

Addressing a crowd of more than 80,000 in Memorial Stadium on Charter Day, March 23, 1962, President John F. Kennedy somewhat unexpectedly quoted Otto von Bismarck about students and the society they would soon enter:

"One third of the students of German universities," he told his audience, "broke down from overwork, another third broke down from dissipation, and the other third ruled Germany."

"I do not know which third of students are here today," he continued, "but I am confident

"After Kennedy challenged us, it was more 'What can we do to make a better world?'"

Mossman married a grad student, **Paul Vitale**, that year, and he caught the bug. They had two priorities: first, for him to finish his graduate degree in city and regional planning, and then for them to apply for the Peace Corps.

His master's was awarded in 1963, and they signed up and were accepted as trainees. In November, they were in New York, scheduled to be sworn in, when they learned the horrible news that President Kennedy was dead, shot in

photographer. In retirement of a sort, they run a nonprofit enterprise, Endangered Threads Documentaries.

In February of this year, **Meera Chary** was pleased with the Peace Corps veterans from the Berkeley campus. More than 300 of them had braved lousy weather — snow had been predicted but didn't happen — to attend a symposium and reunion at International House celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Peace Corps. As one of the event's organizers, Chary had pride and hope invested

Corps booth at the Michigan State Agricultural Exposition." Looking back, he says he found the images on the brochure and its hint of adventure strongly appealing after a hot summer spent baling hay on his dad's Michigan dairy farm. After college in Michigan, he joined up. He was sent to Ecuador, where the Peace Corps placement folks "figured I would be perfect teaching subsistence Ecuadorean farmers how to raise healthier guinea pigs and castrate boars in the somewhat remote village of Chiguinda" in the Amazon cloud forest. He also organized regional rabies vaccination campaigns, created a women's gardening

community projects in Ecuador every year through a project they and two others manage online: [www.FriendsofEcuador.org](http://www.FriendsofEcuador.org).

**Jason Price** served as a secondary school teacher in northern Malawi from 1999 to 2001, teaching English grammar and literature to secondary school students while living in sub-Saharan Africa's largest pine plantation, where it was "very chilly and windswept, cloudy and rainy."

After the Peace Corps stint, Price worked at various jobs, was an Americorps volunteer

One thing they all remember, no matter how far away they are in miles and time from the countries they served in, are the friendships. And some, perhaps the ones who didn't serve in cities, recall the skies, especially at night.

Meera Chary: "The millions of stars in the sky at night, taking a bucket-bath by candle light, looking over my sigiri (charcoal stove)."

Ben Bellows: "I remember the colors just before sunset in Chiguinda when the sunlight had left our valley but was still shining over the mountain ridges and throwing a pinkish

## The Peace Corps is very Berkeley

In the half century since the Corps was founded, UC Berkeley has supplied more volunteers than any other university in the U.S. — over 3,400 in more than 120 countries. And the numbers don't begin to tell the tale.

that I am talking to the future leaders of this state and country who recognize their responsibilities to the public interest."

Kennedy got the laughs he planned on, but could not have anticipated the public-interest fires he lit in many who heard that speech, or the lives that would be influenced by his listeners.

He did not mention the Peace Corps by name in that speech, but a year earlier — on March 1, 1961 — he had created it, by signing Executive Order 10924.

That was less than three months after his inauguration, when he touched a chord in young Americans with a single sentence that concluded, "ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country."

Sitting among the 80,000 in the stadium in 1962 was **Kathleen Mossman**, who had acquired her art history bachelor's degree just the year before. Always an eager traveler before the speech, Mossman's perspective changed in those 20 minutes. Instead of having a how-many-places-can-you-see-outlook,

Dallas. They nonetheless went through training, then flew to their assignment in Ecuador. They served in Quayaquil and Quito, where Paul put his degree, and shovel-handling muscles, to work, sometimes literally in the trenches, while Kathleen taught in schools and helped local artisans export their products. Both helped local residents navigate the bureaucracies around them.

The Peace Corps, Kathleen now says, "defined our lives." They stayed in Ecuador for a total of seven years, the last five of which Paul was employed by the U.S. Agency for International Development. They adopted two children while in Ecuador, and their third child was also born there.

When she returned to Ecuador with their three children 12 years after the Peace Corps stint, their Quito neighbors had fulfilled their dream list: curbs, electric lights, schools, a health clinic, and more. Kathleen says, "We take credit only for helping them understand how to petition the government. They did the lion's share."

Paul worked as a foreign service officer, then returned to academe, teaching at the University of Oregon. Kathleen worked as a journalist and

in its success. While she greeted attendees and watched them place pins on a world map to show where they'd served, she saw an energetic cross-section of the people-power Berkeley had supplied to the Corps, many now grey or white on top, but still brimming with optimism and can-do spirit.

Of Indian descent herself, by way of Marietta, Ohio, Chary managed to bookend her Peace Corps service in Uganda with two Berkeley degrees. She did her undergraduate work in mechanical engineering, graduating in 2002, then went off to teach people how to be teachers in the rural Kamwenge District (and, using her engineering background, to troubleshoot solar energy systems at local schools). Back in the Bay Area after her two years, she worked for a San Francisco educational nonprofit group, then earned an M.B.A. from the Haas School.

She's now a consultant at Bain and Company and the Bridgespan Group.

The initial impulse toward international assistance **Ben Bellows** felt had an element of escape to it. One summer, he "passed a Peace

project, directed a local agricultural fair, and managed a municipal fruit tree nursery.

"When I came back to the U.S.," he says, "I scrambled to find a job that would carry forward that sense of adventure I had learned to relish. I ended up in a cubicle, but a very fine cubicle indeed, at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta," helping with the CDC's Global AIDS Program in East Africa. A year and a half later, infused with a new passion for public health, he decided to go back to school. He bought a bicycle and rode across America from Boston to the West Coast. "I got to Berkeley tanned and rail-thin and able to eat a godawful number of calories."

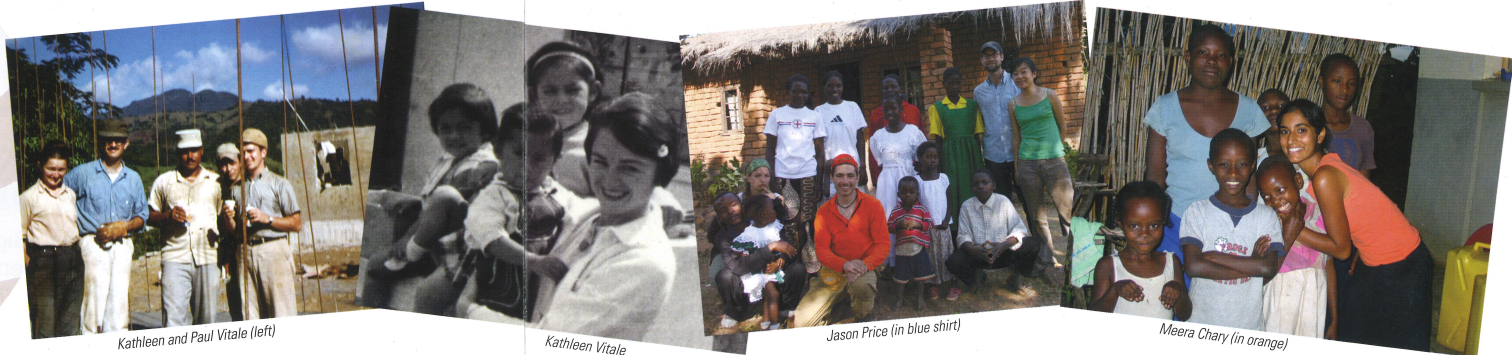
In the School of Public Health, Bellows earned a master's degree in 2004 and a Ph.D. in 2009, in epidemiology. When he graduated, he joined the Population Council, an international nonprofit NGO that carries out research and service related to HIV/AIDS, poverty, gender, youth, and reproductive health — in Nairobi. He still keeps a toe in that the western hemisphere, though; he and another returned Peace Corps volunteer raise money for com-

in Chicago, studied anthropology and film at New York University, returned to Malawi for a number of projects, then came to Berkeley to work on his Ph.D. in sociocultural anthropology, which he hopes to complete in 2013.

In 2007 he shot, edited, produced, and directed, with extensive volunteer translation help, a video documentary of a day in the life — literally 24 solid continuous hours — of Edith, a 13-year-old student at the Domasi Mission Primary School in Malawi's Zomba District, for the nonprofit Global Lives Project.

Price went back to Malawi in March 2011 as a Fulbright Scholar.

One observation that the Peace Corps folks from Berkeley seem to share and say in similar words is that "people are people." This is the way Kathleen Mossman Vitale puts it: "I learned that in Vallejo growing up, and at Cal living across the street from the I-House." "People are the same everywhere," says Meera Chary, adding, "Especially kids. They are innocent, they love to play, and they are curious!"



Kathleen and Paul Vitale (left)

Kathleen Vitale

Jason Price (in blue shirt)

Meera Chary (in orange)

### A Peace Corps Legacy

The Joe Lurie Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Fellowship provides room and board at International House to a financially-strapped RPCV who's an entering doctoral student at Berkeley. The Graduate Division matches this with a year's tuition and fee support plus a \$5,000 stipend. Launched in 2007, the fellowship is named for the I-House's third executive director, Joe Lurie, who retired that year after 19 years at the helm. Lurie served in Kenya during his three years in the Peace Corps.