



## Kenema Blango Health Clinic

by Peggy Murrah

Friends of Sierra Leone spent several years building the first primary school in Kenema Blango, a small remote village in the Valunia Chiefdom in Bo District. In the process, a friend of mine became a major donor of the school. He and his wife visited the school several years ago for the dedication and opening of the new classroom block that completed the school. While there, he committed to building a church in Taiama. This was not a FoSL project, but was part of his plan to give back to the world and honor his parents at the same time. Before leaving Sierra Leone after the church dedication a few years later, he had already promised the people of Kenema Blango during a brief visit to the school and community there that he would undertake raising the money needed to build the village's first health clinic. Our good friend Emmanuel Gborie already had a

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## Remembering Daphne

10th Anniversary Luncheon & Fundraiser for the Late Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn, Sunday Oct. 15, 2017

By Sylvia Lengor

On that beautiful Sunday afternoon, the friends and family of the late Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn got together to celebrate the 10th anniversary of her home-call. Fortunately, I had just learned from Peggy that the funds in the Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn Memorial Fund were running low. We decided that since this event was to honor her memory, we would ask for donations toward



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## **Year End Appeal & Thanks**

**by Peggy Murrah**

When I left Freetown to go to Kenema Blango for the clinic opening last October, it was almost impossible not to drive within view of the remains of the August mudslide that killed so many people and wreaked so much havoc. It was a horrible sight and I can't fathom what it must have been like immediately after it happened. Board member Gary Schulze and I



visited the Freetown office of Street Child, the nonprofit that Friends of Sierra Leone sent our members' donations to. We raised over \$8000 dollars in about three weeks. Our members, and friends of our members, reacted quickly and, according to Street Child, were able to provide much needed assistance.

Friends of Sierra Leone's members are kind, generous people as evidenced by the response to the mudslide. I would like to ask members to step up one more time. At the December board conference call, we emptied the projects account by funding three projects. Our next funding will be next May. Unless we are able to replenish our project account, we will not be able to fund one project, much less three. No amount is too small. I have made donations of small amounts as a way of saying thank you to friends or as birthday and Christmas gifts. Those donations add up and if enough of us do that we will be able to fund the next selected project applications.

**Thank you** to everyone who has contributed this past year. Because of you, we have been able to make a difference in several communities around Sierra Leone. Well done FoSL!



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signed agreement with the Ministry of Health regarding the plans and staffing before we ever went back to Freetown.

That took place in January 2016. On October 3rd, 2017 I accompanied our donor and his wife to Kenema Blango again, but this time was for the official opening and dedication of a brand new maternal and pediatric health clinic. In addition to my friends, Holy Cross Lutheran Church in Athens, Georgia, their place of worship, also contributed to the clinic. The Ministry of Health gave it its highest rating for a community health clinic facility.

Also integral in getting the clinic built properly and on time was our long time friend, Emmanuel Gborie. He volunteered his time and expertise in the many details that go into a building project in the provinces. He handled everything from Ministry coordination, to hiring work crews for skilled work, to insuring the villagers contributed in-kind materials and unskilled work, and to procuring and transporting materials to Kenema Blango. Given the deteriorating road conditions after several years of hauling building materials on a bush road, he also encouraged the village to repair the road before the opening. He was very successful in all aspects of his work in seeing this project through. And as always, he volunteered his time and efforts.

Making the opening even more

special were our honored guests. Lonny Born, the Associate Peace Corps Director for Health and two current health volunteers joined us. It was satisfying to be able to show the current volunteers how they could look forward to continuing their connection to and with Sierra Leone in the years to come. Lonny spoke to the crowd and helped make the connection between Peace Corps service and the current project as well.



Also attending were local dignitaries including the paramount chief, the Minister of Health and various other District, Chiefdom and village leaders.

Bestowing a special honor to Friends of Sierra Leone, Ambassador Bockarie Stevens took time from his busy schedule during his trip home to come from Freetown to Bo to meet us and go with us to Kenema Blango. His attendance was very much appreciated by everyone and me especially. I think it is just one more example of how he has done so much personally to support the efforts that Friends of Sierra Leone



makes to help our friends, families and loved ones in Salone. He spoke to the people of Kenema Blango and promised his support once he returned to the Embassy in Washington, DC.

We brought donations of baby clothes that family members, faculty and staff from Social Circle Primary School in Social Circle, Georgia and Hightower Trail Elementary School in Conyers, Georgia donated to the clinic. While there, we had teachers from the school submit classroom needs and,

using donations from Holy Cross and friends, Emmanuel Gborie got the supplies from stores in Bo. He was able to get textbooks from a bookstore there.

My friend who has donated so much of his personal resources to the people of Sierra Leone was also honored at the opening. Besides building a school, a church and a health clinic, he is currently funding four teachers selected by the community in their efforts to become certified teachers. Friends of Sierra Leone presented him with our humanitarian award in recognition of his continued assistance in education and now health. This award was overdue and he exemplifies what a humanitarian is.

To everyone that helped make this project a success, thank you!

## **Report on Cassava & Potato Farming Support by FoSL in 2017**

### **Minah Agricultural Development Farmer's Association**

#### 1. Background Implementation

This project was set up to establish a cassava and potato cooperative farm for processing garie, foo-foo and potato flours for income generation and running community savings and loan associations. The project brought together a group of women and youth farmers into a community cooperative, so as to increase

income generation and improve livelihoods in poor and hard to each communities in the Tonko Limba Chiefdom.

Upon approval and receipt of funds from the Friends of Sierra Leone based in the U S, MADFA was able to cultivate 10 acres of cassava farm and 1 acre of potato farm (see picture on page 10). Six communities benefited from this project as was indicated in the project plan. The implementation of activities started in January and completed in September, 2017. The project was a continuation of an

(continued on page 10, MADFA)

# Projects Report

by Jim Hanson

It has been another good year for FoSL projects, thanks to all of you who have supported us in 2017. Besides the outpouring of support after the mudslides in Freetown, the Board of Directors has granted over \$10,000 to small projects. Three of those projects were just approved at our December meeting.

The **Kissy Youth Organization** was awarded \$1004 to rehabilitate five wells in their community. They will construct aprons and fences, and add ropes and pulleys to keep them safe from contamination.

The **Wounded Camp School** in Port Loko received \$1353 for school furniture and supplies. Earlier this year, FoSL granted that community \$2400 to construct two classrooms. A site visit by attendees of the 2017 Annual Meeting in Freetown convinced us of their dedication to education for their children.

The **Bonthe District Community of Tihun** was granted \$2500 for solar lighting at their community centre. This will be used as a student study space, and for adult literacy classes and meetings.

The only bad news is that we spent all of our money. Our projects budget now stands at only \$220. So, if you are planning to make some tax-deductible donations



before year's end, we have lots of room in our bank account to help you out. It is easily done from our website, [fosalone.org](http://fosalone.org). Just click on "donate" and enter the amount. We pledge to put 100% of your donations to work on the best community-based projects we can find in Sierra Leone.

**Your donations make our work possible,** and the projects committee would like to thank all of you for your donations and wish you all a happy and prosperous new year.



The Kenema District Council Junior Secondary School is currently trying to finish the foundation of two classrooms before the end of this school term. They received \$1500 from FoSL in May.



## Promoting the Green, White and Blue in Gullah Country

By Amadu Massally

It was that time of the year again. The second weekend in November and Penn Center was hosting their 35th Heritage Days Celebration. After weeks and weeks of planning and negotiating it was time to go and represent the green, white and blue.

By the time we got there, after a long drive from Maryland it was in the wee hours. But breakfast was going to be served in a few minutes. So we stayed up for it. I went to bed at 7 a.m., and was up again by 9 a.m. as I had to get some administrative things out of the way. Whew... What a start!

The John Kizell Symposium started at 11 a.m. Kevin Lowther, the author of the book entitled *The African American Odyssey of John Kizell*; Ron Daise, a native of St. Helena Island, and also actor, poet,

singer, activist, plus more; Joseph Opala, the man chiefly responsible for popularizing the Gullah Connection to Sierra Leone; Akindele Decker, a young Sierra Leonean public historian; and I, Amadu Massally, formed the panel. We talked about the

book, its context to both African Americans (Gullahs) and Africans (Sierra Leoneans).

We agreed that we have not confronted the legacy of slavery and the slave trade enough in both America and Africa. We were pleased with the turnout and the reception. In fact, Kevin Lowther told us he sold the most books he had ever sold at one speaking event. Now that's how you measure success! When you hit the bottom-line. A great first event.

After we dwindled down and the crowd finally dispersed from Darrah Hall at Penn Center, we strolled across the street and over to the next event at the Cafeteria dining hall. Our signature event, the TransAtlantic Red Rice Luncheon. The Gullahs and Sierra Leoneans faced off in a friendly red rice competition. What we know in Sierra Leone as "Jolof rice." Our Jolof rice was cooked by Mrs. Olayinka Massally and Mrs. Zainab Wurie. Auntie Pearl-Sue, my co-

host at the event, led the cooking of the Gullah dishes. We appreciate all of them and the food was quite tasty.



A local eatery, the Gullah Grub, is iconic to the area.

But before we ate we were entertained by some soul-soothing singing from Auntie Pearlie-Sue and the Gullah Kinfolk. And in spontaneous order, Sierra Leoneans joined and sang along to some of the familiar spiritual songs. In addition we had our own session of songs, up to and including the Sierra Leone national anthem. The Mayors of both Beaufort and Port Royal were there along with several Gullah leaders in the community. We also had an opportunity to share project ideas and network. In audience also was Peggy Murrah who presides over the Friends of Sierra Leone. We had a blast!

The next agenda item was the Friday night's Fish Fry. Oysters in their shells, shrimp, and lots of fish, and sides that were finger licking good were all available to be consumed. It was cold though and we did not spend too much time

gallivanting. Especially being that the next morning, we had the biggest event of the event... the Heritage Days Parade!

Bright and early, we were up in preparation for the parade that starts at St. Helena's Middle School and ends on Penn Center Grounds. About a mile or so walk, but it was effortless as singing and 'chipping' on a brisk November morning was more fun than anything else. We were boisterous along the streets of St. Helena, singing songs like "Home Again... when shall I see my home!" or "Tel Am Tenki, Tel Am... tel Papa God Tenki!" We made enough noise (the most passionate some of CNN's crew told us) and even got to interview with W. Kamau Bell for his show "Different Shades of America" that will be aired in the Spring of 2018. Not bad for small town people, yes?



Merchandise from Sierra Leone proudly displayed.

The rest of the day we spent on the grounds or back and forth from the hotel to the village. And in closing, after a long two days of hustle and bustle we spent some



time with a Gullah family. The Atkins family of St. Helena Island had sent a family member to Sierra Leone in 1989 when we had the First Gullah Homecoming. Ernestine Atkins' house was full of her family members and we introduced each other, ate and danced to some serious Sierra Leonean music with some of the latest hip-hop.

I want to acknowledge some special people who made the event a success because of their hands-on participation and making the event as silent contributors in their own ways. They know themselves. We look forward to the next time we go to Gullah country for any celebration.

Gullah farmers displaying their produce similar to those found in Sierra Leone.

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(Daphne, cont. from page 1)

the memorial fund.

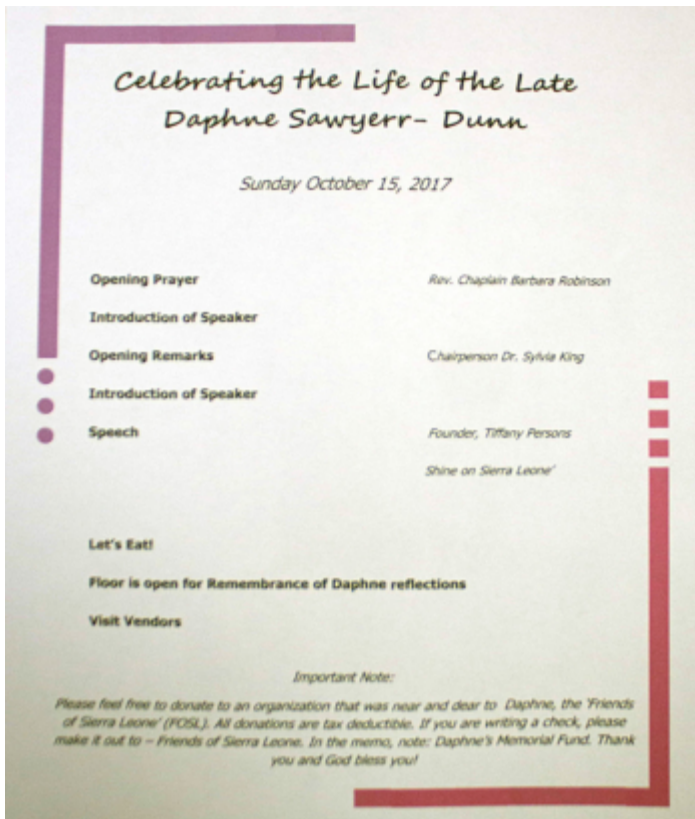
The large room at the Los Alamitos Community Center was nicely decorated with fresh flowers in vases as center pieces, together with lavender table cloth and purple napkins - Daphne's favorite colors. Two display boards of Daphne's pictures and a good collection of Fosalone newsletter articles (over the years) that talked about The Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn memorial Fund were put on display.

There was the usual 'Awujoh' food - beans, bitters and bologi, crain crain, jollof rice and plenty more. There were also three different vendors who displayed Essential Oils, and African clothing. The event opened with prayers by Chaplain Barbara Robinson who

had flown in from Northern California to celebrate with us. This was followed by the rendition of Nicole Mullen's 'I know My Redeemer Lives,' by Glenna Moseray. Glenna ministered in songs at a remembrance service held for Daphne the Sunday after her burial. It was now time to eat, and eat we did.

The chairperson for the event, Dr. Sylvia King (nee Ojukutu -Macauley), was introduced by her husband, Mr. Emmanuel King. Sylvia read messages of remembrance from the late Daphne's husband (Wynford) and her friend (Agatha Wellington). She started by telling guests about her relationship with Daphne, which stemmed as far back as Daphne's teenage years. Sylvia's older sister, Gloria, was Daphne's best friend. When Sylvia came to the U S,





Daphne adopted her as her 'younger' sister. Gloria had written a beautiful story about Daphne that Sylvia read during her laying out ceremony 10 years ago. I asked Sylvia to read it again because it was so well written. She continued by speaking at length about the work Daphne did for Sierra Leone. She tied it all beautifully by informing guests about The Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn Memorial Fund while encouraging them to donate.

Tiffany Persons (CEO, Shine on Sierra Leone) read a prepared report from Jim Hanson, about The Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn Memorial Fund. Following this, Dr. King opened the floor for Daphne's friends to share some memorable things about her. Christiana recalled a time when Daphne went to her home and volunteered to wash her 4-year-old daughter's hair.

This little girl hated getting her hair wet and would put up a fight if anyone tried to do so. Daphne thought she could get that job successfully, but ended up coming out of the bathroom soaking wet. Some spoke of how she brought them closer to God and encouraged them to pay tithes regularly. Others spoke of how she would go help them clean their homes on the weekends and had even planned a wedding party for one of her friends. Overall, it was a fun day with plenty to eat, drink and carry some home, as friends and relatives remembered the late Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn. Indeed, she is gone but not forgotten. Our sincere thanks go to Friends of Sierra Leone for keeping her memory alive after all these years. May she continue to rest in peace.

## **Call for Annual Meeting Site and Coordinator**

For the last decade or so annual meetings have been either on the east coast or in Sierra Leone. This makes it difficult for many to participate. If you would like to suggest a location not on the east coast and you can take an active role in coordinating the meeting, please contact Peggy at [president@fosalone.org](mailto:president@fosalone.org). Given the amount of time necessary to plan a meeting, a venue needs to be selected and booked within the next couple of months. Now is your chance to get involved!

(MADFA, cont. from page 4)

action that was already on course. Before now, members of MADFA had organized several groups of women and youths in six villages and towns into a group of cooperatives comprising of 50 per group, and the funding added value into the already planned activity process. The funding requested covered the following activities: payment for cassava cuttings, potato vines, food for work and land arrangement, tools, care taker for six months, sign board, stakeholders meetings and transportation of materials.



## 2. Achievements

- 10 acres of cassava and one acre of potato farm cultivated.

- Six community women and youth cooperative groups formed and strengthened in six villages in the Tonko Limba Chiefdoms.

- Out of this project, a cooperative called Tonko Limba Co-operative Growers & Marketing Association Limited has been formed and registered.

- The production of garie and foo-foo processing is ongoing.

- Garie processing is currently in progress, since the cassava tubes are now mature.

## 3. Challenges

- There is a high community interest shown by other community members to participate in this project, but we have limited funding to expand the project

- The project lacks support of a processing machine to process the garie and food products. There is indication that the project will succeed if processing machines are available.

## 4. Conclusion

The project was successful and the harvesting of the cassava tubes are on progress as indicated in the picture bellow. It is the intention of the Association to extend the cassava farm to more than 10 acres of land site by the end of this year. We will continue to update Friends of Sierra Leone on the progress of this venture as we are anticipating additional support to purchase the processing machines to expand the production and marketing of garie product in the Chiefdom and beyond.



Cassava harvest, ready for foo-foo processing.

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