

Friends of Sierra Leone

Projects Committee in Freetown

Over two weeks in March, Anthony McMillon and Bob Heavner represented the FoSL Projects Committee at meetings held in Freetown. The purpose of these meetings was to carry out a needs assessment regarding teacher training for Sierra Leone (SL) primary teachers. FoSL has been interested for some time in helping to establish a training program in SL modeled on the LEAP program in Liberia. The first step was to meet with those in-country currently doing non traditional teacher training. traditional we mean teaching that is interactive as opposed to rote learning with a teacher writing content on the blackboard, his or her back to the class, and the students learning through memorization. Once it is clear who is already doing such training, FoSL can determine how best to augment these efforts through technical assistance and further training.

Anthony and Bob met with four separate non profit programs as well as holding three separate meetings with the Ministry of Education. The organizations with whom they consulted were F.A.W.E. (Federation of African Women (People's Educators), P.E.A. Education Association), SLANGO (SL Association of NGO's), and Pikin to Pikin, a health education organization. Of these organizations, F.A.W.E. and P.E.A. are doing a great deal of primary education teacher training. Their efforts are -----[Project Committee continued on page 8]-----

Advocacy Report

Our primary focus has been on getting Peace Corps to return to Sierra Leone and to aid Sierra Leoneans who are in this country and have lost their Temporary Protective Status (TPS).

We held two Advocacy Days in Washington D.C., April 3-4. Aiah Fanday, Peggy Murrah, Daphne Sawyerr-Dunn and I (Judy Figi) spoke with officials at the State Department, Peace Corps Headquarters, and Sierra Leone Embassy. We also visited the staffs of Congressmen who on are the Africa Subcommittees and got commitments from most of them to contact Peace Corps Headquarters on our behalf. We spoke to staff for Senators Feingold (WI), Obama (IL), and Martinez (FL), and Representatives Petri (WI), Slaughter (NY), Green (WI), Watson (CA), Payne (NJ) and Jackson Lee (TX). If any of these are your representatives, and even if they're not, this is the time for you to contact them and thank them for supporting the return of Peace Corps to Sierra Leone. We were told that Peace Corps is getting calls and letters from Congress, so keep at it. They are hearing from us! If your Congressional representative has contacted Peace Corps, be sure to thank him/her, and it doesn't hurt to ask him/her to write another letter. My Senator, Russ Feingold (WI), wrote to Peace Corps last year advocating for Sierra Leone and when we visited his office we found he had written a second letter just recently. Senator Obama (IL), Representative Watson (CA), and Representative Green (WI), have also sent letters to Peace Corps -----[Advocacy continued on page 8]-----

Friends of Sierra Leone Board of Officers and Committee Chairs

Elected

President Peggy Murrah, Social Circle, GA

Vice President Aiah Fanday, Silver Spring, MD At Large Gary Schulze, New York, NY Treasurer Mark Hager, San Antonio, TX At Large Tim Curley, Silver Spring, MD Secretary Bob Heavner, Berkeley, CA At Large, Projects Cindy Nofziger, Seattle, WA Public Relations, PC Dave O'Neill, Alexandria, VA Jim Sheahan, Atlanta, GA At Large

Public Relations, SL Adjai Robinson, Baltimore, MD At Large Anthony McMillon, Fort Washington, MD

Appointed

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Newsletter Editor Carl Onken, Central Valley, NY Education Chair Sarah Armstrong, Falls Church, VA

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To all members of Friends of Sierra Leone:

I recently joined the FoSL Board of Directors as the Education Chair. The Education Chair is responsible for responding to requests for more information about Sierra Leone and/or FoSL. These responses will come in the form of talks/presentations/meetings. Occasionally FoSL has been contacted to provide information orally and now I will respond to these requests.

I will be assembling a presentation that can be used for these occasions and <u>need your help!</u> Can you please send whatever information you have about Sierra Leone and/or FoSL that you think might belong in a presentation such as this? Thank you! Anything and everything will help me do the best job possible.

And a bit about me: I, like all of you, have a very strong feeling for helping people in Sierra Leone. It is something to which I plan to dedicate an awful lot of time and energy throughout my life. I was in Sierra Leone twice over the past year and again in February, 2006.

I have started a foundation to help women and children in Sierra Leone and more information about the work I am doing can be found at my website at http://www.brighterafrica.org.

This will be a wonderful experience working with all of you. Thank you for the opportunity and for the work you do.

I look forward to hearing from you and to receiving information.

All the best, Sarah Armstrong sarah.armstrong@brighterafrica.org

Pressed for Time

Tom Johnson, Jr.

Gibralia Kamara had cried a little before leaving the government camp for Internally Displaced Persons. His mother and stepfather saw him off with a small plastic bag holding one change of clothes. We took public transport the 40 minute ride from Grafton camp to the house where I rented a room on Easton Street in Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone. Gibralia did not object to riding on my lap so that we would be charged for taking up only one seat in the crowded van. He stared out the window, his nine-year-old eyes' interest held by the many sights along the road into the city. Gibralia ate nothing the rest of the afternoon except for one banana with a little water, a small handful of parched peanuts, and a few mouthfuls of bread. Fatmata, my landlord's wife, had cooked us some rice and sauce, but Gibralia shook his head at the offer. He fell asleep early on two mats stacked on the floor. I sprayed his legs and arms with mosquito repellent.

The next morning Gibralia indicated he wanted to bathe. I set him up with a bucket of water, soap and a cup in the bathroom and gave him a washcloth to keep as a towel. After putting on his clean set of clothes, he ate a banana on the veranda. We walked the quarter mile down the road to the children's hospital on Fourah Bay Road. The whole way Gibralia held my hand as he picked his way over and around the holes and crumbling asphalt of Easton Street with much speed and grace. He held his shoulders at a steady, crooked angle walking only with his legs, giving the appearance that we were cutting through the crowds with his small leading shoulder.

Gibralia panicked at the sight and touch of the thermometer that was placed under his arm. "No fo chuk me, no fo chuk me," he pleaded. Fearing an injection, he struggled against the overwhelming strength of the nurse holding his thin arms. We took public transport to the center of town rather than to have Gibralia try and walk through the congested head of Fourah Bay Road the few blocks before it reaches the intersections at the Clock Tower. One of the few words Gibralia had spoken to me was "motocar" indicating his pleasure to again be riding to someplace.

Waiting at the hospital on Ecowas Street and knowing that it would be some time before Gibralia would be X-rayed, I left him for about fifteen minutes to go and make a phone call at a public tele-center. When I returned I found Gibralia where I left him, sitting stiffly on a chair among about 30 other patients waiting for various hospital services. Seeing we still had some waiting to do, and pressed for time knowing I had only two weeks left to be in Sierra Leone, I decided to go and try to get something I needed done started at the Immigrations office a couple blocks way. When I told Gibralia he remained perfectly still while a large tear welled up in his left eye and rolled down his cheek. Using the country's patois I assured him that I would not go anywhere and felt a little ashamed in front of the Sierra Leoneans silently waiting and observing our discourse.

While waiting for the X-rays to be developed we walked two blocks up to the travel agency on Rawdon Street where I had to confirm the return flights of three doctors I had brought in on a ten day medical mission trip. The agency staff seemed curious about seeing a white man come in with a small black boy in hand. After confirming the flights I produced from the folder in my back pack the photos I carried of a few of the 12 spinal surgery patients we had already sent to Accra, Ghana, for treatment by a surgical mission team that visits there from America. The three agents, Lebanese employees, took a break from their computer screens and keyboards to view the pictures I had laid out in clear plastic covers with printed captions explaining the patients' before and after status. All of these ----[Pressed for Time continued on page 7]----

SEPTEMBER 2006 ANNUAL MEETING EVENT

By: Aiah Fanday

This year Friends of Sierra Leone's (FoSL) annual meeting will be held on September 15 and 16 in the District of Columbia metro area in conjunction with the Peace Corps' 45th Anniversary. To commemorate this event FoSL will host two functions on Friday, September 15 and Saturday, September 16. The kickoff event will be on Friday, September 15 at 6 pm at *JJ's Grills Bar & Restaurant*, 2017 Veirs Mill Road, Rockville, MD 20851 – 301-340-8611. Buffet style Sierra Leone meals (cash bar) will be provided for \$13.00 per person.

Be part of a night of class and distinction for our signature Fund Raising Awards and Dance Event on Saturday, September 16, at the *NUHORIZON PARTY HALL*, 2120 Industrial Parkway, Silver Spring, MD 20904. The Master of Ceremonies for this event is *Mr. Sam Ford* of ABC 7 NEWS – WJLA. The donation for the event is \$50.00 per individual. The event is open to the public, but members are encouraged to pre-register by mailing their \$50.00 donation by *September 1*. One does not have to attend to donate towards this fund raiser. Our target is to recruit new members and raise \$15,000.00 to fund some of the outstanding goals and objectives the board has set forth for the next couple of years. Please see flyer and form for more information.

FoSL SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 EVENT RESERVATION FORM

Mail this form with your payment by September 1 to:
Friends of Sierra Leone
P.O. Box 15875
Washington, DC 20003-0875



\square YES – I WILL ATTEND \square NO – I WILL NOT ATTEND

Name:					
	(\$50.00 per individual) Total Amount:				
Current Address:		Apt. #			
City	State	Zip			
Home Phone:		_ Cell Phone:			
E-Mail Address:					

We are going to have a Silent Auction at the September dinner. Please be thinking about items that you could donate for this auction. These items could be from your time in Sierra Leone a long time ago or recently. They could be gift certificates from places like restaurants or stores. I would appreciate it if you could contact me if you have an idea of what you are going to bring so we know how to prepare a space for the auction. My email address is bruzekkp@comcast.net.

As an example, I will be donating a country cloth that was given to me when I went back to visit in 1987.

Patty Bruzek, Fundraising Chair

FRIENDS of STERRA LEONE



ANNUAL AWARD DINNER & DANCE

Saturday, September 16th, 2006 8:00pm – 2:00am

DONATION: \$50.00 Per-Person

BE PART OF AN EXCITING NIGHT

At

THE NUHORIZON PARTY HALL

2120 Industrial Pkwy, Silver Spring MD 20904

(Across from the new MVA & Emission Station)

DJ DONALD MOORE

MC

Sam Ford
(ABC 7 NEWS - WJLA)

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT

Aiah Fanday 301-871-5703 Mike Diliberti 703-641-0721 (DC Area)
Peggy Murrah 770-464-2986 (Atlanta Area) Judy Figi 608-345-0175 (Mid-West)
Bob Heavner 510-843-4377 (West) Gary Schulze 646-252-1087 (New York)
Tim Curley 301-439-3111 (MD Area) Patty Bruzek 630-916-0218 (Chicago Area)

Call these cell phone numbers if you have problems finding the hall: 240-821-3641 / 703-380-3296

Green Oranges on Lion Mountain

By Emily Joy, 2004. 271pages. \$14.99 /soft cover (available through Peggy Murrah with all proceeds going for medical help in Sierra Leone)

"Green Oranges illustrates the tenacity and determination of the people of Sierra Leone," comments the Duchess of York. This book also describes the author's volunteer service as the only doctor in a small hospital upcountry in Sierra Leone. With her two years of VSO service bumping up against the beginning of Sierra Leone's 10-year civil war, we become aware of the vicarious pain of being connected to another part of the world.

The author, Emily Joy, presents herself as a total hoot in deprecating ways that range from her physical looks to her ability or lack of ability as a doctor, a humor compounded by the tendency of Sierra Leoneans to see Western doctors primarily as surgeons. She is a woman out to save the world and her starting place is Serabu, Sierra Leone. As we read the book we come to know her as amazingly competent and courageous. Her descriptions, like herself, are full of warmth, humor and great humility. Describing her cravings for chocolate and for a man with nearly the same intensity, the reader is drawn into the personal side of the author's life, only to be rudely interrupted by jarring medical crises such as the removal of a basketball-sized ovarian cyst which turns out instead to be the belly of a middle-aged pregnant woman – a stunning discovery for Doctor Joy, who then sews the woman back up, leaves the fetus unharmed, and retreats to her quarters. As this book proceeds from anecdote, to astute observations, to beautiful descriptions, it becomes impossible to lay aside.

Former volunteers tend to love <u>Green Oranges</u>, which brings us back to the smells, looks, tastes, sounds and feeling of life in the village, but with the added drama of someone doctoring in unbelievable situations. Like our past volunteer selves, we, as readers, are gently swept into the rhythms of the village. Just when we finally feel settled in, we turn the page to confront with the author the onset of war. We share her sense of impending tragedy, a sense heightened by her knowledge that she can leave this place while her counterparts cannot. The emotional intensity is ratcheted up further by our fore-knowledge of the hell that lies ahead for so many good people.

For those who have not experienced Sierra Leone, Emily Joy paints a vivid portrait of the daunting task of survival confronting the African even in times of peace. From the perspective of the struggles of Sierra Leone, she compels us to re-examine our own existence here in the West. Her account uses charming humility to open our eyes once again to the very real world of those connected to us but so often far from our daily thinking.

---Lucretia Humphrey

Lucretia Humphrey served in Sierra Leone with the Peace Corps from 1971-1974 and used the hospital at Serabu with a bad case of hives during that time.

Goodsearch is a search engine powered by Yahoo that donates a penny to a cause of your choice every time you use it to do an Internet search. Just go to http://www.goodsearch.com/ and use Friends of Sierra Leone as your designated charity in the box at the bottom of the page. You can even check on the current amount of donation due to FoSL via the searches done in our name. The donations are paid for by the advertisers on the site.

--[Pressed for Time continued from page 3]-- patients had had their spines fractured by tuberculosis pathogens eating at one or more vertebrae. The agents expressed much pleasure and amazement, then turned their attention to Gibralia. He didn't seem to mind them lifting up his T-shirt to look at his back to observe where it was fractured in two places, at the top between and just above his shoulder blades, and again at its base. Gibralia smiled a little with all of the attention.

We crossed Siaka Stevens Street and walked down Rawdon to the Immigration's office. Gibralia climbed the two flights of stairs without too much trouble. I was told I would have to leave my passport for a few days to have my visa extended, as tomorrow was a Muslim holiday. Again much fuss was made over my young friend. The pictures were brought out, the shirt lifted and the back examined by the Sierra Leonean office workers as they expressed their glee over the hope for Gibralia's treatment.

On Wilberforce Street Gibralia and I turned into my favorite Internet cafe. Gibralia stood transfixed before the monitor screen as I checked my email, clicked the mouse and typed on the keyboard. We then hooked up with one of my Sierra Leonean helpers, Alhaji Sesay, who is a brother of the first patient we ever sent to Ghana for spinal surgery. We three went to "chop" at a nearby "chop house." To my surprise Gibralia had by now found his appetite. He ate his own plate of rice and sauce as well as some of mine. Alhaji negotiated a good price with a street vendor, 3,500 leones, for a small soccer ball I then bought for Gibralia.

The next day, after having gotten the X-rays and after Gibralia was at last injected, I bought him a "yogurt" from a street vendor made out of frozen, half-curdled powdered milk and sugar. After I paid the 500 leones, a passerby pressed a 500-leone coin between Gibralia's hand and the soccer ball. Earlier in the day one of the healthy young boys who hang out on lower Easton Street where they try to play soccer with a punctured old ball, ran up and gave Gibralia a 100 leone coin. By late the next day, I had already returned Gibralia to his mother and stepfather at the government camp. I was again downtown after having gone back alone to the Immigrations office. A street vendor stopped me as I was buying bread. She took two candies from a wide pan she had been carrying on her head, and gave them to me. I thanked her, then pulled a 100-leone coin from my waist bag. But she refused the offer.

Note: Tom Johnson, Jr. served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in Sierra Leone, 1989-91. Tom now raises funds to procure medical and surgical care for impoverished Sierra Leoneans suffering with a variety of illnesses and conditions. For more information about Tom's work please visit his website at: **africasurgery.org**.

The **2007 International Calendar** produced by the Returned Peace Corps Volunteers of Wisconsin will be available through FoSL. In addition to volunteers' photographs from host countries around the world, the calendar includes historic days, holidays and holy days from many cultures. A portion of the proceeds will go toward FoSL activities. Watch the website, www.fosalone.org, for details and an order form, or wait and order with the order form that will be included in our fall newsletter.

-----[Project Committee continued from page 1]----supported in part by UNICEF. Several areas for FoSL assistance were identified including with help distance learning programs, methodology and implementation curriculum, additional training and follow up as well as assistance in training at more remote, rural villages. Further information was collected from SLANGO and Pikin to Pikin as well as from Ministry officials. On his way home from SL Bob reported back to the Projects Committee at its April 2nd meeting at Tim Curley's home in Maryland. This meeting was also attended by Stephanie Vickers. Director of the Liberia LEAP project and Michael Gibbons, formerly of Banyon Further implementation Tree Foundation. ideas were discussed at this meeting and several action plans were delegated including bringing together Liberian and Sierra Leonean trainers to work together.

Finally, Bob returned to his former Peace Corps village of Mambolo to present educational and medical supplies sent by container as well as a school vehicle for Scarcies Secondary School. This was not a FoSL sponsored project but like many Board members have done, this was Bob's personal effort. He was Scarcies' first Peace Corps teacher from 1969-71. Over \$10,000 were raised in the States for this project. All 700 Scarcies students and teachers joined by several hundred villagers took part in the celebration on Saturday March 25th. This project also included a new roof on one of the classroom buildings, textbooks, equipment, computers and medical materials. The prospects for FoSL assistance with teacher training for primary teachers are exciting. The Projects Committee will work diligently toward this end and will be reporting on our progress in the Fall newsletter.

Bob Heavner

FoSL Board Secretary

urging them to go into Sierra Leone. Please let them know that you appreciate their efforts, especially if you are their constituents. They need to know we recognize their work.

Immigration is the hot topic in Washington these days and we are hoping new legislation will help our Sierra Leone friends who are struggling here after losing their TPS status. When Congress is on recess many Congressional representatives are in their home districts, often doing listening sessions. This is a good time to speak to them and their representatives. If you are in the Washington, D.C. area it is a good idea to stop in to see your Congressmen. You don't always need an appointment although calling ahead is a good idea. Just go to the office, introduce yourself and ask if there is a staffer available to speak to you. There is nothing like a personal visit.

Contact information is on the FoSL Advocacy webpage (www.fosalone.org) and you can contact me at salonesix@aol.com if you have any questions.

Membership Renewals

Please renew your membership or join FoSL today.

It's tax deductible!

Don't Delay!

There's a membership form on Page 11.

Dear Friends of Sierra Leone

Thank you very much for contributing \$3000 for the purchase of a generator for a Ministry of Education's radio station that we received through The Foundation for West Africa. Please allow me to update you on the progress of this project.

The donation was made in November 2005. In December we met with the Deputy Minister of Education Abass Collier and spoke about the donation and he was very happy about this. We wrote a letter to inform him that Friends of Sierra Leone had donated this. He was busy with the Commonwealth meeting for Ministers of Education and asked us to wait to forward the project.

The generator, which has been purchased, is a key part of the strategy of using the radio to support quality education. A little background -- The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) has a small radio station that was given to them by UNESCO. They have been using the station to support education in central Freetown. FOSL is playing a key role in addressing a central problem facing this station: they had no electricity beyond office hours to run the station. Most kids who use the radio to support their education use it in the evening. Your donation makes this possible.

In January we met with the Deputy Minister Collier to begin moving the project forward. They agreed to locate where the generator house should be set. More important, we discussed the larger strategy of supporting quality education for children out of school using their radio. He was very enthusiastic and supportive.

MOEST is building the generator house. Talking Drum Studio (TDS) is keeping the generator in our store while construction is being completed. At the same time we are working with World Vision to establish a pilot project using the MOEST radio to target vulnerable kids including those working and street children in central Freetown – this is an evening programme. This should be in place in the next 2 months. The generator and the generator house need to be ready to support that project. Our goal is: by end of May you will see both the generator working (at night) and supporting educational programmes that are designed for kids who want to learn but don't have the opportunity to do that.

You guys are great, thanks for the support to this little initiative that could be transformative and help Sierra Leone to meet the Millennium Challenge Goal of basic education for all by 2015.

Best regards, Frances Fortune (not ex peace corps but ex CUSO 1985 – 1988 Kabala)

Note from President Peggy Murrah

Work continues both in projects and advocacy. Those committees have been working hard toward their various goals. While we don't have Peace Corps back to Sierra Leone yet, we are still more hopeful than in the past. Please consider contacting your congressman or woman asking for support in this effort. Particularly if you live in one of the states whose representatives (see Advocacy Report on front page) have sent a letter or letters of support, please let them know that you noticed.

The projects Committee is working on a long-term teacher training project that will require more funding than most of our projects in the recent past. If you would like to support deserving projects receiving financial support from FoSL, please make your tax deductible contribution soon.

Check your mailing label to see when your membership expires. If you are reading this online because you didn't get it in the mail, chances are your membership has expired. Contact Michael Diliberti (info@fosalone.org) for information.

If you have any ideas about ways FoSL can make a difference in Sierra Leone, please don't hesitate to share them. Send your comments and ideas to info@fosalone.org and I will respond.

Prosthetics Outreach Foundation Brings Hope and Healing to Amputees in Sierra Leone

Four years after the end of a brutal, decade-long war that devastated the West African country of Sierra Leone, the wounds of war are still visible throughout the country. Charred out homes, schools and hospitals litter the countryside and towns, and limbless children and adults spot the cities and upcountry villages. During the war, rebels gruesomely amputated the hands, arms, legs and feet of men, women and children using axes, machetes and knives. Often the victims were selected at random. Today, the amputees and their families struggle to regain some semblance of a normal life.

"Our hearts still bleed with tears" - Sierra Leonean amputee

The Seattle-based Prosthetics Outreach Foundation (POF) is partnering with the Sierra Leonean government and a local amputees support and advocacy group, the Single Leg Amputee Sports Club, to help bring hope and healing to amputees in Sierra Leone. POF is assisting with the construction of a new prosthetics center in Makeni, the northern provincial capital of the country. This area saw some of the fiercest fighting during the war, yet, there are no prosthetic rehabilitation services available.

POF has almost completed the construction of the new center and recently sent off a first container with prosthetic supplies, equipment and materials to Sierra Leone. The center is expected to open later this spring and will serve amputees throughout the northern region.

"The prospect of helping hundreds of amputees in Sierra Leone regain their mobility is truly exciting," declared Winfried Danke, Prosthetics Outreach Foundation Executive Director. "They have waited so long for a chance to walk again and rebuild their lives."

POF is grateful to the Friends of Sierra Leone who have contributed \$3,000 to this project to fund prosthetic components for 29 amputees.



"I cannot wait for my daughter to get a prosthetic limb and take her first steps" - Mother of a two-year-old amputee

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

FRIENDS OF SIERRA LEONE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION					
Name (include maiden)					
Address					
City State	ZIP+4 code				
Home Phone () E-mail address					
Occupation	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·				
Relationship to SL (e.g., Sierra Leonean, PC, e	tc.)				
Sierra Leone Home	Years	to	Wou be p		
Membership: Individual \$20 Contributions: Household \$35	FoSL Circle Supporter Sponsor Friend	\$500 to \$999	rece and mer at (Ple		
Membership	\$		addı		
Contribution	\$				
Overseas Mail add \$10.00	\$				
Membership in National Peace Corps Associati (Add \$35.00 individual, \$42.50 family)	on \$		3		
Total Remitted	\$				
Thank you for your support! Please return Friends of Sierra Leone to the			F		

FoSL needs your participation. Circle your areas of interest:

Advocacy

Education

Membership

Projects

Events

Events

Would you be willing to be part of a network to receive information and contact your members of Congtress at important times? (Please include e-mail address, if available.)

Yes



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

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Web: www.fosalone.org

Address Service Requested



Order a FoSL sweatshirt! We are going to place an order for white sweatshirts with the design shown here. We need to have these preordered to get the group rate. The price will depend on how many people order the sweatshirt. It will run anywhere from \$21.50 to \$30.00. If you want to see the way it is shown on the website, you can go to: http://customink.com/cink/r.jsp?E=pmurrah%40mindspring.com&F=fosl11



Please email Patty Bruzek at <u>bruzekkp@comcast.net</u> to let her know how many and what size of sweatshirt you are interested in buying.