

While in Monrovia in October, I spent Liberian Thanksgiving visiting the Friends of Liberia Family Literacy project in Duazon. It is a community near the beach, so the roads are sandy, and we walked through a very poor community over three hours, stopping at 8 different homes to meet parents and their 3, 4 or 5-year-olds. They demonstrated their lessons, and they all wanted to show how they could now read aloud or talk about the books. It is impressive what the Home Visitors have been able to do for these families. Several of the women enrolled in our Adult Literacy Program that we taught this year at their request because they wanted to be able to read to their children. I loved seeing a mother who could not read to her child prior to the adult literacy class and read aloud the book with her daughter. At another home one older sibling in 6th grade helped the grandmother, who had several children, work with her own little sister. The 6th grader wanted to tell me that working with her 5-year-old sister has helped her read better and do better in school! Pretty neat to see such great results for kids and parents!!

*Stephanie Vickers, PC Liberia 1971-1973
Liberia, October 2019*

This Thanksgiving . . .

We are grateful for your support. As the “busyness” of the holidays gets closer, it is important that we reflect and celebrate what **your** past support of programs in Liberia has meant for the people of Liberia.

Your contributions and those of other Friends of Liberia supporters have made our programs a success. For four years, our **Family Literacy Initiative (FLI)** has been working with parents and children ages three to five in four communities (West Point, Neezoe, Caldwell, and Duazon). You should be very proud of the success of the families (see evaluation results at FOL.org). We are so fortunate to partner with HIPY (Home Instruction for Parents and Preschool Youngsters-International) and WE-CARE Foundation of Monrovia, which administers and implements the program.



the **FLI** communities. **ALP** is contextualized to the reading skills needed for FLI participation and to increase chances of employment for parents. In surveys of FLI parents, their own literacy was one of the chief needs expressed. Home Visitors also advocated for the adult program to make it easier to teach the parents to teach their children. Twenty-two (22) women enrolled in our first year.

How can you help? The continuation of **FLI/ALP** for 2020 is in your hands now. FOL just received word that our major funder is discontinuing support of early childhood education. Year Five funding for FLI/ALP needs your support **now**, while our Development Team seeks other major funding partners. Your designation of your gift to support either our **Family Literacy Initiative (FLI)** or **Adult Literacy Program (ALP)** or **BOTH**, are vital to the continued success of our partnership with WE-CARE Foundation, HIPY and the Liberian families.



You may ask what lasting effects FOL projects can have on Liberia. One example is The Garden School, a Friends of Liberia-advised and inspired school in Gbarnga. It is a direct outgrowth of our 13-year teacher training project called LEAP. Steve Griffith and his wife, Chris Dickey, an early childhood educator, decided after observing a LEAP workshop that they wanted to build an ideal Early Childhood School in Gbarnga, where Steve served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the late '60s. The two teachers who run the school, Yatta Nrotoe, head teacher, on the left, and Nowai Kapu, principal, on the right, are LEAP trained. Stephanie Vickers (former FOL president), led and administered the LEAP teacher training for 12 years. She was on hand to work with parents, staff, and students on finishing the building, developing curriculum, and purchasing supplies. The pre-school will reach children between the ages of 3 and 5 in an area outside of our FLI.





FOL's Small Grants program continues to make a difference in the lives of many Liberians. We award partial funding for projects carried out by carefully screened local non-governmental organizations across the country. Check out our website, FOL.org, to learn more about the criteria. A few of many examples follow.

The Koon Town Poultry Farming Project received a FOL Small Grant of just over \$2,000 and completed the farm in early 2019. The local organization hired community residents for the construction and to prepare traditional mud bricks. A manager is being trained by AgriLife-Liberia's technical team for the poultry house. Students of the local school are receiving poultry management training. The

students have cultivated an acre of cassava for start-up feed while awaiting the arrival of chickens.

In late 2018, a FOL Small Grant was used by the Grow Hope Foundation to construct a four-compartment latrine for 400 students, teachers, and staff on the campus of the Liberia Central Academy in Paynesville. This has even impacted positively the school attendance of adolescent girls, as well as lessened staff worries about hygiene-related health problems.

Foundation for Women and Children Empowerment (FOWACE) also received a 2019 FOL Small Grant and wrote:



“On behalf of our organization (FOWACE) and the beneficiaries of your funded project, I want to extend our thanks and appreciation to you all at Friends of Liberia for funding our livelihood empowerment project for Ebola affected women through Soap Making. The women graduated today and were each given soap making oil and caustic soda to start their individual businesses. FOWACE will continue to work with each of them for the coming months to guide them in the business process.”

In response to the many health education needs in Liberia, the **FOL Health Team** has developed a continuing education workshop to improve the knowledge base and competency of faculty members at 20 Liberian schools of nursing and nurse midwifery. This will assist faculty members to better prepare nursing and midwifery students for their work, and in turn improve the quality of health care in Liberia.

The initial workshop is based on a needs assessment the Liberia-based team conducted in 2017-2018 with teaching faculty in this critical area of the health sector. It will be held at Phebe School of Nursing, located in Bong County, in January 2020. The Health Team in Liberia is designing the workshop content and will lead the sessions. An evidence-based evaluation will follow to determine its impact, and may lead to a sustainable model of in-service continuing education for health service professionals. The Liberia team members are all masters-in-nursing education graduates of Mother Patern College of Health Sciences in Monrovia. The Health Team in the U.S. includes health educators and public health experts with extensive experience in Liberia, and will provide mentoring and support. This is a new opportunity to contribute to long-term health improvement by a donation to FOL designated for the **"Health Project"**.

The Liberia Literacy Landscape Paper and its companion piece, the Liberia Literacy Mapping project, are the result of five years of research by Friends of Liberia Education Working Group members Virginia (Jinny) Hesel and Mary Gemignani to document organizations working on literacy in Liberia. Please visit FOL.org to view this important work. Beginning in 2020, the Liberia Landscape Paper and Map will include technology, occupational and vocational training schools. Stay tuned!



Friends of Liberia is an all-volunteer organization. We rely not only on the financial support of donors like you, but also the “time and talent” donation of volunteers to help us complete our work. We would love your hands-on help on one of our committees—let us know!

Another way to show your support for Friends of Liberia is to join our Legacy Circle. We have a growing group of friends who have included FOL in their wills and estate plans. This can be one way you make decisions easier for your family. Please let us know of your intentions and you will be included in a list we will be posting on our Legacy Circle web page. You can do this anonymously, too. There is no minimum to join the Circle. Check it out at: <https://fol.org/donate/legacy-circle/>

With your donations, **YOU** are the foundation of our work. An increasing number of you are making monthly donations through PayPal (thank you!), a few have designated major gifts to expand a favorite program (you are lifesavers!). If you know of funding sources who might be interested in helping to support our projects, please let us know that, too.

"We see the Family Literacy Initiative as an opening to quality education to all—the new road map to education in Liberia for the less fortunate to become part of the process and thus a buy in. WE-CARE is proud to be a part of this program."
Michael Weah, Administrator, WE-CARE Foundation, Monrovia, Liberia

We cannot do our work without your generosity. Your financial contributions are needed to continue these important programs. Please make a gift today and help us support sustainable Liberian education and development.

The Liberian economy is still recovering from the Ebola health crisis, years of war, and governance challenges. It requires an educated and healthy workforce to fuel its growth. Liberians’ ability to take part in 21st century commerce will hinge on their ability to seize educational and employment opportunities for themselves and their children. ***Our support makes a positive impact. YOUR gifts make it possible.***



Please consider a generous donation to FOL – and it’s never too early to include **FOL** in your will. As many of us retire, remember that donations directly from your required minimum distributions (from IRAs and many retirement plans) are not taxed. Yours can be a living legacy! Check with your financial advisor, or we can provide you with more information. Fill out the form included with this letter and send a check, or go to our website for direct donation information. What several of us find easiest is a modest monthly automatic deduction via PayPal and using Amazon Smile for those purchases ordered from home. They contribute a small percentage of the price, but it all adds up, too!

"Every child is a different kind of flower, and all together make the world a beautiful garden."
Duazon School, Liberia

We appreciate all of you for making great things happen in Liberia. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Sarah

Sarah C. Morrison, President of FOL

*P.S. Your gift **now** will help provide 180+ children with help to prepare for successful experiences in school. In addition, caregivers will benefit from reading instruction, small grant projects across Liberia will help many communities prosper, and continuing health education for instructors will help improve the quality of health care across Liberia. Please return with your donation, comments, or go to FOL.org!*

