

# BURKINA CONNECTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

2010 - NO. 2



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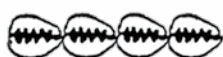
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 *Peace Corps Burkina Faso Country Director Shannon Meehan visits PCVs in the field.*

## WELCOME SHANNON MEEHAN

New Country Director, Shannon Meehan, arrived in Burkina Faso in February. She describes her first seven months in Burkina in this edition's Field Notes (page 3).

Shannon was born in Chicago Heights, Illinois, though she grew up in Portland, Oregon. She graduated from the University of Oregon with a degree in History and Economics. Shannon worked four summers in Alaska, living on factory boats, processing and gutting fish in order to get through college.

She joined Peace Corps just after college in 1989 and was assigned to Senegal, where she fell in love with the music, food, dance, and people of West Africa. Her Peace Corps service ended in 1991, after which she worked different international jobs in Senegal until 1995. Shannon speaks French, Diakhanke, and Wolof.

She has spent more than 20 years working internationally, especially in conflict zones

around the world, focusing mainly in the areas of humanitarian needs and the protection needs of displaced populations and refugees.

Shannon has worked with the American Refugee Committee (ARC) in Guinea and Kosovo, where she served as Country Director. After the ARC, she was a consultant for Refugees International as well as the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation.

Most recently, she worked for the International Rescue Committee as Director of Advocacy and Policy. Shannon was responsible for conflict areas within Africa and then she covered policy priorities for the Middle East, violence against women, refugee resettlement and civilian-military issues.

We are fortunate to have such an experienced country director serving the volunteers and people of Burkina Faso. Bienvenue au Pays des Hommes Intègres et du courage!



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To contact a member of the leadership team, please visit <http://fbf.tamu.edu>.



# PRESIDENT'S YIRI

by Mike Lavoie, '75-'77

**M**aam souri yaa noog wusego! That Moore expression of immense contentment is how I feel as I begin my term as President of the Friends of Burkina Faso. This contentment reflects the privilege and honor of leading FBF's great tradition of service and friendship with the people of Burkina Faso and the excitement of celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps.

Let me introduce the other members of our new leadership team: Vice President Lyndsey Wilson-Williams, Treasurer Suzanne Plopper, Secretary Helen Shore, Technology Chair Guy Fipps, Community Relations Chair Kristie McComb and Projects Chair Tom Vollrath. The passion, talent and experience of this team is impressive and will bring great things to our organization.

To our retiring President, Kristie McComb, let me express our gratitude for her many years of service including the three years she served as President. Her tireless strength has led us through one sensational project after another. Our gratitude to her, however, continues as she has agreed to become the Community Relations Chair. Personally, thank you Kristie for being a great role model for me.

To the Board Members and FBF Members, I thank you for this special opportunity. I pledge to strengthen our organization and further enhance the friendship that exists between us and the people of Burkina Faso.

To current Peace Corps volunteers, PC Burkina staff, and their County Director, Shannon Meehan, I pledge our commitment and cooperation to propel the work of the Peace Corps and its Three Goals in Burkina Faso and the United States.

To the people of Burkina Faso with whom

we share this extraordinary friendship, I pledge to continue to build that friendship through projects and through increased communications and opportunities to work together.


To those who may not know me, I was a PCV well-digger in the Village of Namtenga, south of Tougouri, from 1975-1977. That Namtenga friendship has remained vibrant ever since, including countless partnership projects, return visits in 2000 and 2007 and hosting two members of my Namtenga host family here in Michigan in 2005. If interested, you may read more about that in a Burkina Connection article from 2007.

The 50th Anniversary presents us with a spectacular opportunity to celebrate our friendship with the people of Burkina Faso. I will be traveling to Burkina in February to celebrate the 50th Anniversary on March 1, 2011, and to also celebrate FBF projects and various other partnership projects in Burkina. Please keep a

watch out for more news about these events in the near future.

Let me conclude simply with the inspirational words of President John F. Kennedy, "And so my fellow Americans, ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country. My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man." That is the fundamental business that we are all about and to which we enthusiastically apply ourselves.



 Mike Lavoie reads a penpal letter in Namtenga.



# FIELD NOTES FROM SHANNON

by Shannon Meehan, Burkina Faso  
Country Director

**D**ear FBF Members, I thought I would take you on a trip that describes my first seven months on the job:

## February 18 – 19, Ouagadougou

It actually felt good to be in the sweltering heat of West Africa again. While I waited for my bags, I stepped up on a wooden platform and an officer turned and said “No Madam.” I replied, “Yes, but I am short, I cannot see anything.” He laughed with me. I got my bags and a nice man named Moussa helped me get them outside of the airport where Peace Corps staff was waiting.

My first day on the job was a busy one, I met with Charge d’Affairs at the US Embassy in the morning and then I was off to meet some great volunteers and learn about some of the fantastic projects they are engaged in. During my second day, I had a calabash water drinking ceremony to “baptize” me into the new family. It was a very nice sentiment.

## Early March

I was able to visit volunteers again which is easily my favorite part of the job. I was invited to a latrine training which included health and hygiene issues. The village chief gave me a white rooster which is a great honor. The rooster was my car companion for the next 24 hours. I was then asked if I would be back to “inaugurate” the latrines with them and I said yes - which got a huge laugh from the crowd.

March 8 is Intentional Women’s Day, a national holiday in Burkina. This year’s big event was in Koudougou, hosted by the First Lady of Burkina, the Premier Minister, the Minister for the Promotion of Women, the Minister of Primary Education. The event was like a glorious 4th of July parade – all the women gendarmes, women police, women military, women forestry workers, different women’s associations and businesses all


marched down the main road with their messages or examples of what they do best.

I was then allowed to be part of the lunch that was given for many of the invitees. I met the First Lady, Premier Minister, Minister of Commerce, Minister of Promotion of Women, and many other high officials. The best part was being at a table with women who spoke Bambara – which I learned in Senegal so we were in heaven trying to get me to remember certain phrases.

## April – Now

In April and May, the team prepared for 79 new volunteers who would arrive in June, the largest Burkina Faso PST ever. Our two training groups arrived for a total of 79 trainees while 80+ volunteers were in their sites. Seventy-six trainees swore in at the US Embassy on August 27, with the honor of having the First Lady of Burkina Faso as our special guest. She was lovely and gave a very warm and encouraging speech to our new PCVs. Our program currently has 139 volunteers. By the time you are reading this we will have another 33 health and small



 *Burkina Faso Peace Corps  
Director Shannon Meehan*

enterprise development volunteers who arrived in October. We have also hired a new Agriculture and Environment Advisor, who will design a new Agriculture and Environment sector, bringing the number of sectors in Burkina to five.

June and July saw a number of security threats from Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. We were required to evacuate 16 volunteers in the northeast as well as move our entire training site temporarily to Ouaga before finding a new training site two weeks later.

After 7 months on the job, we have gone from 100 volunteers to 139, 37 employees to 47 employees - growth is fun and challenging and never ending. We all strive to do our job with patience, hard work and laughter.



# MORE THAN ONCE IN A LIFETIME

by Rut Mulero, Burkina Faso Peace Corps Response Coordinator

Being a Peace Corps Volunteer is truly a unique experience that is only once in a lifetime. But what if it was possible to do it again? It is possible with Peace Corps Response.

Peace Corps Response (PCR) is a unique program that mobilizes highly-skilled Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) to provide short-term assistance to countries worldwide. Originally named the Crisis Corps, PCR works in six broad program areas:

- Agriculture and Environment
- Business/NGO Development and IT
- Health and HIV/AIDS
- Disaster preparedness and mitigation
- Community & Youth Development
- Education and Teacher Training

PCR assignments are designed to be short, more concretely defined with achievable objectives and goals to be met within the specified period of time generally averaging six months in length. Specific projects are developed by the partner organization, the in-country Peace Corps office, and PCR in Washington.

To serve with PCR, individuals must have successfully completed their Peace Corps service, have several years of professional experience and/or graduate degrees, and be equipped with the language, technical, and cross-cultural skills needed to make an immediate impact.

Peace Corps Burkina Faso is growing. And part of the growth strategy is through PCR. We will have many opportunities over the next few months for RPCVs. There are two upcoming projects listed to the right. If you are interested in PCR but the current listings do not match your qualifications, please visit the PCR Website at [www.peacecorps.gov/response](http://www.peacecorps.gov/response) for new and updated postings. We will be posting more positions throughout the coming year.

If you are ready to have another once in a lifetime experience I encourage you to join PCR where you can address critical needs in Burkina Faso.

## RESPONSE OPPORTUNITIES

### Environmental Trainer of Trainers

Program Area: Agriculture and Environment  
 Partner: Ecole Nationale des Eaux et Forets  
 Projected Start Date: January 2011  
 Duration: 9 months

A PCR Volunteer will be engaged in training of trainers to empower the ENEF staff. While working at the administration level of the training center, the PCRV will improve staff capacity to train others by assessing the efficacy of the existing curriculum, organizing the training curriculum, and instructing the teachers on effective ways to train their students. A volunteer will work with ENEF staff to test new modules in the classroom and develop more interactive training materials. The PCRV will strive to improve field agents' ability to impart lessons to rural communities taking into account the needs and reality of Burkina Faso, current climate conditions, and community members' capacity to manage their environment.

### Monitoring and Evaluation Officers

Program Area: Health and HIV/AIDS,  
 Business/NGO Development and IT  
 Partner: Ministry of Health  
 Projected Start Date: March, 2011  
 Duration: 9 months

PCRVs are needed to serve as Monitoring and Evaluation Officers for the Ministry of Health (MOH) in Burkina Faso. PCRVs will be engaged in the development of simple data collection tools and the creation of a database and standard operating procedures. The PCRVs will also be involved in training of trainers by instructing the district health information system manager, all head nurses and all district management staff.

**For more information on these opportunities please visit [www.peacecorps.gov/response](http://www.peacecorps.gov/response).**



# BURKINA REFLECTIONS

SAMEDI SOIR (CIRCA 1977)

by Josh Shade, '75-'77

It was a Saturday night and we needed to eat before the evening began. It turned out to be 11 of us at the Caban-Ban-Boo, a corner restaurant right on market square.

As we sat down, several of us gave nervous looks, maybe it was Dorothy Pardee who spoke first saying, "This will never work, they can't get two orders right, we better think about how we are going to order 11 meals." Someone came up with the idea that we should take the order ourselves and write it down.

So we wrote down 11 orders, written in clear simple French and when the waitress came she took our drink orders and the list. All was well, we were pleased with ourselves for solving a problem. We were truly ancients.

The first order came out and it was right. The second and third came out together and one was right and the other was pretty close, just a petit pois for haricot vert confusion. Then the fourth, fifth and sixth orders came out. One was right and the other two were not close, not at all.

We tried to make them right in our minds, could this be #8 with just the vegetable and side dish wrong? Well it could have been but then two of the three items on the plate were wrong. No one really cared, we all knew how lucky we were to be in Ouaga and have food available. More than half of the group was from *en brousse* and anything was fine, though some of them had been dreaming of a certain meal for months. It was what had kept

them going through weeks of riz sauce and fufu.

We all looked at each other and wondered how can this be? We had been very clear with our order; we had even numbered them 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on. And then the light bulbs started going on as we shook our heads and started to laugh. Mark Gilcrest saw it first - the solution was mathematical. The first order had been correct. The second and third were exactly the same, one of which was correct. The fourth, fifth and sixth meals were all the same with again, only one correct.

The cook was back there making 11 factorial number of meals. Since he had already gotten to order number 4 he was now making four of number 4, bringing the total meals served to 10, just one less than needed as he was on his way to making 66 meals.

You would think he could tell from the din of the crowd that there were not 66 people out front. It was early and we were the only customers. And we were pretty sure that the place had never had 66 people in it even if it could hold that many.

Maybe we still had something to learn after all.



## BURKINA FASO IN THE NEWS

- 08.05** The Economist reported that a Western diet promotes unhealthy gut bacteria in children according to a recently published study. Scientists compared the diet and gut bacteria of a group of healthy children in a village in Burkina Faso and a group of Italian children. An african fiber-rich meal of millet, legumes and other vegetables fostered a diverse mix of bacteria while a western diet heavy on sugar, fat and meat had fewer microbial species - including fewer healthy bacteria.
- 10.19** Spero News reported Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger were selected for introduction of a new Meningitis A vaccine in a country-wide campaign in December. Developed under a partnership by the World Health Organization, the vaccine, whihc provides protection for 10 years, will be distributed nationwide.



# UPPER VOLTA ONE REUNITES

by Denny FitzPatrick, '67-'68

We called ourselves Upper Volta One. We were children of the 60s, Kennedy kids hailing from 24 different states; Peace Corps volunteers in Burkina Faso in 1967 - so long ago that the country had a different name.

The Peace Corps trained us in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, so we could arrive in Africa prepared, they said. This spring we returned to St. Croix for a full-circle reunion, back to where it all began for us.

Fortunately, there is an active, Facebook network of RPCVs living on St. Croix, and they eagerly agreed to assist us with preparations and planning. They even arranged to host an elaborate RPCV beach party and pig roast to celebrate our visit. The locals also led us, with the help of a machete, to find our old Virgin Islands Training Center, where we lived and studied, and which is now totally overgrown with jungle vegetation.

It was a miracle to pull us all together. We've stayed in touch, but we had to converge from all around the world. One couple flew in from Kenya. Two couples sailed in from Tortola.

We did our share of sailing and snorkeling, but we also wanted to do some type of community

service while in St. Croix, to give back something in honor of the place that had once nourished us. So

we teamed up with the St. Croix Environmental Association to plant trees for habitat on Green Cay, a little island where the endangered St. Croix Ground Lizard manage to avoid encounters with mongoose. We also helped the Fish and Wildlife Service safely rescue and release 40 baby Leatherback Sea Turtles hatchlings.

We received an extraordinary, personal

note of congratulations from President Barack Obama. He commended us for our pioneering service as agents of change, and challenged us all to continue to serve.

I highly recommend Burkina Peace Corps reunions. Because it's quite impossible to explain to others what it was like to live in the Faso, what a defining moment it was in our lives, how it changed our perceptions of the world. Only other RPCVs from Burkina can truly understand what you're talking about.

Emotion and nostalgia ran rampant. The St. Croix tourism motto is "Feel the Love." It could be our motto too.



Members of Upper Volta 1 planting trees on Green Cay for the St. Croix Ground Lizard. Left to Right: Helen, Bob, Denny, Tina, Wendy, Dan, Barb.



## FBF LISTSERV

- ❖ Are you looking for travel partners or travel tips for a return trip to Burkina?
- ❖ Do you want to locate long-lost Peace Corps friends?
- ❖ Are you recently-returned and looking for a mentor in your field?
- ❖ Do you have an interesting news article about Burkina to share with our members?
- ❖ Are you doing some exciting Burkina-related work that might interest our members?

**If yes to any of these, our listserv is a great place to exchange information!**

**To join, please visit: <http://apache.tamu.edu/fbf/listserv.html>.**



# NAMTENGA PROJECT, TEN YEARS

by Marcy De Craene

Cranbrook Schools is entering its tenth year of friendship and support with the village of Namtenga, Burkina Faso. Cranbrook Schools are independent schools serving pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. In 2000 the lower school, Brookside School began a relationship with the village through Mike Lavoie ('75-'77), who had served as a well digger in Namtenga. What began as a supply drive for the village school children has grown and developed over ten years. Over the years, Cranbrook Schools have raised money for annual scholarships, school supplies, uniforms, playground equipment, soccer balls and nets, a well and water pump and mosquito netting.

Most recently the schools raised money to enable the installation of a solar panel to provide lighting for the school. Three years ago a pen-pal program, Kids-2-Kids, was started and 75-100 letters are now exchanged annually between Cranbrook and Namtenga students. Each

year we ask the school and community to identify their school's greatest need.

Cranbrook Upper School joined the lower school in 2006, when funds were raised to build a weaving studio in Namtenga, purchase 15 looms and provide training to support the development of a weaving co-op for the women of Namtenga. The weaving studio was named, Namtenga Soundi Babisi which means "the Weaving Sisters of Namtenga." This group of women has been eager to learn a variety of weaving techniques; they dye their own threads and continue to create unique products. Cranbrook has supported their endeavors by selling these goods throughout our school and community.

Our Girls' Middle School is in its third year of supporting further education by sponsoring students to continue schooling beyond primary school.

One highlight of our ten-year relationship was when Noelie Sandouidi and Simeon Baguian, a brother and sister who lived in Namtenga, visited Cranbrook. Three years later in 2007, three teachers from Cranbrook, with Mike Lavoie, traveled to Namtenga. Both of these experiences strengthened our friendship and connectedness.

Cranbrook School founder, George Gough Booth said, "The only way to have is to give..." The Namtenga Project is one way, we as a school, work to live that mission. Our students have been


enriched in many ways by our relationship with Namtenga. Despite obvious differences in our two cultures, the students see many commonalities. This respect and appreciation of diversity elevates us all. Cranbrook looks forward to continuing our friendship with Namtenga and supporting future needs identified by the village.

Please contact Marcy De Craene at Cranbrook Schools ([mdecraene@cranbrook.edu](mailto:mdecraene@cranbrook.edu)) if you have a school interested in setting up similar programs with villages in Burkina Faso.



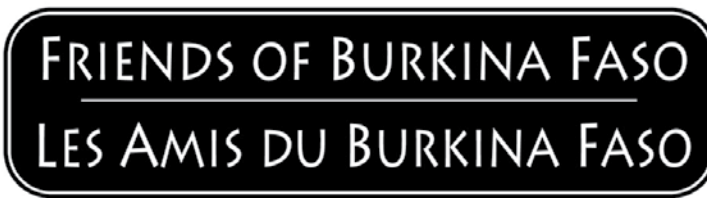
 A member of the Soundi Babisi weaving co-op in Namtenga



 Margaret Charney from Brookside school, helping Namtenga students read their pen pal letters.

NAMTENGA PROJECT





## BOARD UPDATES

by Thomas Vollrath, '01-'03

Dear Friends, many members in our community have provided assistance to development projects in Burkina Faso since returning home from their tour of service. FBF has, for instance, used donations earmarked for its Projects Fund as venture capital investments. We have supported numerous development projects over the past decade, projects that were proposed by Burkinabé and approved by our selection committee. FBF can be proud of the many accomplishments achieved to date, especially in the promotion of female education and its relationship with NEEDED in Ouahigouya. There is, however, much more that FBF could accomplish should our friends, family members, and acquaintances make more frequent and larger donations in support of our outreach program.

Let me describe two shea-nut butter projects to illustrate some challenges and possibilities. You may recall that back in 2003, our organization helped a women's cooperative in the village of Babora-Pegora purchase a hydraulic oil press to process karité nuts into shea butter. FBF channeled funds through ASUDEC, a Burkinabé non-governmental organization (NGO), who had submitted the shea-nut butter proposal on behalf of these women. FBF's project selection committee was impressed with ASUDEC and its notion of "passing-on-of-the-gift", the guiding principal underlying this group's approach to sustainable development. One objective of the project was that a proportion of the proceeds from the sale of the butter would go into an revolving trust fund, enabling ASUDEC to purchase an oil press for a cooperative in an adjacent village. The Babora-Pegora cooperative has proven to be a success. It mobilized local resources, empowered women to assume greater responsibilities over their lives, and improved the standard of household living in Babora-Pegora. But, low prices in the local market prevented the goal of "passing-on-of-the-gift"

from being realized.

Last year, Nowon (another Burkinabé NGO) sent FBF a shea-nut butter proposal on behalf of a women's cooperative in Tiogo. FBF's selection committee views this proposal very positively. It is very well written and the project clearly has "buy-in" support from the local institutional infrastructure. However, given the shortage of resources in the FBF projects account, we had to inform Nowon that we would place their request to underwrite the purchase of a hydraulic press for the Tiogo cooperative on hold until after 2010 Fall Fundraising campaign and our projects account had been replenished.

In early October Taylor Clay, a scholar at Pepperdine University, contacted me regarding her application for a Fulbright grant to study the supply-chain in the shea-nut butter industry in Burkina Faso. She hopes to gain an understanding of constraints and prospects as seen through the eyes of the women collecting the nuts, intermediaries transforming the nuts into final products, and actors selling the butter in the domestic and international markets. She is absolutely thrilled about the prospect of assisting FBF to evaluate and monitor our projects involving shea-nut butter. Perhaps we can find out the production/market viability of indigenous shea-butter projects!

The Nowon proposal is but one of four proposals that the FBF selection committee views favorably and that remain in our in-box. The shea-nut butter proposal focuses, of course, on agriculture. The other three highly-ranked address needs related to health care, micro-credit, and computers. The dollars requested for the four proposals sums to \$25,000. Might it be possible for FBF to support one or more of these initiatives?

Please remember that 100% of project contributions made directly to FBF via our website or through the mail are sent overseas. FBF does not levy a tax on incoming funds to cover the organization's overhead expenditures







# IN MEMORY OF SEBROAGO

by Shannon Meehan, Burkina Faso Country

Peace Corps Burkina Faso has recently suffered the loss of our beloved colleague, Sebroago Kiendrebiego, known to us simply as, Seb. He was our friend, colleague and brother. He left us at a very young age, he was just shy of his 40th birthday. He was battling cancer. Seb was born on December 27, 1970, he obtained his Baccalaureat in 1991 in Cote d'Ivoire and his Bachelors of Science with a focus on Physics from the University of Ouagadougou in 1996. He became a professor of Physics for high schools and middle schools.

It was in March 2004 when Seb joined the Peace Corps family of Burkina Faso. From 2004 - 2006, Seb served as a technical coordinator for our secondary education program and our girls education program in Kaya, Gourcy and Ouahigouya. In December 2006, he became our APCD for Secondary Education. He was a brilliant, innovative and dedicated APCD. He was well admired by the volunteers because of his compassion, his support, his technical knowledge



and his humor. The PCV groups of 2008 - 2010 and 2009 - 2011, wrote a letter to the Country Director stating all of the amazing attributes and achievements of Seb which allowed us to give him one of the highest employee awards at the US Embassy staff awards assembly this past June.

Peace Corps Burkina Faso will have many wonderful memories of Seb. He was a great team player and had so many pertinent and innovative ideas for our work in Peace Corps. We hope to carry on his legacy. He will be dearly missed. He leaves behind a lovely wife and two very young children. Peace Corps Burkina Faso expresses their sincere condolences to his family and friends.



If you would like to contribute to an RPCV fund to support Seb's family please visit <http://donateforseb.blogspot.com>. Please note that Friends of Burkina Faso is not affiliated with this fund.

## RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2011

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

- I would like to renew my FBF membership for 2011 (\$15 a year\*).
  - I would like to join the National Peace Corps Association (\$35 a year\*).
  - I would like to make a FBF Project Fund contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
  - I would like to make a FBF Newsletter Fund contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.
- Total amount enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Save time and a stamp - renew online at:**  
<http://fbf.tamu.edu/shopfbf.html>

To renew by mail, please mail this entire page with payment to:  
 Suzanne Plopper, Treasurer - FBF, P.O. Box 395, Chester, CA 96020  
 Make checks payable to FBF. ❖ Contributions are tax-deductible. ❖ Puus baarka wusgo!  
**Memberships are valid February 1 through January 31 every year.**

# AS THE SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

by Suzanne Plopper, '67-'69

As the school year begins in Burkina Faso, Friends of Burkina Faso's partnership continues with NEEDED (Nimbus, Enfance, Environnement, Education et Developpement) in support of the education of village girls in the Yatenga Region. This school year, we have been able to fund girls' education at the primary, middle/secondary, and post secondary levels with our support totaling \$56,707.

At the primary school level, FBF is once again providing financial resources to NEEDED for the Lambs for School Project. FBF funds will be used to buy school materials for the first year of school for 300 girls plus a lamb for each girl. Parents will raise the lambs, sell them and buy another each year in order to support their daughters' education through secondary school.

At the middle/secondary school level, we are supporting lunches for 750 students of the Lycee Modern de l'Amitie (the combined middle and secondary school for girls), in collaboration with the Stern Stewart Foundation in Germany.

For the first time, thanks to a very generous donation from the Milton and Beatrice Wind Foundation and the generosity of our new partner, the Federation of American Women's Clubs Overseas, we are able to lend financial assistance to post secondary training and education for 13 young village women who successfully completed secondary school this past year. The selection criteria were high and the competition was keen for the scholarships available. The young women who received scholarship support

to continue their educations this year are all indigent, have lost one or both parents and have no other source of financial support. Of the 13 scholarships:

- Nine are for primary school teacher training
- Two are for diploma nurses training
- One is for State nurses training
- One is for a university education. (This young woman plans to study law)

It is exciting to know that at least some village girls who at age 6 had no hope of even entering school will now become educators, nurses, midwives, and lawyers!

**An important correction regarding the cost of post secondary education** reported in our last Burkina Connection: NEEDED neglected to include the living costs for students while in primary education, nursing and midwifery training. The correct total costs for students in all programs are:

- Teacher training for primary education: 1,562,000fcfa
- Diploma nursing training: 1,786,000fcfa
- State nursing training: 2,619,000fcfa
- Midwifery training: 2,619,000fcfa
- University education: 4,060,650fcfa

We are optimistic that we will be able to continue to offer the opportunity for post secondary education to qualified girls whose ability to continue their education is limited only by their lack of financial resources.

**To recap the girls' progress to date:** at the primary school level, the girls are doing very well. The following table shows the percentage of girls supported by the Lambs for School Project, and the percentage of all primary school students in northern Burkina Faso, who have passed the national exit exam at the end of primary school and qualified to go on to middle school over the past eight years.

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Lambs for School</b>	80.6	80.1	79.3	81.2	82.9	84.4	87.8	86.3
<b>All children</b>	62.4	64.6	64.2	63.2	65.7	66.3	68.0	65.1

The girls continue to do very well in middle and secondary school as well. The following table shows the percentage of students in the Lycee Modern de l'Amitie (LMA), and the percentage of all middle

**NEEED UPDATES**



# 2010 PROJECT UPDATES

by Tom Vollrath, '67-'70

Friends of Burkina Faso continues to support NEEDED's female educational programs. New this year is the partnership FBF forged with two donor organizations to enable NEEDED to award post-secondary school scholarships. To date, 12 young women have been granted scholarships to be trained as teachers and nurses. Another woman has been awarded a scholarship enabling her to advance her education at the university level.

FBF continues to buttress other educational programs sponsored by NEEDED in Ouahigouya and surrounding areas. At the primary school level, FBF's support enabled 300 girls to enter primary school through the Lambs for School Project. At the middle/secondary school level, FBF underwrote the cost of lunches for 750 students attending the Lycée Modern de l'Amitié. In 2010, the total cost of these two programs was \$56,707.

In addition to providing financial assistance supporting NEEDED that promote female education, FBF extended small grants to a library in Pobé Menago and a computer project in northern Burkina Faso in 2010. According

to librarian Konfé Hamidou, the library was able to make its initial purchase of books thanks to the \$2,000 gift from FBF. Reports from the field indicate that project is proving to be a success. The library is a popular place for students to read and study. It is also being used as community center where young folks congregate and older adults come to converse and play "lido," a card game.

FBF also extended a small grant of \$2,500 to pay for shipping recycled computer equipment from Interconnection, an organization in Washington to local schools in northern Burkina Faso. Shortly after the computers were distributed last Spring, American personnel were evacuated from the region due to U.S. intelligence reports of an al-Qaeda threat. Unfortunately, the Peace Corps volunteers who were monitoring this project have either terminated their term of services and/or are still not allowed to return to their posts or travel to all areas in the north. To date, FBF has not received information about the payoffs of use of this equipment.

## NEEED Update Cont'd

school students in northern Burkina Faso, who passed national exams at the end of each year of middle school in order to go on to the next grade. Note that the passing rate for students of the LMA is consistently almost double that of all other students in the region. The combination of learning conditions (including a noon meal along with high standards; committed teachers, parents

and students; and a maximum class size of 50) are crucial to this success. (In response to significantly lower scores this year than in previous years, our colleagues in Burkina report that "all of the teachers and actors in the world of education felt like the exams were far more difficult this year than in previous years". The national pass rate was 32%.)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Middle school students of the Lycee Modern de l'Amitie	71.0	77.18	81.15	79.0	53.84
All students in middle schools in Northern Burkina	39.26	37.62	41.78	39.83	29.16

We extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone who has participated in supporting the education of girls in northern Burkina Faso. You have given these girls an opportunity to define their worlds and to contribute to their families, communities and nation. Your continuing support is most welcome and appreciated!



# CALL FOR CONTENT

The *Burkina Connection* is a biannual newsletter and a great source for information about FBF projects, updates from the FBF President, PC/BF Country Director and U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso, and a chance for RPCVs to reconnect.

One way you can contribute to the commemoration of Peace Corps' 50 years of service is to write an article about your experience as a Volunteer in Upper Volta/Burkina Faso for an upcoming issue of the *Burkina Connection*. We plan to feature at least one RPCV per decade since the 1960s to show the evolution of Peace Corps' presence in Burkina. What has changed? What has stayed the same? What impact did your service have on Burkina? What impact did it have on you? If interested in sharing your story, please contact [fbfnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:fbfnewsletter@gmail.com) for more details. The deadline for the next issue is May 1, 2011. Photos are welcome and must be 300 dpi and include a caption.



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Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within do not necessarily reflect the position of the Friends of Burkina Faso.



## BURKINA CONNECTION

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO



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