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Pettay starts Peace Corps adventure

Beth Day
The Times

Making a difference and a sense of belonging. Those are two of the goals Wamegoan Alexis Pettay hopes to accomplish through her adventures with the Peace Corps.

Established by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, the Peace Corps has sent over 235,000 Americans of all ages to 141 different countries worldwide. Pettay has joined that number as she left on Aug. 20 to spend 27 months in the Dominican Republic.

The Peace Corps has been on her mind ever since high school. Then, in college, the idea grew. "I decided I wanted to do the Peace Corps because throughout college I took human rights classes and I am really interested in having a professional career in sustainable development," she said. "The Peace Corps really applies to that."

"I also like the platform," she continued. "You don't go and initiate your own project. The Peace Corps has something assigned for you based on what the community needs, rather than you going in to tell the community what it needs."

Pettay will be working in the education sector as a Spanish Literacy Promoter. "I'll be improving the reading and writing skills of primary students in Spanish," she said. "I hope to be a culturally competent volunteer during my service. I also want to be able to be a self-starter and be adaptable with problem-solving. My personal goal is to be open to embracing failure and to be willing to take big risks."

Upon arrival in the Dominican Republic, she began an intensive three months of immersion language training, but it's not for beginners. "It requires two years of high school or college level Spanish and you're more competitive if you have a higher level. The goal is to get you speaking high or high intermediate Spanish by the time you are done with training, if you are not already at that level."

Pettay said she had been taking Spanish throughout high school and in college. "I'm probably at the mid-intermediate level right now," she said. "I've taken some advanced Spanish classes, but have not had the chance to fully immerse myself. I'd say I'm pretty good with the grammar, but my conversational skills need a little work."

After the three months of training near Santo Domingo, she will be sworn into service and assigned to another community to begin her two years with the Corps.

She expects some adjustment challenges along the way. One of them is privacy. As the program is set up, she will be staying with a couple of host families – one during training and the other after her arrival at her permanent community.

"One thing I've learned about that culture, privacy doesn't really exist," she said. "It's



Courtesy Photos

Alexis Pettay has volunteered for the Peace Corps. She will be spending the next 27 months in the Dominican Republic.

kind of frowned upon to lock yourself in your room for a couple hours and not communicate. You need to have that extroverted personality all the time. I think that will be hard. I'm used to having a couple hours a day to spend time with myself.

"I think another big challenge will be learning the Dominican accent and slang. It will be hard not to speak properly at first," she said. "It will also be hard not seeing my family whenever I want to."

She is excited about her adventure.

"I really want to get so

much out of the experience," she said. "I'm looking forward to living in another place again, since I haven't been outside the United States since I went to Ghana a couple of years ago. And, I'm looking forward to trying new things and having each day be an adventure. And, of course, I'm hoping to make a difference with the children I'm helping."

"I also want to be able to make a place feel like home anywhere in the world, develop great relationships with the community and have a place I will feel fond of and can always go back

to." Pettay is the daughter of Robert and Theresa Pettay of Wamego, and a 2015 graduate of Wamego High School. She attended Webster University in St. Louis, Mo. where she earned a bachelor's in English in May 2019. Prior to joining the Peace Corps, she tutored for the Immigrant and Refugee Women's program of St. Louis, and for the Multi-cultural Counseling and Research Center of St. Louis.

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the September 5, 2019 edition of The Times.

Anniversary

Mettlers celebrate 50th Anniversary

John and Kathy Mettler, Paxico, will be celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary on Oct. 26, 2019 from 1 p.m. – 3 p.m., at Paxico Longbranch. The couple requests no gifts. It would make their day to just visit with familiar faces for a little while.

They were married in a private ceremony Oct. 25, 1969. They have two children: Angie Mettler; and Tammy (Keith) Hall. They also have two grandchildren: Walker and Olivia Hall.

Home of the Flint Hills wins National Residential Assisted Living Award

Owners Brad and Angie Jones of Wamego with the Above and Beyond Award.

PHOENIX, ARIZONA- October 4, 2019 – The Residential Assisted Living Academy (RAL) announced the winners of their 2019 National awards at their National Convention being held at the Arizona Grand Resort and Spa, Friday evening. Among the winners was that of Home of the Flint Hills of St. George, KS and its owners Brad and Angie Jones of Wamego, KS.

Brad and Angie were presented with the Above and Beyond Award for their beautiful and unique Residential Adult Care Home and the work that is done within it every day to enrich their resident's lives.

Friday the Jones' also were honored by sitting on a Successful Student Panel where they answered questions to help give knowledge to other current owners and any future entrepreneurs in Residential Assisted Living market. Residential Adult Care Homes are newer concept in the senior housing market.

Residential assisted living is a neighborhood-based senior housing model that offers an intimate family-like setting. These homes are usually located in the heart of traditional neighborhoods and built to look like a traditional ranch style home.

These smaller homes have fewer caregivers to allow for more familiar faces that are frequently seen by the residents daily. They provide an actual home-like environment that is caring and nurturing. RAL homes are community-based and family centered.

Home of the Flint Hills opened their doors in April of 2018 with their first Residential Adult Care Home. They are currently in the process of building their second home in the community that will open in 2020. It will specialize in the area of Memory Care for those who are struggling with the diagnosis of Alzheimer's and Dementia.

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