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**PRESS RELEASE**

Apia, September 22, 2023

Eleven new United States Peace Corps Volunteers were sworn in on Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, as a final step before moving into villages to begin their two-year assignments. At the request of the government of Samoa, these eleven Volunteers will work in Samoan primary schools to help Samoan students improve their English literacy skills and to establish and/or upgrade school libraries.

The Volunteers have completed an intensive eleven-week Pre-Service Training focused on technical, language, and cultural skills, and they now look forward to beginning their service in villages across Upolu and Savai'i. They will join the seven Volunteers who swore into service in April 2023, bringing the total number of Volunteers to 18.

The new Volunteers were accepted into service by the Country Director Ms. Gini Wilderson and sworn in by Ms. Noriko Horiuchi, the Chargé d'Affaires of the US Embassy in Samoa. The keynote address for the Swearing In ceremony was delivered by the Honorable Minister of Education, Sports and Culture, Seu'ula Ioane Tua'au, at a ceremony at the National University of Samoa's Fale Samoa. The event was also attended by the MESC CEO and Ministry staff, partnering organizations, Volunteers' counterparts and host families, Peace Corps staff—including a regional Chief of Operations visiting from Washington, DC—and currently serving Volunteers.

The new Volunteers ended the program by entertaining the guests with short speeches in Samoan and the performance of a Samoan Siva and Pese.

The eleven new Volunteers are eager to start their two-year assignments, which will keep them in Samoa until September 2025.

**END RELEASE**

For further information please contact Peace Corps Country Director Gini Wilderson at 22345.