



# Friends of Sierra Leone Newsletter

December 2012

## Our Projects Run on YOUR Contributions

By Peggy Murrah, President

As we head into the holiday season that marks the end of the year, I have some great suggestions for gifts and ways to honor friends and loved ones. A contribution to Friends of Sierra Leone makes a nice gift and enables some very good projects at the same time. As you read about our projects, remember that only the generosity of our members and friends provides us the means to fund the projects and see them to completion.

The general project fund is used for small grants. Twice a year the projects committee selects recipients from applications submitted. The committee tries to select projects from all regions of the country. The maximum amount is \$3,000 and projects should meet the

following criteria:

- The project must be in Sierra Leone
- The receiving organization should be a Sierra Leone-registered NGO or community-based group
- The project should have a plan for future sustainability.
- The project should benefit a large group or community

We also house a separate fund strictly for current Peace Corps Volunteers. Many of our members, probably most, are returned Peace Corps Volunteers. With the return of the Peace Corps to Sierra Leone almost three years ago, there is a big interest on the part of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers in the secondary projects that the current volunteers are working to

complete. While the interest is great, we do not want our listserv to be used as a fund raiser. Our members, for the most part, don't want numerous emails asking for funds, even if the projects are worthy. By maintaining a specific fund for Volunteers, we are hoping to support them without constantly soliciting money from our members. Worthy projects will be sent to us by the Peace Corps office in Freetown. One criterion is that recipients be willing to communicate project updates and, if possible, pictures, to our members. We anticipate our first recipients to be selected soon.

Those of you who have been part of Friends of Sierra Leone for several years will remember Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn, may her soul rest in perfect peace. See the Fall 2007 newsletter posted on our website, [www.fosalone.org](http://www.fosalone.org), for a tribute to this remarkable and much loved lady. To honor her memory and all the good work she did for the people of Sierra Leone, Friends of Sierra Leone has a scholarship fund for children attending the Paul School for the Blind in Bo.

Jim Hanson's letter on page four mentions some recent projects and we have a list of projects Friends of Sierra Leone has funded over the past few years listed on our website, [http://](http://www.fosalone.org/projFunded.php)

[www.fosalone.org/projFunded.php](http://www.fosalone.org/projFunded.php). In addition we have information for "special projects," such as our Solar Electric Initiative. The range of projects and locations is impressive. All of that work is possible because of our members. Without their support, there would be no list because there would be no projects. We are one of the few organizations that can honestly say all donations for projects go to projects. We have no paid staff in the US or Sierra Leone. This is a way to donate and know that your money will be used only for projects.

Even if you haven't considered it before, or if you have but have put it off, this is a good time to make a donation in any amount to honor or thank someone. Please consider a gift to Friends of Sierra Leone's project fund for that "hard to buy for" person who has everything already. We will send a note on your behalf to the person or persons being honored.

To those of you who have donated in the past, we would like to thank you once again for your help. We truly appreciate you. And our friends in Sierra Leone who have benefited from your generosity appreciate you as well.

Friends of Sierra Leone wishes you a wonderful holiday season. Peace to all.

## Time to step up.

Two years ago we elected our current Board of Directors. That means that elections are just around the corner again and we need you to send us your nominations for new officers. We're always in need of volunteers who can bring in new ideas and help with activities. The job descriptions for each of the officer positions and the at-large Board members are on our website at [www.fosalone.org](http://www.fosalone.org). Go to "About FoSL" and then "FoSL Bylaws." The descriptions are included in Article V: Board of Directors.

Please send us the names of those whom you know would be great officers. We currently have officers who live in 12 different states -- so location doesn't matter -- and we've mastered the art of audio conferences to move our programs forward. And please, please consider stepping up your participation by nominating yourself for one of the positions. All officer positions and half of the Board slots are open for nominations for the upcoming election in the Spring.

**The deadline for nominations is Friday, January 4, 2013.**

Send your nominations to:

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

Send nominations by email to [Mike@fosalone.org](mailto:Mike@fosalone.org)

- For President \_\_\_\_\_
- For Vice President \_\_\_\_\_
- For Secretary \_\_\_\_\_
- For Treasurer \_\_\_\_\_
- For Public Affairs (SL) \_\_\_\_\_
- For Public Affairs (US) \_\_\_\_\_
- For Board Member \_\_\_\_\_

## Projects

Dear Friends,

I want to thank all of you for keeping the donations coming so that we can continue to fund projects like the one shown in the pictures on pages five and six. Peace Corps Volunteer Brandon Brown and the staff at St. Peter's Junior Secondary School applied to Friends of Sierra Leone last fall to replace broken furniture at the school. We were happy that we had ample funds at that time to grant their request.

Earlier this year the Board of Directors approved four projects that totaled over \$7,600. We are currently reviewing three more requests, which will likely once again put us over \$10,000 in project support this year. Our committee is all volunteer, so every one of your dollars can provide things like sterile medical equipment to a patient at Moyamba Hospital, or clean drinking water to a student at Ebert Kakua School for the Deaf, or a desk at Brandon's school.

Peace Corps Country Director Valerie Staats has sent a request for

funding of a volunteer project. The Board of Friends of Sierra Leone agreed last year to provide \$2000 for a project selected by the Peace Corps staff. The project is a request for building latrines at the Kolenten Senior Secondary School in Kambia. PCVs Sherry and Kenneth Browne teach at the 1000 student school that has only one functioning latrine. They are seeking \$1854 to repair five latrines and build six new ones with hand-washing stations to serve the faculty and students. With cholera prevalent in the area, this is obviously a much needed project. Our goal is to make \$2000 available each year for a volunteer project that Peace Corps selects, which will be separate from the small projects fund.

With your help, we can do even more next year. Happy holidays and a sincere thank you from the projects committee.

Jim Hanson  
Projects Chair

### Mark Your Calendar!

The National Peace Corps Association's second annual gathering — Peace Corps Connect: Boston 2013 — will be held June 28-29, 2013. Check their website for details:

<http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/annual-gathering>



## Building Furniture In Bauya





New Furniture for St. Peter's School in Bauya



## WAGING PEACE: The Peace Corps Experience

A film by Allen Mondell

In 1961, President John Kennedy came up with a very simple but profound idea: he asked young Americans to volunteer to travel overseas to help the people in under-developed countries build better lives for themselves and their children.

Allen Mondell was part of the first wave of Peace Corps volunteers, working as a teacher in Sierra Leone from 1963 to 1965. After his return to the United States, he worked as a journalist and eventually became a documentary film director and producer. For nearly forty years, he and his wife Cynthia Salzman Mondell have made award-winning films that intimately personalize complex social issues. They've depicted the consequences of handgun violence, the mysteries of teen depression and suicide, the struggles of the modern women's rights movement, and even the insidious, pervasive nature of anti-Semitism throughout Europe.

Now, in *Waging Peace: the Peace Corps Experience*, Mondell has gone back to his early years to try to understand why he and the

other volunteers were so deeply affected by their brief Peace Corps experience overseas--and why that experience continues to affect their lives to this day. The film, which took two and a half years for Mondell to complete, is told almost entirely through former Volunteers' letters, journals, emails and blogs. The stories he finds are hardly sentimental or drowned in self-admiration. Instead, they capture the seemingly insurmountable challenges of ordinary Americans who were willing to endure vast cultural isolation, poverty, suspicion and, at times, antagonism--all in the hopes of making a small difference.

At times hilariously funny, and at other times grimly sad, *Waging Peace* is full of perceptive insights into sacrifice and hardship, courage and defeat--and, ultimately, hope. At a time when society desperately relies on volunteerism, *Waging Peace* is also an inspiring call to other Americans, young and old, to cross cultural lines in order to discover a new awareness of the world and, in the end, to wage peace.

Allen Mondell has worked in film and television as a writer, producer and director for 40 years. He began his career as a newspaper reporter in Baltimore and then went to work for Westinghouse Broadcasting (WJZ-TV), first as a writer for a magazine program and then as a writer/director of documentaries about urban and social issues. After moving to Dallas, he spent five years as a writer, producer, and director of documentaries and special programs for KERA-TV. He and his wife, Cynthia Salzman Mondell, have been making award-winning docu-dramas and documentaries for 35 years. For more information about Media Projects Inc., please visit [MEDIAPROJECTS.ORG](http://MEDIAPROJECTS.ORG).

## The Peace Corps Returns Reconnecting with Friends in Salone and Co-Producing a Film by RoseAnn Rotandaro

In the summer of 2011, Peggy Murrrah, Friends of Sierra Leone's president, suggested that I join her and more than 40 other members for Friends of Sierra Leone's annual meeting. "It's going to be in Freetown!" she said. Peggy and I had overlapped in our Peace Corps service in Sierra Leone in the late 1970s. Admiring Peggy's efforts in post-war Sierra Leone, I was easily persuaded to make the trip.

I had not returned to Sierra Leone since my Peace Corps days and had mixed feelings about returning. I had lived in Pujehun and Golu, places that were hard hit by rebels in the war. In the 30+ years since leaving Salone, I had been wrapped up with the responsibilities of my life -- raising a son as a single mom, graduate school, law school, and navigating a career as an attorney in Silicon Valley. I had not even kept up with the news in Sierra Leone and only intermittently paid my membership fees to Friends of Sierra Leone. In my heart, I wanted to be a loyal friend of Sierra Leone. In reality, I was not. More so, I was recently widowed, still grieving and emotionally fragile. Could I handle a visit to Sierra Leone? What would I find?

Steve Kovacs, a film maker and a professor of film at San Francisco State University, roomed with my late husband during their college days at Yale. I invited

him to join me. "Let's make a documentary!" I urged. Steve, although an adventurous world traveler, initially declined. But fortune would have it that his daughter, an immigration attorney in Los Angeles, had just finished reading "Long Way Gone," Ishmael Beah's book. She admonished him, "Dad, how can you *possibly* turn down the opportunity to go to a country like that with people who actually *know* the country!" And Steve called me back, agreeing to come along.

We hired two young film-makers from Freetown, recommended to us by Amadu Massally. Without a clear idea of what we would do with it, we did seven hours of filming in Freetown and upcountry. This included interviews with Friends of Sierra Leone members in which they spoke with great compassion about their relationships with Sierra Leone, and its people, and the influence their experiences in Sierra Leone had on their lives.

*The Peace Corps Returns* documents the spirit and dedication that turns ordinary Americans into ambassadors of goodwill. Transformed by our relationships with Salone, many of us have returned there to help make our adopted land a better place to live. For more information on this documentary visit [www.thepeacecorpsreturns.org](http://www.thepeacecorpsreturns.org).



# Election Report

By Peggy Murrah, President

A little over a week before the elections in Sierra Leone, I learned I had been selected as a member of the Carter Center's election monitoring team. I was lucky enough to be able to observe firsthand the process of voting for national and local elections in the Kenema District. In each of the stations within Kenema and the surrounding rural areas that I visited as part of the day, I saw Sierra Leoneans going about the business of voting in an orderly, after an initial bit of confusion in figuring out which line their voter cards directed them to join, and very peaceful manner. The complete calm and total lack of tension that I witnessed was inspiring. APC and SLPP party monitors even shared a chair at one station. The process was humbling given the hours that went into voting and counting. Counting went far into the night and was conducted by flashlight. I couldn't help but compare the Sierra Leone elec-

tions to the US elections the previous week and I have to congratulate Sierra Leone on the sheer stamina and dedication by which the workers conducted them. Sierra Leone had paper ballots that had to be counted by the workers at the local station, again at the district level and finally data was entered into computers in a double blind manner at the regional level. Not an easy process at all. While I can only comment on the stations I visited, and even with those I can only comment on what was happening while I was there, I can say I felt I saw a fair and transparent process take place. I feel quite lucky to have had the honor of witnessing the first Sierra Leonean election completely managed by Sierra Leone since the war ended. Congratulations Sierra Leone! You showed the world that peace is important and that your citizens can put aside political differences to work together in a democratic process. Well done.

[Photographs of campaign posters are on page 10]

# Posters in Kenema preceding the election



**Check the date on the address label. Is it time to renew? If there's no date, or if the date is some time in the past, it's time to renew!**

FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name (include maiden) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to SL (e.g., Sierra Leonean, PC, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

Sierra Leone Home \_\_\_\_\_ Years \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Membership:</b> \$25 per Individual	<b>Donations:</b> FoSL Circle	\$1000 and up
	Supporter	\$500 to \$999
	Sponsor	\$100 to \$499
	Friend	\$50 to \$99

Membership (\$25 per member) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution to Projects \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Overseas Mail (add \$10) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership in *National Peace Corps Association* (\$35) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Remitted** \$

Membership dues support operations for Friends of Sierra Leone, including meetings, newsletter, and the website. All other donations support projects in Sierra Leone.

Dues and other contributions to Friends of Sierra Leone are fully tax-deductible. The \$35 membership fees for National Peace Corps Association are **not** tax-deductible.

**Thank you for your support! Please return this form with a check payable to Friends of Sierra Leone to the address at the right. →**

**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 e-mail address, if available.)

Yes

\*\*\*\*\*

How would you prefer to receive your newsletter? (circle one)

via the Postal Service

via e-mail

\*\*\*\*\*

P. O. Box 15875  
Washington, DC  
20003-0875

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

**Web: [www.fosalone.org](http://www.fosalone.org)**



## **Address Service Requested**

### **Friends of Sierra Leone**

#### **Board Officers**

President	Peggy Murrah, Social Circle, GA
Vice President	Aiah Fanday, Upper Marlboro, MD
Secretary	Patty Bruzek, Lombard, IL
Treasurer	Mark Hager, Phoenix, AZ
Public Affairs	Amadu Massally, Sachse, TX
Public Affairs	Jim Sheahan, Atlanta, GA
At Large	Anthony McMillon, Ft. Washington, MD
At Large	Jeff Davis, Arlington, VA
At Large	Edward Monaghan, Gaithersburg, MD
At Large	Gary Schulze, New York, NY
At Large	Judy Figi, Janesville, WI
At Large	Falla Lamin, Fairfax, VA
At Large	Tom Hull, Grantham, NH

#### **Committee Chairs**

Advocacy	Judy Figi, Janesville, WI
Annual Meeting	Etta Toure, Fairfax, VA
Bunce Island	Mike Diliberti, Nairobi, Kenya
Education	Kalyca Thomas, Orlando, FL
Fundraising	Patty Bruzek, Lombard, IL
Membership	Lisa Forbes, Denver, CO
Newsletter Editor	Carl Onken, Central Valley, NY
Projects	Jim Hanson, Social Circle, GA
Website	Jamie Brown, Juneau, AK