

"Bibi" Wendy worked to teach the women to say, "No, not without a condom."

"You just don't know if you get through," Wendy said.

The headmaster also requested their help teaching in a high school with 500 students and only two teachers. Dave taught biology and Wendy taught English to 80 freshmen each.

To start the school's first library, the couple called for donations from Monterey Peninsula residents, who mailed nearly 3,000 books. To cover shipping costs of nearly \$55 a box, the community raised \$5,000.

The couple's family also offered support. A granddaughter requested soccer balls—used or new—instead of gifts for her 10th birthday, and shipped them with pumps to Tanzania. One of the couple's daughters raised money to finance two girls' education for three years.

The couple brought with them a laptop, printer, solar charger, shortwave radio and a power strip, which proved especially useful in a village that had just one room with electricity and many villagers with cellphones that needed charging.

Wendy Banks was struck by villagers' resourcefulness. "They can do so much with so little," she said.

One memorable side trip seems to bear this out. To get to a larger city a few hours away, the couple rode in trucks called dala-dalas, which were crammed with livestock, people and bags and had "already lived their life and died," Dave Banks said. On one trip, the truck got a flat tire. The driver used a pile of rocks to jack up the truck, but jammed on the wrong size spare tire. Soon after starting up again, the truck ran out of gas. After the driver borrowed a bike to travel to the only village with gas, he returned and swished gasoline in his mouth, spit it on the carburetor, and they were finally on their way.

"Traveling was just so awful," Wendy said.

"When we got off the bus, we were always real happy," Dave said. The average age of a Peace Corps volunteer is 28, and only 7 percent of volunteers are older than 50 or married. The organization is trying to change that. In November it teamed up with AARP to reach out to volunteers with a lifetime of skills and professional experience.

The oldest volunteer currently serving in the Peace Corps is 82, just five years younger than the oldest volunteer ever to serve.

But the Peace Corps' rigorous medical background may stymie the process for older Americans, who must provide thorough documentation to show a clean bill of health. Though both Wendy and Dave were in excellent physical health, the Peace Corps still requested medical records dating back to their 20s. Applicants with diseases like diabetes can serve, but may be placed closer to medical facilities instead of in remote villages.

For Dave and Wendy, 18 months passed from the time they submitted the application until they left for Tanzania. Though they returned a year and a half ago, the couple still uphold one of the three Peace Corps goals—promoting a better understanding of Tanzanians to Americans. They've given numerous talks around the San Francisco Bay Area and don't seem to tire of telling their stories.

In an African culture that respects their elders, but also depends on an extended family for support, the Tanzanians thought it odd for two people to leave their home and family of four children and 10 grandchildren.

Wendy's response: "We'll go back to our family . . . and maybe our family will be better, because we had this experience to share."

## CONDEMNING IRAN FOR ITS PERSECUTION OF YOUCEF NADARKHANI

SPEECH OF

**HON. LOIS CAPPS**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, February 29, 2012*

Mrs. CAPPS. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 556, which condemns the Government of Iran for its persecution, imprisonment, and sentencing to death of Pastor Youcef Nadarkhani.

H. Res. 556 rightfully condemns the Government of Iran for its state-sponsored persecution of religious minorities, and calls for the exoneration and immediate release of Pastor Youcef and all other individuals held or charged on account of their religion.

Pastor Youcef is a 34-year old father of two who was arrested over two years ago for the crime of converting from Islam to Christianity. In October 2009 he was tried and found guilty of apostasy. Adding to this atrocity, his sentence of death-by-hanging was recently upheld by the Supreme Court of Iran.

Only in oppressive regimes like Iran could this fundamental human freedom to worship as one sees fit could be considered a crime, let alone one punishable by death.

And sadly, the case of Pastor Youcef is only one of many other deplorable religious freedom cases in Iran. It demonstrates the Iranian authorities' utter disregard for religious freedom, and highlights Iran's continuing violation of the universal rights of its citizens.

It is deplorable, and this House should denounce it in the harshest of terms. Pastor Youcef deserves to be free. He deserves to practice his faith and be home with his wife and young children. He deserves to have his rights as a human being upheld and respected.

I urge a yes vote on H. Res. 556.

## IMPORTANCE OF FISCAL DISCIPLINE IN OUR OFFICES

**HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON**

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2012*

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address an issue that is of principal importance to our fiscal situation today in this Congress. I am referring to our own fiscal responsibility within the confines of our Congressional offices.

According to the Chicago Tribune, the number of members from Illinois that have returned more than one million dollars from their office accounts, called Member representational allowances, or MRA account only totals four members. They are Congressmen COSTELLO, JACKSON, MANZULLO and I. I encourage my fellow colleagues from my home state, and those across the county, to accept my challenge to strive for this respectable marker, to ensure the general public that we in Congress can also "Live within our means." We ask those who we serve, our constituents to make sacrifices to do so, and therefore we are expected to do the same in return.

I understand that returning this money will not offset our debts significantly and is a nomi-

nal amount when compared to our ever increasing colossal debt. But, the country and our citizenry demand a Congress that is in tune with their needs and values. Consequently, fiscal responsibility is tantamount to operating a home and a business, and we as leaders should make an effort, no matter how minuscule, in order to gain back the public's trust in this government.

I thank you Mr. Speaker for allowing me to speak on this issue. I praise my Colleagues from Illinois that are motivated to pursue fiscally responsible policies, and I encourage all Members of Congress as a whole, to follow our example.

## IN CELEBRATION OF JOHN COWANS'S 90TH BIRTHDAY

**HON. PETER J. VISCLOSKY**

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, March 1, 2012*

Mr. VISCLOSKY. Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor and admiration that I congratulate Mr. John Cowans on a significant milestone, his 90th birthday, which will be on Thursday, March 1, 2012. John will celebrate this remarkable milestone with family and friends on Saturday, March 3, 2012, at a semi-formal gala in his honor. For over 32 years John's lasting dedication and irreplaceable presence in Northwest Indiana has allowed him the opportunity to touch the lives of countless individuals.

John Cowans was born on March 1, 1922, in Union Springs, Alabama. After high school, John devoted six years of his life to serving our country in the United States Army. Mr. Cowans then attended Tuskegee Institute, earning a bachelor's degree in elementary education, which would be the beginning of an influential teaching career. John went on to further his education and earned a master's degree in school administration from Alabama State Teachers College. John accepted his first teaching position at the Morgan County Schools in Decatur, Alabama. Later, he moved to Gary, Indiana, and taught science, math, and social studies at Charles R. Drew School. His career at Charles R. Drew would span 32 years. For his many dedicated years of inspiring youth through teaching, he is worthy of the highest praise.

John Cowans made his mark on history as the first African American Vice-President of the Indiana State Teachers Association. Mr. Cowans also became President of the Gary Classroom Teachers Association. Mr. Cowans's pursuit to push education to greater levels continued, and he was instrumental in bringing about a day of recognition for teachers. To add to his already extraordinary career, John was a member of the National Education Association Assembly of Delegates to the Democratic National Convention 1976. John was able to impact the lives of youth for generations to come when he contributed to the creation of the 21st Century Scholars Program, which today helps to ensure that every student in Indiana can afford to attend college in exchange for a good citizenship pledge. Mr. Cowans is truly an inspiration, and I am grateful for his outstanding contributions to education in Indiana and across the nation.

Mr. Speaker, John Cowans has been an excellent leader in our community. Not only has