



My View

by Peggy Murrah
FoSL President

Last December I traveled to Sierra Leone with fellow board member Amadu Massally on his historic trip leading some fifty people primarily from Georgia and South Carolina for a homecoming. It was an amazing trip and I am grateful I was able to go. When I visit Sierra Leone, I am always on the look out for signs of improvement, and I always find some. The airport alone is enough to make frequent visitors happy. There is no resemblance to the airport that was there even five years ago. And, as always, I am reminded of the resilience of people who have gone through far more than their share of difficulties, hardships, and sorrows brought on by the war. I breathed a sigh of relief in my visits from 2004 to 2014.

But then, even as I was in Salone with Patty for an absolutely delightful celebration of Alfred Gborie's, our brother, fiftieth birthday in 2014, Ebola had started its devastating rampage through Salone. You may remember the Peace Corps evacuated all volunteers to keep them safe. But, that finally abated and the Peace Corps returned, and so did I.

Shortly after the 2017 annual meeting held in Freetown, the landslide happened

2020 Annual Meeting Canceled

No one was surprised by this. We were to be on Sapelo Island the last week of June and I know the participants were really forward to it. We had a good number of participants who had never been to Sapelo before. I hated to send them the news. Given we would all be staying at the Reynolds Mansion, it wasn't a good idea.

We will probably not reschedule a physical meeting this year. Given the uncertainty of travel and the necessary physical distancing, it doesn't seem possible. We will include committee reports in the summer newsletter.

If you are interested in hosting the 2021 meeting, please contact Peggy by email: info@fosalone.org



Wash stations that FoSL funded in the efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19

that killed over 1,000 people, but hurt far more than just the ones killed. Friends of Sierra Leone raised some \$8000 to immediately assist in helping the survivors. After researching the available recipients, we settled on Street Child. I knew they were highly regarded and were recommended by the US Embassy in Freetown as reliable organization. I also stupidly breathed a sigh of relief. I remembered the old adage about troubles occurring in threes.

Now in 2020 once again, Peace Corps Volunteers have been evacuated due to a virus, Covid-19 in this case, and there is no return in sight. However, the Peace Corps office is still open and the local staff still has jobs. That points to an eventual return. I know from our experience in getting the Peace Corps returned in 2010, it is far easier to get them returned to an intact office and staff than start a new program. However, the return of the Peace Corps obviously isn't even a topic of discussion among our board members right now. The pressing issue is preventing the spread in Sierra Leone and helping the most marginalized in a country full of marginalized people.



We are again working with Street Child in our efforts to both stop the spread and help those who can't help themselves. Street Child began with setting up 150

hand washing stations around the country. They have projects in every district so all districts were included. Friends of Sierra Leone donated \$3000 to help.

Street Child's next response was to include getting food to those who could not get their own during the subsequent lockdowns. Friends of Sierra Leone sent \$4000 to help with that. The first lockdown Street Child delivered 7,119 meals to children who had no access to food. During the second lockdown they delivered 10,458 meals. Many of these were to street children who were sleeping in places like an empty market.

Street Child is putting a lot of work into educating people on how to not get the virus. Patty Bruzek and I participated

in an international conference call today with Street Child to hear what they had done and what they wanted to do. Street Child has a local staff and that staff has a great deal of input into making the decisions on what needs to happen and how it will happen. During the meeting today, one of the staff said when they are traveling the country right now they are going through more frequent road blocks due to the lockdown. The staffer said once the police see the Street Child logo on the vehicle, they wave them through and thank them for the good work they do. They also said they work closely with the appropriate ministries.

Because of Covid-19, the board decided to use the available project funds to assist in helping Street Child. We delayed the usual funding of projects from around the country for the small grants. We would like to try to fund those once we have the financial means to do so. If you can help, please visit our website, www.fosalone.org, and follow the link for donation. Thank you for making our work possible.



Wash stations that FoSL funded in the efforts to stop the spread of Covid-19

The CARES Act And Charitable Giving

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act—or CARES Act—signed into law on March 27, 2020, includes a provision of particular interest to individuals who may be considering charitable donations in tax year 2020. Non-itemizers are now eligible for \$300/\$600 charitable deduction. A reduction in taxable income is available in 2020 for individuals who do not itemize their deductions. It is an “above-the-line” deduction from taxable income for cash gifts to public charities and is limited to \$300 per taxpayer or \$600 for a married couple filing jointly. Discuss this with your tax advisor to determine its applicability to your individual tax situation. To make a charitable donation to Friends of Sierra Leone, click on Donate.

<https://fosalone.org/donate.php>

Amazon Smile

As a reminder to all Friends of Sierra Leone supporters, if you choose to shop with Amazon by using their "Amazon Smile" program, a small percentage (0.5%) of your purchase will be donated to FoSL.

Simply use this address to get to Amazon:
<http://smile.amazon.com/ch/52-1732179>

Don't be surprised to see FoSL registered by its original name - Greater Washington FoSL

Donations directly to FoSL are also greatly appreciated:
<http://fosalone.org/donate.php>

Thanks for supporting FoSL

Gondama Birth Waiting Home



Once again, Sierra Leone is preparing for what could be a devastating time and has sadly sent all the Peace Corps Volunteers home.

Due to the Government's declaration of a national emergency, starting in March, RHCI has decided to delay the opening of the Gondama Birth Waiting Home. Thank you for the \$1150 in funds FOSL provided for the construction of the latrine, kitchen, and renovation of the existing building to be used. RHCI received a grant of \$6030 from the US Embassy in Sierra Leone for this project also, and the community provided the equivalent of 25% in labor, land and building.

I'm attaching some pictures to confirm the construction was completed. Once the COVID 19 Pandemic is resolved, and the Government emergency Declaration has ended, we plan to open this 10 bed facility in Gondama, where it is

very much needed. In the meantime, RHCI is partnering with the Gondama CHC staff to operate motorbike outreach clinics to 4 villages in their catchment area.

Thank you to you and all the FOSL members for the support of this project, which will improve maternal health.

Please let me know if you have any questions.
Warm Regards and stay safe,
Carol Nelson MD MPH



Rural Health Care Initiative

Pursuing healthy pregnancies & children in Sierra Leone

www.rhcimnsl.org

PO BOX 14822, Minneapolis, MN 55414

651-503-1369

By Mr. Aiah Fanday – FoSL Vice President

April 26, 2020

**SOLICITATION FOR FINANCIAL AND MATERIAL
SUPPORT**

TO FIGHT COVID-19 IN SIERRA LEONE

To FoSL Members:

The Embassy of Sierra Leone in the United States is seeking your kind indulgence and support to contribute financial aid and/or material assistance, such as medical equipment and hospital supplies and services, for Sierra Leone to continue the fight to stop the spread of the COVID-19 epidemic the country, and to help those who are in need due to this tragic crisis. For example, many people and families, especially those with children who are financially challenged, are suffering and need food and adequate shelter. They need our support as well.

Some of you have already donated or pledged such valuable assistance of material and financial support to this effort. For this, the Embassy is grateful and cannot thank you enough.

The Embassy need your assistance at this time. To make your generous contributions, donations and pledges, please contact the officials at the Embassy of Sierra Leone to the United States of America in Washington, D.C. as listed below:

Ms. Rakie Macarthy, Head of Chancery.

Phone: +1 (202) 460-7109

Email: HOC@EmbassyofSierraLeone.net

Mr. Emmanuel Senessie, Financial Attaché.

Phone: +1 (240) 605-8036.

Email: Senessiet5@yahoo.com

You could also make your check payable to the Embassy of Sierra Leone,

P.O. Box 53359, Washington, D.C. 20009.

On behalf of the Embassy, the government and the people of Sierra Leone, thank you in advance for your love of country and our people by contributing during this COVID-19 campaign.

Transitions

If you have news to share that would be of interest to FOSL members, please send it to Peggy at info@fosalone.org. It may be a job change, birth of a child or grandchild, a death, or any other piece of news that our members would like to know.

Cora Schofield Cramer was in group 6 (1964-6) and taught at Harford School for Girls in Moyamba. Recently her lovely 40 year old daughter **Emily** passed away from melanoma. Emily worked for the CDC and had spent time in Sierra Leone during the Ebola crisis.

Suzanne Willsey, RPCV SL '78-'81, passed away 2/29/2020, after a long struggle with Alzheimer's, in Tucson, AZ. She served as a Primary Education workshop instructor while living in Njala Komboya, Bo District. Suzanne had a teaching career that took her all over the world. She will be missed.

It's with heavy heart to announce the death of our Beloved Mother **Mama Haja Sia Hawa Mbayo-Fanday** age 80 of Njagbwema Fiama / Kainkordu who passed away of natural death on Sunday May 3 2020 in Jui, Freetown, Sierra Leone.

A Mother to many Children.

A Grandma to many Grandchildren.

A Great Grandma to many Great-grandchildren.

A Mother who sponsored and financed all her Siblings, her Children and many other Children through their highest academic intellectual, professional and career pursuits to their highest heights and not limited to only Universities.



House Legislation Proposes Rescinding Peace Corps COVID-19 Funds

by National Peace Corps Association

While there has been significant legislation introduced to support Peace Corps and evacuated volunteers, a South Carolina Congressman has announced legislation that would — in part — rescind the \$88 million in emergency appropriations approved earlier for Peace Corps.

Read the full article here:

<https://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/articles/breaking-news-house-legislation-proposes-rescinding-peace-corps-covid-19-funds>

Here's action you can take

Follow the link below to send a message to your representatives. At the web site, simply enter your name & address. A template letter will be created for you, which you can alter. A sample letter is shown below.

Oppose House Legislation that would Take Back Peace Corps COVID-19 Funds

<https://advocacy.peacecorpsconnect.org/email-congress>

<your name>
<your address>

<date>

<your US Representative>
House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-1006

Dear <your US Representative>:

I am very grateful for the critical support Congress and the Trump administration have provided to Peace Corps and its 7,300 evacuated volunteers during this temporary suspension of programming.

It is because of this that I write to express my strong opposition to House Bill 6657, legislation introduced by Representative Jeff Duncan that would - in part - take back the \$88 million provided to Peace Corps to address the unexpected costs associated with the successful global evacuation and support of volunteers who were serving in approximately 60 nations.

I urge you to actively oppose H.R. 6657.

Congress has regularly demanded, and Peace Corps has regularly confirmed that the health, safety and security of its volunteers is of the highest priority. The agency performed admirably in making sure the highly complex evacuations were executed without incident. The funding to cover evacuations and other additional readjustment costs was as necessary as any element within the CARES Act to support our citizenry.

We need to continue to support Peace Corps as it prepares for eventual redeployment and future involvement in global health care initiatives. Proposals such as H.R. 6657 do exactly the opposite.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

<your name>

Check the date on email subject. Is it time to renew? If there is no date, or if the date is some time in the past, it's time to renew! Fill out and mail the form below with your check.

**Or renew through our website:
<http://fosalone.org/mbrs.php>**

FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE MEMBERSHIP FORM	
Name (include maiden) _____	FoSL needs your participation. Circle your areas of interest: <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Membership <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/ Communications <input type="checkbox"/> Projects <input type="checkbox"/> Events Would you be willing to be part of a network to receive information and contact your members of Congress at important times? (Please include your email address.) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Address _____	
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	
Home Phone _____ Email _____	
Day Phone _____ Occupation _____	
Relationship to SL (e.g., Sierra Leonean, PC, etc.) _____	
Sierra Leone Home _____ Years _____ to _____	
Membership: \$25 per Individual \$ _____	
Donation to Projects: \$ _____	
FoSL Circle \$1000 and up Supporter \$500 to \$999 Sponsor \$100 to \$499 Friend \$50 - \$99	
Overseas Mail (add \$10) \$ _____	
Total Remitted \$ _____	
Membership dues support operations for Friends of Sierra Leone, including meetings, newsletters, and the website. All other donations support FoSL projects in Sierra Leone.	
Dues and other contributions to Friends of Sierra Leone are fully tax-deductible.	
Thank you for your support! Please return this form with your check made payable to Friends of Sierra Leone to the address at the right. →	
PO Box 15875 Washington, DC 20003-0875	

Friends of Sierra Leone
P. O. Box 15875
Washington, DC 20003-0875

Web: fosalone.org



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