

Jeanette (Kitti) Kitzman Oral History Interview
Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
Administrative Information

Creator: Jeanette (Kitti) Kitzman
Interviewer: Kimiko Doherty
Date of Interview: August 13, 2011
Location of Interview: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Length: 33 pages

Biographical Note

Jeanette (Kitti) Kitzman served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru from 1964 to 1967 on a Latin American arts and crafts project.

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Suggested Citation

Jeanette (Kitti) Kitzman, recorded interview by Kimiko Doherty, August 13, 2011, page #, Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum.

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Oral History Interview

with

Jeanette (Kitti) Kitzman

August 13, 2011
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

By Kimiko Doherty

Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Collection
John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

DOHERTY: [00:00:01] Today is August 13th, 2011. This is Kimiko Doherty and I'm interviewing Jeanette "Kitti" Kitzman, who is a Peace Corps volunteer in Peru from October 1964 to August 1967 in the Latin American arts and crafts group. Kitti, could you tell us a little bit about your life before becoming a volunteer?

KITZMAN: [00:00:30] Oh, I was working at the phone company in Southern California, and while I worked here, I went to UCLA and got my bachelor's degree in art. And after that, they transferred me to the graphic arts department. But the minute I heard Kennedy announce his career at the great company after television, I knew that was what I wanted to do. And I liked the work I was doing that I didn't like working for the phone company.

DOHERTY: [00:01:10] Can you tell me a little bit more about the day you heard Kennedy speech?

KITZMAN: [00:01:15] Oh, I used to rush home from work in the afternoon. And I you know, I heard his speech and I thought, oh, this is really something I want to do. And I did and I don't. I signed up at the post office. I think that's where you signed up to take the test.

DOHERTY: What kind of test did you take?

KITZMAN: It was a written test, and you took it on a Saturday, and at the time I took it, I remember there was a lady who kept trying to get answers from me all the time and I couldn't give her answers. What if she makes this? You know, and she doesn't really know anything. But she didn't make it obviously. But when we went into training, we came here for one week.

DOHERTY: Where is here?

KITZMAN: Philadelphia for one week and we stayed at the Sylvania Hotel and they sent people to the dentist, the temple. They sent people to something in Oakes for extra glasses. They sent people to different places to do things that should have been done before we came. But the kids that were in college all knew that Peace Corps would pay for them if they didn't get them done. They would have had to pay for them. And then after that week, they flew to Puerto Rico and we had three months of Outward Bound training and probably and it was during the rainy season, it was at Camp Crozier. There were two camps there and they were both named after volunteers that had been killed in a plane crash.

KITZMAN: [00:03:09] And every morning, what do I put on clean, wet clothes or do I put on dirty, dry clothes? It was one or the other. And we would go down this hall that was covered in water. Wet, you know, have to do our exercises and things. And then we would all have to run up to what they call the comodore for breakfast and I think some of the food came from an Air Force base on the island. And then some of the people just put local

things in there to do. The girls all gained weight because it was like you're not going to get anything to eat until. Gotta eat a lot of breakfast.

DOHERTY: [00:04:03] Kitti, before you tell me more about the training, can you tell me a little bit more about when you applied, for example, what was your friends or family reaction to signing up to be a volunteer?

KITZMAN: [00:04:16] Well, my family was living in Wisconsin, I had left Wisconsin with a girlfriend quite a few years before and got a point. And I actually didn't tell them until I thought that pretty soon somebody was going to be knocking on the door and I'd better let them know. So that I told them that I had joined the Peace Corps and they felt pretty good about it. They really did. You know that when somebody came and interviewed them and, you know, know that I could go and then I, I yeah, I didn't stop there on the way here, but we had a home leave of two weeks in which to go home and get our things packed that we wanted to take with this process. I had given up my apartment and I was living with another girlfriend when I went home and. And then when I went into Puerto Rico, when I came to Puerto Rico, I, we had a government travel thing and I flew to Chicago and my sisters picked me up. And I spent a couple of days at home and then went on to New York. Where we checked in that night and all we were all met in New York and then we all flew to Puerto Rico.

DOHERTY: [00:05:46] What were any sort of hesitations or fears or reservations that you had about Peace Corps before joining?

KITZMAN: [00:05:55] You know, I really had none. I knew which one I wanted to do. I didn't. The phone company gave me a leave of absence. They didn't think I should quit, you know, and I remember one of my landlady's friends who might have known quite well came down to see me that last day. And he said, but how can you do this after 19 years with the phone company? And I'm walking out with nothing. But I knew that I would have to work until I was 55 with the phone company and there's no way I was going to put in another 15 years there. And I just said, just watch me at three o'clock. I'm going at his front door and I'm not coming back. But I did.

DOHERTY: [00:06:40] Oh. So how old were you when you did the Peace Corps?

KITZMAN: I was 40.

DOHERTY: You were 40. Ok.

KITZMAN: [00:06:44] I was a late starter. I started college when I was 30. I mean, in the Peace Corps when I was 40 and I bought my house at 55.

DOHERTY: [00:06:55] So what project were you invited to join and how did you prepare yourself for training if at all?

KITZMAN: [00:07:02] Well I was invited to join the Latin American arts and crafts thing and knowing that I have a degree in art and I had always done for my mother, I mean, she sewed all our clothes and she crocheted and knitted all this stuff. So I always did it. And I used to sit by her sewing machine until she would say, if you don't get away from here, I'm going to shoot you. And so I knew that, you know, as I said, I thought, well, if you go to Thailand, you'll just teach English for two years. And if you go to Peru, you'll do what you know and like to do. So I decided I would go to Peru.

DOHERTY: [00:07:45] And so tell me a little bit more about training. Can you tell you mentioned Outward Bound.

KITZMAN: Yeah.

DOHERTY: Was there technical training? What did you what did you do for fun?

KITZMAN: [00:07:59] Well, there was there was an open outdoor bar right across from the from the camp that most of the kids went to at night. I did not because I realized that I was older than most of the people. There were two other people in the beginning training that were older than I. One was a guy who had umpteen degrees in theology. He didn't make it because

then he went on village visits all he would do is hand out candy to the children. And then the other lady was from Florida and she had this little rubber mold she was going to make molded Jesuses to put on dash boards of cars. She didn't make it needless to say. But yeah, and almost everybody in the group had an art background. There was one girl in Bongrabri who had a biology background and she used to catch tarantulas on the paths and put pins and needles in with something to kill them and mount them.

DOHERTY: [00:09:10] Do you remember how many people were training with you?

KITZMAN: [00:09:13] I think it was sixty five when we started and we were supposed to go to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Chile. And then they were having the problem with Chile government. So they just told us they didn't have enough volunteers to send in Chile, but we all knew it was for political reasons.

DOHERTY: [00:09:35] This was 1964?

KITZMAN: Yeah.

DOHERTY: And was everybody in your training group arts and crafts also?

KITZMAN: [00:09:44] Yeah. Everybody except Yvonne. She was a biology teacher.

DOHERTY: [00:09:50] How about, how did you learn Spanish?

KITZMAN: [00:09:53] Well, I had had a Latin in high school. I had I had a French minor in college until my last year and I could never get the conversation. So I had so many history degrees that we said, well, why don't you just take the history minor and you'll have enough to graduate in February? Which I did, but I just think that I think Spanish is the easiest language to learn. I'm not fluent in it, but I think it's easy because of one sound with every letter, you know, and they gave us Spanish lessons every day. We had we had that was part of the Outward Bound. We had thing in the

morning, the exercise. And I went to breakfast and then we would have Spanish someplace. And they divided into small groups for the Spanish. And we had teachers that were from Cuba, that were from Puerto Rico, that were from Spain and from Mexico. So we got all types of Spanish.

DOHERTY: [00:11:04] And you just mentioned exercise. Can you tell me a little bit about that?

KITZMAN: [00:11:09] It was just the part of Outward Bound, you know, exercises, doing push ups and jumping up and down and then running up to the door afterwards for breakfast. And then we had some other exercises there because I knew they had a nurse there that had been a returned volunteer. They had many returned volunteers in the training group and she was returned volunteer who gave us the shots. And of course, the boys always got the shots first thing, you know, like, oh, it's like that was so horrible. It wasn't really bad. And then one time we had to come down a rope, we were up high and we had to come down a rope. And the person that came down ahead of you is supposed to stand there and hold the rope. And as I got onto the rope, she let go and it swung and I hit my back against the wall. So, you know, they gave me painkillers right away. She said, you won't move tomorrow if we don't give you painkillers. And we had to do rock climbing, rock climbing wise, it rained every day that it was my turn. We got to by my turn and it rained every day and we just, you know, slid on these wet rocks, horrible time. And the very last day, the sun was shining that morning and I said, wonderful, it's not raining. While the sun was so hot. Our fingers were so blistered when we got down because it was so hot. There wasn't an easy way.

DOHERTY: [00:12:58] To get a few more questions about training. Were there any surprises or disappointments during your training process? Was it what you expected?

KITZMAN: [00:13:08] I don't think there were surprises. When you have a lab, we could go and listen to Spanish at night and then you would repeat it and then you'd hear back and forth. By the end of the day, it was very, very

hard to awake. I find myself nodding off because it was just the end of the day. And I was a little. They had a psychiatrists there and sociologists from the training. And I was a little upset when they let some of them go because there were some people that, well, you felt like they would really be nice, nice people. I remember asking the psychiatrist if they knew why they were being let out, because I said, you know, this girl is really nice and I would hate for her to leave thinking she had been unsuccessful and not know exactly why. And he said, no, no, we explained it to them all. And we do hope they'll get help, which is so.

DOHERTY: [00:14:12] So you said you started with about sixty five people in training. So how many finished training?

KITZMAN: [00:14:21] Oh, why did you but there were some that went to Colombia and some that went to Ecuador because when we flew down. I flew into Ecuador, which we stopped in Ecuador and let off that group and then we went on to Peru and we got into really early in the morning and we got in at the same time another group came in that had had four months of training at Washington University because they were going to be teaching in college teachers. So they wanted their Spanish fluency. And there was one person who didn't take Spanish seriously and he got moved from that. Well, I wouldn't say officially he was still part of that group, but he got put in working with the arts and crafts people that was very funny because later he became tri-lingual.

DOHERTY: [00:15:20] Did you did you think that your train how long was your training and what did the training prepare you?

KITZMAN: [00:15:27] Oh, it was three months and we decided that it was perfect because there was nothing that could have prepared us for what we're going to do. There really wasn't anything. And this just prepare. Well, every time I got into something that seemed difficult, I would say, look, you made it through Puerto Rico. You make it through anything you just did.

DOHERTY: [00:15:50] So after three months of training and you go with your group to?

KITZMAN: [00:15:55] We had home leave for two weeks in which we were to tie up ends at home. I mean, people who had I you know, people have their own apartments or nothing because I had given mine up before I went in and I stayed with a friend, but and we got our, we had a trunk full of things that went with us and I'm not sure, but I think it was maybe like one hundred and fifty pounds. And then we had like maybe two hundred and fifty pounds trunks that they sent later. They arrived like three months later and we put in things that, well, you don't know what you're going to use, you really don't know. But we just put in things that became very good symbols, like I put it in powdered milk. So we had no milk in Peru other than canned leche, you know, so powdered milk was very good when it arrived. And I think I even put in a jar of coffee, know we had no real coffee in Peru with something called Pyramus. It's made by Nestle in Switzerland and it's maybe closer to post or something that we had. But and my co-worker put in marinated artichoke hearts. And every time we had a really bad day, we would make dinner and say I think it's time we had artichoke hearts so.

DOHERTY: [00:17:31] Kitti, can you tell me a little bit about your initial reaction and then arriving in Peru as a volunteer? What were your what was your first week like?

KITZMAN: [00:17:41] Well, the first thing is they put us in a hotel at the time. There were hotels in every city that gave discounts to Peace Corps volunteers. And they put us in this hotel and they told us to go to the American embassy and get our assignments. It was so funny because all through training, they kept harping on the term *donde esta la embajada americana?* And we would keep laughing because we didn't know why we would ever want to know where the American embassy was. Well, now we knew why. So we had people that, we went to the street corners of the plaza and we looked at each other, sort of drew numbers, like who's going to have to go and ask somebody, where is the American embassy?

DOHERTY: [00:18:30] So you arrived in country without a Peace Corps staff person. They just told you to go to the embassy then?

KITZMAN: [00:18:39] Yeah, there was a step. Oh, wait. After the embassy were to go to a party at his house that night. He also didn't tell us that house numbers in Lima did not run in sequence. We found the street, so we had to go around and find which house was his because they didn't come in sequence. But we didn't have a party at his house. And that's where I met my friend who was in the in the college training group, and he didn't take Spanish seriously and he ended up working. Well, I think the first week we were in Cota, we were sent to Arequipa by bus. And believe me, they took the worst busses they could find. The bottom things were all tin and they were loose and we rolled over clay roads, you know, and every time you hit a bump and stuff would fly up in your face. We got to Arequipa, there was this kind of an art conference going there. And Alexander, I think that's the name, was running this conference. So we were told to attend that conference like three days.

DOHERTY: [00:20:02] When you first arrived?

KITZMAN: [00:20:04] Yeah, well we were now in Arequipa, from Lima we had gone to Arequipa by bus. And the people in Arequipa all gave me, that were going home, all gave me their warm clothing because I'm from California and I didn't believe I would be sent to Puno where, you know, it's freezing cold. It's all the seasons in one day. I mean, you wake up in the morning and you put on three sweaters and then by noon, you take them all off and then by three o'clock, you're putting on a hot tea kettle again and making tea because it's getting cold and it's very cold at night. It could freeze any night of the year. But so they all gathered up their warm season clothes and gave them to me.

DOHERTY: [00:20:54] So you started in Lima and then together with your group you went to?

KITZMAN: [00:21:00] Well, some people didn't go. The people that were going to the south of Peru went to the Arequipa, the other people that were going to the north, went to another area. And we were in Arequipa like I said, for I think about three days for this conference. And then we then we had to get our own way up to our sites. I mean, we weren't going in a group to our sites. And I took a train to Puno. And when I went down to get the train in the morning, there was a man came up to me and said, what are they going to Puno? And I said, yes. And he said, come with me. And he got on the train and he had a daughter he was sending up to his parents and he wanted me to sit with her. And I found afterwards she kept putting something down under the seat, she had a box of chicken because she was taking children. But she was a very nice little girl, you know, and we went up there and we got there fairly late at night. They stopped somewhere along the way that people had set up tables that had soup and stuff for us to get off and have dinner. And then we got there and it was it was dark. It was late. And I was supposed to be met by someone from the Peace Corps office. Well, and she was out drinking with her friends and she forgot to come and meet me.

KITZMAN: [00:22:32] So somebody at the station told me that I could get a room at the hotel across the street, it was a Peace Corps discount place. So I went over there and then she called me around, I don't know, eleven o'clock at night and said, Well, I'll be down to pick you up in the morning.

DOHERTY: [00:22:52] Kitti, tell me, so the town was called Puno?

KITZMAN: Puno.

DOHERTY: OK, and can you tell me how big it is?

KITZMAN: [00:22:59] Well, it's a good place. It's a good sized city. Let's see, we didn't go to Puno, yes, the train did go to Puno because that's where they transferred to the boats to go across the lake to Bolivia. But in Juliaca the train splits and part goes up to Cusco and part goes down to Puno. And of course, the first day you can't run, it hurts you to see somebody run

because of the height is so bad. I would go to the office with this girl in the morning and then have breakfast. And by noon, I was back in my hotel to take a nap. I was just breathless from it. I'd see somebody running. I don't know. I can't even breathe.

DOHERTY: [00:23:57] And that's because of the high elevation?

KITZMAN: [00:24:01] Yeah, but you get over it after about a week.

DOHERTY: [00:24:05] And so were there other volunteers in Puno, you said there was a Peace Corps office?

KITZMAN: [00:24:13] Yes, there was a Peace Corps office. And and Joe, my co-worker who ended up being my co-worker, was in the group, but he was sent south of Puno. There was a site there, a community that had not had a volunteer ever before, and he had to give up, get up and give a speech and everything as to why they should want him. But the director kept trying to send me to Juliaca, which is a terrible town. And it's but I figured later I realized it was because I was older and they just didn't think that they would send older people out in the rough. I was a farm girl and I wanted to be in the rough. So I went to this weaving cooperative and they wouldn't let me do anything. They just wanted somebody to sit in the office. And I think they got they got a subsidy on their pay by having an American there. And one of the things they would do is. There were hills all around it, clay hills, and they would wash the wool and they would lay it out on the cement ground to dry. And in the night it would rain and all this clay would wash down from the hills. And the wool was all dirty. And I just made a little design, a wire and four sticks to lay the wool on so that the rain would go through it. But they kept saying, no, there's no money, there's no money for that. Well, there was money for champagne and sugar cookies every Friday afternoon.

KITZMAN: [00:25:54] That would have easily paid for my little thing. So it was very frustrating because they just wouldn't let me do anything. And there was a man from Cota where my coworkers was out already, he would come and

visit this place. He knew about it and he and his people were making little knit animals and he would bring them into Puno and sell them on the street to tourists or anybody that would buy them, you know, and he would come over here and visit me. You need to come to Cota, we have work for you. And during that same time, the director from Lima was coming up because they had a lot of complaints about the staff in Puno.

DOHERTY: [00:26:44] The Peace Corps director?

KITZMAN: [00:26:45] The office staff in Puno. He had he had three children. And, you know, he would talk on the phone and hang up the phone and say, I wish these damn Peruvians would learn to speak Spanish. So they came up and interviewed everybody. And some of the older volunteers that had been there before sort of said, oh, look, this is a married man and we're probably destroying his job and his family. But the director said, no, if he's not doing it right, he needs something to tell him. So they gave him the choice of resigning and they would pay his way back to Washington and he'd be eligible for another job or else they fire him and he'd have to pay his own way home. So he resigned and everybody begged not to have a new director. They said everybody is doing their job. We don't have any problems here. We don't need anybody in this office during the day of this. And it was a secretary that was a volunteer. And it worked. It worked almost for a year. And then new volunteers came in and they didn't realize what it had been like. So they sent a new director down. It was OK.

DOHERTY: [00:28:02] A new director to the Puno office?

KITZMAN: To the Puno office, yeah.

DOHERRY: So can you tell me a little bit you mentioned the weaving co-operative. Did you work with them here your whole time or did you work with other groups?

KITZMAN: [00:28:16] Well, I tried to work with them, but they didn't do anything we told them. There was another European lady that had a small weaving

school of her own in northern Puno, you know, and they sent her down and she tried to show them the same thing, how to do the knots so that they were woven back in and you didn't see them because they were doing this huge white pieces of alpaca and llama. And it had massive holes in it. You couldn't sell that for any amount of money that it was worth. And they just wouldn't they wouldn't do it. You told them. I mean, you know, because I knew how we made it in college. And so when when the transfer came, when they sent this man home. My co-worker that I ended up with in the village of Cota with borrowed a Jeep and he came out and he moved my things out. I just left because I said I was there for, like, I guess about two months. My only friend was the eight year old daughter of the laundrywoman. Nobody had time for you. It was a place where the planes came in. It was a place that the railways came through.

DOHERTY: [00:29:40] So you spent two months in Puno and then you went to Cota?

KITZMAN: [00:29:43] No, I spent two months in Juliaca.

DOHERTY: Juliaca, sorry. OK, and then you went to?

KITZMAN: [00:29:49] And then I went out to Cota. Because Joe was out there already and everybody said, oh, you better go there or Joe will starve to death, he's living on bread. But I knew that I wasn't going to go there to be a cook. I knew that. And Joe's parents had a restaurant in Cape Cod so he was a better cook than I was. So he found a house for me, found the only house that had an arch doorway and two rooms in the community. And you have a house that was just, you know, mud walls and a tin roof. But his landlord said that he bought the materials, he'd fix the house up. So we ended up having a floor and windows and the whole thing. And I made curtains for the windows from what we found in the market. And we made, they had the meals at my room, at my house. He'd come up and eat at my house and then he'd go home at night to and then after quite a while and I went, I take quite a while. It might have been three or four months that his landlord had fixed up the place pretty much where he lived, and we couldn't get anybody to work in a house. So they said, oh, they said a man

had died there and there were yellow bugs in the house. But we never found anything but one mouse.

DOHERTY: [00:31:25] This is side two of tape one, interview with Kittie Kitzman.

KITZMAN: [00:31:32] And then Antonio, the man who had convinced me to come out here in the first place, got his people together, these little knit animals. And we weighed all the yarn and we change them. And we found out how much the animals had to cost in order to get a fair price for them. And we told them and then an AID man who had been a former volunteer in Colombia came out. He was working for Sears with AID. But Sears wanted him to get order of these animals and they wanted them by October. And I told them the price at which they had to be. And I told the people to sell them for to make any money. And they didn't want to pay that price.

DOHERTY: [00:32:33] It was too high?

KITZMAN: [00:32:34] They thought it was too high. They didn't want to pay that price. So they waited until payday whenever we got a subsidy. So we were going into Puno and he went out there with his AID van and got an order from the people at his price. Were when I found it out, you know, and drove over there fields and everything. So about two days later they came to my door in the morning and they said, we're not going to make any money. And I said I told you you wouldn't make any money. I told you you couldn't sell them below the price. But I said, I think you better make the order or you'll never get another order. So they put their own money into the order, got it ready in October, and it's never picked it up until February. They had their own money tied up in this order. So from that time on, they came to work in my patio outside my house every day.

DOHERTY: [00:33:42] The co-op? So how many people?

KITZMAN: [00:33:43] We ended up with 30 women and two men. The men did well, the running around, the women spinning, knitting, basically spinning and

knitting. Many men did some of the weaving, but we didn't sell very many weavings because we made wall hangings. But we would buy the in the local market. And then we did it there. We had, well, we thought we were going to have a bathtub when we first went up there. So we bought this big round oval tub and after carrying water the first time, the water was like four blocks away. And we decided that we had to make so many trips to get water that we maybe just live with our sponge baths. But we did use that for the laundry and for dyeing fabrics. And so they would dye fabrics, because the wall hangings and things you can charge a much better place aren't worth, and people will pay more than they will for a pair of mittens or a pair of hats or a hat or something like that, you know. And we also made socks. There was a lady, Vivian Burns, in California, who was sort of a distributor of crafts, and she sent me a few ideas for hats, which I developed, and they made some hats.

KITZMAN: [00:35:22] And then we did socks that were to go to ski resorts. So if people broke a leg, they can have this pretty knit sock their leg because we couldn't do two. We knew they couldn't do two alike, it was just even with mittens. We had some people that could never get the two thumbs to match and we'd have to come over and make them do them over until they would match. And I would design with like three rows of yellow and three rows of orange and three rows of yellow. Or you can count to thee, to five. You've got five fingers. But it was a problem. They decided that they wanted some of their money kept back for whatever.

DOHERTY: [00:36:10] The cooperative?

KITZMAN: [00:36:11] Yeah, each of the people wanted some of their money kept back and we kept records of it all of how much they earned and how much was held back. And eventually they had enough to buy land to win a piece of land came for sale in the middle of the town. They bought the land. And the women all carried the jugs of water. The men dug the holes and they made the bricks, the big bricks, red clay and let them drive the sun. And they built this co-op, a building that they could live in. And they didn't want windows because they said there would be thieves if they had windows so

they put in a thing on top. So you could eventually make a window if you wanted to, that we make windows, but we made metal aluminum roofs with tin and they also sold plastic in that same size as a tin. So we put two big plastics up on the roof. So they had daylight inside move to walk by and then they were there every day. If they wanted to sit outside, they could sit outside too. They made the animals and then I started pricing where they could sell. I think they had six little animals and I thought you could buy six for the price of five, this sort of thing, you know, and then we did they had a llama. And so I designed a lion and I thought, well, we need a third animal to give this little bargain price. So I asked him if they knew where a giraffe looked like and they sort of, Antonio thought they knew what a giraffe looked like.

KITZMAN: [00:38:05] Well, I drew a giraffe and the next day they brought me back a giraffe that had three legs, this giraffe. And then I looked at my drawing and I had drawn it in perspective. So I drew three legs. I wish I have kept it, but I didn't. They took it apart and made it work. So we had and I don't have a copy of the giraffe. I brought home lions and I brought home alpacas, but I never brought home a copy of the giraffe. And when we went somewhere traveling, when we had vacation time or anything we didn't take cash with or very little. We took animals with us because everywhere we went, we got the Peace Corps office and sell the animals to volunteers or anybody that wanted them. And that was our travel money. So we would take back our paid money to them after we got back. But it was very nice. And when we decided to extend because that was before they built the co-op, we had the money to build the co-op and I even had planned but hadn't built it. And so we asked to extend it and we didn't think there would be any problem with extending because we were doing exactly what we were supposed to do. Well, Beard was the head of the group and he refused the extension. So when we went into Lima, when they terminated the group, everybody complained about the fact that we were not being extended. So they wrote down from Washington that they would be extended, but he wouldn't let us have our home leave. So anyway, we stayed there. And, you know, Vietnam was going on at this time, too, and so was really the age to go to Vietnam. And so we

extended. It was funny because one night he didn't come, I usually went home a little bit early for dinner, we often went home in the afternoon and made popcorn for them to eat. And then sometimes I would go home a little early and start dinner and Julian would come down. And I said, What is he doing? It's getting dark and he's not down here.

KITZMAN: [00:40:51] So I went up to the center and they're all on one side of the other side. He said, well, they're arguing about where they're going to put the statue of us. And I statue of us, are you crazy? I've already turned down that they're not making any statue. So crazy. And at the very end, too, they had told us that we could sell anything we had left that we didn't want to take home with us, but do it at a reasonable price that people could afford to buy. So we sold our things. I had a London Fog raincoat with that, with the fleece lining, and then a man bought that and he was so happy with that coat, put it on and waltzed around. And they all wanted bath towels, because they used them like scarves when they rode the trucks. And, you know, we kept the bath towels for each of us to use the last week. That's the only thing we ever had stolen from us. We hung the bath towels on the line to dry and went into the center. And when we came home, they were gone. The only thing in the whole time we were there than anything was stolen from us. And we had a cat. There was a cat at the Maryknoll farm when we came in and we had a party for those people who were going home. And I asked her about her cat and she said, well, we decided that the cat is going to get a new owner, so we let him have the same home. So we'll just leave him here with Frank, that was coming in. So at the time, I said to Frank, if you ever want to get rid of the cat, you've got a home for it out in Cota. So one morning we have a Jeep with the Maryknolls. He came out with the cat under I mean, she's eaten my last hot dog. If you feed her, she won't eat your hot dogs. So we got the cat. Oh, and the cat was named Tabby, a giant real cat, you know, that's no name for a cat like that. So we sat down to thinking and it was right at the time when the when we went in, the play Oliver was popular. So we came up and we named the cat Oliver. And everybody in the center used to call her wawa baby. But when we went away one time on vacation, I said, you know, we can't leave food out for the cat because stray animals

will come and eat it. So what do we do? So I fed it good before we left. We just turned it loose. And when we came back, I went up to the well for water one day and I just called kitty kitty and she came meowing down the hill and came back with us.

KITZMAN: [00:44:00] And when we came home, we didn't think of bringing the animals home. Later on, many people did bring animals home. I know people who brought a dog home and some people brought a mina bird home, but we just left it for the people that were moving in to take over after us. And I don't know what happened to them. They didn't stay very long. But, you know, it's very difficult for people who come in, to follow a first group of volunteers that are successful because it just it just is, you know, they're different. And the people, I guess, are hoping they're going to be the same people. So it's very difficult.

DOHERTY: [00:44:46] Um, can you describe a little bit more about the town that you lived in? You said you described your house.

KITZMAN: [00:44:53] It was a community. It wasn't a town at all. It was just a community. It had a school in two schools, one school. There had been Seventh Day Adventists people there many years before. And I don't know where they came from. But so we didn't have a drinking problem in our town. There was a tienda where the teachers who came out from Puno and they had a UNICEF Jeep that they could come out on Sunday and Monday morning can return on Friday afternoon. There was a little tienda not far from me where they could drink beer, I guess, but I never went to the tienda at all, and and Joe didn't either. And, uh, they cooked. They had food for the children. UNICEF sent food for the children. They had big rocks and they made a fire. And then these big pots that they cooked quinoa, you know what quinoa is? Quinoa grows in Peru. And they made them quinoa and they made them hot chocolate with powdered milk that I tasted at once. So burned, so scorched. And I thought, oh, I hope these poor kids don't think this is what we eat.

DOHERTY: [00:46:09] Tell me about what you and Joe ate?

KITZMAN: [00:46:13] Well, we had to do pressure cookers because they told us to take pressure cookers when we went. But being Italian, he would have liked to have had spaghetti and tomato soup every night. And I would say, you know, after a while, look at and rice and the mushroom or something different. But that's pretty much what I could bake. We had this little double previous that we did the dying on and we had a tin oven that some other volunteers who went home sold us, and I baked fantastic cakes. They were so moist and they were so good. It was unbelievable to me. But they were. And we had a cookbook that had been made by the wives of doctors who had been in Bolivia earlier. And it was like it had recipes from Denver College cheese that were for high altitude recipes, that it was very good. They were in English and in Spanish.

DOHERTY: [00:47:25] Can you tell me a little bit more about your first year? You mentioned the co-op, but were there other maybe social events or work related events?

KITZMAN: [00:47:34] There were some social events, yes. Whenever the teachers wanted something that involved money, we were invited. They have a thing where you were supposed to stab the baby. The baby was made of bread and you're supposed to stab the baby. And I said, Joe, they just want our money to pay for the baby and we'll give them the money. But I'm not stabbing any babies. And then the landlord at Joe's place, they had the festival once a year and they wanted us to dance in their pit, their team. Well, they came to us one night and they always had this thing. If we came to visit Tom and he was a big man for a Peruvian, unusually large, most of the smaller size, they looked chubby. But that's because they wore so many clothes. And they came and I knew he had something under his coat and they came to visit. So they came in and they told to help him. And then he brought out this big wire basket full of eggs because we had bought eggs and there weren't a lot of eggs in the village and just a few people. But usually we could tell when the doctor was coming because they would come with eggs the night before they'd bring me an egg. So they got paid, to buy their medical shots, you know, so we

knew that they had eggs and we would get them. So we said, yes, we would dance with them when they came to this horrible, ugly white satin blouse that I had to buy and wear, but they would loan me skirt. So the first morning they came with a green skirt and they all have to help me dress. And I know they're just dying to see what I'm wearing, you know, help me dress. And we had to learn to do something called the wechi wechi. And it's a braided piece with little balls on it and you have to turn it this clockwise with one hand and counterclockwise with the other hand. It's not easy to do. And I practiced that and Joe did too. He had to wear a thing and it was all beads sewn onto cardboard and it went all the way over shoulder and down. These things are heavy, you know, and we have to dance to cross the pompa with these things on and the orchestra playing and their band playing their pipes. They played pipes a lot and we did that. And then we had, oh, we had to dance in front of the schoolhouse. And this one woman kept motioning to me and Joe said, well, I think she wants you to take her picture. So I ran home to get my camera. And when I came back, she had a camera. She wanted to take our picture.

KITZMAN: [00:50:45] So she took our picture. And the following week in the market, which was lavee market, which we took a bus or truck down, it was a good distance, but it had a Sunday market in which they sold the fabrics that we used and they sold different things. And everybody's over looking at one tree. And there's a big man over there said to the crowd over there for, you know, people celebrating, you're not going to believe she has put our picture on a tree and they're all, that's the gringos. You know, there are just so many funny things like that. So it's happened.

DOHERTY: [00:51:39] Other than Joe, were there are other Peace Corps volunteers in your town?

KITZMAN: [00:51:42] No, they weren't in our town. And I'll tell you, the only one that ever came out is Steve, which had been a Peace Corps volunteer and was. Thank you. So know, he was not working for AID and then he became a rep, so he would have a van and once in a while if we wanted

supplies in town, like went for flour and sugar. We bought big bags of them and we could leave the Maryknoll house and then tell him they were there. And when he came out, he would pick them up and bring them to us. And sometimes there was a Maryknoll house on the highway. We would we would three and a half kilometers from Panamerican Highway, which is true. And they had told us that we could use their shower while we went there. One night we rode our bicycle up there. And then when we got there, the Mother Superior was there so we couldn't come in the house. But she said, oh, you see, so far the jury has dinner for you down there below the minimum. So we went down there and by the time we drove home, we were so dirty again that he didn't pay. I said, this is useless to drive over the pump and the wind's blowing the red clay. So we just decided we weren't going to do that anymore, but not many. We always joked about the fact that if we ever had a party, we'd find out who our friends were because there were parties and well, like chickweed to Larry, my friend now, moved to Chiqueta. The Saviors, who owns the gallery? Well, they were in Chiqueta first and they were trained in medical health, but never worked in. And he works with these craft things and when they wanted some help in crafts, they asked me to come over for a couple of days to help them. But when they extended, they went up north and crew to work on the boards and they sent Larry out there to get the money in order.

KITZMAN: [00:53:58] They had a table with a drawer in it in their so called asienda and the co-op money and their pay and everything went in the same drawer and nobody knew one from the other when they needed anything. It came out of that drawer when they made anything that went before. So they sent Larry out there to get the money organized so that the money that was co-ops stayed co-op. So and he had a Christmas party there one year. And the kids from Mariquita, from his group had brought up a turkey. And we played cards all night the night before. And we made a Christmas tree. We had eucalyptus trees where just like what we were above the tree lighting trees. But you cut it branches and made it on the wall and they put it on the wall in the shape of the tree. And we all made ornaments to hang on it and baked a lemon pie that night. And we had lemon pie for breakfast

on Christmas, you know, and we made fun. We made our own fun. We just did. And Larry had brought, he had worked for Graceland's before. He was a business man. I mean, when I brought powdered milk and Joe bought artichoke hearts, Larry brought silk stockings and he thought that he would be in an office somewhere and he would give the girl silk stockings, well Nadeen and I both got silk stockings for Christmas. But it was just there was a lot of stuff like that. And I remember I walked. I thought it would it looked like the distance is very changing.

KITZMAN: [00:55:48] There was there was a United Airlines plane that went over once a week and it looked like you could reach up and pick that plane out of the air. And the distance seemed so close when it really wasn't. But one day I baked lemon cake and I said, I'm going to walk over to Larry's across the compound. I'm not going the way the road. Well, it was forever a walk. And I stumbled out of fog and fell down tore a hole out of my pantyhose. But the cake was whole. The cake, not just me, but I said I. That's the only time I ever tried to walk that this was because it was a lot further than it could be. Yeah, and we have different parties for occasions. One girl, in fact, made fondue. And it was funny because I really sort of made fun of the fact that she was going to make fondue because our cheese was canned cheese from Tasmania. But she did, she had a party and she made fondue and it was delicious. And I mean, we had, but we did joke about the fact that everybody had, well, you know, the original groups had gone home and we were left, but we decided that we would have I always said we'll know our friends if we have a party. So we decided we were going to have a party. And I think it was probably from Memorial Day and the rainy season was supposed to be over. And we were planning this and told everybody about it, and it kept raining and the people in our co-op said, no, it's OK, it's not the season, it's not going to rain. It's OK. I think I made like 50 tamales and made sure all this stuff for a party, baked cakes, and it was still raining. I said that morning and sitting there about 10 o'clock, Joe do you think I should make another cake, are we going to have enough food? Nobody came to our party. Except our cat knew the difference between Indians and Americans, and don't ask me how the cat knew the difference, I did, and that evening we were sitting in the house

and the cat is on my lap and we used to boil our water over. We have a little Coleman heater that we put the kettle on at night, a little more water than we ever wanted.

KITZMAN: [00:58:33] And we heard the gate open. And I said, Joe, the cat isn't moving, it's got to be an American. Joe went out in the yard, and it was the papal volunteers, they had come to the party, they drove the car off the bridge and it was so muddy and wet and they had walked up to our house. And he asked Joe if he had a pair of dried jeans he could put down. And I think I just go in the kitchen and change, well, the kitchen was just this thing behind shelf of boxes, but at least it was protection. So he left them laying on the cement floor there, and he borrowed Joe's jeans, and in the morning. I went out in the kitchen and picked up these jeans and they were just all red clay, covered with it. And so that was that was our party guests that came. And the people at the co-op got to eat tamales and chili, had probably never had them before in their life, but we gave it to them to eat.

DOHERTY: [00:59:50] So did you spend any leisure time with Peruvians also?

KITZMAN: [00:59:57] Oh, yeah, we did. With the teachers, with the teachers where they would have liked to spend a lot more time with us too. We didn't feel like it was really involving our work. We did work at the school, too. They wanted us to take the first classes in the morning so they could sleep later. Well, I took the first classes, but these kids don't need English. This is crazy. You know, these kids that they come to school with no lunch or anything. They probably haven't had breakfast and they surely don't need English. So I just tried to teach them things to improve their health situations, you know, and tell them about bog burning and water and stuff and that you keep an area for the bathroom, you know, and I could look out because my first house was sort of higher and I could look out and I would see somebody walking across the fields and all of a sudden they were gone. And then you wait a while, they get up and go out. And, you know what they were doing. So we tried to teach them things that would improve their health situation. Because they said, you know what, after

two years working in that school, I met the kids and they passed. They would say, good morning mister.

DOHERTY: [01:01:23] Let's start another tape. This is tape number two with the interview with Kitti Kitzman. Kitti, do you have any did you have any health problems when you were serving in Peru?

KITZMAN: [01:01:49] Yeah, I had two health problems. I guess the one health problem was that one time we went down to Chile for the weekend. Arica, Chile was just below the border from us. And it was like an overnight ride on a bus. And we went down there and we got the last two seats on the bus. And I sat over the wheel with my feet up over the wheel all night. And of course, every time they stopped anywhere, they stopped right in the middle of the plaza and everybody got up, went to the bathroom. And that wasn't going to be me, you know, I mean, just didn't work for me. So by the time I got to Ilavi in the morning, I was already in pain. By the time I got home, I was more in pain. And the stupid thing is we had these medical kits that we did use for basic things, but it never occurred to me that that kind of thing would be in a medical kit. So I was gone for like two or three days. And Joe finally said, look, if it doesn't get better, I'm going to go into Puno and call the doctor to come down. Well, the doctor was coming down normally we found out. So we went into town and. And have you met her? No, that's Brenda and Jack. So we went into town and Maury's answer to everything, they called him a hovey medical. He also went into Peace Corps because he didn't want to go to Vietnam. And so his answer to most things was to take the volunteers out to lunch at the hotel. It was something we didn't do by ourselves. We never spent that much for lunch. So he took us to the Turista hotel. And then he said to me, Kitti, you'd better take something like 12 of these pills that were in the kit. So we did some other things that the office, did some shopping in the afternoon and Steve is going to drive us home and we get out of town to the cemetery was just outside the edge of town. I think the cemetery. And Maury says, stop and let me out, Steve, because he knew Steve was going to wander around half the night, you know, and he didn't want to go.

So he got out of the car and he said, OK, Kitti, maybe you'd better take six pills. Cut them in half.

KITZMAN: [01:04:33] Now I have a lot of faith in Maury. Needless to say, I went home and read the medical kit and took what he told me to take and I was fine. And then when they did the yearly medical exam, I had amoebas. And don't ask me where I got amoebas because I thought Joe would get them. He ate much more freely and loosely than I did. And the treatment for the amoebas was worse than the illness, because it just made you go and flush everything out, you know. But those are the only two medical problems.

DOHERTY: [01:05:21] So you served in Peru and then you extended for a third year. So at the end of your service, did you can you tell me a little bit about how you felt, though, you have a sense of failure or accomplishment?

KITZMAN: [01:05:37] Well, no, but we knew we were going home and I knew I didn't want to go back to my job, even though they've given me a leave of absence all the while, because when I extended, I just wrote and told them I was extending and they could do what they had to do and they just extended my leave absence. And I knew that I didn't want to go back to work there.

DOHERTY: This was at the telephone company?

KITZMAN: [01:06:01] Yeah. And Philadelphia school system had been recruiting among volunteers for teachers because doctors said came here as the new superintendent and his man under him had been a director in Sierra Leone. And he said, well, if you want teachers to stay, go to the Peace Corps. And so they recruited among the Peace Corps. And Joe took the job immediately. And then it meant that he left right at the beginning of August to come home. And they were having an orientation program for the teachers. But I had sent my information to. The school system and probably Peace Corps to any way, the school system sent it off to my friend's address in California and didn't send think. So I didn't know that I

had the job. So after he went home, I said, well, I'm going to go home. But it's sort of by land because I probably will never have this opportunity to travel again. And, you know, I met up with one friend and we went up to Ecuador and then he went on somewhere else. And then, oh, I stayed in Quito for about a week and I had trouble getting out of Quito. But one of the volunteers that had been in a group had married a girl from Quito, and she knew some teachers that I had chartered a plane to go to Panama. So they said they had ecstasy on the plane if I wanted to sit on the plane. So I did. I got to Panama and I spent some time there.

KITZMAN: [01:07:55] And then, how I got to Mexico City, but I got to Mexico City from there. And I remember I flew back when I did that, I got to Mexico City and I had another girlfriend who came in later than we did. She was still in Puno, who had a sister married to a Mexican and lived in Mexico City. So I was going to try and look them up and I stopped in Mexico City and I shopped for a dress and go home. I knew did I'd given my clothes and I bought a dress. And that's just when women came and popular. So I took the dress from what they called a Mexican wedding dresses. You know, they're white. I took it back to the hotel and I left him out of it just to show it to him that I wore it in Mexico City for a couple of days and I went to Los Angeles and it was too long to pay him back. But when I that can go up and down how many times? And I finally gave it to a student where I was teaching. They have at that school they had the girls had to wear white dresses for graduation and this little girl didn't have a dress. So I gave her my dress for graduation.

DOHERTY: [01:09:20] Can you tell me a little bit before before you left your town, you said Joe left and and then you left shortly after?

KITZMAN: [01:09:33] We were both in Lima when he left.

DOHERTY: [01:09:34] Ok, tell me about the co-op or what happened to the co-op?

KITZMAN: [01:09:40] There was another couple of volunteers that had come in later than us, were coming out and taking over and they were taking over our

house. But I don't really know for sure because I was told that they didn't stay very long. And what kind of training she had in this, I don't really know, except that I do know that there is a man who went to London and opened a shop in London who buys from the co-op. And every now and then somebody that's traveled to London and brings me back one of our little items.

DOHERTY: [01:10:22] So do you think the co-op is still there?

KITZMAN: [01:10:26] I don't know, because Isaiah Zager, who is, you know, said no, because you said that flooded out. Well, I couldn't it out, didn't want to flood out and we had bought a boat to that you cross. But the town itself was up high, so it would have never flooded that. So I, I don't think I think it still exists.

DOHERTY: [01:10:49] Reflecting back on your Peace Corps experience and thinking about the three goals of the Peace Corps, which are to provide technical assistance, to promote a better understanding of the United States and to promote understanding of other people by Americans.

KITZMAN: [01:11:07] I'm violent about that. When I meet people who aren't doing anything, I really think you're not finishing your obligation to the Peace Corps. I really do, because every now and then you meet somebody who doesn't do anything. And, you know, I really think that they made a commitment and they should be doing something. And sometimes I mean, I met at one of the dinners and met this girl who was so excited that she had accomplished something in this whole town of what he had done. And it was something the sewer system said. And then I said, did you tell them how to fix it? And he just looked at me and. And I said, well, we had a well in our community with a pump on it and the pump broke and nobody knew how to fix it, so the pump got thrown in a storeroom at the school and the well that opened up. And we threw our bucket in. And I said, you know, you have to tell people how to repair things if you do things that are there because it doesn't really do much good. So and so and all my friends, they are Peace Corps volunteers.

DOHERTY: [01:12:35] And were there specific things that you did in your town that you shared about American culture?

KITZMAN: [01:12:46] Well, yeah, they knew that we wash our clothes and hung them on the line, we didn't take them down to the trees and laid them out of the rocks. We had, in fact, one of the girls that we asked at one of the girls to grow up would like to watch our clothes for the same price she made if she worked at the co-op. And so she volunteered. And it's funny because when we ran home, Sophie asked if I would sell her the washboard, which I did for a very reasonable price. Yeah.

DOHERTY: [01:13:19] So you came back in 1967 after traveling?

KITZMAN: [01:13:25] Yeah.

DOHERTY: [01:13:27] How did and then you came to Philadelphia?

KITZMAN: [01:13:31] And you really do get the culture shock, really works because I came back to was Burbank, California, and then my girlfriend lived and had the mail there. And when I opened it and found that I had the job in Philadelphia, I wrote him a letter that I wrote a letter and said it was still OK, but I would still be available. And I got a phone call to more later seven o'clock in the morning because of the time difference. And I said I never thought of using the telephone and calling that because I hadn't had a telephone for so many years that I wrote him a letter. And I should have known, too, because there was a clue there. They told me to show up on the first day of school. I mean, this was just before Labor Day. And I had to show up on the first day of school and I had not had children before. I had taught a dog and I had a B.A. degree. I did not get the certification. Well, I came and I got a plane reservation and came in the next day and went to the Board of Education that a school assigned to me and they assigned us all the first grade teaching. It was a school that had 13 teachers, first grade teachers, and only one of them had taught before. And then it was the holiday. And my friend Larry, who is now living in New

York and working there, called up. And I said, Larry, that right. It's closed on the weekend. Philadelphia closed on the weekends? So he said, well, get on a bus and come up here. So I do that to New York, have the weekend in New York. And it's very funny because we were walking down Fifth Avenue and we ran into another volunteer from California who had been in a ceramics thing quite near us. We had been there to play football. You know, we ran into him. And so I was I was in New York and Washington, like every other weekend because the train fares were very reasonable. And I had another girlfriend in Washington that had been in place for.

DOHERTY: [01:16:00] So how did serving as a Peace Corps volunteer influence your later career as a teacher if at all?

KITZMAN: [01:16:09] Well, I guess the one thing I would say is that it's rough as it was sometimes I used to say, you survived Puerto Rico, you can survive anything. But I liked teaching. Well, you know, they decided they wanted to. They told us they had a program with Temple to get certification. And when I went to Temple, Temple said what? It would be nice if they told us. Temple didn't know anything about it. But then I talked with the Board of Education and I said, well, you know, I'm not going to take a certification in elementary education out of my field. And he said, well, what are you doing? I said, that's where you put me. So he said, all right, we'll transfer you to art. And I said, well, wait until the holiday because, you know, the kids are going to get a new teacher. And so the holidays will be off for two weeks. And that's when I transferred and started then at another school at junior high. And I chose a junior high because I thought that I've done elementary junior high and then eventually I'll go to high school. Well, then in there they froze the things and nobody went to high school after that. So I just stayed in junior. But I really like the junior high kids because I think it's so important that somebody to listen to them, that's the main thing, just listen to me.

DOHERTY: [01:17:41] Did you keep in touch with people in your town or in Peru since you've been there?

KITZMAN: [01:17:48] No, I really didn't keep in touch with people. I like, you know, the had people I had some contact with, with the volunteers, I think that really. Well, I guess it was you know, it would have been hard for them to read letters because, you know, they weren't very literate people.

DOHERTY: [01:18:20] I forgot to ask this earlier, to you. Did you how often did you write letters home, whether they were to your friends or to your family?

KITZMAN: [01:18:29] When I was there I wrote letters. I wrote it one letter a week and probably more, because I'll tell you, during the noon hour, it was it was warm and we would go home and sit in our patio where people were having you there. Well, they didn't have lunch. I think they only eat breakfast. I think that's the only meal they eat. And I also think that marijuana was needed there because when they cooked their breakfast, I took this wonderful aroma outside and I didn't know what marijuana smell like at the time. But after I came home and I smelled it on the street corners, I said, that's what they, you know, they were cooking was dung. And I think the animals ate the marijuana and it was in the dung. But of course, that's also because the country lacks so much fertilizer because they cook with the dung. So there is no production going into the soil.

DOHERTY: [01:19:35] Um, so since you came back. Have you had continuing Peace Corps involvement? You mentioned you had a lot of your friends there.

KITZMAN: [01:19:44] Yeah, yeah. My friends are all volunteers, and I do. When I first came back, there was a group here and I can't remember the last name, his first name was Stanley. He had volunteered from the school district here and there was a group going, but it only went for a few months and it just fizzled out. They didn't do anything special, I don't think. And so people that had been laid around here, this group, get organized and have been doing things.

DOHERTY: [01:20:21] Um, have you had reunions with your Peace Corps group?

KITZMAN: [01:20:25] Yes. Yes, we did. Well, I don't know for sure, but I don't because we had the year of 9/11, we had worked to have a group because there was a reunion going from Washington, headed reunion plans. And this girl lived in Alexandria. And she and I had formed and talked and we got in touch with everybody. And she had a computer at she you know, and we had most of the people located to come to Alexandria. She had, I don't know, maybe room for five or six to sleep in her house. There was a motel just like a block away from her house. And I took a room in a motel because I figured I was working and could afford it. And there were some people who couldn't. And so we had this. And then because of 9/11, they canceled the Peace Corps one. But we've worked so long. And she said, look, we're going to go ahead and have it anyway because we'll never get everybody together again. And this was thirty seven years that we hadn't been together and we had a great time. She had a neighbor that was a chef and he helped her. We ate outside in her yard and they cooked all the food. And it really was a great, great event. And my friend Larry, the one who is in France and Belgium and now is in Ohio, was invited as an honorary guest because he was from the other group. But he had worked with the arts and crafts people. And it was a great, great time. But I would say three fourths of the guys were gay and we hadn't known that. They went into Peace Corps and, you know, they didn't want to go to Vietnam. And I guess they went into Peace Corps and there was only one fellow in all of training who I have some contact with, who was obviously gay and we knew it, but none of the rest did. We know, but when they all showed up they were gay. Then we had another reunion last year at a place called Lava Rock, California. Lava Rock is sort of near the foothills of Mount Shasta. And I flew from here to San Francisco and from San Francisco to Eugene, Oregon, and there the same girl that have reunion in Alexandria. They had been they had a daughter that was living in Seattle and they had been driving across the country in a van. And they picked me up in Oregon and we drove down to Lava Rock. And this volunteer is a sculptor. He had bought a foreclosed dairy farm.

KITZMAN: [01:23:36] And it was a big place and he moved up all his stuff there. And we have enough room to keep everybody, everybody there. And the only

girl who wasn't the arts and crafts volunteer, Yvonne, was there, in fact, Yvonne and he had been married. And they had to a daughter that was in Cirque du Soleil. And she baked a cake. She baked a seven layer cake. And they had they had so much food. It was like, you know, we just got done with breakfast and it's starting to prepare lunch. But we all had a wonderful time and we really had a wonderful time.

DOHERTY: [01:24:23] It sounds like you worked very closely with the other volunteer in your town, Joe, and you mentioned that he came to Philadelphia also. You still keep in touch with Joe?

KITZMAN: [01:24:37] Joe died of AIDS.

DOHERTY: Oh sorry to hear that.

KITZMAN: Yeah, in fact, he was drafted after he came home and he took the teaching course and he went one day to teaching and he was assigned out in Kensington and he said to me, he said to me, said today, he said, listen, I went to a Catholic school and he said, these girls are laying in cloak room waiting for the boys to come in. He said, I can't cope with this. And he quit. And then he got drafted because he quit and he was in the army. But he said he sent the whole, it might have been two years, I guess, whatever it was. And he said, well, I volunteered for every office job and I kept putting my file in the back of the. But he later died of AIDS.

DOHERTY: [01:25:29] And how did the how did his career change or influence your life or your outlook on life?

KITZMAN: [01:25:44] Oh, well, certainly because all of my friends are volunteers, you know, and well, my whole family volunteers. So my father was a town chairman of a tiny little village for twenty four years after he retired from farming. And he used to say, well, young people have to earn a living for their families. They can't do these jobs. And my sisters, one volunteers in her church a lot and the other one volunteered for the VFW. Her husband was a veteran. And we just all volunteer.

DOHERTY: [01:26:26] Um, you mentioned at the beginning of the interview, Kennedy's speech and something that I forgot to add that to the beginning that I thought about was, I believe his speech was an announcement of Peace Corps in 1960 or 1961. So did you think about doing Peace Corps for two years and then signed up to do it?

KITZMAN: [01:26:52] I didn't I didn't think about the time. I mean, they said it was two years and I sort of sort of assumed it would be two years. And I'll tell you, even at the end of the third year, I didn't really want to go back to work, but I kept thinking, you know, you left a job with 19 years and nothing. So somehow you're going to have to earn a living one day. So you really have to go back to work. I applied to NYU to get a master's and I was accepted, but I didn't go because I just decided that I had to get a job and earn some money.

DOHERTY: [01:27:32] Are there any other closing thoughts or stories you'd like to share? This has been very interesting.

KITZMAN: [01:27:40] I just think anybody should go if they're not happy with what they're doing or they just think there's something better. I'm going through these old letters and things. I found a little clipping from a newspaper and it said "join the Peace Corps, you'll go far." Right.

DOHERTY: It's true, isn't it?

KITZMAN: It's really true. Yes.

DOHERTY: [01:28:03] Well, Kitti, thank you so much for your time. This has been very it's been great to listen to your story. I hope you enjoyed it.

KITZMAN: [01:28:10] Oh, I did. I did. Yeah. I enjoyed my time.

[END OF INTERVIEW]