

Friends of Sierra Leone

September 2023 E-Newsletter







Friends of Sierra Leone 2023 Annual Meeting July 13-16 Houston, Texas

Committee Reports (slides) - page 2 Committee Reports Summary - page 4 Meeting Agenda - page 5 Awards - page 7

-- more --

Projects - page 8
President's Message - page 9
Advocacy - page 11
Special Event - page 12

Committee Reports

2023 FoSL Annual Meeting





Future consideration: Standard outreach letter members can use to reach out to their networks to encourage participation

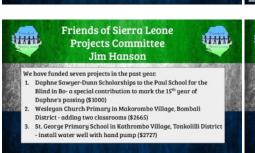


















sure we achieve the objective of the project are pictures of activities carried out











- Currently, we fundraise through:
 Annual dues
- o Donations
 Goals for Fundraising
- Sell items online Host fundraisers
- Interested in leading the Fundraising Committee?
- Email Michael Lee at Info@FoSalone.org







Education in Sierra Leone

- Host events/programs in Salone
 Partner with NGOs on the ground in Salone
 Education in the United States
- - Host virtual talks, lectures, panel discussions, meet & greets, etc.
- Interested in leading the Education Committee?

 Email Michael Lee at Info@FoSalone.org

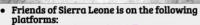




Friends of Sierra Leone Social Media







- Instagram (@FoSalone) @ (166 followers)
 Facebook (@FoSalone) (3 (1,654 followers)
 Twitter (@FoSalone) (3 (1,552 followers)
- Website (www.FoSalone.org)

Follow us! Help us spread the love of Salone!





Marco Rubio

The Daily Review

Reflecting on the Peace Corps





Questions? Ready to Be an Advocacy Leader?



Treasurer Report Treasurer Mark Hager

Friends of Sierra Leone

HAMME

HAMM







Patricia Conioh & Steve Norfleet's 2023 annual village visit photos.



Patricia's school visits and distribution of school supplies.



Patricia's school visits and distribution of school supplies.













Summary of Committee Reports

Membership Committee Chair: Hannah Benga

Membership Status

As of June 30, 2023, we have: 184 Active Members 1078 Total Members

Encouraging Membership Renewals

Emails to expired members with reminders Individual membership status included in newsletters Future consideration: Standard outreach letter members can use to reach out to their networks to encourage participation

Innovation Efforts

Members have more hands-on control and can update their personal account information and select what contact information to share with other members. Updated website features simplified membership renewal process and provides active members access to the database to find and connect with other members.

Membership Database

(\$2727)

Demonstration by Jamie Brown

Projects Committee Chair: Jim Hanson

We have funded seven projects in the past year. Daphne Sawyer-Dunn Scholarships to the Paul School for the Blind in Bo- a special contribution to mark the 15th year of Daphne's passing (\$1000)

Wesleyan Church Primary in Makorombo Village, Bombali District - adding two classrooms (\$2665) St. George Primary School in Kathrombo Village, Tonkolilli District - install water well with hand pump

Kamande Agriculture Project in Kabala,

Koinadugu District - purchase cassava-processing equipment (\$500)

Mamaka Village Agriculture Project near Mile 91 in Tonkolilli District - small loans to support farmers, 30 women and 10 men (\$3000 - part of \$7600 that that came from other contributions)

Young Muslim Primary School in Benkia Village, Bombali District - rehab the school and latrines and purchase school (\$3000)

Kono District Global Organization at Titabaya Primary School in Kono District - build a 3-place latrine and hand-washing station (\$3000)

Therefore, the total amount of grant money given out for this past year was \$20,492.

Budget for Projects - \$41,725 Daphne's Scholarships - \$915 Mamaka Village Ag. Project - \$150



KDGO Toilet Project

Please visit our social media sites for more information, updates & photos of the projects we supported!

Also, spread the word! We are always looking for new projects to support!

KDGO Toilet Project

KAMANDE AGRICULTURAL PROJECT/ PROCESSING

Situational Report on the Rehabilitation of the School at Benkia

SCHOOL BUILDING PROJECT AT MAKOROMBO COMMUNITY

Advocacy Committee Chair: Jim Sheahan

NPCA President Dan Baker & RPCV Congressman John Garamendi The Next Six Months – And Five Ways to Help 1. Serve as FOSL's Advocacy Coordinator

3. This August/September: Organize a District Office Advocacy Meeting

4. This August/September: Participate in NPCA's OpEd Campaign

5. September 27: Advocacy Zoom Training for NPCA Country of Service Groups

Treasurer Report: Mark Hager

Fundraising Committee

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Education Committee

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Social Media

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Follow us! Help us spread the love of Salone!

2023 Annual Meeting Agenda in Houston, TX

The winter newsletter had an article asking for possible places for the 2023 Annual Meeting. Some of the RPCV's in Houston volunteered to host the Friends of Sierra Leone Meeting in their hometown this past July. They worked really hard to make it a wonderful gathering of people who all of have a love of Sierra Leone. Here is a brief summary of the activities.

THURSDAY, JULY 13TH: Evening Friends of Sierra Leone BBQ Dinner Thursday dinner. As people arrived in town, we met at Truth BBQ.It was really great to see people we had not seen in a few years and have a delicious meal.

FRIDAY, JULY 14TH: We met in the morning at Smither Park & Orange Show. Walk through Smither Park followed by a guided tour through The Orange Show. The Park and Orange Show are really hard to describe. Both are very unique and really worth the visit if you are in Houston for a few days.

FRIDAY, JULY 14TH: Midday Tex Mex Lunch 11:30am-12:30pm: Lunch at The Original Ninfa's on Navigation, a popular Mexican restaurant

FRIDAY, JULY 14TH:People had the afternoon on their own.

<u>FRIDAY, JULY 14th:</u> Afternoon FOSL Board Retreat at Mark Hager's home. We were able to discuss our processes and make plans for the future of the group.

FRIDAY, JULY 14TH: Evening FOSL Meet & Greet 5pm-10pm at the apartment building of a very generous Houston friend of our members. We had a delicious Salone chop meal provided and lots of time to socialize with everyone.

SATURDAY, JULY 15TH: All Day FOSL Annual Meeting 9:00am-3:00pm: Texas Southern University.

- 9:00am-9:30am: Coffee & breakfast items for all participants. Peggy recognized Aiah Fanday for all of the work he has done through the years with a special plaque. She then introduced Michael Lee, the newly elected President of FoSL.
- 9:35am-10:05am: Akendele Decker, lead us in a discussion about his experience with importing Sierra Leonean goods via Zoom. He wants to make an impact through bringing art from Sierra Leone to the U. S. Here is the website:
- 10:10am-10:40am: Update about Peace Corps programs currently hosted in Sierra Leone via Zoom with PC/SL Natalie Gilman and Kyle Jessup. They told us there are presently 13 PCV's in country and 16 were to be coming in the following week. They are education and health volunteers, with the hope of bringing agriculture volunteers in soon. Climate changes are a big factor in Sierra Leone and Peace Corps is encouraging PCV's to develop gardening programs. Inflation has hit them all pretty hard with fuel more than doubling lately. Natalie said that if you are coming to Freetown, to please stop be the Peace Corps Office.
- 10:45am-11:15am: Patricia Conjoh Norfleet was a Former Peace Corps Language Specialists (LCI) from 1973-1977. She spoke about her experiences with PCV's—she met her husband this way! She is grateful for all the PC does for Sierra Leone. She and her husband and a group bring school supplies annually to an area in the country.
- 11:20am-11:45am: Victor Alhaji Sheriff, Minister Counselor from the Sierra Leone Embassy, gave an update on Sierra Leone and recent elections. He said the President is concerned with Education, Agriculture and Health. They are trying to give salary incentives for teachers. The enrollment and test scores have increased. There is a new

airport and increased flights. Energy is the biggest problem now in Sierra Leone and they are working to address this. Solar energy is becoming more prevalent.

- 11:45am-12:00pm: Yvonne Hubbard, TSU Teacher Corps/RPCV/SL, is now a senior advisor with Peace Corps. She spoke about the programs worldwide. There are presently 1165 PCV's back in 55 countries, hoping to have 2300 by the end of September. They are bringing them in slowly. She discussed the opportunities available with Peace Corps Response. She spoke of a Pilot Program: Virtual volunteers to work with local people. Work 5-15 hours a week with people virtually. She said the RPCV's are the best people to talk up Peace Corps and get new recruits. They have a bold new initiative:
- 12:00pm-1pm: TSU-catered a great lunch for all participants
- 1:00pm-1:30pm: Chris Siegler, FOSL member & RPCV Sierra Leone, discusses his recent trip to the village of Mamaka (via Zoom). Chris' group in Sierra Leone was the recipient of the a FoSL grant of \$3000 for their organization that is a farmer owned project, where they learn better methods of working and planning for the future.
- 1:30pm-2:00pm: Yvonne Hubbard and her 7 counterparts led a group to discuss the Teacher Corps Peace Corps that was at Texas Southern University. This program produced more than 75 PCV's between 1971-78 for SL and Ghana. This was a 3-year program: First year they would get their teacher certification and next 2 years, they would serve as Peace Corps Volunteers. Yvonne asked each about the impact of the program on their lives. It was a very interesting discussion.
- 2:05pm-2:45pm: FOSL Business Meeting. President Michael Lee will give the Committee Reports Membership, Projects, Advocacy, Social Media & Treasury . That is a separate article here in the newsletter.

The meeting ended with Aiah Fanday presenting a plaque to Peggy Murrah for her 18 years of hard work as President. We also presented Peggy with a special etched glass.

SATURDAY, JULY 15TH: A group of people had the experience to see some of the Third Ward. They had a guided tour.

SATURDAY, JULY 15TH: Evening Sierra Leone Chop Party 6:30pm-11:00pm: A catered delicious dinner and the special "KamaKazwei" drink! We all enjoyed great food, good drinks and dancing.

SUNDAY, JULY 16TH: The few of us met to go to the Menil Collection, an art museum and then went to lunch nearby at Southern Yankee Crafthouse.

Awards Presented at the Annual Meeting



Peggy Murrah



Aiah Fanday







Greg Johnson



Nat Treadway

Projects Report - August, 2023

Jim Hanson, Projects Chair

At our annual meeting in Houston last month, the Board of Directors voted to make a change in our project application process. Our committee will now be accepting applications throughout the year, rather than having a twice a year deadline. This change should benefit both the applicants and our committee. So, we will now consider each application as we receive it, eliminating the wait of our decision for those applying for funds.

So far this year, FoSL has funded four projects. The **Kono Global District Organization** received \$3000 to build latrines and hand-washing stations for the primary school in the Titabaya community. They have almost completed the work, as the school year is fast approaching.

Information for all Sierra Leone is a group that promotes education in the Western Area of Freetown. They received \$3000 to make backpacks from local materials for 100 needy students in three area schools. The backpacks contain school supplies and are fitted with a solar-powered light that students can use for nighttime study.

The **Paul School for the Blind** in Bo has again received \$250 for student scholarships from the Daphne Sawyer-Dunn Scholarship Fund. These funds are used for school expenses and transportation for students in need.

The Mamaka Village Agriculture Project, located near Mile 91, is adding 15 new farmers to its program. They will join 30 women and 15 young men in learning about cash-flow, sustainability, and marketing, and will receive loans to start up their farming ventures. This program has had great success in it's first

year, and looks to greater expansion in the future. They will receive \$1600 to add these new members.

Our current budget stands at over \$34,000, so we are looking to fund many more projects by year's end. Thank you to all who continue to support us as we work to improve the lives of Sierra Leoneans who stive to improve their lives by working together in their own communities.

Compeletion of School Building at Makorombo



The communities and the school administration are happy to report that the project awarded to the school for the construction of a two classroom building has been successfully accomplished. We want to thank Friends of Sierra Leone for their great support in making the two communities realized their dream. We pray that God will richly bless your organization and your individual homes.

This building is going to address the acute accommodation problem the school had before and the frequent accidents the pupils were subjected to.

Once more on behalf of the communities and the school authority, I want to thank you all for this timely support, we wish you well in your endeavours.



President's Message

Una kushe! Aw una de do?

As you may know, my name is Michael Lee and I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Moyamba District, Sierra Leone from 2012 to 2014. During the last month of my service, we were evacuated out of the country because of the Ebola virus. Fortunately, I was able to have my full Peace Corps experience during which I fell in love with the country and its amazing people. Ever since returning back to the States in 2014, I've had so much love for sweet, sweet Salone and I knew I had to continue my support. In 2018, I had my first opportunity to go back to Sierra Leone, where I hosted teacher training for community teachers at an orphanage outside of Waterloo. It was a great opportunity for me not only to give back to Sierra Leone, but to also get a chance to see what was my home for over two years. These are the types of experiences that I want to bring more to the Friends of Sierra Leone. I want to help our members make their dream of visiting Sierra Leone a reality.

It is an honor to be elected president for Friends of Sierra Leone back in May. As a board member for nearly 10 years, I was able to create strong relationships with fellow board members as well as take on many leadership roles within the organization. During that time I was able to see how our organization functions, and where my role will be. My direction for Friends of Sierra Leone will be to continue to make our organization viable within the 21st-century. I hope to continue the amazing work that this board and its members have done over the past 30 years. I want to continue to provide those critical small project grants to community organizations in Sierra Leone to help them strive for a better life. I am going to try my hardest to fill the shoes of our outgoing president, Peggy Murrah, which will not be an easy feat! I want to personally thank her for her dedication over the past 18 years as president. It was a difficult and time consuming commitment that many do not want to take on; thus, we appreciate her abundant dedication, from the bottom of our hearts.

Throughout my tenure as president, I hope to see an increased presence of FOSL on social media. Furthermore, I want to offer more handson projects within the country, where FOSL members can get more involved, and even travel back to Sierra Leone to do great work! I hope that we can connect more with former PCVs, as well as connect more with Sierra Leoneans living in America.

Though we have already increased our social media output, we are always looking for ways to do more. Nevertheless, since May, we secured a subscription to Zoom, so that our board meetings and lectures can be done seamlessly. With the guidance of our projects chair, Jim Hanson, over the past two years, we have improved our application process, not only by offering a digital platform, but by also removing deadlines for project applications. Projects will now be reviewed as they come in, so that organizations don't have to wait so long to see if their project will be funded or not by the Friends of Sierra Leone.

Furthermore, with the leadership and creativity of FOSL Board Member Jamie Brown, we have improved our FOSL website; and, we eased the process for new members and membership renewals with the outstanding help of FOSL Board Member and Membership Chair Hannah Benga. Coming soon, we will have step-by-step videos on our website to show members how to utilize our membership database to connect with fellow members as well as with PCVs you served alongside!

One way right now you can easily help us is by following us on social media and sharing our posts on Facebook, Instagram, and X (formally known as Twitter). Our handle on all platforms is @FoSalone

Within FOSL, we are always looking for new leadership to take on committee roles and/or serve on the board. If you are interested in getting more involved with FOSL, please do not hesitate to reach out! We are currently looking for members to lead our fundraising and advocacy committees. Maybe that person is you!

We recently hosted our annual conference in Houston, Texas and it was a great success! We couldn't have done it without the help and guidance of Houstonians Ruth, Jerry, Nat, Greg and Mark, for their countless hours of planning and organizing an annual conference in a city where FOSL never hosted before. We were at about 50 participants at each of our events throughout the annual conference and we couldn't ask for such a wonderful time! The drinks were amazing, including the Kamakwize, brought to you by our FOSL Treasurer, Mark Hager; mango and rum... a local favorite during his service in Salone! The food was sweet and perfect, reminding each of us of our days in our villages! The venues that the Houstonians found for our events were dynamite! It really showed how former PCVs from every era can come together and make something wonderful happen. Moving forward, we hope to have our next annual conference in Washington DC during the summer of 2024. Following that, our goal is to host our annual conference of 2025 in Sierra Leone. Hopefully, while we are in Sierra Leone, we hope that we can also visit sites of projects that we funded, connect with local communities to see what their needs are, and possibly host a teacher training for teachers throughout the country. If participating in the teacher training is something that interests you, helping teachers become better teachers in Sierra Leone, please reach out to me so that we can get you involved in the discussion and planning of hosting teacher trainings in Sierra Leone.

We have always had a good relationship with Peace Corps, and we hope to continue that for many years to come. Not only do we want to

strengthen our relationship, but we would like to work with Peace Corps more on various projects that can help the people of Sierra Leone. Additionally, there are many wonderful organizations out there that are doing such wonderful things for the people of Sierra Leone; we want to connect with them as well because together, we could bring needed changes/improvements to the country of Sierra Leone.

Before I wrap it up, I want to also welcome the newly elected board members, including Scott Leaman and Brother Joseph Fofanah. I know that these individuals, who are deeply versed with Sierra Leonean culture and the needs of the country, will do a great job in leading our organization. Scott Leaman has already stepped up to help lead the education committee, which is going to be wonderful and I know he will be effective!

And lastly, I want to thank everyone for putting their faith in me during our FOSL elections! And, moving forward, our board and I are going to need your help! Do you have ideas? Do you have a vision for what we can do to help those in Sierra Leone? All those ideas are welcomed!

Lastly, I hope you can make it to our talk with Nike Campbell, as she discusses her historical fiction novel, Saro, on Sunday, September 24th at 8pm ET via Zoom. Please find our registration link on our website or in the article about this upcoming event!

Thank you for your support and let's continue to grow FOSL so that we can continue to provide that life-changing aid to communities in need!

Take care & be safe!

Michael Lee, President

Friends of Sierra Leone

HEAR YE! HEAR YE!

FoSL is now looking for active members to become part of its Advocacy Group

From its inception the Peace Corps has been recognized as one the most exciting of imaginative Agencies the in United States Government. Its history of attracting guarter million volunteers in the last six decades is testimony to the positive image organization built and has maintained around the world and at home. Sierra Leone was one of the first countries to request volunteers in 1961 and over 3,500 volunteers have served largely in Education, but also in Health, Community development, Environment and Agriculture. Peace Corps initially created a Public Affairs Section to promote the world image to advertising, public information and most importantly to raise funds for future growth through lobbying support from Congress, both the House and Senate. Friends of Sierra Leone (FoSL) has played a role in this effort especially in helping the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) achieve success through Returned Volunteers establishing relationships on a local basis in states, cities and towns across the country. Friends of Sierra Leone and other groups represent more than 53 countries in Central and South America, Eastern Europe, Asia, the Middle and Far East and the Caribbean.

ANYONE INTERESTED IN WORKING WITH US ARE URGED TO CONTACT: advocacy@fosalone.org



The British High Commissioner in Sierra Leone sponsored a dinner last year at her residence in Freetown to honor former High Commissioner Paramount Chief Konrabi Peter Penfold. As Honorary Paramount Chief of Kagboro Chiefdom, Gary Schulze was invited to join 26 Paramount Chiefs from across the country. To commemorate the event, a permanent exhibition was opened at the Sierra Leone National Museum featuring photographs of all the Chiefs including Gary.



Meet the Author

Join us on Sunday, September 24th at 8:00pm ET via Zoom for a talk with Nike Campbell as she discusses her historical fiction novel, Saro, which follows the journey of captured Nigerian natives as a arrive in the free land of Sierra Leone in the 1830s.

Here is an excerpt from the forward of Nike Campbell's 2022 novel, Saro:

On a visit to the coast of Marina, Lagos, Siwoolu and his young family are lured by a traitor to a grand merchant ship where they are captured by slave holders masquerading as traders. On the way to the new world, they are rescued by abolitionists on a British naval ship, and sent to Freetown, a haven for freed slaves.

They settle in their new home, grow their family and become successful merchants, trading goods between Freetown and Eko (Lagos). Dotunu, Şiwoolu's wife falls in love with another man and is caught in a love triangle. But their lives are upended again when

they hear that the kingdom has selected the traitor as king.

COME & JOIN US FOR

A TALK WITH

NIKE

CAMPBELL

as she discusses her 2022
historical fiction novel

Saro

Hosted by
Friends of
Sierra Leone

Sunday, September 24th
at 8pm ET via Zoom

Pre-Register at:
https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJOrd-GppzltHLKFHwtJPnntujC9xbgs-
Purchase Saro on Amazon at:
https://a.co/d/75005lv

the traitor as king.

Saro is a multi-generational take of betrayal and restitution, love and war, inspired by true events that will take the reader from the rocky terrain of Abeokuta and the burgeoning city of Lagos to the lion mountains of Freetown and Hastings, Sierra Leone from the 1830s to the 1850s.

Author Biography: Nike Campbell is a Nigerian-American born in Lviv, Ukraine and raised in Lagos, Nigeria. She was a finalist for the 2018 Red Hen Press Fiction Award for her historical fiction manuscript. A selection of her short stories from her collection Bury Me Come Sunday Afternoon have been adapted for film which have won international awards. She is the author of the historical fiction Thread of Gold Beads. Saro is her second work of historical fiction. Nike is based in Florida with her family.

If interested, please pre-register for the Zoom talk at https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tj0rd-GppzItHtLK5ffHwtjPnnujC9xbgs--

Are you interested in reading the book before the talk? You can purchase the book on Amazon at https://a.co/d/75o05Iv

This is a free event and we hope you can attend!

Check the date on your mailing label or subject line. 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:

https://fosalone.org/mbrship/

FRIENDS OF SIERRA	LEONE MEMBERSHIP FORM	1 - 0	
Name (include maiden)		FoSL needs your participation. Circle your areas of interest:	
Address			
City	State Zip	Advocacy	
Home Phone	Email	Education	
Day Phone	Occupation	Membership	
Relationship to SL (e.g., Sierra Leonean, PC, etc.)		Newsletter/	
Sierra Leone Home	Years to	Communications	
		Projects	
Membership: \$25 per Individual \$		Events	
Donation to Projects: FoSL Circle \$1000 and \$990 supporter \$500 to \$990 sponsor \$100 to \$490 friend \$50 - \$990	99	Would you be willing to be part of a network to	
Overseas Mail (add \$10)	\$	receive information and contact your members	
Total Remitted	\$	of Congress at important times? (Please include your email address.)	
Membership dues support operations for Friends of Sierra Leone, including meetings, newsletters, and the website. All other donations support FoSL projects in Sierra Leone.		Yes	
Dues and other contributions to de			
Thank you for your support! Pleas payable to Friends of Sierra Leone	e return this form with your check made 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





President

Board Officers

Address Service Requested

	Vice President Secretary Treasurer Public Affairs Public Affairs At Large At Large At Large	Aiah Fanday (Upper Marlboro, Maryland) Patty Bruzek (Lombard, Illinois) Mark Hager (Houston, Texas) Amadu Massally (Sachse, Texas) Jim Sheahan (Atlanta, Georgia) Michael D Thomas (Arlington, Virginia) Tom Hull (Grantham, New Hampshire) Anthony McMillon (Fort Washington, Maryland)
	At Large At Large At Large	Peter Andersen (Elk River, Minnesota) Peggy Murrah (Social Circle, Georgia) Mohammed Barrie (Boston, Massachusetts)
	At Large At Large At Large	Gary Schulze (New York, New York) Brother Joseph Yakuba Fofanah (Lanham, Maryland) Scott Leaman (Grass Valley, California)
Committee Chairs	Advocacy Annual Meeting	Scott Leaman (Grass Valley, California) Michael Lee (Old Bridge, New Jersey) Aiah Fanday (Upper Marlboro, Maryland)
	Education	Piper O'Keefe (Washington, DC) Scott Leaman (Grass Valley, California)
	Fundraising	Michael Lee (Old Bridge, New Jersey) Peggy Murrah (Social Circle, Georgia)
	Membership Projects Web Site	Hannah Benga (Sarasota, Florida) Jim Hanson (Social Circle, Georgia) Jamie Brown (Kaneohe, Hawaii)
Page 14 Friends of Sierra Leone - Newsletter - Sentember 2023		

Michael Lee (Old Bridge, New Jersey)