

# FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO



July 4, 2002

Dear Friend of Burkina Faso<sup>♥</sup>,

In a quiet moment, during the rush of life, have you remembered your days in Burkina Faso, sometimes with a sense of gratitude? And wondered how you might touch someone else's life with the generosity and kindness that some villager or government official gave you?

About a hundred of us gathered in Washington DC in the Fall of 2001 to honor and celebrate the Peace Corps in Burkina Faso. A feeling arose, in many conversations, that we could create some way to continue our relationship with the people we were privileged to live with and serve. A dozen or so Friends continued meeting. Very quickly we observed that our relationships with Burkinabe were grounded where true needs are voiced, at the grassroots, with workers, farmers, teachers and villagers themselves. So, we committed to funding projects which come directly from and directly affect the kinds of people most of us worked with in Burkina Faso.

This past winter, the Board of Directors of the Friends of Burkina Faso (FBF) approved the formation of the Projects Committee to better coordinate our members' project-support efforts and to manage fund-raising activities; and that committee has made excellent progress in turning this idea into a real Friends of Burkina Faso program. But many questions have arisen and some remain only partially answered: Where will the funding come from? How will we learn about possible projects? And check them out and monitor them? What kinds of projects do we want to support?

From our experiences overseas, we decided to start small and local. We hope that certain in-country resources will be helpful to us, e.g. Peace Corps Volunteers, international or local non-governmental organizations, etc. We believe that our grantees will normally be NGOs working at the village level.

Two projects have passed our initial review process and are on-track for a grant from our Projects Fund. The first project comes from the lycee in Garango. In 1999, plans for electrification of Garango were announced and implementation begun; but there has been no money for the infrastructure required to bring electricity to the high school. The high school's principal and parents request \$1,700 from the FBF to buy the parts needed (i.e., cables, control boxes, light fixtures, and bulbs etc.) to extend the electric supply from the main electric grid to the school. The local community will cover the labor costs of installation and the Parent Teacher's Association has agreed to assume responsibility for the recurrent costs of providing electrical current to the school. The provision of electricity will enable the lycee's 1,100 students to use the school facilities for supervised recreational activities and for night-time study. This is particularly important now, as Garango students have become eligible for the first time this year to take the bacallaureat exam. The lycee electricity project will provide students with opportunities for additional study, communication, and social interaction. With electrical current flowing at the lycee, internet access could eventually become a reality. Marianne Bailey (RPCV Mali '87-'89) and her husband, Alex Bambara, have already donated two used computers to the school. But these computers are not being used for want of an electrical connection.

The second one, the lambs project, first introduced to FBF by Cathy Seeley (Ouahigouya, '99-'01), encourages young girls to enroll in primary school and enables their families to pay for this schooling. A

□ Friends-of-Burkina-Faso membership is open to all. If you, or someone that you know, would like to become an official member of our non-profit charitable organization, let us know by completing the enclosed attachment. Members receive the quarterly Burkina Connection newsletter.

small organization, Association NEEED (Nimbus, Enfance, Environnement, Education et Developpement) was established in Tangaye by Lacine Sawadago, a local lycee professor, and his wife Haoua, a local midwife, to address girls' access to primary school. NEEED provides an ingenious way for girls to help themselves. It provides the child her school materials for the first year. It also gives the child's family a lamb to raise. Proceeds from the sale of the mature animal are used to pay for the girl's school costs the following year and to purchase another lamb to raise. This process repeats itself throughout the child's primary education. Through this mechanism a contribution of \$55 can be leveraged in such a way as to support the education of a young girl through all six years of her primary school! This past month, Suzanne Plopper, (Ouahigouya, '67-'69), visited the Tangaye region. She noted that NEEED currently supports young girls in 15 of the 29 primary schools in this region and that it could support many more children and schools. With \$3,300 from the Friends of Burkina Faso, NEEED will be able to buy lambs for 60 girls to support their school costs.

Our goal is to fund at least \$7,000 worth of projects per year. Several Friends, merely on hearing that we were getting organized, have gotten us started with generous pledges of support; but more is needed. Any amount would be welcome, whether \$10 or \$5,000. You may make a gift to the project fund, relying on the committee to make allocations; or you may designate one of the projects described above. See attachment. Remember, that checks made out to the Friends of Burkina Faso designated for the Projects Fund are tax deductible.

We have special reasons to ask you to send a financial contribution as soon as possible. The two projects approved by the Committee will be best served if they are funded before the beginning of the school year in September. Given this timeline, Ambassador Donald Easum ('71-'74) has provided us with some additional incentive, offering to match dollar for dollar contributions made by August 28<sup>th</sup>, up to \$1,000. So, don't hesitate; act now!

In the coming months, we will keep you informed of the projects we fund and their progress. In the meantime, we hope to hear from you, with your financial contribution, your personal involvement, suggestions and new ideas.

Sincerely,

Tom Vollrath ('67-'70)  
Chairperson  
The Projects Committee of the Friends of Burkina Faso

P.S. Thanks to the many individuals who have contributed their ideas and helped shape our committee: Anastasia Hopkinson ('67-'69), Eric Figueroa ('81-'84), Bob Winterbottom ('72-'74), Elizabeth and Tom Fox ('67-'69), Marianne Bailey ('87-'89), Alex Bambara, Bob Osborne ('67-'69), Holland McKenna ('71-'73), Suzanne Plopper ('67-'69), Leigh Woodward Landrin ('67-'68), Molly Chambers ('99-'01), Jon Berger ('67-'69), Charles Rodgers ('67-'69), Denny Fitzpatrick ('67-'68), Mead Over ('67-'69), Rick Smith ('67-'69), Art Westneat ('69-'74), Peg Hausmann ('74-'76), John Sneed ('67-'69), Dick Dietz ('70-'72), Taale Rosellini ('67-'75), Cathy Seeley ('99-'01), David Greeley ('81-'83), Ambassador Easum ('71-'74), and Keri Lowry, Nelson Cronyn, and Ambassador Kolker currently serving in Burkina.

# FBF Contribution Form<sup>1</sup>

Please complete and return this form in the enclosed envelope to:

**FBF Projects Committee  
c/o Molly Chambers  
1601 Argonne Place N.W.  
Apt # 226  
Washington D.C., 20009**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Burkina Faso \_\_\_\_\_

Current occupation \_\_\_\_\_

My project contribution is enclosed. I am offering \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ My gift may be used wherever the Projects Committee feels it is most needed.

\_\_\_\_ I want my gift to support the \_\_\_\_\_ project.

In addition, I would like to include

\_\_\_\_ \$15 for annual FBF membership.

\_\_\_\_ \$25 to join the National Peace Corps Association (NCPA).

I choose not to contribute at this time, but would like to help out. Please contact me. I can offer the following assistance:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other comments, suggestions or ideas? \_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> Note, the Friends of Burkina Faso is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible. Make all checks payable to FBF.