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Consider this: Ruth Colvin, off the beaten path

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By **The Post-Standard Editorial Board**

A life lived in genuine service to others does not draw undue attention to itself. So it is fitting that the words at the top of Ruth J. Colvin's new book are, "Stories of People Around the World." It is fitting that Colvin rejected the idea of writing a personal memoir.

"The Story of Me" just wouldn't fit the mission of someone who has spent time in 62 countries spreading the word about the word. Colvin founded Literacy Volunteers of America 50 years ago. She has taught uncountable numbers of people how to teach others how to read. Why the international focus? Because she believes that one great barrier to peace and development in the world is that "we know so little of one another." The ability to read is a key to opening wide the gates of understanding.

Presidents and world leaders have celebrated her work. Syracuse University Press has done likewise by publishing her accounts of journeys to 10 countries. The main title is "Off the Beaten Path," with the subtitle quoted above. Colvin will speak about and sign copies of her book from 4 to 6 p.m. today at the Onondaga Historical Association. This begins a series of public appearances, with more to come in April at area bookstores.

The setting today is apt. Colvin has seen much history in her days. At age 95, with seemingly undimmed energy, she remains a marvel and an inspiration to many. A native Chicagoan, she has been a gift to Syracuse for many decades, and in turn Syracuse's gift to the world.

A word of thanks to someone who has given words to so many.

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