Mary Ripley
Volunteer

A Portrait of a Life of Service
Introduction

"Wow! That was great fun!" exclaimed 93-year old Mary Ripley as she gingerly dismounted from the rear seat of a shining black Harley-Davidson motorcycle. She had just completed a whirlwind (80 mph) ride down the interstate freeway near her upscale retirement community in Portola Valley, California, near Stanford University. Over the years her children and friends had discouraged her from trying to ride a motorcycle, but Mary, never put off by naysayers, decided that at 93, she would do it and found a young man who was willing to have a passenger. As she removed her gold and blue crash helmet, a friend remarked that "That's Mary! Never takes NO for an answer." (Several sources: Anonymous)

The information in this brief and informal memoir of Mary Ripley's life as an active volunteer over a 70-year period is drawn from a variety of sources especially Mary's friends and colleagues and associates as well as her family and hours of talking with Mary herself. The editors have attempted to show the parallels between Mary's many activities and causes to which she gave leadership, enthusiasm, and often, success and the changes occurring at the same times in society. The amazing growth in the numbers of nonprofit social service organizations to serve newly recognized needs required strong, focused leadership as well as improved communications and the professional management of organizations involving volunteers.

Interspersed throughout are comments from many of Mary's friends and colleagues. Much of the material is in 'question and answer' format as a result of a very long day of videotaping Mary while a panel of six associates peppered her with questions.

The editors thank Jan Gass for her technological skills and any errors and/or omissions are the editors'.

Ellen Linsley and Saralei Farner, Santa Monica, California, 2007.

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Mary At Work In The United States

“One of the most memorable moments I experienced in the presence of Mary Ripley was when we had an AWIU meeting at her summer home "Riptide" following the earthquake that did considerable damage in the State of Washington. When she told us about the fact that we were standing at the epicenter of that quake I was duly impressed.”
Martha Atherton, American Women for International Understanding.

A word about Riptide -- the longtime summer home of Mary's family way out on the end of a peninsula in Puget Sound, Washington. It is indeed a sylvan retreat with the endless ocean, snow-capped Mount Rainier and sunsets to entertain. Mary has invited many of the boards and committees on which she has served to come to Riptide for meetings, and many have done so. The quiet, the ocean, the deer wandering through and the large amounts of clams, crabs, gooey ducks and other seafood prepared by Mary seem to create a very productive meeting environment.
"I was lucky to staff Planned Parenthood's Western Region when Mary was its Chair. One summer she invited the Executive Committee to Riptide for a weekend retreat. We were instructed to arrive at noon on Saturday.

I learned that Mary was returning from a trip to France at 10:00 pm on Friday. Nevertheless, when we arrived she was wide awake, in the kitchen, whistling and shucking clams. 'Mary, you must not suffer from jet lag', I said. "I don't have time for jet lag," she replied."
Ann Tubbs, Planned Parenthood.

"Another memory of Mary was visiting her in Washington with our five kids and a dear Mexican girl, Olivia, as we traveled to our new abode in Concord, Massachusetts. We stayed with Mary and to this day I have a piece of driftwood I brought with me! So be it."
Deborah Stoessel, Concord, MA.

When Mary finished her high school education at Marlborough School in Los Angeles, she decided to take up her mother's offer of an 18-month round-the-world tour instead of enrolling in college. The trip was an eye opener for Mary—seeing people, communities, cultures far different from her hometown. Human needs were manifest regardless of the climate, culture or ruling powers. Children needed food and medical care; educational needs were widespread; economic development was unknown in many places. Most of all, Mary Ripley was impressed by the great needs of people and the paucity of cooperation and sharing among groups trying to meet those needs.

On her return, Mary participated in volunteer work associated with World War II. Mary married and mothered two sons while joining the Junior League of Los Angeles where the intense training involved identification of community resources and community needs and trying to get these often opposing groups to join in common cause. She started out with the Children's Home Society and her leadership skills were soon recognized. She began to be appointed to task forces and commissions regarding social services delivery on the local and state level. Her primary focus was initially on child abuse prevention and the provision of adequate services to children in need.
"The one thing I can say about my mother is that, as my brother and I were growing up, no matter how busy she was with Junior League, the American Heart Association, or the Children's Home Society, or whatever she was involved with at the moment, she was always home when we came home from school. She was never an absent mom. She was as much involved in our lives as she was involved in the lives of the children of the world. I am sure that I dedicated my life to the service of others as a teacher and minister because of the influence my mother had on me growing up. She always made us aware of the plight of the less fortunate of the world and of our own country."

Bill Ripley, son.

Mary with her son Bill

Mary's leadership abilities and her absolutely indefatigable energies soon moved her from serving as a direct service (to clients) volunteer to various leadership roles. She became President of the Junior League of Los Angeles and she was recognized by the Los Angeles Times newspaper as Woman of the Year in 1958 for her tireless work in providing services for children and families through both public and private programs.
“M”, as I have lovingly referred to her since I can remember, is such a special woman in my life. She has influenced my view of this beautiful world in a way no other person has. She has taught me how to see the beauty in every person I meet and to value each one deeply. My passion for world relief and development is directly related to the experiences she gave to me growing up. She has such a deep concern for others and never fails to take the time to really get to know others deeply. Her strong desire to see women prosper, no matter their circumstances, is such an inspiration. She really believes that things can always be changed for the better and therefore is often able to affect change. M, you have always been an inspiration in my life. Thank you for shaping so much of who I am today.”

Jessica Kooiman, granddaughter.

Mary with great-grandson’s Jason (on lap) and Tyler (standing)
Jessica (granddaughter) and Peter Kooiman’s children
“Everyone knows that my Grandmother is a world traveler. She instilled in me the love of traveling when I was still young. She taught me that the best trips are to places that aren’t made for tourists. That way you really get to learn about the people that live there. Even today I try to see as much of the world as possible.

In 1996 “M” took me to Africa. I was fourteen at the time and couldn’t have dreamed of anywhere I would have wanted to go more. We did so many wonderful things while we were there. Some of them included flying over Victoria Falls in a Cessna, going on a safari in Botswana, sleeping under mosquito netting, and getting to see so many amazing animals. I will never forget watching monkeys climb on the balcony of our hotel or seeing a pack of lions sleeping in the grass. I have so many memories from that trip but what I remember the most is the time I got to spend with my grandmother.

Throughout the years “M” has taught me so much. She has taught me to respect other cultures and learn from them; to always help those that are less fortunate than myself; and to stand up for causes I believe in. I know that she has made me a better person.”

Shawn Ripley, grandson

Mary and her grandson Shawn
**Panel:** Can you give us an example of something you achieved?

**Mary's response:**
"I suppose that one of the programs I worked with from its beginning was the development and recognition of the value to a local community of Volunteer Bureaus (and later, Voluntary Action Centers). Prior to 1960, the larger nonprofit organizations who involved substantial numbers of volunteers in their programs did all the recruiting and training of volunteers in-house. The Red Cross, Scouts, hospitals and schools, March of Dimes and Community Funds decided what they needed volunteers for and had various kinds of successes in recruiting and keeping them. Still, there were many organizations who could use volunteers and apparently many citizens who would like to volunteer but didn’t know how to do it. The development of Volunteer Bureaus required some very dedicated individuals and organizational support and funding in each community. Frequently the local Junior League would be the sponsoring agency or perhaps a coalition of several organizations. The basic premise was that Volunteer Bureaus would provide a meeting/matching place for potential volunteers to find volunteer positions. This required enormous patience and detailed explanations at every step of the way. Why should a Volunteer Bureau which did not operate any social welfare or health programs with clients need to exist? I (Mary) was involved in arguing every point many times and in many different cities and organizations.

"After countless meetings starting in Los Angeles and eventually covering most of the country, Volunteer Bureaus began to operate. Their primary responsibilities were to publicize needs for volunteers, to help organizations prepare job descriptions for volunteers, to interview and assist in finding appropriate placements for volunteers, and to provide recognition for volunteer services to the community. Most Bureaus expanded their efforts to include various areas of training for the volunteers in concert with the participating programs. Some were under the umbrella of the local United Way, some with one other service organization and many became free-standing providing their own financial support. By this time, volunteering was receiving greater public notice and now in many cities, bureaus provide many services to participating organizations including more sophisticated training for managers of volunteer programs."

"The day before we were headed in for our very first United Way budget hearing, I mentioned to Mary that my comfort level wasn’t very high. She told me that I’d better pee and get with it because we (the Volunteer Bureau) had the best budget committee and the best board that United Way was going to hear and I was their professional leader and I couldn't appear timid or scared or unsure. So we got what we asked for! David Saunders told me years later that Mary was absolutely the best volunteer he’d ever encountered — and I agree completely. She has the ability to make everyone else stronger and more able than we think we can be."

Randy Andersen, California State University - Long Beach.

Mary eventually became Chairman of the Association of Volunteer Bureaus of North America (including groups in Canada and Mexico). In 2007, things are more electronically streamlined as citizens are urged to use the Internet to contact [www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov), enter their personal zip code and interests, and immediately the screen shows a list of local organizations dealing with the
specified interest in your locale and giving details and contact information. This matching service, the Freedom Corps, is primarily subsidized by corporate grants and cooperates with the Points of Light Foundation and the Volunteer Center Network. However, the principal reasons for the existence of Volunteer Bureaus still exist in the greater community and are highly valued.

"I knew Mary when I was a young girl and she was a friend of my parents. I loved her stories and eavesdropping on her conversations with others -- and who knows how much what I heard influenced my strong philanthropic bent? Later I became involved with her in some groups, including American Women for International Understanding and the Junior League, and was awed by her knowledge, stamina and contacts. Mary is a great lady and the quintessential volunteer."
Marcia Hobbs, American Women for International Understanding

"When AWIU needed a leader, we knew we could count on Mary! Lead on, Mary, we're going to (country of choice) next. No group can do better than its leadership and we had it all in Mary Ripley!"
Nancy Peterson, American Women for International Understanding.

Mary's reputation regarding her skills and her ability to work hard everywhere for those causes in which she believed, grew beyond Los Angeles and she was often asked to serve on various governmental commissions and task forces dealing with human social services. These experiences helped to broaden her understanding of the needs of each community and ways in which to work given the individual 'quirks' of each situation. She drew national attention and began receiving invitations to sit on the boards of various national organizations.

"In 1974, early in my tenure at the National Center for Voluntary Action, I was young and totally inexperienced in working at a national organization but had been assigned the job of staffing a Board Committee which Mary chaired. After a not particularly good first meeting of the group, Mary marched into my office, closed the door and said 'Now I am going to teach you how to do your job.' And she did, and she has continued to ever since. It was a key moment for me in my professional development as it underscored the role and responsibility of volunteer leaders to truly give leadership whether in a small local organization or in a large national one."
Kenn Allen, Civil Society Consulting Group LLC

Working at the national level where policies are set for programming, staffing, and fundraising required more comprehensive skills and Mary was serious about gathering current information on matters at hand for each organization. She served as President of the Child Welfare League of America, the Association of Volunteer Bureaus, the National Council on Social Welfare, as well as serving on the boards of directors of many national organizations including Involvement Corps, Independent Sector, Planned Parenthood, American Women for International Understanding, the Global Fund for Women, and the National Center for Voluntary Action (NCVA), and the Commission on Volunteerism appointed by President Nixon. Governor George Romney and Max Fisher, an industrialist and philanthropist, had the idea of founding a national
center to assist volunteers and volunteer programs by providing management training and program information at low or no cost.

NCVA was initially founded with federal money. It also received foundation and corporation grants which provided training at the grass roots level and an information exchange of successful programs in every field.

"Mary is my hero. She does what she says without fluff. Her focus is always on the commonality of different parties — not the differences. I love her dearly."

*Baillie Brown, American Women for International Understanding.*

In the 1960s and 1970s, the social fabric of the United States was changing and new nonprofit organizations appeared with 'new' or recently recognized social problems to be solved -- child abuse, prison-based programs, peace, the environment, senior citizens, and literacy among others, comprised a host of newly recognized needs and called for new ways of mobilizing community resources.

"Mary Ripley has always been identified with the leadership working for the community good. When I first met Mary was in the late 1960s when there was so much foment among various groups demanding recognition, changes, inclusion of the whole community in every human services organization. Mary's ability to grasp issues, her willingness to listen, and her forthrightness won her admiration and trust Mary has worked hard and long on issues she felt important thereby helping to establish many programs that exist today at both the local and national levels. I, for one, am grateful for Mary's work in educating our leaders to the importance of full citizen participation needed for healthy communities."

*Marjorie Matsushita, Connect L.A.*

**Panel:** How did you make the change from a direct service volunteer to one making national policy?

**Mary's response:**

"It was definitely a learning experience for me -- the transition from strictly local concerns and resources to looking at the entire country and working to establish organizational priorities which would begin to meet those needs. Major and long-term funding had to be found. Organizations needed to see the advantage of working in concert with each other in mutually productive ways. It was, of course, difficult at times for organizations to surrender a little autonomy for the long-term advantages of service to the communities.

"Also, programs of "paid" volunteers began to appear and proliferate -- the Peace Corps, VISTA, RSVP. Now we have Americorps and TeachAmerica. These individuals receive varying stipends and often work with 'unpaid' volunteers in the same or similar programs at the community level. These relationships needed to be accepted and clarified to work together productively."
"She's no whirlwind, nor a cyclone — she's a typhoon!"
Christy Fox, Los Angeles Times, 1972.

This great expansion of volunteer activity began to need professional management and administration. The management of a nonprofit organization needs to be as professionally expert as that of any profit-making business. Mary definitely supported the roles of the volunteer program administrators and worked with such organizations as DOVIA (Directors of Volunteers in Agencies), the Grantsmanship Center, The Center for Nonprofit Management and similar groups across the country. A major breakthrough was the addition of courses in volunteer program management at the college and graduate levels, beginning with USC's School of Social Work and the University of Colorado followed shortly by Northeastern University, the University of San Francisco and eventually, many major institutions. She also involved such outstanding college professors and corporate trainers as Eva Schindler-Rainman, Ivan Scheier, Arlene Schindler and Alan Kumamoto who all developed new and appropriate materials for the field. One outcome was that the position of Director of Volunteers often became a regular professional paid staff appointment in many organizations and institutions.

"Forty or more years ago I was a young housewife and mother, and Mary involved me in the Neighborhood Youth Association. I've forgotten just exactly how it came about, but those were turbulent years at NYA. How the agency has grown, changed and stabilized! It was, at that time, very connected to the Episcopal Diocese and with Bishop Bloy at the helm, not always a comfortable liaison. However, with Rip and Mary, we all stayed and did what we could for the organization and the community. Mary was a great influence on my volunteer career. When I moved to Massachusetts not knowing a single person, it was through my experience with NYA, the Junior League, LIVE and other organizations that I was able to transfer those skills to full time employment, Believe it or not, I ended up in the development field for over 20 years."
Deborah Stoessel, Concord MA.

Other changes came with the introduction of the Great Society program of President Lyndon Johnson and the historical events of the 1960s and 1970s, Racial integration and the Vietnam war drew new kinds of volunteers into leadership roles. Suddenly agencies and organizations providing services began to appoint clients to their boards of directors. The addition of senior citizens, welfare mothers, youth, and ethnic minority representatives changed the dynamic of the organizations' boards and required all board members to re-evaluate their policies, attitudes and actions and to continually consider the entire community to be served.

"Mary always has a smile on her face, always has an interesting story to share about some new part of the world, always has the courage and chutzpah to voice her outrage about the continued injustices faced by the weak and marginalized people of the world. Mary is still an organizer, introducing us to new connections, opening doors and mobilizing resources for those who most need it."
I think of a conversation with Mary Ripley like a giant booster dose of infectious hope, determination, and courage. You get off the phone or drive off in your car feeling suddenly as though you could, in fact, slay dragons and tilt at windmills, and succeed.”

“Ruth March taught us the importance of focusing on one thing.” Mary Ripley

An extension of Mary's concern about women's issues is reflected in her friendship with Ruth March. Ruth made her crusade to get volunteer experience included on job/work applications and in hiring practices a focus of her volunteer efforts for 11 years. Ruth often referred to her morning phone conversations with Mary. It was at those times that she tested ideas on Mary and found the feedback direct and to the point. It stimulated Ruth to move another step in the direction of achieving her goal of bringing the program to the attention of companies and to governments and finally to its culmination in becoming part of the Congressional Record. The Congress enacted recognition of volunteer skills as a condition of employment procedures in 1988 when the U.S. House of Representatives passed a Resolution on August 8 and the U.S. Senate passed a Resolution on August 11. Mary recalls that Ruth's focus on one prime volunteer activity led to her success in setting this policy. As a member of the national board of Involvement Corps, the pioneer organization in the field of employee volunteerism, Mary helped further those goals.

“When it came time to write my resume, I always had a hard time in describing this period, which I took to calling 'my time of good works.' I may not have had a 'real' job, but I was constantly occupied. I learned to organize, manage, network, motivate and ensure that I always delivered what I promised. Yet all this activity didn't seem to register in the regular world, and I wished there were some rating system for volunteer work that could be equated with government or business titles.”
Madeleine Albright, former Secretary of State from Madame Secretary, A Memoir, Miramax Books, 2003.
Volunteerism Should Count

"The President calls on the heads of businesses and professional firms to include community service among the factors in making hiring, compensation and promotion decisions."

President George Bush
Points of Light Initiative

"...the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad could not have been staged so successfully and profitably without the help and support of thousands of volunteers... It would seem to me only equitable that employers would provide the proper format on their employment application forms to include relevant volunteer experience."
Peter V. Ueberroth
President, Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee

"...That it is the sense of the Congress that experience in volunteer work should be taken into account by the Federal Government, State and local governments, charitable and service organizations and private employers in the consideration of applicants for employment, and that provisions should be made for a listing and description of volunteer work on employment application forms."
Resolution passed by the U.S. House of Representatives, August 8, 1988
Resolution passed by the U.S. Senate, August 11, 1988

"...volunteers provide more than $55 billion in services each year... Experience gained through volunteer work is finally being taken seriously by some, though hardly all, employers."
Editorial Opinion
Los Angeles Times

"...one of the common mistakes we make is to dismiss the significance of what people are doing if they are volunteers... We tend to look down our nose on the volunteer role as compared to the compensated role. We shouldn't."
Honorable George Romney
Chairman Volunteer,
The National Center
Former Governor of Michigan

What Can You Do?

Employers
- Give recognition to volunteer skills by revising your hiring decisions and your employment application.
- On job announcements, identify where and when volunteer (unpaid and community service) experience is acceptable. Remember that many volunteer jobs have direct counterparts in the paid employment sector.
- Consider organizing an employee volunteer program.

Volunteer Agencies
- Develop procedures for explicitly recognizing the work of the volunteer.
- Keep complete businesslike records, including volunteer job descriptions and hours of service.
- When honoring volunteers, include employers who have revised (or are committed to revising) the work history section of their employment applications to include a request for relevant volunteer experience.

Volunteers
- Request that your volunteer supervisors keep records of your hours of service, the tasks and skills you perform, and of the responsibilities you assume.
- Keep your own portfolio of volunteer records. Include job descriptions, identifiable skills, tasks performed, and letters of reference.
- Present your documented relevant volunteer experience when you apply for a paid job.
Fundraising

"Mary is comfortable entertaining international dignitaries, her friends and family. She gets a twinkle in her eye when she tells stories about her world travels with her granddaughter, Jessica. She introduced Alan and me to gooey duck clams when she sent us clam digging with her neighbors...Alan never realized he would be upside down in a trash can digging for a clam! She shares her interest in empowering women, civil society, and volunteerism with all her friends. Mary enjoys life and knows how to live well. We have all learned from her friendship and appreciate the time we spend together."
Joanne and Alan Kumamoto, Kumamoto Associates

“I met Mary at Resthaven Mental Health Center in Los Angeles in 1970. I was a raw fundraising tyro, mostly involved in special events, and she a board member, mentor and friend.

“To call a psychiatric facility “Resthaven” takes some moxie, and may suggest you’ve seen too many Mel Brooks movies, but in fact Resthaven had been the mental health center to the stars of Hollywood for half a century at that time, and was nationally recognized as one of the innovators in psychiatric treatment. Dance and music therapy were pioneered there, as was work-place therapy.

“Thanks to Mary and some of her friends at the old Friday Morning Club, Resthaven was also a national leader in volunteer training and utilization, even in the inpatient settings. A group of fifteen ‘mega volunteers’, which included Ellen Linsley, Jan Kern of Community Partners and other community leaders, was recruited and trained in the early seventies by Mary's friends, Marian Jeffery and Marjorie Matsushita. Mary Ripley served as the unofficial den mother to the group and liaison to the center's board of directors. The success of that group became the stuff of legends, and was soon emulated by the Thalians, Gateways and other community mental health centers across the state.

“There was never a task too small for Mary. She led by doing, and sometimes it was arduous. One year as a fundraising device, Frank Vessels gave Resthaven a new automobile and the opportunity to raffle it off at his race track in Los Alamitos. It was tough work, wearing white straw hats and working the motley race track crowd to sell raffle tickets at a buck a shot. As I checked in the volunteers on the first night, standing with the other volunteers, white boaters placed jauntily on their heads, were Mary Ripley and her husband, "Rip."

“Mary taught me that night and many times thereafter, that leaders stand in front. A simple lesson, perhaps, but one I have to re-learn all the time. It’s a lesson that seems to have been stitched into Mary Ripley’s genetic code. We shall not see her like again soon, I think.”
Jack Shakely, California Community Foundation.

14
Involvement Corps

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*All costs to the client are tax deductible.

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- Leslie Salt
- Levi Strauss & Company
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Volunteer Coordinator Model
A complete Volunteer Program:
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“There are so many things I love about Mary. One of the best is her way of ‘voting with her feet.’ When Mary takes on a cause, she becomes a tireless advocate, expressing her involvement in very concrete acts — whether it be stuffing envelopes at a Global Fund for Women mailing, or acting as a formidable fundraiser for Planned Parenthood. She is a volunteer extraordinaire, and a wonderful role model for us all.”

Esther Hewlett, Planned Parenthood.

Panel: What special achievements stand out in your memory now that you are 93?

Mary’s response:

*First of all, I have to say that in spite of all the honors, awards and opportunities over the years in various leadership roles, I am back to being a direct service volunteer at the Sequoias (retirement community). I work several hours a week in the Assisted Living area doing errands for residents, writing letters, talking with them, exchanging library books, giving a bit of humanity to an institutional setting. I also am a champion envelope stuffer periodically for the Global Fund for Women.

*I suppose that seeing the Association of Volunteer Bureaus established and the well-deserved recognition of volunteer efforts everywhere is special to me.

*the increased involvement in not only funding but program support from the corporate community in all kinds of volunteer programming.

*the continuous formations of coalitions of organizations at both the local and national levels attacking common concerns and reducing duplication of efforts and expenses.

*the increasing public accountability required of nonprofit organizations—both as to financial and program activities.

*the adoption by the federal government in 1988 to have volunteer experience included on job/work applications and in hiring practices.

*serving as a founding board member of American Women for International Understanding and the International Association for Volunteer Effort and working with women in other countries in a variety of programs. I love the friends I’ve made throughout the world especially while working in the areas of women’s issues, rights, health and economic development.
**Panel:** What do you hope will come from this memoir?

**Mary's response**

*The best outcome would be as an inspiration to all potential volunteers regardless of age, condition or ethnicity to come forward and to work to improve the quality of life in their local communities. My family and my volunteer activities have been the core of my life for over 70 years. It's been a satisfying life."

"From our first trip (with AWIU) I found Mary Ripley to be an amazing woman. A full time volunteer, she excelled in many things and was a good travel companion. Mary could have made her mark in a paid professional career but instead chose to be an outstanding volunteer leader."

_Elly Peterson, American Women for International Understanding._

"Never to be forgotten, always a terrific role model, for standing up for what one believes to be respectful, fair, honest and true, plus a sense of humor. Her support of the volunteers of the world is a standard for us all."

_Deborah Stoessel, Concord, MA._

**Important nuggets from Mary's remarks over the years:**

*If we learn the art of communication as volunteers we can begin to close the gaps between needs and services -- be a stimulator, a needler, act as an interpreter.

*There are four important qualities necessary for volunteers -- timing, sincerity, honest caring and patience.

*E-mail is a fabulous gift to the volunteer movement. We need to learn how to use it effectively.

*My dream is that the major foundations and corporations in this country will set aside a priority dollar amount for volunteer programs (in any fields) each year. The future of corporate and business giving to volunteer programs needs to be assessed by each potential donor: Do they want to give $100,000 to start a program for Sub-Saharan refugees (control; publicity) or to give $1,000 to each branch bank (local business/publicity) for Little League uniforms? Market-based funding is now often a serious consideration for business contributions to nonprofit organizations.
Mary At Work Around The World

“Volunteerism is now worldwide – It is a movement, a piece of what the world is all about – It is a powerful movement.”

Mary Ripley

It is summer 2004 and she is attending the 18th International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE) World Conference at the Forum in Barcelona, Spain. Her name is Mary Ripley and she has attended every World Conference since the first one was organized in 1970 in Los Angeles. Liz Burns from Scotland, President of IAVE, is presiding at the day’s Plenary Session. She calls Mary to the stage to receive a special award from IAVE honoring Mary’s long service to the organization. Two young women, one from Spain and the other from the Netherlands escort Mary to the stage. Liz presents Mary with a wooden replica of the IAVE logo. It is a tactile logo called Volun-touch conceived and shaped for IAVE by Guido Dettoni. He describes it as a tool for the Volunteers to share through touch their choice and to strengthen the communication between all of them as well as towards everybody.

Liz Burns, IAVE President, presents award to Mary Ripley
IAVE World Conference, Barcelona 2004
“We had heard many things about Mary Ripley from our good friend Ellen Linsley and me! Mary (with Ellen) for the first time in connection with an IAVE conference in Barcelona in September 2005. It was a special experience for us to spend warm summer evenings together with both grande dames on the Barcelona terraces, take part in the IAVE conference proceedings and see all the IAVE people come up to Mary to greet her. It was her last IAVE conference and is hard to describe the warmth of those interactions and how special Mary really is to so many people of all ages and backgrounds worldwide. Mary is a visceral representation of what is so special and unique to the IAVE organization. The dedication, talent, warmth and humanity, the indomitable will and determination, and ultimately the degree to which the power of the individual can change the world.

One thing we both remember distinctly during that visit was that we took a number of taxis around the city, each time with a different driver. Each time it was a new opportunity for Mary to strike up a conversation and inquire the driver's opinion on various world affairs/upcoming US elections. Amazing that someone would discuss such deep subject matter without benefit of the language ability one would expect to engage at such a level—and also get so much out of the discussion! We shared serious discussion and not a few laughs with those taxi drivers, all with a minimum of language skills. Mary takes on tasks that others would clearly shy from, doing so with undaunted enthusiasm and vigor. We have traveled the world over the years, but have met few people who are as much fun and as inspiring as Mary Ripley.”

Gwen van Roekel & Erik van Tertholen, IAVE Netherlands
"Exemplars are hard to come by. For me Mary Ripley has been that person.

My first encounter with Mary Ripley was at Resthaven Community Mental Health Center. I was 30 something and Mary was addressing the Resthaven Auxiliary. A dynamic speaker, Mary radiated with a passion for her subject, the first international conference for a newly formed group called "Learn Through International Volunteer Effort. This was the forerunner of the International Association for Volunteer Effort (IAVE). The theme of the conference was Bridges of Understanding and it was to bring together 150 women from 15 countries to share their experiences about volunteer work. Her ideas and drive inspired me and she has continued to do that over the decades. She has been friend, jolly traveling companion, marvelous hostess at Riptide and mentor to me since that first encounter at Resthaven so many years ago. Mary has enriched my life, encouraged me to explore the world and been an endless source of good fun along the way."

Ellen Linsley, Connect LA
“A memory from 1980 is most special to me. Mary had pushed me, almost from the first day we met, to consider international involvement and, specifically, to attend an IAVE conference. Finally, I agreed to attend the 1980 conference in Crítica Berard, Switzerland. It was a life and career-changing experience for me. I met people from all over the world who had a shared commitment to volunteering and whose relationships transcended traditional national, cultural and ethnic boundaries. I had never experienced anything like it. It was because of Mary and those few days in the mountains of Switzerland, that I remained active in IAVE and, eventually, was elected its World President.

Thank you, Mary! Without our 30-year relationship, my life would have been much different, likely much more narrower and not nearly as much fun!”
Kenn Allen, Civil Society Consulting Group LLC

Later as a few of Mary’s friends gathered to celebrate at one of Barcelona’s famous tapas bars, she reflected on the origins of IAVE. Eleanor Wasson, a friend of Mary’s and Director of Volunteers at UCLA Medical Center returned from Toronto, Canada’s World Conference on Cancer with an idea that the same concept of gathering people with a common concern could be applied to volunteerism. Mary was one of a small group of women, who grasped the idea and created IAVE, in 1970. At that time it was called the International Association for Volunteer Education. Mary was named their first President and they prepared to convene a conference for women from around the world. The purpose was to exchange ideas and information that would expand volunteer opportunities and help build a Bridge of Understanding among individuals of many nations.

“I have known Mary Ripley ever since she was the first President of the Los Angeles Volunteer Bureau, which was approximately 75 years ago. Since that time she has always taken a leadership role inspiring others to take action in the world of volunteerism in addition to rearing two boys and being a wonderful wife and mother and friend.

In 1976 Mary became the first President of the International Association for Volunteer Education (now Effort). Since that time she has traveled and helped develop volunteer programs throughout the world.

Mary’s faith in the ability of others to move forward, her humor, her love of people of all colors and faiths have inspired all who have had the privilege of knowing her.”
Eleanor Wasson, IAVE, Santa Cruz, CA.
Learn through
International
Volunteer
Effort
LIVE CONFERENCE
Los Angeles, California
October 18-24, 1970

LIVE is a conference for women from around the world convened under the auspices of the International Association for Volunteer Education. The purpose is to exchange ideas and information that will expand volunteer opportunities and to help build a BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING among individuals of many nations.

"The only ones among you who will be truly happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve."  

Albert Schweitzer

PROGRAM

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 18

3:00 P.M.  RECEIPTION HONORING DELEGATES
Statham House
10286 Charing Cross Road
Los Angeles

Welcome:  Mrs. Alexander B. Ripley, President  
International Association for Volunteer Education

Delegates will be accompanied to this reception by their host families.
MONDAY, OCTOBER 19

9:00 A.M.  OPENING SESSION
University of California Recreation Center
Westwood Campus

Introduction to Conference: Mrs. Philip Colman
Chairmen LIVE Conference

KEYNOTE ADDRESS
Speaker: Margaret Hickey
Public Affairs Editor
Ladies Home Journal

SPANNING THE CHASMS
Understanding comes from learning about each other.

Delegates: Brief Reports

1:00 P.M.  LUNCHEON

2:15 P.M.  The morning program will be continued.

4:00 P.M.  Delegates will be driven to their host homes or hotels.

7:00 P.M.  DINNER
Westwood United Methodist Church
10497 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

A world problem and how volunteers can help.
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 20

8:30 A.M.  VOLUNTEER CLOSE-UP

Understanding comes from being with those who give.

Delegates will meet at the International Student Center, 1023 Hilgard Ave., Los Angeles

9:30 A.M.  GOLD KEY AWARDS BREAKFAST
Palladium
6215 West Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood

Speaker: Shana Alexander
Editor
McCall's Magazine

This annual event honoring volunteers is sponsored by the United Crusade.

12:00 Noon  VOLUNTEER CLOSE-UP VISITS IN AGENCIES OR HOSPITALS

Delegates will leave with their Gold Key hostesses to visit a hospital, agency or institution. These visits will include lunch and will emphasize experiences with active volunteers.

4:00 P.M.

Delegates will be driven to their host homes or hotels.

7:00 P.M.  FIESTA IN LOS ANGELES
Casa La Golondrina
35 Olvera Street
Los Angeles

An evening of entertainment takes place on the site of the original Plaza where the city of Los Angeles was founded.
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21

8:45 A.M.  SEE HOW IT WORKS

Understanding comes from first-hand knowledge.

Delegates will be picked up at the University of California Recreation Center, Westwood Campus, and taken to the agency hospital or institution of special interest to them.

1:00 P.M.  LUNCHEON
University of California Recreation Center
Westwood Campus

2:15 P.M.  EXPLORING ON BOTH SIDES OF THE BRIDGE

Understanding comes from discussion and exchange.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS,
Leader: Dr. Eva Schindler-Rainman
National Consultant on Community Organization

4:30 P.M.  Delegates will be driven to their host homes or hotels.

7:00 P.M.  Delegates will attend small dinner parties in private homes.
Your hostess will be:
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22

8:45 A.M.  NOVEL EXPERIENCES IN VOLUNTEERING

Understanding comes from exploring new ideas.

Delegates will be taken from the International Student Center to visit an agency of special interest to them.

12:00 Noon  DISNEYLAND TOUR

Agency personnel will bring delegates to the American Red Cross, 1200 S. Vermont Ave., which will be the point of departure.

Box lunch will be served aboard the bus to Disneyland.

5:30 P.M.  Dinner at Disneyland's 33 Club.

8:00 P.M.  Bus departs for home. Delegates will be returned to the home of Mrs. Donald MacKinnon, 10750 Ashton, Los Angeles.
FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23

9:30 A.M.  ESTABLISHING A FLOW OF COMMUNICATIONS AND CULTURE
Understanding comes from the ability to appreciate.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS
American Red Cross Service Center
1100 Veteran Ave.
Los Angeles

11:45 A.M.  LUNCHEON WITH THE STARS
Delegates will learn of volunteer work done by movie and television celebrities.
20th Century-Fox Film Corporation
10201 West Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles

2:00 P.M.  HOW VOLUNTEERS WORK IN CULTURAL PROGRAMS
Delegates will be taken by bus to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Los Angeles Music Center. They will see volunteers at work in these two cultural settings.

4:45 P.M.  Tea will be served in the Founders Room of the Music Center.

5:30 P.M.  Delegates will be driven to their host homes or hotels.

FREE EVENING!
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24

8:45 A.M.  THE BRIDGE OF UNDERSTANDING

Understanding comes from sharing.

Bus leaves International Student Center, 1023 Hilgard Ave.,
Los Angeles.

9:30 A.M.  VOLUNTEER EXPO

Assistance League of Southern California
1370 North St. Andrews
Hollywood

Delegates will have an opportunity to view exhibits prepared
by agencies and hospitals, meet and talk with individual volun-
teers, view films and slide presentations.

11:30 A.M.  SPEAK-UP

This final workshop session will be designed to create the
feeling that the end of this week together is NOT an ending,
but a beginning.

1:00 P.M.  LUNCHEON

CONFERENCE CHALLENGE

Speaker: Dr. Eva Schindler-Rainman

Delegates will be returned to their host homes or hotels in
time to rest and be ready for the evening program.

7:00 P.M.  FESTIVITIES CELEBRATING UNITED NATIONS DAY

Bel Air Bay Club
16801 W. Pacific Coast Highway
Pacific Palisades

PROGRAM

Entertainment: International Children’s Choir

Speaker: Elizabeth Koontz
United States Representative to the United Nations
Commission on the Status of Women
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER EDUCATION

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LIVE CONFERENCE

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American National Red Cross,
Los Angeles Chapter
Auxiliary of Los Angeles County
USC Medical Center
California Hospital Association
Church Women United,
Los Angeles.
Directors of Volunteers
In Agencies

Junior League of Los Angeles
Les Dames de Champagne
Los Angeles Council
of Catholic Women
Los Angeles Council of National
Voluntary Health Agencies
Mexican-American Women
of Los Angeles
National Council of Jewish Women,
Los Angeles Section

National Council of Negro Women
of Los Angeles
Southern California Council for
Directors of Volunteers in Hospitals
The Councils of the Los Angeles
County Museum of Art
UCLA Medical Center Auxiliary
Volunteer Bureau,
Los Angeles Region

"Bridge of Understanding", the cover photo, is a twenty-four by six foot memorial mural honoring the late Thomas F. Gore. Commissioned
by his friends, it was created by Riverside artist Florinda Eighton for the International Lounge of the University Commen of the University
of California, Riverside. Donated for the use of the LIVE Conference — Learn through International Volunteer Effort.
The LIVE (Learn Through International Volunteer Effort) Conference was held in Los Angeles in October 1970 with 85 delegates representing 15 countries attending. Los Angeles families hosted all of the delegates. By the end of their week together there was a commitment to form an International Board elected from all world regions. Volunteers supported by a network of National Representatives, who are themselves volunteers, do the work of the organization. Today IAVE brings together over 1,000 members from more than 100 countries. There is a permanent secretariat in Washington, DC, an International Resource Center in Taiwan, an IAVE Website, a Newsletter in four languages, Global Corporate Volunteer Council and linkages to a network of National Volunteer Centers and many international organizations. In 2001 the United Nations General Assembly designated the International Year of Volunteers. Mary traveled to Amsterdam to celebrate the kickoff of the International Year. She joined with thousands of volunteers from around the world to make a commitment to help address the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.
LAVE was created in 1970 as a world wide nonpolitical, nonprofit organisation to encourage and promote volunteering as a way to improve the quality of life for all people and to build bridges of understanding among caring people of all nations.

LAVE is now represented in over 40 countries in every part of the world. Members come together every two years in conference to explore issues, exchange information and experiences, establish valuable contacts and linkages, learn new techniques and renew their commitment to effective volunteering in their own nations and around the world.

LAVE provides the opportunity for individuals and organisations:
• To become part of an international network of people and organisations involved in volunteering.
• To learn creative new ways of dealing with daily situations volunteers face.
• To contribute one's own enthusiasm as a volunteer to others, building bridges and opening boundaries between nations.

LAVE membership is open to all individuals and organisations committed to furthering volunteer effort, and the importance of volunteering as a way for people to address human, economic and environmental issues.

LAVE members receive:
• Preferred registration fees at the biennial LAVE conferences.
• A regular international newsletter.
• A directory of members, listing their volunteer interests and resources.
"In 1984, ten days after accepting an appointment as Executive Director of Volunteering NSW in Australia I found myself in Colombia at the behest of Heather Buck my predecessor. Heather was the first IAVE member from Australia. Very new and very green I arrived at the world conference under the leadership of Olga de Pizano an outstanding volunteer leader from Colombia who had taken over the world Presidency from Mary two years previously.

The opening address took place amongst much pomp and ceremony in the presence of leaders of church and state and of course community organisations and government bodies. I was busy trying to keep up with it all. An announcement was made that Mary Ripley one of the founders of IAVE would speak next and of course I was keen to hear what she might say. She spoke clearly and delivered a message that was inclusive encouraging and at the same time demanding. I was listening to a "born leader". From that time on Mary was my mentor in the world of volunteering and has remained so for as long as I have been a member of IAVE.

Encouragement was always Mary's middle name. In 1986 we hosted the world conference on volunteering in Sydney, Australia. Mary helped every inch of the way and was there cheering all the things that went well and never saying a word about any inconveniences or things we might have done better.

In '88 much to my surprise I was elected World President of IAVE and remained so until 1996. Mary attended every Board meeting, replied to every telephone call or fax, read every paper that had to be perused, attended all meetings no matter where in the world they were, played a sterling role as a Board member. She stood beside me all the way during my term of office. I would never have managed the task without her.

Amongst all her volunteer duties with IAVE and with other organisations Mary always had time to bring delegations of American women to our meetings, to take time to travel with her delegation wisely and widely within each country, to meet the people and to learn much about the volunteer work of each country she visited.

I have been proud to work with Mary in the Americas, in Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Australia. She networked and much of the value of her presence was always to do with connecting people and organisations bringing vital information from one group of volunteers to another. She constantly looked for opportunities to encourage people in volunteer leadership and to acknowledge the value of what they did. She was always comfortable with grassroots volunteers as well as leaders of nations; it made little difference to Mary who they were, she was more interested in what they were doing or could do for the development of volunteer effort in their own country.
Mary Ripley is a woman of her time and before her time. Always good humored no matter whether we worked in the blazing heat or desperate cold, she always appeared to be in just the place she wanted to be no matter what the discomforts might be. People responded to that of course and loved her for it. In all her work Mary has been totally committed, she always loved a joke and when day was done enjoyed a tipple or two with colleagues and friends. She presented IAVE to the world as if it really mattered and of course it did. She assisted in and was at the core of its development from a small organisation linking American women with a handful of others from South America, Japan, and the Philippines, sharing insights into volunteer practices of the day, to a worldwide organisation working in partnership with United Nations Volunteers and with membership in 90 countries, connected formally and informally to sister organisations and IAVE national bodies all over the world.

Mary has a great eye for natural leaders. Many such leaders have been discovered by her and owe their growth within the volunteer movement to her careful nurturing and support.

I had the privilege of attending the IAVE world conference in India in November last year. There were six hundred participants from 69 countries. The content was amongst the richest I have seen at any of our meetings, challenging, deeply meaningful and embedded in our own history as an organisation and as the value IAVE is in the world today. Sadly Mary was unable to be with us, but as I sat quietly in the Gandhi Shrine where we met on the last evening drinking in the essence of the presence of the great man still so alive in India today I was grateful to Subhachari Dasgupta who has been a wonderfully faithful member of IAVE and who together with his family did so much to bring us a conference giving a strong international message about the value of volunteer effort bringing hope and peace to millions in a very troubled world. I whispered “Well done, Mary Ripley, you have lived to see a great energy in the world born out of a gathering of a few women in your living room more than 37 years ago. Thank you.”

Margaret Bell, Chain Reaction, Australia
Further information about IYV 2001

The United Nations General Assembly has designated the United Nations Volunteers programme as co-ordinating centre for the preparations, implementation and follow-up of the Year. With generous help from various governments, UNV has set up a small "Team IYV 2001" at its Bonn headquarters. The following items are available from the Team.

- Fortnightly update
- List of bodies supporting IYV
- "Yes, but what shall we do?"
- 2-page backgrounder
- UN Resolution on IYV 2001
- This brochure
- Guidance Notes

Mail or fax: Team IYV 2001
c/o UNV
Postfach 260111
D-531133 Bonn
Germany
(+49228) 815-2001

Email: Team@iyv2001.org
Website: www.iyv2001.org
“There are two things I always think of when I think of Mary: 1, as a relatively young 1st vice-president of IAVE I always felt very encouraged by her, and especially by her willingness to promote change in the organisation. Something elderly people do not do very often! You could feel that she liked it when new people came in with new ideas, and that is something I admire her for. 2. I’ve met Mary at several world conferences of IAVE and every time it was said that she was not sure that she would be able to come to the next conference. However: I felt that she should come to ‘my’ world conference in Amsterdam and I was very relieved when she arrived and we were able to honor her at the stage in Amsterdam! An important milestone at the conference and in the International Year of Volunteers.”

Theo van Loon, Chair, International Year of Volunteers 2001 IAVE World Conference, Netherlands
IAVE

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER EFFORT

NORTH AMERICAN REGION

A worldwide network promoting, supporting, and recognizing volunteer efforts through communication and collaboration.

Linking people involved in volunteer efforts or work around the world.
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER EFFORT

North American Region - United States, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean

WHAT WE ARE

▶ We were created in 1970, IAVE is in consultative status, category II, with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.
▶ We are governed by an international board of directors elected by its members.
▶ Our membership consists of representatives from over 100 countries.
▶ We encourage regions and nations to build their own structures to support the global network.
▶ We promote an international resource center for the exchange of information.
▶ We publish a quarterly newsletter.
▶ We publish an international membership directory and volunteer center directory.
▶ IAVE is an organization for all people regardless of race, nationality, color, religion, sex, age, or disability.
▶ We believe that volunteers can help solve the human and social problems of the world.

WHAT WE HAVE

▶ Developed a Universal Declaration on Volunteering.
▶ Created IAVE Youth as a worldwide network of young leaders committed to volunteer service.
▶ Brought together over sixty national volunteer centers throughout the world and continues to stimulate development of new centers.
▶ A biennial world conference is held in even numbered years.
▶ Developed a web site to facilitate information exchange.

WHAT WE ARE ABOUT

▶ Holds a regional conference in conjunction with the annual Points of Light Conference.
▶ Publishes a regional newsletter.
▶ Publishes a regional membership directory.

HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

Build the Global Network
▶ Participate in the biennial world conference.
▶ Contribute to the quarterly IAVE newsletter.
▶ Participate in the IAVE web site.
▶ Assist in fundraising activities to support member involvement in IAVE activities.
▶ Assist in organizing study tours of US volunteer leaders to other countries.
▶ Build mutual support relations with colleagues worldwide.

Build Awareness at Home
▶ Organize local and state celebrations for International Volunteer Day annually on December 5.
▶ Host a study visit by volunteer leaders from other countries or participate in study tours to other countries.
▶ Promote the IAVE logo as the worldwide symbol of the volunteer movement.
▶ Share volunteer information from around the world with your colleagues.
▶ Stimulate discussion of the Universal Declaration on Volunteering.

Strengthen the North American Region
▶ Help organize the annual regional meeting held in conjunction with the Points of Light Foundation conference.
▶ Assist in long-range planning for regional development.
▶ Recruit new members through the Each One Reach One campaign.
▶ Identify and create links with local, state and national organizations.
I first met Mary at the IAVE conference in Tokyo, Japan in 1994. We were getting on a bus from the hotel to the conference centre when she and Eleonore Schweppe learned I was from Canada and began the task of trying to recruit me for work for IAVE in North America. Mary had suffered some frustration in previous attempts to interest Canadians in the effort and seemed somewhat skeptical as to whether I would prove worth the effort. To be perfectly frank I was somewhat intimidated by the straight talking no nonsense American "dame". She seemed to be hewn from the same rock as women like Katherine Hepburn and Rosalind Russell and I wasn’t all that certain that a mild mannered Canuck would have much to offer that she would find acceptable.

Over the next couple of years I got to know both Eleonore and Mary well as they both attended and participated in Volunteer Canada conferences in Canada and I attended the 1996 IAVE Conference in South Africa. I learned that once you showed yourself a true friend of IAVE that Mary was unwavering in the support she would give you, the friendship she would offer and in her loyalty to you. I learned of her love for vodka and heard tales of her many adventures all over the world, Vodka bottle in tow for IAVE. I think Russia was a particular highlight for her for obvious reasons! I was delighted to have the chance to see more of her after I joined the board of IAVE at the 1998 World Volunteer Conference in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. I continued to be amazed at her wisdom, stamina and dedication to the cause of volunteering worldwide.

In 2000 we attended a Board meeting together in Amsterdam which was a lead up to the following year’s International Year of Volunteers IAVE Conference which was to be held there in January 2001. We were sharing a taxi to a down town restaurant and I was reminiscing about my first and last visit to Amsterdam in 1968. Mary responded with her own memories of visiting the city for the first time in 1933 when she undertook a world tour with her mother. Her stories of Europe poised on the precipice certainly did mine of my hitch hiking and hostelling youth. I love to hear her stories of far distant travels, of recent travels both for IAVE and for her own pleasure and of the people of IAVE that she knows and loves from around the world.

In the summer of 2001 I had the wonderful pleasure of joining Mary for a brief stay at Riptide her family summer place in Washington State. In visiting there I got new insights into Mary as a person and what keeps her grounded. It was a privilege that I will cherish as one of my golden memories. I will look back too on the drive we made - Mary at the wheel - from Washington State up to Vancouver for a CIVICUS Conference. There were a couple of U-turns along the way and lots of laughs and great conversation.

I consider Mary to be one of my strongest and most inspiring mentors. I now work in the field of senior issues and Mary is a firm beacon for how to age - not necessarily gracefully, there is nothing graceful about Mary-but with gusto and joie de vivre and continued commitment to what matters most in life.”

Sandra Murphey, IAVE Canada
18a CONFERÈNCIA MUNDIAL
Voluntariat = interès per les persones, un motor pel canvi
DEL VOLUNTARIAT IAVE

Barcelona
17 a 21 d'agost 2004
Fòrum Universal de les Cultures
Voluntariado = Interés por las personas, motor para el cambio
Volunteering = In the people's interest, engine for the change
Volontariat = Intéret pour les personnes, moteur de changement
Volunteering Taiwan, Volunteering You & Me
A Snapshot of the Voluntary Sector in Taiwan
2004

Taiwan

Links
HPF Taiwan www.avetaiwan.org
National Youth Commission www.nyc.gov.tw
Ministry of the Interior www.moi.gov.tw

Printed by
APA Taiwan
10F, No. 14, Sec. 2, Kung-Hsing Rd.

Taipei City

Hualien County

Taitung County

Pingtung County

Ministry of the Interior www.moi.gov.tw
ABOUT MARY – Mary’s indomitable spirit comes across as you meet and interact with her. At 92, she still carries her own bags when traveling abroad, is eager to ride the motorcycle and take up every challenge with alacrity. When I first met her at the 2001 Asia Pacific IAVE Regional Conference, I was amazed both at this spirit as well as the incisive comments whenever she spoke. She congratulated us for getting in so many young people to be involved and interacted with many of the speakers, who remain charmed. Having been to every Conference, just showed her determination, drive and passion for building bridges of understanding between cultures. It was indeed my good fortune to be with her at Barcelona when we went to Gaudi’s Park Guell. Mary as the integrator, we had a lot of fun. In between cups of coffee, suddenly Mary said “you know I shook hands with Gandhi” and I practically fell off my chair, she continued, “It was in Lahore and I was sweet on one of the young men recruited by the army.” Now this was a woman who, to my mind, had done it all. We really missed her at the World Conference in India, this year 2006, where the spirit of Gandhi prevailed over the entire Conference, as does Mary whenever we all meet at IAVE. My parents have been long standing members of IAVE and all of us, including my brother and sister-in-law remember her with much fondness and hope that we will be able to be of service to further the spirit of inclusion, that makes IAVE, even after 36 years an unique organization worldwide.”

Indira Dasgupta, People’s Institute for Development & Training, New Delhi, India
"I am glad to know that a memoir is being prepared for our great leader.

This is in line with one of the objectives of IAVE - celebrating volunteers.

It is also very fundamental to correct the wrong impression that volunteers are unsung. I recall the submission of late Sharon Capeling-Alakija (former Executive Director of UNV) that “Voluntary action takes place whether or not we take notice. It often happens without official sanction or support. But the fact that good deeds grow in the wild does not free us from the obligation to cultivate them.”

The story of Mary Ripley is one that challenges me so much as a young volunteer. Contributing 70 years out of 88 years of her life volunteering is a record to beat. Her story should be told to the world as a sign of her selflessness. It reiterates my belief that volunteering and volunteers can go a long way in solving the world’s numerous problems. Her record makes me feel that I am yet to start as a volunteer. Vitalis Anopue, IAVE Board member for Africa”.

“Young people are bringing a fresh new look to the ranks of do-gooders. They’re energetic, enthusiastic and, above all, they want to give an honest, effective performance.” Mary Ripley

Mary has influenced IAVE in the development of many programs. Two areas, which she focused on, will have implications for years to come – formation of Youth Council and the development of Global Corporate Volunteer Council.

The Youth Council held its’ first meeting in Buenos Aires in 1992. The first meeting resulted in the youth forming a Council with a designated leader. This has evolved to their present status of a World Youth Conference preceding the IAVE World meetings. In 2004 youth introduced a research instrument to track participants’ reaction to workshops. They communicated via the Internet to set up opening and closing plenary session reports. The 2006 Youth Summit held in Delhi had “Youth as Agents of Change” for its slogan. Over 300 young people from 21 countries came together in Delhi to discuss, deliberate and explore how their actions can affect social change. The youth of the conference debated various issues related to volunteerism such as the role of media, sustainable development, humanitarian action, partnerships and peace. On the second day of the conference, workshop groups presented their discussion results and contributed towards a collective statement of youth volunteerism that has been published by IAVE.
FEATURE

Youth News

XX IAVE World Conference agenda out!
The agenda for the XX IAVE World Conference is out now. As you can see, it contains workshops, seminars, a youth forum, field trips, visits to volunteer projects, tours and lots of fun!

view news

Youth Events

8/12/2007 4th Annual Youth Assembly at UN
4/2/2008 XX IAVE World Conference

view all events

Youth Articles

There are no articles for Youth Section.

Youth Resources

Youth Links

National Youth Commission, Taiwan
The National Youth Commission (NYC) of Taiwan is the government minist ...

view more...

view all links

Youth Discussion

Most recent post:
Strengthening IAVE’s relationships with corporations was another area of concern for Mary. Through her encouragement the IAVE Board appointed a Board member as corporate liaison. Mary enlisted IAVE members with past experience in corporate volunteerism to make recommendations to the Board. The result was the formation of a Global Corporate Volunteer Council (G-CVC). G-CVC was inaugurated at the 2006 World Conference in New Delhi.

Global Corporate Volunteer Council

About GCV

The time is ripe to address the issue of global corporate volunteering. Multinational companies are looking for opportunities to learn from each other and work together to make the world a better place by contributing to programs such as the UN's Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

IAVE's new initiative, the Global Corporate Volunteer Council will help multinational companies effectively address world social needs, and raise awareness of corporate volunteering.

GCV will involve companies around the world in the Corporate Track at the IAVE's World Conferences, build an international network of National Councils on Corporate Volunteerism, lobby governments and other organizations, and impact on the MDGs.

In addition to addressing the MDGs and global poverty, hunger, disease, environmental issues, the GCV will positively benefit individuals working for major corporations by their participation in effective volunteer activities, thereby helping recruitment and retention of valuable personnel, and building employee loyalty to GCV companies.

GCV activities will include targeted out-reach programs for global companies, topical conference calls and webinars, printed and e-news publications, nomination processes for a Global Corporate Volunteering Award, strong Corporate Tracks at IAVE World Conference and other venues where corporate volunteering is featured.

Sarah Hayes heads the GCV. Sarah is a former Board Member of IAVE and Liaison for Corporate Volunteering. She has over 14 years of experience in the corporate volunteering sector, having founded and developed KPMG's award-winning Involve Program, and served on the National Council of Workplace Volunteerism, the U.S. Committee for the International Year of Volunteers, and the International Association for Volunteer Administration Visioning Task Force. She is an international speaker on topics relating to corporate volunteering and partnerships, and is also a Senior Consultant for the Civil Society Consulting Group.

For information and membership opportunities, contact Sarah Hayes at sarah@civilsocietyconsulting.com or call +1(643)532-2234.

Submitted by: Anthony Carlisle

Document: GCV_Council_Brochure.pdf
“One of the reasons for the continuing success of IAVE has always been its capacity to attract outstanding leaders to its Board, and to elect exceptional people as its President. As the first-ever President of IAVE, Mary Ripley set a standard of vision and commitment which laid the foundation for IAVE’s growth into a vibrant and influential worldwide organisation. Her loyalty and attachment to the organisation are unequalled.

As one who came comparatively late to IAVE, I did not have the opportunity of working as closely with Mary as I would have wished. My first experience of her was as a member of the Board, which created the position of Life Member of the Board for her. Since then, I have had the pleasure of meeting her and seeing her in action at Board meetings around the world. Like others before me, I have benefited from her sound judgment and her wisdom, and have admired her shrewdness and strong strategic sense.

Most of all however, I have enjoyed her company at meetings, and around tables. She balances her professionalism with a warmth and sense of fun which must surely have been an important factor in helping to build the culture of friendship and mutual respect, which still characterises IAVE.

IAVE owes to Mary and her colleagues on that first Board more than we can ever fully know. It is a great pleasure to be able to share in this tribute to a truly remarkable person, and an exceptional career in and for volunteering.

Mary, thank you, and warmest good wishes,”
Liz Burns, IAVE President 2007

Themes of the IAVE World Conferences reflect major world concerns such as Reconciliation, Sustainability, Peace and Cultural Diversity.

Mary concludes “Today IAVE has a sense of renewed energy. I would like to live long enough to have secure funding for IAVE.”
Women’s issues have been another focus for Mary. She has served as founder member of the American Women for International Understanding (AWIU), President of Los Angeles Planned Parenthood and a member of their National Board and the Board of the Global Fund for Women.

“I became acquainted with Mary when she was President of Planned Parenthood Los Angeles; I was a board member of what was then Planned Parenthood Santa Clara County. Then, as now, I admired her forthrightness and courage -- and great good humor -- as she stood up for causes we believed in deeply. She continues to do so at Sequoias and in her world travels. She is Indomitable!”

Helen Pickering, Planned Parenthood, Palo Alto, CA

“My first encounter with Mary Ripley made a lasting impression: In my early days with Planned Parenthood I spent many hours in Board President training sessions with the suits. Topics included board development, leadership and governance. My epiphany came when Mary stood up after some lengthy presentation and in her most direct and articulate way named the elephant in the room, defined the task ahead and promptly sat down. For a neophyte this was an empowering moment and a validation of experience, common sense and brevity.”

Patty Boyle, Planned Parenthood
International Planned Parenthood Federation

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The International Planned Parenthood Federation is a global non-governmental organization with the broad aims of promoting sexual and reproductive health, and advocating the right of individuals to make their own choices in family planning. It was first formed in 1952 in Bombay, India, and now consists of more than 149 Member Associations working in more than 189 countries. IPPF is highly devolved, and is organized into six regions.

Contents

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Purpose

Member Associations provide non-profit family planning services, sexual health and abuse prevention training and education. Their goals include giving clients the information necessary to make informed sexual health decisions, promoting continuing sexual health, making available high quality sexual health services, improving the overall health of low income individuals, and using democratic organization and the leadership of volunteers to promote these goals.

Funding

The IPPF is financially supported by governments, trusts, and foundations including the European Commission and the United Nations Population Fund for special projects. Half of the balance of their funding comes from government official development assistance programmes. To achieve their goals as an organization, the IPPF often collaborates with the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). IPPF is a prominent lobbyist in the European Union; specifically, for the European Council and the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). It is the only non-governmental organization (NGO) that focuses on sexual health and reproductive rights to qualify for Consultative Status with the Council of Europe. This allows the IPPF to sit in on the Parliamentary Assembly.
With the aim of exploring the 20th Century women’s role and concerns, AWIU members seek to acquire knowledge through study, travel and symposia designed to develop international understanding. Mary’s Delegation leadership began in 1968 with an historic visit to The Soviet Union. She visited Russia with 29 other women from all parts of the United States, all private citizens interested in certain facets of Russian life. Her particular interest was child welfare, since there are no Soviet volunteers, and she toured day care centers, orphanages and other child-oriented facilities. Mary recounts her impression “In the Soviet Union I saw the supreme commitment of Soviet women to their philosophy and realized the need for a deeper commitment on my part to our way of life. In the Soviet Union there is a lack of emphasis on the individual, and in this country I see again the privilege of having the privilege of choice, which comes back to the volunteer movement, and having the ability to say whether I will or will not go to work here or there. The lack of freedom of choice is pretty devastating; every American should go to the Soviet Union and see the conditions there, and realize how important commitment to our ideals is.” AWIU was one of the first women’s organizations to be received in the People’s Republic of China. Mary has taken on the task of leading delegations to the Middle East, Europe, and South America. Delegations identified potential women leaders for AWIU scholarships. They also contacted women who might be interested in grants from the Global Fund for Women. While traveling Mary frequently called at Planned Parenthood offices around the world. When asked what volunteer effort had brought her the most satisfaction, Mary responded “my volunteer work in family planning, which cuts across all concerns, women’s rights and all world problems.” Her leadership and organizational skills are formidable.
AWIU was founded in 1968 to create good-will and mutual understanding by facilitating communications and personal contacts among women leaders worldwide.

AWIU is a non-profit, non-governmental organization of American women which sponsors delegate exchanges and an international grant study program.

AWARDS PROGRAM
AWIU honors women who have contributed to international understanding by presenting them with the AWIU Award for Internationalism. AWIU has recognized outstanding women in diplomacy, politics, scientific achievement, academia, communications and other fields. The presentation event draws members and guests throughout the nation and revenue raised at this award ceremony is used to fund the AWIU Grant Program.

In 2003, the first Bernice Behren Founders' Award was given to a woman who has been an author, lecturer and goodwill ambassador. This award will be given from time to time to women who have demonstrated exceptional contributions to diplomacy and to international understanding.

CHAPTER PROGRAMS
The experiences of AWIU delegations are shared in special meetings held in various U.S. cities and on the organization's website. All returning delegates prepare written reports to be distributed and discussed at the meetings which include members, invited guests and, frequently, the general public. The symposia demonstrate how vital the friendships established abroad are to the growth of knowledge and to AWIU's goal of international understanding. Typical matters considered are global challenges, such as population growth, child care, education, international trade, politics and entrepreneurship.
OUR PROGRAMS

DELEGATIONS
Since 1968, the year of its founding, AWIU has sponsored more than 50 delegations to the U.S.S.R., European, African, Asian, Latin American, and Middle Eastern countries, the Peoples Republic of China, Australia and New Zealand. The 2002 delegation to Saudi Arabia was the first delegation of women from any country invited to visit that Kingdom.

AWIU members have the opportunity to join official AWIU delegations to visit other countries. Each official visit includes in the itinerary meetings with women in leadership positions in government, business and cultural organizations. AWIU especially seeks to visit and support women who have made outstanding individual attempts to improve the lives of their countrymen who are impoverished or in isolated circumstances. Visits to private homes and embassies are often included in a trip, as well as some touring to visit historical sites.

GRANTS
Since 1990, AWIU has actively recruited and selected emerging leaders from other countries to come to the United States for specialized short-term training, study, intern programs, and for travel related to their particular area of interest. Grant programs are individually designed and center on educational opportunities.

The grant itineraries have included study and observations at such institutions as Stanford University, Mayo Clinic, National Gallery of Art, Merchandise Mart Chicago, George Washington University, University of San Francisco, Columbia University and Mills College. Grantees are introduced to professionals within their sphere of interest and, through AWIU members, have been able to spend time with American women and their families and to attend civic, social and cultural events.

While grant programs enhance education, they also prepare the grant recipients for further specific leadership responsibilities in their own communities. The success of the AWIU Grant program can be seen through the accomplishments of its recipients. Grantees include:

- Documentary film maker, People’s Republic of China
- Professor of American literature, Czech Republic
- Cardiologist, Russia
- Fashion retailer, Lithuania
- University Director of Women’s Studies, Ireland
- Art Museum Curator, France
- Administrator, environmental program, Australia
- Refugee resettlement worker, Palestine
- International banker, China
- Social worker, Mongolia
- University administrator, Afghanistan
- Emergency Pediatric Physician, Poland
Delegation Photos

American Women at the Soviet Embassy

Preparing for their visit to the Soviet Union last month, these members of American Women for International Understanding were the guests of Mrs. Irina Dobrynin, wife of the Soviet Ambassador to the United States. From left: Mrs. Bernice Behrens, director of the U.S. Department of State Reception Center in San Francisco; Mrs. Harry Camp; Mrs. Armigene Johnson, president of d'Armigene, Inc.; Mrs. Dobrynin and Mrs. M. Ripley. Mrs. Behrens and Mrs. Johnson led a similar delegation to the Soviet Union in 1988. This year again, the group visited several Soviet cities, meeting with members of the Soviet Women's Committee and the Institute of Soviet-American Relations and exchanging views on child care and other problems of interest to women everywhere.
Madam Olga de Bzano, World President, IAVE (International Association for Volunteer Effort), Mrs. Margaret Bell, President, and Members of the Executive Committee of the 9th IAVE Conference Australia '86 (Learn Through International Volunteer Effort) have much pleasure in inviting you to attend the Opening of the Conference in the Grand Ballroom at the Sydney Hilton Hotel at 8.45 a.m. on Monday, 22nd September, 1986.

The Keynote Address will be given by Mrs. Hazel Hawke who will speak on Volunteering — Today's Fresh Option

R.S.V.P. 1st September, 1986
LIVE SECRETARIAT,
5th Floor, 383 George Street,
SYDNEY, N.S.W. 2000.

Please be seated by 8.45 a.m.
Present this card on arrival

IAVE Conference
Australia 1986

HERON ISLAND
GREAT BARRIER REEF

Post conference trip to Heron Island
Australia, 1986
ABD'li papatyalar
İstanbul'a hayran

ÜRK Kadını Gökçendirme ve Ta-
mitma Vakti Dyesi papatyaların da-
yettiler olarak dikkimize gelen
"Amerikan papatyalar" dön İstanbul'u
geziler. Amerikan kadınların Uluslararası
Antalya Geliştirme Derneği Dyesi, yerli
papatyaları kısa sürede kaynaştılar. Ka-
rıye Camii, Ayasofya Camii, Yerebatan Sa-
raysı gibi tarihi yerleri gezin yapıcı ko-
nuklar daha sonra Türk haliliğini ince-
lediler.
Mary with Patience Peshe
Women for Peace
South Africa 1996

Alexandra Township
Creche
Who We Are

The Global Fund for Women is an international network of women and men committed to a world of equality and social justice. We advocate for and defend women’s human rights by making grants to support women’s groups around the world.

We are part of a global women’s movement that is rooted in a commitment to justice and an appreciation of the value of women’s experience. The challenges women face vary widely across communities, cultures, religions, traditions and countries. We believe that women should have a full range of choices, and that women themselves know best how to determine their needs and propose solutions for lasting change. The way in which we do our work is as important as what we do. This philosophy is reflected in our flexible, respectful and responsive style of grantmaking.

The Global Fund makes grants to seed, strengthen and link women’s rights groups based outside the United States working to address human rights issues that include:

- Ending Gender-Based Violence and Building Peace
- Ensuring Economic and Environmental Justice
- Advancing Health and Sexual and Reproductive Rights
- Expanding Civil and Political Participation
- Increasing Access to Education
- Fostering Social Change Philanthropy
Investing in women's human rights

News

Celebrate March
Women's History Month!

Global Fund News
Women of the World: Acoustic

BLOG
Global news, women's voices

March 29, 2007
Promoting Democracy, Imposing Theocracy
In spring 2003, as the smoke began to clear from the US invasion of Iraq, a wave of kidnappings, abductions, public beatings, death threats, sexual assaults, and killings gripped the country. The targets were women.

Read Full Post

March 27, 2007
Women's Rights During Wartime
"Several countries in the Middle East have signed international treaties on human rights protection, including women's rights. However, unfortunately, most of these agreements had remained on papers and have not been really implemented." Zeina Zastari, Program Officer for the Middle East and North Africa told the Khaleej Times.

Read Full Post

On March 8, women all over the world will celebrate International Women's Day. Though
Investing in women's human rights

News
Triple Gold Awards
The Global Fund for Women has been named a Gold award winner for excellence in communication in the 2007 William Shields Rich Awards Program sponsored by the Council on Foundations. The Global Fund for Women received three Gold awards for the 2006-2008 Annual Report, the 2005 Special Report Caught In the Storm: The Impact of Natural Disasters on Women and for the newly designed website.

Support the Global Fund and Putumayo World Music
Support the Global Fund and Putumayo World Music

BLOG
Global news, women's voices

April 4, 2007
Tsunami in the Solomon Islands
The Board and staff of Global Fund for Women would like to express our deep sadness about the destruction and loss of life that has resulted from the tsunami that affected the Solomon Islands on April 1, 2007. Read Full Post

March 29, 2007
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Four-Star Charity Navigator Rating
For the fifth year in a row, the Global Fund for...
"I have known Mary as a volunteer for many years and particularly in the very early years of The Global Fund for Women when she always was available to us to give advice, help with mailings and stuff envelopes, or just provide a marvelous model of the perfect volunteer. Mary is an outstanding role model for me on growing old gracefully--with humor, intelligence, compassion, and courage. I am so grateful to Mary for leading the way. Thank you, Mary."
Anne Firth Murray, Global Fund for Women

"Where does one begin to find the words to describe Mary Ripley?

At the Global Fund for Women, even our role model, Lillian, who is 81, says that she wants to be Mary when she is all grown up!

“I remember meeting Mary for the first time at the reception to welcome me, as a young 33-year-old successor to Anne Firth Murray – a founder, an innovator and visionary. I felt very small, young, and rather overwhelmed. I had never lived in California, I knew no donors, and did not really know if I was going to be able to live up to the incredible legacy that had been put in place by Anne. And then a kindly face broke through the blur and enveloped me in a welcoming hug – it was Mary Ripley.

I saw her many times after that – stuffing envelopes or coming to brown bag lunches in our small offices on Sheridan Ave in Palo Alto. I will always remember Mary introducing us to Adam and Rachel Albright – active donors to the environmental movement, but not knowing much about the Global Fund for Women. We watched her transmit the energy and enthusiasm of each one of our grantees on the ground to these new visitors. Her eyes shone and her whole body reflected the sense of commitment and joy that doing this work gave her.

It was no surprise that shortly thereafter, the Global Fund for Women, received a generous first time contribution from Adam and Rachel, who have gone on to become long time and committed supporters, not just of the Global Fund, but also of women’s rights worldwide.

Thank you for modeling Ghandi’s words for me in the flesh: You are the Change we wish to see in the World.”
Kavita Ramdas, Global Fund for Women

“There are so many things I love about Mary. One of the best is her way of “voting with her feet.” When Mary takes on a cause, she becomes a tireless advocate, expressing her involvement in very concrete acts – whether it be stuffing envelopes at a Global Fund for Women mailing, or acting as a formidable fundraiser for Planned Parenthood. She is a volunteer extraordinaire, and a wonderful role model for us all.”
Esther Hewlett, Global Fund for Women
“The power of women with regard to the International Women’s Year 1975 Conference and Tribune in Mexico City has to come forth in a way to deal with worldwide issues. We have to work not just from our own agenda or from our own organization’s agenda. We must begin to think big. We must begin to deal with issues such as how to save the earth and do away with hunger.”

Mary Ripley

As President of IAVE, Mary Ripley convened a meeting in Los Angeles to prepare for the International Women’s Year. Mary explained that the purpose of the meeting was twofold: To exchange ideas for specific actions that could be launched in Los Angeles in connection with International Women’s Year and to gather suggestions for discussion at the Mexico City Tribune. The meeting was attended by representatives from over 30 Los Angeles area organizations including the National Council of Jewish Women, Los Angeles League of Women Voters, Los Angeles DOVIA (Directors of Volunteers in Agencies), the Los Angeles Library Commission, Los Angeles County/USC Medical Center Auxiliary, Los Angeles branch of the American Cancer Society, the YWCA, Church Women United, Build the Earth, the UCLA Rehabilitation Center and UCLA Medical Center Auxiliary, Los Angeles chapter of Women in Communications, Inc., and the Los Angeles Voluntary Action Center, among others.

Mary attended the World Conference of the International Women’s Year convened by the United Nations in Mexico City in 1975. Simultaneously, a Tribune of nongovernmental organizations, which have consultative status with the U.N. and concerned individuals from all area and backgrounds, met.

“Mary Roberts Ripley does not fit into a soundbite!

One cannot separate her volunteer life from her personal life. It is in her nature to take initiative, provide leadership, and organize people to accomplish projects small and large, be it a dinner for six at Riptide or an international conference in Asia. She lives ten minutes away from us in Portola Valley, CA, but Mary is a citizen of the world. She has inspired and enabled us to travel unknown roads, literally and figuratively.

To use a phrase familiar to Mary when she orders food in her beloved Guatemala, she has enriched our lives and surely made them ‘más picante’.”

Mary & Bob Dodge, Portola Valley, CA
A FOND TRIBUTE TO MARY RIPLEY

“When I think of the phrase, “one of a kind” or the word, “extraordinary”, I think of a few people that I’ve been privileged to know and to work with whose character traits are an inspiration to us all. I immediately think of Mary Ripley.

I define exceptional “character” in a person as:

1. The ability to stand up and speak out on behalf of a cause, even when it is not popular to do so.

2. The willingness to sacrifice personal comfort or gain to help another, especially when it’s done anonymously, and even more especially when the beneficiary is a perfect stranger.

3. To know what’s right and to do what’s right, no matter what the consequences.

All her life, Mary Ripley has lived up to these character traits. In her work with Planned Parenthood, Population Communications International and the Global Fund for Women, these character traits were ever-present and always expressed with dignity and grace.

Most of all, Mary has managed to display exceptional character and still be liked by everybody. OK, OK...everybody except right-wing Republicans, anti-choice nut cases and people who don’t understand the importance of a good cocktail before dinner!

I will always see Mary in my mind’s eye getting on a plane to travel the world, getting up early to participate in a telephone conference set for the convenience of those of us on the East Coast, and never complaining, no matter how uncomfortable she might be in the process of helping others less fortunate.

We all need role models to teach us and inspire us along the way. Some of us are lucky. We know Mary Ripley.”

David Andrews, New York

“I met Mary Ripley in May of 1988 at Kennedy Airport. Mary and my sister, Ellen Linsley, were returning from an AWIU Delegation to Turkey and Greece. They had a layover between planes, so I went out to the airport to have dinner with them.

I felt an instant rapport with Mary and enjoyed the evening very much. Over the years this was followed by a few fun days at Riptide and a lovely private time together in New York.

I salute a truly great woman – an inspiration to all who come in contact with her.”

Jane Gass, New York City
The Last Word!

“A well-dressed man in a well-bottled bar in New York City was heard telling this interesting bit of history:

Oh yes, I do indeed know Mary Ripley. What a gal! Here's how we met. I was attending a conference in Cairo, that is in Egypt you know, and the place was swarming with women with causes, but one of them stood apart and above the others. She was funny; she was interesting and she was eloquent. That was Mary of course!

Well, at the end of the conference — this one on contraceptive needs, prenatal care, sex education, all the usual stuff; anyway, it seems that some enterprising person had chartered a small plane in order to get the right people over to Casablanca where the next conference had already started. There were maybe a dozen of us, Mary in the lead of course, and we took off early the next morning. We had a French pilot at the controls and a good-looking stewardess.

Well, at some point, while we were skimming over the desert, the engines started banging and the pilot told us in halting franglais, Messeurdames, it is necessaire to be dropping down, etc. He meant we had to land. He was heading for a small oasis just ahead and down in the sands.

We didn’t freak, but there was some praying and then we were on the ground and the stewardess picked herself up off the floor and told us to remain calm which she wasn’t and while she was yakking, Mary Ripley was at the exit door, manhandling that big handle, and the door slunk back with which the escape slide automatically inflated and there was Mary, feet first as instructed, sliding down the ladder clutching her purse. At the bottom, I saw her take out what looked like a little black address book and I saw her squinting through the date palms while calling a camel keeper over to her. He came with some trepidation due to the big bird which had landed on top of the camel dung heap, and Mary was gesticulating and the man was bobbing his head, and then he turned and ran like gazelle through the oasis. Mary turned and called to us to "Come on down!" Within minutes, while we were navigating the slide, I saw a big black-bearded man with a magnificent turban on his head heading in Mary’s direction. What do you know? Arms were flung around each other; the Sheik was kissing Mary’s hand, and pretty soon our entire higgledy-piggledy group was following Mary and Sheik over the sands into his dung-roofed mansion.

Seems that the Sheik and Mary had shared a vodka once in Marrakesh while discussing how contraceptives should or should not be dispensed to the Sheik’s 11 wives. Mary had won the day by reminding the handsome turbanned man that if he had too many sons each one would try to replace him and it would cost him a lot of camels.
At a meal we all shared with horror that night (it included camels' eyes as a special treat), the Sheik make a remarkable toast to Mary, thanking her for hand delivering 12 dozen colored condoms to his sheikdom. Of course Mary had indeed included these important items in her carry-on bag.

Now there's one incredible, wonderful, never to be copied, woman! Here's to the one and only Mary Ripley, about whom stories are told all over the world.”
Trish Hooper, The Sequoias.

* * *

Dream fulfilled
The Motorcycle Ride 2006