

FRIENDS OF LIBERIA ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2014

A summary for our members of the year's achievements and our future plans

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends,

We are proud to share the Friends of Liberia Annual Report for 2014. The report summarizes the highlights from fiscal year 2014, an important year for us in which we focused our efforts with the Ebola crisis. We also continued to meet our mission to positively affect Liberia by supporting education, social, economic and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts as well as continued to institute our strategic plan that will ensure that Friends of Liberia remains a sustainable organization.



This last year we raised over \$100,000 to support organizations in Liberia attempting to combat the terrible health crisis brought on by Ebola. FOL sponsored an Ebola fundraiser in New Orleans prior to the September board meeting, as did some of our members around the country in Montana and upstate New York. As an organization, we welcomed new board members and officers, began developing a new website, and adopted several by-law amendments.

Furthermore, in our ongoing effort to accomplish our mission, FOL awarded six Liberian organizations funds to support their projects. The FOL board continued to work on projects dealing with health, education and entrepreneurship.

Most importantly, we wish to give you the clearest picture of FOL's framework, where we are and where we are heading in this report. Also enclosed is the 2014 financial statement. We hope this information will be helpful to you in assessing the effectiveness and responsibilities involved with our organization.

Friends of Liberia continues to rely heavily on volunteers to support its many ongoing programs. As you read the report, think of areas where you might want to become involved as a volunteer. In addition to project volunteers, we are interested in working closely members who might wish to serve on the Board of Trustees, as an Officer or on a committee.

On behalf of the entire Friends of Liberia Board of Trustees and Officers, we would like to thank you for your support. Your support and comments are the fuel that keeps us moving forward to make Friends of Liberia a sustainable and viable organization.

Sincerely yours,

Stephanie Vickers, President

Robert Sharer, Board Chair

STRATEGIC PLAN

In March 2013, FOL adopted a five-year strategic plan. Two years into the plan, we are taking stock of where we are in implementing the many goals and tasks we set out to achieve, examining what remains to be done, and analyzing the implementation challenges we face, especially in the light of the Ebola crisis.

The project has provided opportunities for three new FOL members to get involved with FOL. Recent RPCVs Rebecca Martinez and Eugene Wicket began the project and worked on it from November until January when they



returned to Liberia and Sierra Leone to work on Ebola issues. RPCV Brianna Grothe has taken over the project and will present the results to the Board at its March meeting in Washington.

The strategic plan overview is listed on the next page.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Friends of Liberia Strategic Plan 2013 - 2018

Vision

Our vision is that Friends of Liberia be an effective organization for helping Liberia in its quest to be a peaceful and just country in which every Liberian has opportunities for quality education and employment, and access to adequate health care.

Mission

FOL is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that seeks to positively affect Liberia and Liberians through educational, social, economic and humanitarian programs and through advocacy efforts.

Core Values

Service Partnerships Integrity Stewardship
Accountability & Transparency

Strategic Issue 1: Programs

What programs can FOL develop with a large impact that draw on the expertise of FOL membership, capitalize on FOL's comparative advantage, and support Liberia's long-term development strategy?

Strategic Issue 2: Funding

How can FOL diversify, increase and sustain its financial resources to support programming for greater impact on Liberia and more engagement of members?

Strategic Issue 3: Governance & Operations

How can FOL organize itself for more efficient and effective management of its work in the U.S. and in Liberia?

Strategic Issue 4: Membership Engagement

How can FOL recruit new members and engage more members in its work by offering opportunities to carry out FOL's mission?

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Combatting Ebola

Halfway through 2014, reports began coming in that the Ebola outbreak in Lofa County was spreading to Monrovia and other areas and beginning to threaten the normal functioning of life throughout Liberia. Large international institutions seemed slow to respond, with the exception of Doctors without Borders, Samaritan's Purse, and several smaller faith-based organizations. The FOL Board decided to raise money for areas in need and allocated \$20,000 from the organization's general fund to the Ebola Fund—which would be used exclusively to support organizations that were working to end the Ebola epidemic. In early August, through their Liberian News Service, FOL website, and FOL Facebook page, Friends of Liberia called on members and friends to give money specifically for Ebola. By the end of August, the fund had grown to \$36,000, and FOL quickly set a goal of \$100,000 for supporting community-based Ebola work in Liberia.

In mid-August, FOL established the FOL Ebola Task Force to monitor developments on the Ebola crisis and make recommendations as to the allotment of monies from the Ebola Fund. Ebola Task Force members included Pat Reilly, Don Drach, Alison McReynolds, Pat McGeorge, Jim McGeorge, Stephanie Vickers, and Verlon Stone. During its first organizing conference call on August 21, it became clear that the primary work of the Ebola Task Force would be to identify suitable organizations for FOL to make donations. The Task Force also decided to adopt a set of criteria for organizations that FOL would support:

1. FOL donations will be dedicated for treatment and prevention of Ebola and Ebola-related issues in Liberia.
2. FOL will support organizations that:
 - a. Are well known and respected in Liberia for integrity and accountability.
 - b. Have a demonstrated, effective track record in handling donations and achieving desired results, including reliable delivery systems in Liberia.
 - c. Have on-going, sustainable operations in Liberia.
3. If possible, the organization and at least some of its leaders should be known to FOL.
4. When practical, FOL will consider addressing needs that are not being met by larger organizations.

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The criteria developed served as the foundation for identifying organizations with the Ebola Task Force later focusing on organizations that specifically served the needs of women and children.

In September, the FOL Board of Trustees voted to donate \$10,000 to Doctors without Borders, which was running intake centers for suspected Ebola cases. Another \$10,000 went to Minnesota-based Global Health Ministries, which was working with Liberia veteran Dr. Paul Mertens to identify supplies that could be airlifted to Robertsfield and distributed by the Lutheran Church in Liberia. Members of FOL and partner diaspora group, We Stand as One, helped load the container. Ebola Task Force member Jim McGeorge served as a key liaison between GHM and FOL.



Global Health Ministries shipped 20 cases of the DuPont Tychem QC hazmat suits, 6 cases of DuPont protective aprons, DuPont disinfectant spray, and cases of gloves, gowns, goggles, masks, and other supplies.

As larger organizations began to come into Liberia, FOL began to focus its attention on the unmet needs at the village level, as most of the international aid was going to Monrovia. We funded the Refuge Place Clinic in the Chicken Soup Factory neighborhood clinic run by Dr. Mosoka Fallah, who gives free medical care to women and children. Women were dying in childbirth because hospitals were closed to them. Even small, clinics needed protective gear. Dr. Fallah was later identified by Time Magazine as a person of the year.

Women's Campaign International (WCI) has a network of 150 communities in Liberia and those affected by Ebola were calling for the establishment of an emergency fund we helped them set up with two grants. The fund has already helped feed families in quarantine, buy fuel for burial teams, and stage a door-to-door awareness campaign. The Ebola Task Force networked with WCI to identify and present potential WCI-affiliated organizations worthy of support.

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FOL also gave two grants to the Catholic Hospital in Monrovia and its system of smaller clinics throughout the country to come back online after shutting when their administrator died of the disease early in the epidemic. Sister Barbara Brilliant kept the Ebola Task Force well informed of the Catholic hospital and clinic system's needs and progress.

We also made a grant to Education First Inc., a Maryland County-based school support group, which led Ebola prevention activities in the area of Harper. Educators distributed buckets and chlorine with information about safe hygiene practices. They also set up chlorine hand-washing stations in public places. EFI's founder, Dr. Blidi Stemm, also became head of the FOL Post-Ebola Task Force.

FOL also supported Liberia Education Project Inc., a Bong County-based non-profit organization, which provided prevention education in the area of the Ghenwein Mission in Kokoyah District, similar to EFI's program. A detailed summary of FOL Donations to Organizations working on Ebola-related issues during this time is below.

Donations to Organizations working on Ebola-related issues

Organization	Date (Est.)	Amount Donated
Doctors Without Borders	7/31/14	\$10,000
Global Health Ministries	7/31/14	\$10,000
Refuge Place International Clinic	9/3/14	\$4,000
Refuge Place International Clinic	10/3/14	\$7,000
Women's Campaign International/National Rural Women's Program	9/3/14	\$4,000
Women's Campaign International/National Rural Women's Program	10/3/14	\$7,000
Roman Catholic Hospital, Clinics & Programs	9/3/14	\$8,000
Liberia Education Project (LEP)	11/15/15	\$3,847
Education First, Inc.	11/15/15	\$4,000
Total Allocated by Ebola Task Force		\$57,847
FOL Ebola Fund		\$100,000
Total Available to Post-Ebola Task Force		\$42,153

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The FOL Ebola Task Force also undertook other initiatives to extend its reach and to leverage its resources:

- During Fall of 2014, the FOL News Service focused almost exclusively on distributing information about the Ebola outbreak by including specialized Ebola reports and links from other organizations and increasing its Public Service Announcements to advertise Ebola-related conference calls, webinars, and meetings. The news service also increased the frequency of its dispatches and the number of subscribers, adding about 1,800 subscribers to the basic FOL 1,400 subscribers. The response by readers was very positive.
- The Ebola Task Force partnered with Philip Suah and his umbrella organization We Stand As One for Liberian diaspora communities in the U.S. and Europe. This partnership led to greater cohesion in communication as contact lists were exchanged, organizations seeking or giving support were contacted, and announcements of Ebola-related news and events when out in coordination. Pat Reilly wrote and helped edit several sets of guidelines for Liberian diaspora communities dealing with the press, including Ebola fact sheets. Philip and We Stand as One organized, produced, and hosted a number of informative teleconferences with specialists from the CDC, Doctors without Borders, Mission Harvest America, and Dr. Mosoka Fallah.
- Former US Representative Lee Hamilton sent letters on behalf of FOL and We Stand as One to the Secretary of Defense, asking for assistance in transporting Ebola-related supplies if Department of Defense planes and ships had excess capacity, and to the Director of CDC, offering the cultural expertise and experience of FOL and We Stand as One members in helping train the health care workers being deployed to Liberia. After several months of waiting, polite turndowns came from both U.S. government organizations.
- The Ebola Task Force—in collaboration with Chad Priest, Assistant Dean for Operations & Community Partnerships at Indiana University School of Nursing—commissioned a survey of locally available Ebola prevention supplies in Montserrado, Grand Bassa, Margibi, and Bomi Counties. Both FOL and the Indiana University Schools of Nursing and Medicine (which work with JFK Hospital)

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wanted to know which Ebola prevention supplies could be purchased locally (and more cheaply) in Liberia and which needed to be imported (usually at higher cost). By the time the survey was completed, several large international organizations had helped ameliorate the supply and shipment problem for the PPEs and other high cost materials, so the issue was largely moot.

- FOL also worked with the National Peace Corps Association on creating an Ebola Relief Fund to help the three West African countries most affected by Ebola: Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

In late December, the fight against the Ebola outbreak in Liberia was showing success and the number of new cases was declining. Liberian medical and public health professionals had gained experience and expertise while the Liberian population had recognized the reality of Ebola and accepted the importance of reporting and isolating suspected cases, careful burial practices, and proper and frequent hand washing. With the arrival, although belated, of very large international organizations to fighting the Ebola outbreak, shortages of PPEs and other medical supplies began to abate. Furthermore, some of the Liberian organizations once assisted by FOL donations were turning directly to these international organizations for support, sometimes becoming subcontractors. In light of the changing conditions, the FOL Ebola Task Force was merged into FOL's Post-Ebola Task Force, chaired by Dr. Bledi Stemn.

Much work remains to combat the terrible effects of the Ebola outbreak: dealing with Ebola orphans, overcoming the stigma experienced by Ebola survivors, continuing Ebola awareness and prevention programs, rebuilding and strengthening the Liberian medical and public health infrastructure (including training more workers), and restarting the educational system to name just a few. FOL's Post-Ebola Task Force is the appropriate group to undertake these tasks along with the education and entrepreneur committees.

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Small Grants Program

FOL has had a Small Grants Program since 2007, awarding up to \$2000 on a competitive basis to nonprofit Liberian organizations. The Small Grants policy and application process are posted on the FOL website at <http://www.fol.org>.

In 2014, FOL awarded six Small Grants, as follows:



Football to Develop Destitute (FODEDE): \$1800 to purchase sewing machines as part of a project offering career training in cosmetology in Gardnersville.

Bee Keeping Venture, Inc. (BVI): \$1998 to purchase materials to construct beehives as part of a project to help disadvantages and vulnerable youth, also in Gardnersville.

Student Reform Initiative: \$1450 to support a five-day entrepreneurship development program for high school youth in Paynesville.

Hope in the Harvest Missions International: \$2000 to assist in the construction and placement of a well for a new management waste system of an agricultural education center in Ganta.

Liberian Council for Economic and Social Services (LICESS): \$2000 to purchase medical equipment and materials for clinics in Man-nao town outside Firestone Plantation at Harbel and on Barclay's Farm in Menani Town, Margibi County.

Mission for Education and Development in Liberia: \$1000 to purchase textbooks for a newly established school in Zayzay Community, Paynesville.

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Screening an OB patient in the clinic at D-16 in Mende Town at the outskirts of the Firestone Plantation, Margibi County

LICISS

FOL has formed a partnership with the Liberian Council for Economic and Social Services, LICISS, a Liberian non-profit that provides social and economic support programs for Liberians.

Three FOL Board Members, Joseph Crayton, Jefferson King and Harmon Lisnow, who are also on the board of LICISS, will launch a crowd-funding campaign for an entrepreneurial training program for Liberians with a good business idea that need resources and training to run a business.

After a modulated training in business practices, the Liberian entrepreneurs will receive financing to start the business and coaching and technical support for one year. The goal is to kick-start small businesses that will employ Liberians and keep more of the business wealth in the country. LICISS has its own web site: www.licess.fol.org.

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Fundraising

As was mentioned earlier in this report, FOL set a goal of \$100,000 to support community-based Ebola work following widespread news of the outbreak. In addition to soliciting donations through our mailings and website, several fundraising events were held.

On September 19, at the Columns Hotel in New Orleans, the FOL Board hosted a fundraiser in conjunction with its semi-annual board meeting. With the extraordinary help of member Dr. Meda Colvin and the medical community of New Orleans, the event raised \$9,000. Thanks also to the members who contributed artifacts and artwork for a successful Silent Auction and the management of the Columns Hotel that contributed 10 percent of proceeds back to the Ebola Fund.

A fundraiser was held in Helena, Montana that was organized by FOL member Michael Lee and his friend Joe Phillips, a Liberian who could not return home due to the epidemic. They raised \$1,600 at an event that featured a panel discussion about the epidemic. In Ann Arbor, Michigan, RPCVs Kathy and Jim Welch hosted a Liberian Chop Fest serving palm butter, goat soup, peanut soup, rice bread, plantain, and check rice to about 50 guests. They raised nearly \$5,000 in donations.

FOL was instrumental in persuading the National Peace Corps Association to create an Ebola Relief Fund for the three most-affected countries: Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea. The Friends groups representing those countries formed a task force to send out a request for proposals and decide on distribution of the funds. FOL Board members Don Drach and Pat Reilly served on that task force. NPCA has raised more than \$80,000 for that work.

FOL reached its Ebola relief-funding goal with a donation of \$3,600.05 from St. Martin's Episcopal School in Metairie, Louisiana. That extra nickel tells you something about its St. Martin's Day fundraising. Each year the student body chooses an organization for which to raise funds. Thanks in part to faculty member, FOL Board Member, and former Peace Corps volunteer Garrett Mason, as well as a Liberian staff member at St. Martin's and several Liberian students who attend St. Martin's, they chose FOL as their organization.

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So from Pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade, students conducted bake sales, penny drives, and other activities to raise funds for FOL's Ebola Fund.

As Liberia's Ebola cases dwindled to less than a dozen, FOL turned its attention to the fallout from the epidemic, including a lost year of school, devastated health infrastructure, and shattered economy. The \$42,153 left in the Ebola Fund will be used for work that addresses those issues (See "Post-Ebola Work" in the *Future Plans* section of this report).

Strengthening FOL and Building Capacity to Serve

In 2013 the Board of Trustees adopted a strategic plan to guide the organization for the next five years and in 2014 the plan has been updated. The plan is posted on the FOL website at: http://fol.org/reports/final_strategic_plan.pdf.

With a system of term limits for Trustees, the Board has been welcoming new board members whose three-year terms are staggered. In addition, several new Officers have been elected, taking the place of Officers who have served with distinction for many years.

The Board has streamlined FOL's internal operations and made quantum leaps with regard to electronic communication and the use of social media. It also has focused on fiscal sustainability. FOL is poised to move forward with accomplishing its mission and involving more of its members in this effort.

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Membership

FOL members played a huge role in Friends of Liberia's ability to assist Liberia in 2014. The significant monetary contributions from our membership allowed FOL to donate funds to local, high impact organizations on the ground in Liberia who was helping to prevent Ebola and mitigate further outbreaks.

One of the byproducts of FOL's intense fundraising and involvement in Ebola outbreak related activities was an increase in membership numbers: as more people became interested in helping Liberia, they turned to FOL as a conduit for positive impact. We have been able to stay connected to both our continuing and new members through e-blasts and social media. We kept everyone updated on the status of our Ebola related donations and shared success stories of projects we funded in Liberia.

The Board of Trustees has developed a mentoring program whereby FOL members who are former Peace Corps Volunteers would make themselves available to newly returned Volunteers to help with cultural readjustment, networking, etc.

More and more members of FOL are serving on committees, which previously had been staffed only by board members and Officers. This is an opportunity for more members to involve themselves in the work of the organization and retain their connection to Liberia.

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Finance

During 2014, in response to the Ebola Crisis that erupted in Liberia, FOL embarked on a major fundraising effort that would enable a rapid action plan in support of efforts to combat Ebola, focusing on the rural areas most seriously affected. These are the most vulnerable groups in Liberia because of their lack of proximity to Liberia's fragile and limited health infrastructure and resources. During 2014, FOL raised a total of \$122,894—four times the previous year's amount. Thus our members' response to the Ebola outbreak was overwhelming. Donations came from a variety of sources. We received 685 separate contributions. Many members responded to our appeals by donating generous individual gifts as well as organizing several fundraisers of their own.

FOL also received several generous grants in 2014, including a donation of \$5,000 from the Rolander Family Foundation. The total raised also includes a drawdown of FOL's cash reserves as a response to the crisis in Liberia. Program expenditures totaled \$83,187. These were predominantly on our efforts to combat the immediate impact on Ebola.

At the outset of the epidemic, we supported the work of Doctors Without Borders as well as an early shipment of Ebola related supplies through Global Health Ministries of Minnesota. Subsequent support was a series of grants to small rural organizations identified by FOL's Emergency Ebola Task Force. FOL is careful in efforts to ensure that the money raised is spent effectively on helping those most seriously affected and most vulnerable. Thus there is some lag between our raising money and spending it. For this reason the balance of the money raised for Ebola in 2014 is being spent on Ebola related activities in the first part of 2015.

FOL also continued to support our regular small grants program. FOL has managed to steadily reduce its administrative costs in the past few years, mainly through use of technology and lower mailing costs. In 2014, we spent \$4,000 as a first charge on updating and improving our website.

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Art and Livelihood Treasures from Liberia

2014 was a fruitful year for Liberian art and livelihood object donations. Donations came from the Collections of Drs. Warren d’Azevedo and Jeanette Carter.

Dr. d’Azevedo, an anthropologist worked among the Gola. He wrote a number of seminal articles and books on Gola artistry, especially woodcarving. He also helped with developing training materials for early Peace Corps Volunteers and taught orientation classes on Liberia and its cultures to PCVs.

Dr. Jeanette Carter lived in Liberia and in other parts of Africa much of her life since the 1960s. She traveled extensively throughout Liberia and other parts of Africa, often with African art specialist Bill Siegmann, Jane Martin, and John Singler. She had a good eye for baskets, textiles, and other items pertaining to peoples’ livelihoods.

Friends of Liberia continues to work with several institutions in regards to Liberian art and artifacts, including North Carolina Central University, The James E. Shepard Memorial Library University Archives and Records, the Department of Folk Studies and Anthropology at Western Kentucky University, and the Kentucky Museum. Howard University in Washington, D.C. is also interested in accepting donations and we have begun working with this institution. Discussion has begun with Quito Swan for art placement.

One of the challenges for donor institutions and museums accepting art and livelihood treasures from Liberia have been locating storage space for new additions to their collections.

While universities would like to accept Liberian art and artifacts outright, the process is often more time-intensive and involves working with a number of individuals throughout the university. Despite these challenges, Friends of Liberia continues move ahead with securing proper homes for the rich cultural and historic art and artifacts that Liberia has produced.

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Post-Ebola Work

FOL knows that much still needs to be done to support post Ebola Liberia and a task force is at work to help Liberia move forward. Led by Dr. Bledi Stemm, a Trustee of the



Board, and four members of FOL, they have developed recommendations in the areas of health education, psychosocial support and entrepreneurship that will be shared with the Board of Trustees in March 2015.

FOL will continue to seek support from its members to raise funds to support these recommendations and future projects.

Program Recommendations for Post Ebola Small Grants Program

1. Health Education

Schools: Health education is part of the national curriculum, but it is rarely implemented. Local organizations involved in hygiene education for students or teacher training will be considered. Provision of supplies for the schools, such as buckets, soap, construction of WASH facilities, could be included in the programs, as long as there is also an educational aspect.

Community Based: Programs implemented by local NGOs that focus on educating communities about basic health and hygiene practices. Communities with school health education programs will be favored.

Health Centers: Projects focusing on educational and support for medical staff (doctors, midwives, nurses, etc.). Programs educating maternity patients about hygiene and health are also appropriate.

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2. Psycho-Social Support System Rehabilitation

Orphans (children and youth): Local NGOs working with orphans to provide nurturing environments with education, shelter, food, etc. Support should be long-term and enable orphans to become independent and productive members of society. Programs should go beyond immediate or short-term counseling.

Ebola Survivors: Programs supporting individuals that are stigmatized as a result of contracting the Ebola virus. Goals of programs should be to help people rebuild their lives, but nature of support or intervention will be evaluated on case-by-case basis for the applications.

Hard-Hit Communities: Communities may include geographic locations and sites that were devastatingly impacted by the outbreak, as well as sectors, such as medical staff and healthcare practitioners.

3. Entrepreneurship

Micro-financing: Programs supporting micro-financing projects for individuals affected by Ebola (survivors, orphans, families of victims, market/sellers impacted by limited access to goods, etc.). Programs may have two-pronged approach with economic/micro-financing and psycho-social support benefits. Qualified implementers with quality projects, appropriate target populations, and history of micro-financing in Liberia will be considered for grants.

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Family Literacy

“If Liberia does not put an end to illiteracy, it will be illiteracy that will put an end to Liberia.”

-Foreign Minister Augustine Kpehe Ngafuan, Monrovia June 2014

Literacy in Liberia is in crisis, with an existing serious post-conflict education problem exacerbated further by the Ebola epidemic and the subsequent closing of schools for an extended period. Friends of Liberia is committed to helping address this crisis by partnering with recognized international and Liberian literacy organizations in the public and private sectors to initiate a culturally appropriate family literacy program.

As we support the Liberian government’s to raise literacy levels for all Liberians, our focus on family literacy recognizes that parents are a child’s first teacher. We recognize that increasing the literacy of the entire family is critical to improved educational outcomes and the economic viability of Liberia. Building on the guiding principles in the FOL Strategic Plan, we are committed to supporting a program that will have a lasting presence in Liberia. Specifically, these basic capacity building and international development principles guide our work:

- Supporting a sustainable program in Liberia based on local ownership and participation;
- Engaging in partnerships and alliances;
- Coordinating with donors; and
- Acknowledging the importance of gender balance.

In addition, we will build on existing good practice, monitor and evaluate what we do, and offer opportunities for members to participate.

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The Board of Trustees at its September 2014 meeting in New Orleans approved these guiding principles and the following four areas of work.

1. **Research and Data Collection:** We have developed a Liberia Literacy Landscape Paper to show the many literacy programs operating throughout the country. With this data, FOL will promote collaboration and knowledge sharing among the programs, identify gaps in literacy training access, document and share best practices, and contribute to a strategic and comprehensive approach to improving literacy. To supplement the paper, we are also mapping literacy programs by county, including links to each program’s website.
2. **Partnerships and Collaboration:** FOL is committed to engaging in partnerships and alliances with like-minded organizations, including the Ministry of Education and other government ministries and international organizations, and non-profits

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and professional associations including the Open Society Initiative for West Africa, We-Care Foundation, HIPPIY-International, and USAID/Education Development Corporation's Advancing Youth Program among others. FOL is one of many partners participating with the Ministry of Education on Liberia's National Reading Campaign.

3. **Capacity Building:** We are evaluating family literacy programs for adaptability to Liberia. Once the program is selected, we will start with a pilot and support the program through advising, training, coaching, helping develop communities of practice, and promoting and integrating technology as well as Liberian literature and publishing efforts into the literacy initiative.
4. **Advocacy and Communication:** FOL will leverage its work in the areas listed above to help increase Liberian public awareness of the importance of being literate to the education and economic viability of Liberia.

FOL members who would like to know more about the literacy initiative and perhaps work with us should send an email to liberia@fol.org and put in the subject line: Literacy Project Help.

New Website

In 2014, Friends of Liberia focused on updating its online presence. The Communications Committee concentrated on creating a new, more engaging and visually appealing website and ramping up FOL's social media exposure. The committee solicited proposals from designers and chose Yellow Line Labs of Virginia to build the new website and refresh FOL's branding. Yellow Line Labs created a site that integrates FOL's social media pages and blog, clearly defines FOL's core activities and ways for the public to become a part of the organization, and unifies the organization under one logo.

FOL hopes that the new site, which will go live in April 2015, will help to better serve members staying up to date on news in Liberia, making donations through PayPal, and applying to the Small Grants Program. FOL also believes that the increased social media

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exposure working in conjunction with the website will help it become a central channel for the general public interested in supporting the people of Liberia.

The new website will also allow more effective communication with FOL's membership and make it easier for new members to sign up for our mailing list.

Membership Survey in 2015

A membership survey will be posted on the new Friends of Liberia website in the coming months. We anticipate receiving new information from members and from that information "recruit new members and engage more members in FOL's work by offering opportunities to carry out FOL's mission" as stated in FOL's Strategic Plan.

Finance

For 2015, our goals are 1) to increase our current level of donations by sustaining and expanding our donor base, 2) to continue to support worthwhile projects that address Liberia's ongoing difficulties stemming caused by the devastation from the Ebola epidemic, 3) to continue to reduce our administrative expenses by having our members receive our newsletter by email and 4) to maintain our financial records electronically rather than on paper.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Linkedin: [Friends of Liberia](https://www.linkedin.com/company/friends-of-liberia)

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A hopeful sign for Liberia in this photo of the last Liberian Ebola patient (Photo from nbcnews.com)