send it to [office@usaidalumni.org](mailto:office@usaidalumni.org) or, better still, post it on the Forum.

Looking for someone with a USAID alumni background and skills to hire or as a volunteer? If you would like to post a job or volunteer opportunity, please email us at [office@usaidalumni.org](mailto:office@usaidalumni.org), Attn: Jobs/Volunteers.

## It's time to make your 2015 Membership Contribution

Thank you to everyone who has already made their 2015 UAA Membership Contribution. Your support allows us to continue strengthening the array of services and programs of interest to alumni. No matter where you reside, we need your active participation, ideas, and generous financial support.

If you've not already made your tax-deductible contribution to the UAA for calendar year 2015 (January 2015 - December 2015) we encourage you to do so today. You can [make your contribution electronically through our secure payment system by clicking here.](#)

Or, if you prefer, you can mail a check to

**USAID Alumni Association  
DACOR House  
1801 F Street, NW (4th Floor)  
Washington, DC 20006**

The **suggested contribution levels for 2015** are:

- \$75 Those who live within 50 miles of Washington, DC
- \$50 Those who live elsewhere in the United States
- \$25 Residents of foreign countries AND Former FSNs wherever they live

And, of course, we welcome you to join with UAA's other "angels" who have generously contributed \$100 or more as "Friends of UAA."

So don't delay! Make your 2015 annual membership contribution today, and encourage your friends and former colleagues to sign up and contribute to UAA as well!

Please don't hesitate to let us know if you have questions or comments for us, or if you know of other alumni who should be on our mailing list. Everyone is welcome -- former FSOs, Civil Servants, FSNs, PSCs and other contract personnel, and political appointees.

## Volunteer with the UAA Public Outreach Committee

If you would like to join the Public Outreach Committee, or have suggestions for ways that

the UAA can strengthen its public outreach efforts, please contact Public Outreach Committee Co-Chair Ann Van Dusen ([avandusen@usaidalumni.org](mailto:avandusen@usaidalumni.org)). Ann will be scheduling a meeting by Skype or conference call for those interested in joining the committee, so you don't need to be in the Washington, DC area in order to participate.

If you have any questions regarding what participation in the committee entails, contact Ann van Dusen at [avandusen@usaidalumni.org](mailto:avandusen@usaidalumni.org)

## Last Call! Participate in the 2015 Membership Survey

We're extremely proud of all the UAA accomplished in 2014 and are gearing up for an exciting and productive 2015. We wish to solicit your thoughts on past programming and ideas on what you wish to see from the UAA in the future.

We thank all those who have already provided feedback through and encourage all those who have yet to do so to take a few minutes to fill out the 2015 Membership Survey by clicking the link below. **The deadline for participation is March 15, 2015.**

**[Click here to participate in the 2015 UAA Membership Survey](#)**

As always, we greatly appreciate feedback from our members, positive or negative, as this assists us in planning for 2015 and beyond.

## UAA Winterfest success on February 7, 2015

On February 7, Board member Dave Eckerson and his wife Connie graciously opened their home in South Arlington to UAA members for the first annual Winterfest event. The weather totally cooperated that afternoon, enabling almost 60 people to attend this social event. It was a great opportunity for friends and colleagues to catch up with one another and to meet new Board Member Denise Rollins. Friends, food and wine, it doesn't get much better in bringing some warmth to a cold winter day!

## Save the Date! Spring Reception May 31, 2015

# UAA Annual Spring Reception

Date: Sunday, May 31, 2015

Time: *TBA*

Location:  
4001 Dresden St.  
Kensington, Maryland 20895

Board Co-Chair Alexander Shakow and his wife graciously offered to host the annual Spring Reception at their home in Kensington, Maryland. We hope many of you will decide to join us for an event.

*More information and a formal invitation will be provided in the coming months.*

## UAA expresses its thanks to former USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah

On February 25, 2015 the UAA sent a letter of thanks to outgoing USAID Administrator Rajiv Shah, the text of which can be viewed below.

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February 25, 2015

Dear Raj,

On behalf of the USAID Alumni Association we want to express our deepest appreciation to you for your leadership of USAID over these past five years. We know it is never easy to make the case day-in and day-out for development - and for USAID in particular in this strained political environment - but you have done so consistently and effectively with great courage and vision over all this period. USAID is much stronger today as a result of the reforms you and your leadership team have initiated and implemented. We are most grateful to you for your great efforts on behalf of the agency whose work we all cherish and support.

We were delighted to see that, in your departing note to USAID staff, you wrote: "Tomorrow morning, I am going to wake up and figure out whether it's okay for a former Administrator to join the USAID Alumni Association. :)" On our website, [www.usaidalumni.org](http://www.usaidalumni.org) you can find on the left hand column of the home page the steps to become a member. We will welcome you warmly.

The Alumni Association is committed to maintaining a vigorous program of activities to increase awareness of the value of development and the contributions of USAID. As you know, we also collaborate with USAID in various ways, including a successful mentoring program, an active speakers program and an initiative to document the history of the

Agency's work. And, of course, we offer social opportunities for USAID alumni to keep in touch. Our website describes these various activities.

When your schedule permits, we would very much welcome the opportunity to meet with you and have the benefit of your ideas about how we might better serve our members and our shared interest in supporting the effectiveness of USAID and US support for development.

Once again, thank you very much for your leadership. We extend best wishes for your continued success in your future endeavors - and we look forward to having you as a fellow member of the UAA.

With warm regards,

Carol Peasley and Alex Shakow  
Co-Chairs, USAID Alumni Association

## Alumni Profiles: Denny Robertson and Paul White

### Denny Robertson

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After more than 20 years with USAID, Mission Director to the Caucasus Denny Robertson retired in 2007. He continued development work with private contractors and occasionally returned to USAID to act as Mission Director for Armenia and Brazil, as Director for the PEPFAR Office of HIV/AIDS and as Development Counselor in Bulgaria.

Denny decided to get back to his community development roots and applied to become a

Peace Corps Country Director. He had served as a Volunteer in the Philippines in the 1970s and 35 years later in 2011, he returned as the Country Director. "The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love" applies to being a Country Director as well as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Through his work in Peace Corps as an 'old (er) guy,' Denny is able to pursue one of his passions - teaching - in an applied context with hundreds of (mostly) young Americans on the road to global citizenship through volunteer service. He especially loves the connection to the next generation, which keeps him on his technological toes. He uses his interagency relationships to the advantage of the Peace Corps program - opening doors to Volunteers for future careers with State, USAID and the broader international development community.

Denny loves the fact that every day is a surprise whether helping volunteers during the good times of creating libraries in rural schools and organizing fisher folk to take responsibility for the environment or working through the bad times of typhoon "Haiyan". Denny is pleased that the Philippines was selected as a pilot country for placement of same-sex Peace Corps Volunteers - a sign of how far we have come in recognizing human rights for the LGBT community.

He plans to stay with Peace Corps a bit longer - and will soon move to Ukraine to re-start the program, which was temporarily suspended when hostilities with Russia broke out. Then he will take stock and see which doors mysteriously open as they have done in the past. Denny also plans to write about his overseas experiences once he retires from the Peace Corps.

Denny continues to admire the work of USAID and welcomes contact from old and new colleagues in USAID ([Denny88@aol.com](mailto:Denny88@aol.com) or [drobertson@peacecorps.gov](mailto:drobertson@peacecorps.gov))

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**Paul White**

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During his long career with USAID, Paul White thrived during assignments in remote areas working with indigenous communities. In the process he learned six languages and became skilled at partnering with NGOs and local government. After retirement, he became involved with Toastmasters International, which trains and encourages members to develop their skills in public speaking. Not surprisingly, Paul used the familiar material of his far-flung USAID experience for his early speeches. His early speeches featured development success stories from around the world, as well as in specialized areas such as HIV/AIDS, family planning, appropriate technology, etc. In no time, he was a skilled promoter of USAID and foreign aid.

As Paul came to appreciate the communications and leadership benefits of membership in Toastmasters, he turned to helping the organization expand and diversify its membership to include non-English speaking members in the US. He rose through the ranks to become the District Governor of the 10th largest Toastmasters district in the world and chartered almost 100 new clubs throughout the Washington DC area. He also introduced the first bilingual clubs in the region, including Spanish-English, Chinese-English and Spanish-English.

Then using his Asian cultural affinity and fluency in Lao, Cambodian and Thai, Paul launched an effort to expand Toastmasters into new parts of Southeast Asia. After extensive travel in the region, he helped create new clubs and organized a new District including Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

In recognition of his successful efforts, Paul received the organization's highest honor, a rare Presidential Citation, at the Toastmasters International Convention in 2013 (see photo). Last summer he also traveled to Myanmar to launch a new Toastmasters program there. Today Paul feels that he is using the experience and skills he developed while at USAID "in perhaps smaller but every bit as important ways to help make our world a better place."

Paul was nominated for the UAA Alumni of the Year award last year by Joan Silver. Although he was not ultimately one of the finalists, his post-retirement activities are indeed inspiring in terms of new ways to build on past experiences and explore volunteer service with new organizations - in this case one with both local and global impact.

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Alumni are not only in the D. C. area but scattered across the country and overseas. We would be pleased to share your latest news with former colleagues in the upcoming newsletters. Brief and breezy is the style we enjoy. Alumni interested in sharing what they are up to are encouraged to send a paragraph or two to [office@usaidalumni.org](mailto:office@usaidalumni.org)

**[Make your 2015 UAA Membership Contribution](#)**

**USAID Alumni Association**

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