



Friends of Sierra Leone

December 2018 Newsletter

Our Trip to Sierra Leone

by Patsy, Patty, & Peggy

We had a wonderful trip to Freetown and up-country. We were in Freetown to attend a friend's daughter's wedding and to meet with a few individuals, and went up-country to check out some projects that FoSL has sponsored in the past. We will give a brief summary of our meetings and project visits in this article, with a few photos, and then later a longer, more in-depth article online via email and the web page in a few weeks.

Freetown:

1. U. S. Ambassador Maria Brewer

- A. Impressed with number of former RPCV's who have remained active in Salone, calling them the "second diaspora"!
- B. She said that education is very much a priority with Salone's current administration. Students attended school on the first day instead of weeks later.
- C. The School Feeding program is getting better attention. It is still felt that those 40 years old and older are more literate. The Department of Agriculture has gotten a large grant from CRS and this will help to renovate schools, train teachers and give nutrition training.
- D. Bunce Island is getting attention. The Sierra Leone Government has put in a new jetty and they are mapping the ruins and working to preserve what is there.
- E. Ambassador Brewer hopes to be able to Skype with us at our next Annual Meeting.



2. Penny Alexander, Peace Corps Director

- A. There are currently 80 PCV's in-country in Education and Health
- B. There has been some transition in the recent years at the Peace Corps Office because of Ebola and change in staff, but they are working well together and continue to address the needs of the volunteers.



- C. 48% of the school children cannot read or write, so some PCV's programs are transitioning from the classroom to that of helping with teacher training in primary schools.
- D. They will be having a December training program for PCV's. One topic will be grant writing.
- E. We will share this newsletter with Penny and she will send it out to all PCV's
- F. Hoping to get 60 new PCV's next year in education and health.
- G. There was a group of PCV's who did a bike ride from village to village to create malaria awareness and were handing out mosquito nets.
- H. Penny also hopes to Skype with us at our Annual Meeting in 2019.

3. Dr. Adonis Abboud

- A. We met with Dr. Abboud because Jaipur Foot (an Indian organization) would like to come into Sierra Leone to bring prosthetics to the amputees. We were told that Dr. Abboud could be a good connection for getting this process going.
- B. Dr. Abboud let us know what his questions were and Peggy has begun the process of getting the communication going for this project.

4. Tom Johnson and Dr. Patrick Don-Davis

- A. Tom's work with Africa Surgery led us to Dr. Don-Davis, an oral surgeon in Freetown. There are very few dentists in all of Sierra Leone and there is a huge need.
- B. Dr. Don-Davis said he would like to link with Friends of Sierra Leone to put out a notice for someone to help organize dentists to come do dental work. He would help with this organization.

5. Street Child

- A. They are in the 3rd phase of helping Mudslide victims begin to recover. Phase 1 in August of 2017 was to meet immediate needs of water and food (FoSL members gave \$8000 in 3 weeks for this). Phase 2 was to get the students back to school and now in Phase 3 they are giving grants to the small businesses to help them get "back on their feet". They have a very organized training program for these business owners.
- B. We visited a number of the grant recipients and were able to talk with them. Photo is of a woman selling cassava leaf and rice.



Up Country projects that have been funded by FoSL grants:

One goal was to visit the projects without them knowing ahead of time so we could see them as they are.

1. Gborie Institute for Girls to learn skills—pan roof came off in a rainy season storm. Government has replaced it with a tarp so far.
2. Paul School for the Blind—we give a yearly scholarship for students. This is often used for transportation by the secondary school students.
3. Ebert Kakua School for the Deaf—2012 for water tank and 2018 Solar. Both are being well used!
4. Blama PreSchool—2016 Completion of construction. School is now complete and opening will be in January. Very nice facility.
5. Tikonko Rural Health Birthing Room—2016 grant for wells and latrines. The wells and latrines are an integral part of this facility.
6. Bumpe Green Africa Women’s Vegetable Marketing Program—this was a grant from 2013 and we could find no evidence of anything with this in the town. We asked the women in the village market and they did not know.
7. Baiima—2015 Health Clinic improvements. We found the clinic improved and doing well.
8. Mandu—We were able to visit with Mamie Gbani and see the women’s cooperative in action. They are doing well and expanding with a new storage facility
9. Wounded Camp School in Port Loko—The attendees at the 2017 Annual Meeting were able to see this school. Patsy and Patty spent an hour asking people for help in finding it and were unsuccessful. We think we were just asking the wrong question, or we had the wrong name????

FoSL Elections

We will be having elections for the FoSL board this coming April. If you are interested in being a part of the FoSL Board, please email Patty Bruzek at patty@fosalone.org. We would love to have new people on the board with your fresh new ideas!! The following FoSL positions are up for election this coming April 2019:

Position: Incumbent

- **President: Peggy Murrah**
- **Vice President: Aiah Fanday**
- **Secretary: Patty Bruzek**
- **Public Affairs: Amadu Massally**
- **Public Affairs: Jim Sheahan**
- **Board Members at Large: Peter Andersen**
- **Board Members at Large: Michael Lee**
- **Board Members at Large: Anthony McMillon**
- **Board Members at Large: vacant**
- **Board Members at Large: vacant**

President's Message

by Peggy Murrah

I just returned from Sierra Leone having spent a little over a week with Patty Bruzek and Patsy Spier on a combination business and pleasure trip. Somehow none of us had ever been to a traditional Mende wedding ceremony during our Peace Corps days, but we have now! The daughter of a man we have known since 1978 was the bride. In addition to the traditional ceremony, there was a government ceremony and a "white wedding" ceremony as well.

In between the various ceremonies we were able to meet with administrators at Street Child and arrange a visit to the mudslide site to visit recipients of one our recent fundings. There is another article detailing the visit, but we can't over emphasize the impact the visit made on all of us.

I came away from the visit knowing that our members' donations have been used extremely well. We continue to be one of a very few organizations supporting work in Sierra Leone that does not take a percentage of donations for anything at all. We use 100% of the money on projects. We continue to be volunteer led as well. I can think of no other organization that is able to do so much with the money we raise through donations. We have a variety of projects and we strive for equity in supporting projects in all areas of Sierra Leone.

As the holiday season gets into full swing, please remember our Sierra Leonean friends and family. Your gift will go a long way. Thank you to all of you who helped last year. And thank you in advance to those of you who will donate in the coming year. No amount is too small!

Wishing everyone a warm holiday season, however you choose to spend it, and a happy and safe New Year!



Gary Schulze the recipient of 2018 Mansa Musa Award

**By Aiah Fanday - Vice President of
FoSL**

On Saturday, October 6 2018, FoSL Board Member Gary Schulze a Board Member of Friends of Sierra Leone (FoSL) was awarded the Mansa Musa Award by the North American Madingo Association Washington (NAMA) DMV Chapter.

Amongst the many great revered icons in the Madingo Heritage, the NAMA Organization choose to honor the legacy of "Emperor Mansa Musa" the 10th Sultan of Mali Empire, his Humanitarian Philanthropist and Progressive Legacy is second to none in the history of Madingo People.

Mansa Musa was famously known for expanding the Mali Empire and bringing progressive reforms such as building Mosques and establishing Islamic Universities. He was specially celebrated following his pilgrimage to Mecca, where he donated wealth to the poor and spread his generosity to all that came across him.

Gary Schulze is the 2018 recipient of

(continued on page 8, Schulze)



**Meet Sierra Leone's New
Ambassador to the United States**
**by Embassy of Sierra Leone,
Washington, D.C.**

The Honorable Sidique Abu-Bakarr Wai was unanimously approved by the Sierra Leone Parliament as Ambassador Extraordinary & Plenipotentiary to the United States.

Born and raised in Maburaka, in the Northern province, Kafe Simiria Chiefdom in Tonkolili District, Sierra Leone, Ambassador Wai earned a B.A. Degree in Political Science and Pre-Law from Fordham University and later pursued graduate studies in Public Policy and Organization Theory at New York University's Wagner School of Public Service. His over 35 years of professional experience in the United States entails a rich journey that included positions as Deputy Director of the Institute of African Affairs at NYU, Community Liaison for the Brooklyn Borough President, Division Chief at the New York Housing Authority. For the past 14 years he has served as Community Affairs Advisor to the Commissioner of the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

The New York City Police Department is among the largest law enforcement

organizations in the world and the largest in the United States with approximately 40,000 uniformed personnel and 20,000 civilians. Among his accomplishments at NYPD, Ambassador Wai was responsible for introducing Body Cameras, an innovation which has now been adopted by law enforcement organizations across the United States. His responsibilities included mediating public safety disputes between NYPD uniformed personnel and civil society on behalf of the Police Commissioner.

For the past 20 years, Sidique Wai has been President and National Spokesman for the United African Congress, an organization representing 3.5 million continental African immigrants in the United States. Ambassador Wai has been credited with championing numerous initiatives which helped keep New York City safe and supported the interest of the African diaspora in the United States. This included overseeing foreign initiatives for the developing African nations in New York City, serving as point of contact between law enforcement agencies in the city and the diplomatic communities accredited to the United Nations and the African Union.

In 2013, Ambassador Wai set a record when he became the first Continental African to run for the New York City-wide office of Public Advocate. He also served as a member of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Community Engagement Leadership Council.

Ambassador Wai played an important role in contributing to the development and welfare of Sierra Leone through advocacy and diplomacy during two of the most challenging periods in the country's recent history - the Civil War period between 1991-2002, and the Ebola Epidemic from 2014-2016. During the war, his diplomatic efforts resulted in forcing the RUF rebel forces to release several high-profile Sierra Leonean

abductees including his brother, a renowned physician, Dr. Sulaiman Jabati Wai. During the Ebola crisis, he championed the interests of Sierra Leone at the United Nations convincing donors that the Ebola recovery process would be decentralized, participatory, and transparent, resulting in pledges of over \$1 Billion.

Ambassador Wai is uniquely qualified to serve as Sierra Leone's Ambassador to the United States. He is held in high esteem by Members of Congress, Governors, business executives, academics, international organizations, philanthropists, the various wings of the U.S security apparatus, and, moreover, the presidents of Sierra Leonean diaspora organizations in the United States. Over the years he has been able to leverage these ties to champion the interests of the poor and downtrodden within the African diaspora community in the United States and in New York in particular.

In addition to representing Sierra Leone in the United States, Ambassador Wai also has concurrent accreditation to Canada, Jamaica, Brazil, Guyana, Venezuela, the Bahamas, and Trinidad & Tobago.

My Friend Ambassador Wai

by Gary Schulze

Ambassador Sidique Wai and I have been close friends for nearly twenty years. I serve as a Trustee of the United African Congress (UAC), the organization Sidique founded to assist immigrant Africans in the United States. We served together on the NYPD Commissioner's Advisory Board and I worked on his campaign for New York City Public Advocate a few years ago. President Bio could not have selected a more qualified Sierra Leonean to serve as his Ambassador to the United States. Sidique, unlike most of his predecessors, was educated in the United States and has lived here for many years. He personally knows, has worked with, and is respected by many influential people in both the private and public sectors, including the U.S. Congress. His love for Sierra Leone is evidenced by the fact that in order to qualify for this post he had to renounce his American citizenship. He has asked me to serve on his Ambassador's Advisory Board and I'm looking forward to working with him to help President Bio implement his "New Direction Vision" for Sierra Leone.



Mamie Gbani and coworker at the Mandu women's cassava cooperative.

Opportunity to Get Involved

Friends of Sierra Leone is looking for someone who is interested in taking over our twice yearly newsletter. The June/July issue is electronic and the December issue is a hard copy. We have experienced board members who can help, but we would love to have someone join us to head it up. We are also open to having two people share the responsibilities. If you are interested, please contact Peggy at info@fosalone.org.

Projects Report

by Jim Hanson

It has been another great year of FoSL in small project funding and helping small communities improve their lives. In June, the Board of Directors voted to grant over \$17,000 to small projects in Sierra Leone, including a primary school water well in Kono, school latrines in Port Loko, and tools and seeds for a women's agriculture group in the Bo area. Two solar projects were also funded, one for the Ebert Kakua School for the Deaf in Bo, and the other to light a library for students in the Kambian community of Kabasa.

The Street Child organization had applied to FoSL for funds to help 35 families that had lost everything in the mudslides last year in Freetown. They were awarded \$3000 to set up small businesses with these families. They will provide them with training in small business operations, mentor them, and provide start-up capital.

Another project, providing \$2860 for health clinic expansion and solar lighting, was granted to the Rogbin Community in Karena District. They reported that the rainy season was longer than usual this year, delaying the start of their work. The four town sections have each agreed to produce 250 mud blocks, and the wall will be going up in January.

The projects committee received 13 new applications and the Board will be voting on which ones to approve in the very near future. It looks as though FoSL may set a new record for the amount of money going to project this year. Much of this was made possible by one very generous donor. But, we need all

donations, both large and small, to continue helping the people of Sierra Leone.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for supporting the projects fund. While we cannot all live and work in Sierra Leone, we can change a lot of lives with projects like these. Your support is greatly appreciated. <http://fosalone.org/donate.php>

Happy Holidays!



Student learning to sew in Bo at the Gborie school

2019 Annual Meeting

The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held in Washington DC at the Sierra Leonean Embassy. No date has been decided yet, but word will be sent via the listserv as soon as we do. Given the new Ambassador, this will be an opportunity to meet him and for him to meet us. We hope to see you there.

Schools Completed

by Momodu Jalloh

I wanted to inform you that we have completed the Three Community Primary School that FOSL helped sponsored.

Three Communities Primary School has been completed, and the school opened its doors to the community on October 1st, 2018, for the 2018/2019 academic year. The building is one level, consisting of 6 classrooms, a library, and an office. Each classroom has 12 tables and 12 benches, a blackboard; and a table, a chair, and a cabinet for the teacher. Each classroom can accommodate 30 pupils for a total capacity of 180 pupils for the entire school. It is a primary (elementary) and junior secondary school (middle school) so the classes range from 1st grade to 6th grade and JSS1. The school has enrolled 132 1st grade to 6th graders and 14 JSS1 schoolchildren. We hired 4 qualified teachers who have moved from the capital city Freetown and have taken residency in Rogbomtama village so that they can provide teaching services to these underprivileged children. As a result, EFH has to provide monthly residential and living stipend to the teachers. We filled 200 sport packs with notebooks, crayons, pens, pencils, and erasers. Also, we provided educational materials for the teachers.

Here is the link - <https://www.educationforhope.org/blog/new-school-opened>. Please share it with the FOSL network and thank them for their support and donations.

Thank you,



the Mansa Musa Award for his "outstanding commitment, support and dedicated service to the Sierra Leone Community." This year he was also presented with the "2018 Life-Time Achievement Award" by the Sierra Leonean organization All Works of Life (AWOL).

Gary began his humanitarian efforts as a member of the first contingent of Peace Corps Volunteers to go to Sierra Leone shortly after Independence.

In 2013, he was installed as Honorary Paramount Chief Pieh Gbabor Caulker II of Kagboro Chiefdom, Moyamba District. The following year President Ernest Bai Koroma made him an "Officer of The Order of The Rokel", Sierra Leone's highest civilian honor.

Five years ago he discovered the only known photograph of Sierra Leone's national hero, Bai Bureh, which he purchased and presented to the Government and people of Sierra Leone as a gift.

Last year Gary became a naturalized citizen of Sierra Leone.

Peace Corps and the "Making of African Art"

The University of Michigan has recently embarked on a project that considers the formation of the field of African art history in the 1960s and 70s. The Peace Corps played a significant role in this process as a good number of scholars who founded this field were RPCVs. We are reaching out to former Volunteers who served in Africa in the 1960s and 70s and were involved in arts-related projects while in the Peace Corps or who became involved with African art—either as a collector, scholar/educator or museum curator—after returning from Africa. If this piques your interest, we would love to hear from you. Please either complete a very brief online questionnaire (just click on "questionnaire") or contact us at makingafricanart@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for your response.

MAA "Making African Art"

Artists have been making art in Africa since before the beginning of recorded time. Yet, the study of African art as an independent, academic discipline only originated in the 1960s, and in the United States. **"Making African Art" explores the social and political milieu from which the field of African art emerged, including the election of John F. Kennedy, the Cold War, the founding of the Peace Corps, African Independence and the Civil Rights Movement.** This interdisciplinary project, funded by the University of Michigan Humanities Collaboratory, focuses on three strands of scholarly production about African art that have been given little if any attention in conventional histories of the field. First, originating from its first mention by President John F. Kennedy at the University of Michigan, the foundation of the Peace Corps influenced the trajectory of a number of scholars, curators and collectors of African art in the United States. At the same time, scholars from Historically Black Colleges and Universities actively challenged colonial representations of Africa by reinterpreting African histories, cultures and art forms. These developments coincided with the cultural agendas of newly-independent African nations, including the establishment of professional art schools, national museums and ministries of culture. **By exploring the importance of these three research threads, the project seeks to complicate and enrich understandings about the shaping of a canonical art history for Africa.** It represents the first substantive critical study of the social and political dynamics that established how African art is collected, exhibited and studied in the United States. **The project, a deep partnership with the University of Michigan Museum of Art, will produce both a scholarly monograph and a traveling exhibition.**

Original Photo of Black Star Gate on Independence Square, Accra, Ghana by George Appiah, licensed under CC BY 2.0.

Festac '77: Marilyn Nance, *The USA contingent at the closing ceremony of Festac '77*, February 1977, Lagos, Nigeria.

© Marilyn Nance, Cheri Samba, Cheri Samba, *Hommage aux Anciens Créateurs (A Tribute to Earlier Artists)*, 1969, acrylic and glitter on canvas. Courtesy of the Contemporary African Art Collection (CAAC), Collection Jean Pigazzi, Geneva, Inv# ZA.CHS.049.

© Cheri Samba, Kennedy Inv#16: Terile, I. Berra, 1966. ©Tommy Milks.





Sharing a blow up globe with the students.



Men at Mudslide area making a path for the water to flow down the hill naturally.



Patsy visiting a school.



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