

BURKINA CONNECTION



NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

2015 - No. 1



In this issue:

"GlobalGiving Launch a Success" on page 2

"FBF Helps Build Schools" on page 6

"New Public Health Volunteers sworn in on March 17th." on page 4

"Award for Peace" on page 3

"Let Girls Learn Initiative" on page 11

DID YOU KNOW...

Third Goal grants available to NPCA members! Find out more here.

Save the Date
SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2015

Annual members meeting in D.C.
Click [here](#) for more info or to RSVP.

THE PRESIDENT'S YIRI

by Michael Lavoie, '75-'77



We all know President John F. Kennedy's famous quote: "And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country." But the next sentence is often overlooked. President Kennedy continued, "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." If I might take the liberty of rephrasing this latter part, the question could be put as: "What can we as citizens of different parts of the world do together for human freedom?" And if I might further rephrase it to apply to the Friends of Burkina Faso and the people of Burkina Faso, "What can FBF do together with the people of Burkina Faso for human freedom?"

Let me offer a response. FBF and the people of Burkina do a great deal together. We see it in the pages of this newsletter and many previous newsletters. We see it in the new FBF Award for Peace. We

see it in the partnerships that are integral to virtually all of the FBF projects. We see it in the interactions of all our board members with the Burkina people on a host of domestic and international levels.

Is improved human freedom of man a consequence of all that work together? I say yes. When we work together in all these ways, all of us attain more freedom. Freedom to comprehend and learn from one another. Freedom to grow in wisdom from life's experiences. Freedom elevated by the joy of better understanding and improving the human condition. Freedom unchained from ignorance, misunderstanding, hopelessness, isolation and depravity.

A very good friend of mine in Burkina once simply and wisely observed: "Ninsala yelle ya toogo." In English, "the problem of the human being is difficult." Working together for the freedom of all humans, as urged by President Kennedy, must surely make human freedom better.

TIGOUNG NONMA GLOBALGIVING LAUNCH A SUCCESS

by Tom Vollrath, '67-'70



Members of Tigoung Nonma, with Burkinabé and British International Service Volunteers, are pursuing placement on the GlobalGiving UK site after a successful launch in the U.S.

Many thanks to Mead Over, FBF team leader, who has played an instrumental leadership role interfacing with TN personnel and orchestrating the very successful Open-Challenge effort that raised funds and gained TN a permanent presence on the GlobalGiving website. Thanks also to PCV Katie Gehron who strengthened our ties with TN staff and volunteers and who oversees developments in the field.

The Friends of Burkina Faso helped Tigoung Nonma, a cooperative of artists living with disabilities in Burkina Faso, launch a project entitled [Build Workshop for Physically Disabled Burkinabés](#) on the GlobalGiving website. Tigoung Nonma -- “strength through unity” in the local language Mooré -- operates two primary income-generating activities: handicrafts and catering services. Artisans make and sell jewelry, baskets, textile products, ceramics and sculptures. Other members operate a catering service that prepares and delivers meals to clients living in or near Ouagadougou. These revenue activities enable TN members to participate

in the socio-economic development process, achieve financial independence, and become more fully integrated into Burkinabé society.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE

The TN project had to raise a minimum of \$5,000 from at least 40 different donors during GG's *Open Challenge* in December to qualify for a permanent presence on the GlobalGiving U.S. site in 2015. TN and FBF can be proud that both thresholds were met and exceeded! A total of 73 GG donors contributed \$5,719 during the month of December 2014. Combined with FBF's pledge to match all individual donations received through GG in support of the Build Workshop project during December, TN is in a good position to achieve its two primary objectives:

- To bolster the financial independence of the Tigoung Nonma through the construction of a workshop that is accessible to its artisans and customers. The workshop will provide more space for TN artisans to produce and design their products and it will also provide them with an improved venue to market their arts and crafts.

continued on page 9



FRIENDS OF BURKINA FASO

Award for Peace

Friends of Burkina Faso is soliciting nominations for its first annual Award for Peace. The FBF Award for Peace will recognize a person having played an active role in promoting and expanding peace in Burkina Faso. The Award for Peace will be awarded in September 2015 at the annual meeting of the Friends of Burkina Faso in Washington, D.C.

The Friends of Burkina Faso Award for Peace is given once a year to an individual having made a substantial contribution in a powerful and innovative way to the development of Burkina Faso and/or to the growth of cross-cultural understanding in the service of peace. Nominees must be Burkinabé, a returned Peace Corps volunteer, or hold close ties to the country of Burkina Faso in an extraordinary way. The Friends of Burkina Faso Award for Peace is established to recognize the contributions of individuals at all levels, to provide support and motivation to those individuals, and to raise-up powerful examples of good works for others to see and from which to be inspired.

“The Award for Peace is an opportunity to recognize the extraordinary demonstration of the Peace Corps’ goals: the promotion of mutual understanding between our countries along with invaluable contributions to the development of Burkina Faso. This is our way of demonstrating FBF’s love for Burkina and recognizing the often times overlooked, yet noble and heroic, work that takes place,” stated Michael Lavoie, President of Friends of Burkina Faso.

The Award for Peace was developed to recognize any person having made a positive impact in maintaining and developing peace in Burkina Faso and, given the important role peace plays in Burkina Faso, the Friends of Burkina Faso Award for Peace strives to reaffirm its stature.



ELIGIBILITY

Eligible nominees must be from Burkina Faso; a former Peace Corps Volunteer who served in Burkina Faso; or a person with extraordinary connections to Burkina Faso.

NOMINATIONS

The nomination form, a description of the award, and award process can be found on the [FBF website](#).

IMPORTANT DATES

Nominations must be received by July 1, 2015. The award winner will be announced at the FBF annual members meetings in Washington, D.C. on September 19, 2015.

AWARD DESCRIPTION

The Award recipient will receive a \$500 prize, an Award for Peace statue, and recognition on social media.



UPDATE

from the field



by Keith Hackett,
PCBF Country Director



*New Public Health Volunteers
sworn in on March 17th.*

There are currently 105 PCBF Volunteers in the field: 44 in Education, 31 in Community Economic Development (CED), and 30 in Public Health. On March 17 of this year 42 Public Health and CED Volunteers were sworn in to service at the US Embassy in Ouagadougou (pics attached). On June 8 we will welcome a class of 28 Education Volunteers in country to begin their pre-service training in Leo. Although it is the top of the hot season here right now, Volunteers are staying resilient, embracing the heat, and some are even finding creative ways to stay cool. April 25 was World Malaria Day and Burkina Volunteers from all three sectors conducted many, varied activities in their communities to raise awareness about Malaria.

PC PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

by Tom Vollrath, '67-'70

*FBF Bolsters Ability of a
Village Library Resource Center
to Impart Computer Skills to Students*



Congratulations to both Noel Ouedraogo and Kris Mills for their forward thinking and efforts to instill computer literacy among students at the middle school in the rural village of Yelbougua!

Information technology (IT) is an invaluable tool in today's global economy. Unfortunately, Burkina Faso's educational system rarely, if ever, exposes students to computers or teaches them IT skills at the village level. PCV Kris Mills posted a project on the Peace Corps Partnership Program (PCPP) platform to address this vacuum in the village of Yelbougua. His proposal, developed in collaboration with Noel Ouedraogo, the principal of Yelbougua's middle school, creates a library resource center.

FBF elected to support this PCPP project, enabling the Yelbougua school to purchase 3 computers, a printer, and solar-powered electricity system needed to power the electronic equipment. Solar-powered electricity will provide much needed lighting, making it possible for student to use the center for studying after the sun goes down.

The community will contribute a furnished room in the school for the library resource center. The school's director is computer literate and has agreed to lead training of the school's three teachers as well as a select group of high-achieving students. In addition, a computer curriculum focused on basic IT skills will be developed. The school aims to offer this introductory course to all 300 students in the near future.



GIRLS' EDUCATION PROJECT CREATING FUTURE TEACHERS

by Suzanne Plopper, '67-'69

Girls' education projects supported by Friends of Burkina Faso in northern Burkina Faso continue to make us proud! Over the past twelve years, 84% of girls enrolled in primary school through the *Lambs Support Girls' Education Project* -- helping young girls enter village primary schools -- have passed the exit exam at the end of primary school, qualifying them to continue on to middle school, compared with 64% of their peers throughout the northern region. Association NEEDED, who founded this project in the late 1990's, anticipates achieving its goal of covering all interested villages in the northern region by the end of the 2016-2017 academic year if not earlier. Thanks to the generosity of our many donors/partners, FBF will support this project in reaching its goal.

FBF support for the *Noon Meal Project* at the Lycee Modern de l'Amitie began in 2006. This project reached its funding goal of \$175,000 in 2012 at which point another NEEDED partner assumed sponsorship. However, recent economic challenges curtailed funding and FBF has been asked if we could resume our support for this project. The Project Committee and Board have given their approval for resuming support and the *Noon Meal Project* has been reposted on the GlobalGiving website.

The *Postsecondary Education for Girls Project* has provided scholarships to 83 young women to date, enabling them to pursue training in primary school teaching, nursing or midwifery; or a university education. We are excited about the opportunities this project provides to young village women and about the 100% success of the young women to whom we have given scholarships to date. The efforts of the well-selected, capable and motivated young women are to be commended!

Approaching the end of their first semester of primary school teacher training, six young women supported by the *Postsecondary Education Project* -- Haoua, Pascaline, Maimounata, Liliane, Hawa and Marietou -- express their enthusiasm for sharing their knowledge with children and helping them in their education. Hawa stated, "Contributing to the education of young children is an immense joy for me". Haoua added that she

plans to work with village parents, many of whom are illiterate, to encourage them to send their children to school, saying she plans to help parents with school costs when necessary and possible. All of these future teachers have expressed great appreciation for the opportunity given them to achieve professional teacher training and have emphasized the importance of encouraging parents to enroll their children in primary school.

On April 14, the *Postsecondary Education for Girls Project* participated in a Microsoft Youthspark GlobalGiving Bonus Day, for which Microsoft provided \$100,000 in matching funds. Our sincere thanks to the 82 generous individuals who donated \$10,343, earning this project \$3,205 in matching funds for the project and overall sixth place finish among 553 projects. This funding will provide nine young women the opportunity to enter primary school teacher training this fall.

Donations can be made at any time to this project through FBF or on the [GlobalGiving website](#).



Postsecondary Education Scholarship Recipients: Haoua, Pascaline, Maimounata, Liliane, Hawa, Marietou



FBF HELPS BUILD SCHOOLS IN THE YATENGA

by Suzanne Plopper, '67-'69



Former primary school in Koeneba

The government of Burkina Faso has announced a policy that it will endeavor to provide a teacher to schools that villagers build themselves. This pledge induced many villages to construct primary schools using mud bricks and thatched roofs so that their children can obtain some formal education.

When I met with Ministry of Education personnel in Ouahigouya in 2011, they informed me that the government does not have the capacity to replace but a very few of these locally constructed schools each year, and that financial support of non-governmental

organizations is critical to the expansion of primary, middle, and secondary school construction, particularly in the rural areas.

Association NEEDED has long included in its activities the construction of health clinics, birthing centers, and schools. With one exception, a *lycée* for girls, all facilities have been turned over to the government upon completion. In 2011-2012 alone, Association NEEDED received requests from 106 villages in the region for assistance in the replacement of mud brick/thatch primary schools with schools built of more durable materials: concrete walls and metal doors, windows and roofs. NEEDED aims to replace the “worst of the worst” of the mud brick/thatch schools, as their limited resources allow.

The Friends of Burkina Faso has helped three villages replace their mud brick/thatch schools in northern Burkina Faso. In 2013, FBF supported the construction of a single classroom in each of two villages -- Koeneba and Dougouri Ouidi -- which allowed NEEDED to receive funding from another partner organization for the construction of the remainder of each school’s infrastructure.

In 2015, FBF is financing the construction of a three-classroom school in the village of Talle Bouli, thanks to a generous donation from an anonymous donor. Construction of the new school began in March and the school will be completed by late May. With this effort, the commune will build latrines for the school. In each case, the community contributes 50% of the aggregate -- sand, gravel, and stones -- necessary for construction.



New primary school, built with FBF assistance



Interior of new primary school

AN ODYSSEY IN SEARCH OF SOLUTIONS TO WATER SCARCITY

by Tom Vollrath, '67-'70

Properly designed and constructed in appropriate locations, small catchment basins give surety that water will be available throughout the year.



FBF congratulates Kati McDonald and Dr. Seydou Traoré for their energy and dedication to the enhancement of water resource management in Burkina Faso. The innovative technology they envision has the potential to substantially improve the lives of those living in villages throughout Burkina Faso. We wish them every success in their endeavors as they graduate from the support of FBF to the wider world of charitable and foundation fundraising. To learn more of the GWGL project, visit its [website](#).

FBF mounted the *Rainwater Catchment: A Solution to Water Scarcity* project on the GlobalGiving website in October 2013 in an effort to help launch an initiative called *Give Water Give Life* (GWGL), proposed by Kati McDonald (RPCV '71-'73). The aim was to accumulate resources needed to build a basin in Romongo that could provide villagers with a reliable source of water throughout the year. FBF set a financial goalpost of \$35,000, to be achieved from donations to the GG site. On March 12th, the \$35,000 threshold was attained, in record time, thanks to contributions from more than 1,200 donors! Congratulations are due to project leaders, Kati McDonald and Seydou Traoré, a PhD engineer and Fulbright scholar, for this success!

Notwithstanding unforeseen challenges during the past 17 months, Kati and Seydou achieved much progress advancing the ambitious goals of GWGL. The project focus shifted from building a new basin in the village of Romongo to repairing a weakened basin in Sisené and the development of a prototype catchment model for the village of Kamsi. Seydou, who is currently at Texas A&M University, has been in contact on a weekly basis with experts in the field, including

continued on page 8



WATER SCARCITY CONTINUED

GWGL'S PROTOTYPE BASIN

GWGL's prototype rainwater catchment basin incorporates satellite imagery, water irrigation and filtrations systems powered by solar and/or wind energy. It is also dependent upon local materials and village labor. Small basins, if proven to be technically and economically viable for replication throughout the country, will provide villagers with opportunities to increase agricultural production, create employment, stem outmigration, and improve overall health.

FBF SUPPORT OF GWGL

According to FBF treasurer, Suzanne Plopper, a total of \$42,182 has been earmarked for the RWCB project in FBF's Project account. This sum includes contributions from GG donors as well as from FBF-member contributions sent directly to our treasurer. The net amount of money raised through GG is \$39,081. There are more than sufficient funds accumulated to finance the Sisené basin repair. Kati and Seydou will keep us informed as to ways to make good use of whatever money remains to advance their long term goals.

scientists at INERA and government officials at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Since the launch of the project, Kati and Seydou have both traveled to Burkina Faso to visit rural villages, accompanied by Burkinabé professionals, in the central-west and north regions. The objectives of these excursions were to establish contact and interact with personnel in the field and to assess viable locations for the construction of GWGL's envisioned prototype rainwater catchment basin. One result of these trips was the recruitment to the GWGL team of Laetitia Kaboré, a socio-economist. Laetitia has proven to be an invaluable addition to the project. She is coordinating resources and activities among villagers and workers in Sisené. Another payoff to Kati and Seydou's field expeditions was the formation of a partnership with WA-WASH, a USAID water and sanitation program for villages in Burkina Faso and Niger affiliated with Florida International University.

More recently, the GWGL team, after an extensive vetting process, selected AICET to provide technical guidance and inspection of the Sisené basin repair. In March, AICET delivered an impressive design to strengthen the basin. The design includes an emergency spillway and upstream protection from ravine or gully erosion to prevent water erosion by downgrading the runoff speed. The GWGL team has signed agreements with a contractor and work on the Sisené basin has begun. It is to be completed by the end of May 2015.



Save the Date

SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2015

Join FBF in Washington, D.C. for our **annual members meeting**. For more information or to RSVP, click [here](#).



A shop displaying Tigoung Nonma's creations



TN's catering business is their primary source of revenue

TIGOUNG NONMA CONTINUED

- To enlarge the TN facility to meet the needs of all of its members. An enlarged centre will provide rooms to train aspiring artisans as well as to provide space for the association's women-run, catering service to expand. The latter is critically important to the long-run viability of the TN because food catering is the organization's primary source of revenue.

ON-GOING EFFORTS

Looking forward, TN plans to expand its market outreach via GlobalGiving in the United Kingdom. For this reason, Achille Sawadogo (Burkinabé volunteer and University-trained economist) and Alice McGonnell (British volunteer) are in the process of negotiating with GG-UK to have TN's Build-a-Workshop project posted on the British website, thus expanding TN's exposure to more potential donors.

British volunteers assigned to Tigoung Nonma by International Service (IS) are making the most of their social networks back in the United Kingdom. Current volunteers have informed their alumni about recent developments at the cooperative, including last December's amazingly successful fundraising efforts and achievement of the *Open Challenge* through GlobalGiving in the United States with assistance of the Friends of Burkina Faso. The former IS volunteers

will surely be spreading the word for the Build Workshop project launch on GG-UK. With effective marketing and social networking, the hope is that TN will receive sufficient resources to construct a well-designed and centrally-located workshop for its artisans with sufficient space to accommodate its catering service.



FBF FEATURED ON NPCA WEBSITE

Thanks especially to some of the successful Burkinabé-led projects we've supported, the National Peace Corps Association will be highlighting our group on their website in early April. We're proud to be recognized as an active "Friends of..." group, and will continue to set a good example. Thanks for all YOU do to support FBF and keep us on target.

Treasurer's Report: 2014

by Suzanne Plopper, Treasurer

PROJECT CONTRIBUTIONS AND DISBURSEMENTS in 2014

Contributions

• Unrestricted	\$ 9,404.82
• NEEDED: Lambs Support Village Girls' Education Project	\$ 6,538.76
• NEEDED: Girls' Postsecondary Training Project	\$102,676.00
• Rainwater catchment	\$ 28,487.00
• Tigoung Nonam Cooperative	\$ 435.00
Total	\$147,541.58

Disbursements

• NEEDED Lambs Support Village Girls' Education Project	\$ 24,954.00
• NEEDED Postsecondary Training Project	\$ 74,100.00
Total	\$ 99,054.00

Project expenses

• Wire/Western Union charges	\$ 111.00
• Photocopying & postage	\$ 325.57
Total	\$ 436.57

Year-end balance \$ **48,051.01**

ORGANIZATIONAL INCOME AND EXPENSES in 2013

Income

• FBF memberships	\$ 2,837.09
• NPCA memberships	\$ 1,715.00
• T-shirt sales	\$ 39.00
• Other (organizational overhead donation)	\$ 10.00
Total	\$ 4,601.09

Expenses

• Membership letter	\$ 193.41
• NPCA affiliation	\$ 80.00
• Incorporation fee (District of Columbia)	\$ 80.00
• NPCA rebates	\$ 1,785.00
• Other	\$ 97.21
Total	\$ 2,235.62

Year-end balance \$ **2,365.47**

Note:

- Incoming memberships to NPCA and membership rebates to NPCA are received, and rebated, at different times.
- NEEDED Lambs Support Village Girls' Education Project was fully funded in 2014, including funds to support the project through its completion in 2015.
- Organization expenses "other": returned T-shirts, FBF domain name transfer fee, currency conversion charges for income received in Euros.



BURKINA FASO PART OF LET GIRLS LEARN INITIATIVE



Board of Directors

President

Mike Lavoie, '75-'77

Vice President

Kathleen McDonald, '71-'73

Treasurer

Suzanne Plopper, '67-'69

Secretary

Helen Hinshaw Shore,
'67-'69

Technology Officer

Guy Fipps, '75-'77

Communications Officer

Aaron Buchsbum, '08-'10

Projects Officer

Tom Vollrath, '67-'70

Membership Officer

Ebbon Wiley Bell,
'10-'12

Newsletter Officer

Kristen Combs-Bicaba,
'98-'01

PC-BF Liaison

Mike Lavoie

ABURWA Liaison

Drissa Dao, Burkinabé

FBF Project Committee

Kaitlyn Brown
Desiré Bansé
Yannick Congo
Drissa Dao
Tom Fox
Jimmy Kolker
Kathleen McDonald
Mead Over
Suzanne Plopper
Bony Porrogho
Tom Vollrath

To contact a member of the leadership team, please visit <http://www.friendsofburkinafaso.org>



As part of the U.S. government's commitment to Let Girls Learn, First Lady Michelle Obama and the Peace Corps have formed a powerful collaboration to expand access to education for adolescent girls around the world.

This program will address that challenge by empowering local leaders to put lasting solutions in place. Peace Corps Volunteers who live and work at the grassroots level will serve as catalysts of community-led change.

In the first year of the Let Girls Learn collaboration, Peace Corps will initially target 11 countries where we can make a real difference: Albania, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Georgia, Ghana, Moldova, Mongolia, Mozambique, Togo, and Uganda.

In an email announcing this new initiative, Peace Corps Director Carrie Hesslet-Radelet stated, "Under Let Girls Learn, we will be training Volunteers and counterparts to become local champions of girls' education, working hand in hand with communities on projects through a new Let Girls Learn Fund, and increasing the number of Volunteers working to break down barriers to girls' education in the communities they serve."

Content reprinted from the the Let Girls Learn [website](#).

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR THIRD GOAL ACTIVITIES

Individual National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) members and NPCA member groups may apply for Education Small Grants of up to \$500 to fund projects/events in their communities that promote Peace Corps' Third Goal.

Examples of projects that may qualify for these grants include:

- a country of service cultural event at a community fair
- a wall map-painting project at a community school
- a resource fair at a local community library
- an international film festival on a college campus

Applications will be reviewed and awarded quarterly. The application deadlines for each quarterly review are by 5 pm Eastern time on February 1st, May 1st, August 1st, and November 1st. For more information, visit the NPCA [website](#).

