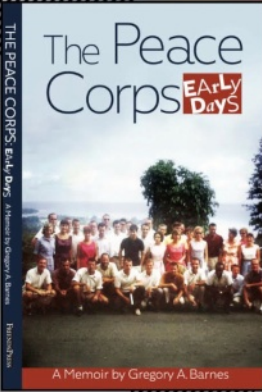




Friends of Sierra Leone

April 2024 Newsletter

**JOIN US SUNDAY
MAY 19TH AT 7PM ET
VIA ZOOM**



FOR A SPECIAL TALK WITH SL1 RPCV AND WRITER, GREGORY BARNES

After his service in Peace Corps Sierra Leone in the early 1960s, Barnes worked for Peace Corps at the DC HQ for a few months as well as 2 years as associate rep. in Northern Nigeria. Along the way, he published several short stories about West Africa. Barnes earned his Ph.D at the University of Wisconsin and taught at Drexel University in Philly.

He will discuss his new book, *The Peace Corps: Early Days*

YOU MUST PRE-REGISTER FOR ZOOM MEETING

Upcoming Barnes Talk

Join us on Sunday, May 19th at 7pm ET via Zoom for a special talk with SL1 RPCV and writer, **Gregory Barnes**, as he discusses his new book, *The Peace Corps: Early Days*. Barnes was in the first group of Peace Corps Volunteers in Sierra Leone in the early 1960s, serving alongside our FOSL Board Member Gary Schulze. Immediately following his Peace Corps service, Barnes worked for Peace Corps at the Washington DC headquarters for a few months. He also served as the Peace Corps associate representative in Northern Nigeria. Along the way, he published several short stories about West

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Judy Figi Scholarship by Peter Andersen

In December, 2022, FoSL lost one of its most dedicated members, **Judy (Lamm) Figi**, of Janesville, Wisconsin. Judy was a talented musician and music educator, and as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the mid-1960's, taught music at the Harford School for Girls in Moyamba. She remained active with Sierra Leone all of her life. On the FoSL Board, she served as our Advocacy Chair.

In 2023, the FoSL Board considered ways in which Judy's memory might be honored, and her legacy preserved. Since Judy had a past relationship with the **Ballanta Academy of Music and Performing Arts** in Freetown, it was decided to offer a scholarship to a deserving student at the academy. A friend of FoSL donated the \$500 to fund a full scholarship for one year in Judy's memory. The Ballanta Academy selected **Sylvia Adjarou** for this honor. Sylvia is a 24-year-old student who aspires to perfect her



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Africa, including *A Wind of Change*. Barnes earned his Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin and taught at Drexel University in Philadelphia. More recently, Barnes became a Quaker and most of his writing now is regarding Quaker matters. To learn more about Gregory Barnes prior to the talk, visit his website at www.gregoryabarnes.com or find him on Facebook at www.facebook.com/gregoryallenbarnes

This event will be on Zoom and you will need to pre-register at ([click here](#)).

Membership Report

Hannah Benga, Membership Chair

The Membership Committee is pleased to announce that FoSL currently has 181 active members. Thanks to your steadfast support, we've successfully supported a variety of impactful development projects in Sierra Leone. Your continued engagement is crucial to our ongoing success, and we're truly grateful for your dedication to FoSL's mission.

In our commitment to expanding our membership, we've recently crafted a new outreach letter to share with our networks and Peace Corps Volunteers who will soon complete their service. We believe extending this invitation to join will help broaden our reach and amplify our impact. Becoming an active member of FoSL provides an excellent opportunity to stay connected and make a tangible difference!

If your membership has lapsed, we kindly encourage you to renew conveniently online or by mail at fosalone.org. Your renewed support will help us further our efforts and make a lasting impact in Sierra Leone.

singing skills and to delve into the world of Gospel music. Although she has no instrumental experience as yet, she is determined to master at least one musical instrument. With a strong work ethic, bilingual proficiency in French and English, and a commitment to learning, Sylvia embodies dedication and adaptability in pursuit of her musical passions.

On February 27, I presented, on behalf of the FoSL Board, two memorial plaques at Ballanta, in honor of Judy, and the other representing the Frank Scholarships, in memory of the brother of an anonymous donor. The Frank Scholarships establish \$250 scholarships for 24 students over the next five years. I had travelled to Freetown for the RSCSL Legacy Conference, and this was our earliest opportunity to present the plaques. I also have a relationship with Ballanta going back to 2003.



continued page 6 - Judy Figi Scholarship

Join us in
WASHINGTON DC
for our Annual Meeting

July 25th to July 28th

Speakers & Meetings on
the 26th and 27th at the
Sierra Leonean Embassy!

REGISTER TODAY! SEE YOU IN JULY!



2024 Annual Meeting

We are super excited to host our 2024 Friends of Sierra Leone Annual Meeting in Washington, DC at the **Sierra Leonean Embassy!**

The Annual Meeting consists of multiple events and outings over four days, starting on Thursday, July 25th through Sunday, July 28th. Our guest speakers and business meeting will be on Friday, July 26th and Saturday, July 27th. Please take a couple minutes to complete the registration form to let us know which events you plan on attending for planning purposes.

Some of the amazing speakers we have on Friday and Saturday include the **Sierra Leonean Ambassador Sidique Abou-Bakarr Wai**, the **United States Ambassador to Sierra Leone Brian Hunt**, the **Acting Peace Corps Sierra Leone Director Setou Karama**, the **Peace Corps Desk Officer for Sierra Leone Hannah Amado**, former **National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) President Glenn Blumhorst**, and owner of **VisitSierraLeone.org, Bimbola Carrol**.

We will also go on tours of the National Museum of African American History and National Museum of African Art. There will be lots of West African food to eat, including delicious chop at the following restaurants: Bukom Cafe, Sweet Sweet

Kitchen and Swahili Village.

Please submit one Google Form per participant.

The FOSL Annual Meeting is open to everyone! The registration fee is \$25; however, it is free for all active FOSL members! After completing this registration form, there will be a link to pay your registration fee or to join Friends of Sierra Leone, which is \$25. We will also accept in-person payments of \$25 at the Annual Meeting, if that is more convenient for you.

We are excited to see you in July in Washington, DC! Book your Airbnb or hotel stay now!

If you have any questions, please reach out to our FOSL President Michael Lee at info@fosalone.org

Here is the link to register for the 2024 FOSL Annual Meeting in DC, if you plan on attending in-person or virtually via Zoom: ([Register](#))

Additionally, here is the link to the register for Zoom if you plan on attending virtually via Zoom: ([click here](#))

The advertisement is a dark blue rectangular box with a white border. At the top center is the 'Friends of Sierra Leone' logo, which is a map of Sierra Leone with a green-to-blue gradient, overlaid with a white circle containing the text 'Friends of Sierra Leone' and a line of stylized human figures holding hands. Below the logo, the text 'Donate Today' is written in a large, white, serif font. Underneath that, the word 'Visit:' is written in a smaller white font, followed by the URL 'http://www.fosalone.org/donate/' in a white sans-serif font. At the bottom, the text 'All Donations Support Small Projects in Sierra Leone for Schools, Latrines, School Supplies, Solar Projects & More!' is written in a white sans-serif font.

Projects April 2023

Jim Hanson, Committee Chair

Small projects funding has been moving along smoothly this year since changing to a monthly approval process, rather than the old twice a year model previously used. FoSL has funded six projects so far, and the workload on our committee has greatly eased.

The needs of schools throughout the country continues to lead all other application categories. Three schools have received grants to add classrooms. A **primary school in Shenge**, a coastal village in Moyamba District, was funded in



memory of our long-time Board member, **Judy Figi**. Judy also served on the Board of the Magic Penny, an NGO that has been supporting the Shenge school for many years. At the time of her passing, friends and family donated about \$4000 for a special project in her honor. FoSL decided that the Shenge school project was a perfect fit for her memorial, and matched those donations with another \$4000. The Magic Penny is now overseeing the construction of three classrooms to meet the ever-growing enrollment at the school.

The two other school construction projects received \$3000 each; one in **Kumala**, in Koinadugu District, for the completion of a 3-classroom expansion of its junior and senior secondary school, and the other in Modema, located in Kenema District. They are adding a new classroom to replace a makeshift structure that was built after a storm damaged the old school. Another school, the **Taiama Secondary School**, in Moyamba District,

received \$2060 to replace old and broken classroom furniture.

In January, FoSL donated \$3000 to help fund a **midwife training workshop** in Bo, at Njala University. A total of 94 midwives, nurses, and community health officers from Bo Government Hospital and area health clinics were trained in new mother health and safety, managing difficult births, and essential newborn care. FoSL was happy to join with several other NGOs to fund this important and much-needed work.

Lastly, a school field trip was funded for \$845 to allow 50 students and 9 teachers from **St. Peter's Junior Secondary School in Bauya**, Moyamba District, to visit the National Railway Museum in Freetown. Bauya has an old railway station, and the project will educate these students in the history of rail travel in Sierra Leone, and help them build the skills to maintain the heritage site in their own village. Most of these students have never traveled outside their district, so this trip will be a real educational experience for them.



I would like to thank our committee members for their work and dedication to our small projects program. They are all volunteers, not high-paid staff on expense accounts. And, we are very grateful to you, our loyal donors, for your continued support. FoSL currently has over \$34,000 in the projects fund, so we will be able to help many more small communities with projects that get overlooked by larger organizations. **Thank you for your help in fostering hope and community leadership in villages all over Salone.**

FoSL Speaker - Madieu Williams

by Peter Anderson

FOSL's speaker for February, by Zoom, was **Madieu Williams**, a former NFL safety and the proprietor of the Abigail Butscher Primary School in Calaba Town, east of Freetown.

Madieu is from Foulah Town, a less-than-affluent suburb of Freetown, but moved from Sierra Leone to Maryland at the age of age eight. He started playing high school football as a junior, started as a senior, and went on to star as a safety for his alma mater, the University of Maryland. In 2004 he was selected in the second round of the NFL draft by the Cincinnati Bengals, and during his nine-year professional football career he also played for Minnesota, San Francisco and Washington. In 2011, while with the Minnesota Vikings, he was named the Walter Payton Man of the Year in recognition of his commitment to philanthropy, his impact in the community, and his excellence on the football field. It was one of the few positives for the Vikings that year.

In an undated interview which Madieu played prior his presentation, Madieu noted that he had interests off the field. The major interest was the school in Calaba Town, named after his late mother Abigail Butscher.

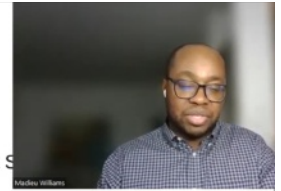
The original building consisted of four classrooms, an administrative office, a storage room, three toilets, and a water

- L-shaped building due to shape of the land
- Leaves room for latrines/toilets
- 2-story with twelve classrooms for 6 high school level grades
- Foundation building built into the hills for basement function as library/computer lab



Highlights

- UMD School of Public MOU 2010
- UMD School of Engineering MOU 2010
- Teacher training/Curriculum Development S
- Medical Mission Summer 2010
- Water Catchment Project 2012
- School Design 2014
- Teacher training/Laptop-Khan Academy 2019
- Handwashing station 2020
- Secondary School Construction 2024



well which dries up after the rainy season. The school opened with 85 students. The school has since expanded and today serves around 300 students, with a secondary school under construction which should be ready by the 2024-25 school year. The majority of the students are female, a conscious decision based on his mother's dedication to the education of women and girls.

Madieu said he had not intended to remain involved with the school after it was built, thinking it would be "one and done," but, he said, things didn't turn out that way. He remains active as proprietor, although he defers to the headmaster and the teachers for decisions regarding the school. As proprietor he has forged numerous partnerships that have allowed the school to expand and to thrive. These include especially two colleges of the University of Maryland, the first being the A. James Clark School of Engineering, which in 2014 designed a second set of classrooms, installed solar panels, designed and built a catchment system to provide, sterilize and store water for use in the dry season, and built a hands-free hand washing station; the second being the University of Maryland School of Public Health, which helped with post-Ebola recovery efforts at the school and in the community. Their contributions, he noted, were "woven into the story of the school."

Madieu said the school had become a pillar of the community, and that local people had helped to build the second

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building. He credited the teachers and the community support for the high standards, as evidenced by a 99% pass rate in the nationwide WAEC exams, indicating that they should do well in the future. He said he was committed to assisting those who failed the exam. In 2022, one child who failed the exam needed glasses, and had been unaware of that fact. Members of the community also volunteered their labor to help build the school, while those who were unable to do this work cooked for those at the site.

In the video, Madieu said he did not want to be defined by football. In Calaba Town at least, in Sierra Leone, and increasingly in the United States, he has succeeded.

Advocacy Committee

by Marco Cavallaro

FoSL's Advocacy committee has been re-established and being co-chaired by Jim Sheehan and Marco Cavallaro. So far in 2024 the committee has engaged our members around several NPCA campaigns including tuberculosis awareness and support for the Peace Corps budget. The committee has also gained input from various stakeholders around top Sierra Leonian opportunities to potentially focus on including health, education and employment. Please be on the lookout for opportunities to participate in making your voice heard, and email marco@fosalone.org if you are interested in participating in our monthly advocacy committee meetings.

Judy Figi Scholarship - continued from page 2

Ballanta's long-time principal, Kitty Fadlu-Deen, was (and is still) trying for the third time to retire, and so I met with the interim principal, Lovelace Love-Harding, who reminded me that he played second trumpet in a brass ensemble that I coached more than 15 years ago. Lovelace arranged for most of the scholarship recipients to be present, and on a dimly-lit stage on the ground floor I formally handed over the plaques. He also had me hand each student a letter offering them a scholarship. I was unaware that in the even more dimly lit bleachers there was a journalist from the Awoko newspaper, and so FOSL and the scholarships were reported in Sierra Leone's largest newspaper.

Sierra Leone Waltz

Kate R. Harper & William Ratel

The image shows a musical score for a waltz in 3/4 time, key of D major. It consists of six systems of piano and bass staves. The piano part features a melodic line with various ornaments and dynamics. The bass part provides harmonic support with chords and bass lines. Dynamics include piano (p), forte (f), mezzo-piano (mp), and fortissimo (ff). The score ends with a double bar line and repeat signs.

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Or renew through our website:

<https://fosalone.org/mbrship/>

FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE MEMBERSHIP FORM	
Name (include maiden) _____	FoSL needs your participation. Circle your areas of interest: Advocacy Education Membership Newsletter/ Communications Projects 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.) Yes
Address _____	
City _____ State _____ Zip _____	
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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. →	
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Friends of Sierra Leone
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