

The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

Volume 24 Issue 1



April 2009

Peace Corps Friendship From 1970 Blossoms USA Study Opportunity for Nigerien "Nephew"



Today a young African man is studying at Parkland College in Champaign, Illinois as a result of the cross cultural friendship that began 38 years ago when John Baird, piano technician of Decatur, Illinois, served in the Peace Corps. That young man is Mourtallah Idy Gondah, 27, who comes from Niger, West Africa where Baird served for three years in the early 1970's. During this time, Baird developed a close friendship with Mourtallah's father, Idy Gondah, who was his Nigerien counterpart in the village where they lived. They managed the peanut cooperative.

"Despite the striking differences between our two cultures, Idy and I had similar interests, personalities and values," recalls Baird. "We spent a lot of time together on the job, and I ate every evening meal at their house. Mourtallah's mother cooked my food for a whole year!" The relationship between the two became like that of brothers (consequently, these days Mourtallah always refers to John Baird as "Uncle.")

John Baird as a PCV in Niger with Mourtallah's parents.

first, the idea seemed too farfetched to consider. More than a year passed before inspiration hit, and John realized he was uniquely qualified to help make these dreams become reality. Soon, John and his wife Jan found themselves in careful visa discussions with the American Embassy in Niamey, since applications are denied at a high rate. Against long odds, Mourtallah arrived at O'Hare International Airport on December 21, 2007.

John never imagined that 36 years later Idy would ask if his scholarly son could come to the United States to study. At

Mourtallah now has a one-year track record behind him. After an intense semester and summer of ESL (English as a Second Language) classes, Mourtallah was able to jump into regular classes along with American students. This fall he did very well in Calculus, Chemistry, and English 101. Next semester he will add Physics and Engineering Graphics. Now that Mourtallah has shown himself to be a viable student, his future is opening up before him, full of promise. One year of study could grow into four, but this will require additional funding. Mourtallah would like to pursue a Civil Engineering degree to help build Niger's infrastructure. His country needs him.



Mourtallah with Lincoln.



Mourtallah at Parkland College

(Continued on page 3).



Dear Friends of Niger,

We are very encouraged by the news we receive from our members. We constantly hear human interest stories of how Niger RPCVs continue to make a difference and fulfill the third goal of Peace Corps. In this edition of the Camel Express, we want to share with you the story of John Baird and his family, and how they reached out to John's Nigerien host family and the son of John's counterpart in Niger. The relationship between two families, thousands of miles apart, has grown and evolved since John served in Niger in the early 1970s. This issue also announces Bill Stein's efforts to promote a Peace Corps Volunteer Museum. A Niger RPCV and former member of the Friends of Niger Board of Directors, Bill has been instrumental for the past several years in assembling and establishing a meaningful exhibition of artifacts and experiences of Peace Corps Volunteers who served from Oregon and the Northwest. We also want you to know about the work and efforts of some of our FON members who were not Peace Corps Volunteers but who either served in Niger in other capacities or who committed themselves to promoting a continued friendship after a tourist experience with Nigeriens. One of these people is Bess Palmisciano. We've included Bess's story about an NGO, Rain for the Sahel and the Sahara, that she started in northern Niger. Rain (as it is affectionately referred to) supports education and other community development programs in Niger.

By reading these human interest stories and vignettes along with similar stories of other FON members in past editions of the Camel Express, we hope that you will be inspired to write your story and send it to us. We would like to capture as many of your Niger stories both past and present as possible. Your stories and experiences are what encourages new PCVs and what sparks the memory of others to reconnect with friends from long ago. Photos are welcome.

Also in this edition of the Camel Express, we want to introduce to you a new FON partner AAWEL. This Nigerien NGO works especially with children who need some extra educational support. AAWEL's program, called "Second Chance Schools" is the first partnership project between FON and AAWEL. We look forward to reading more about AAWEL's experiences in future edition of the Camel Express.

We hope that you enjoy this edition, and that we will hear from you soon.

John

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NIGER LIAISON

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CAMEL EXPRESS EDITOR

The Camel Express is the periodical
newsletter of **Friends of Niger**
(FON).

FON can be contacted via the post at
P.O. Box 5823

Washington, D. C. 20016-9998

Or by e-mail at

j.soloninka@sbcglobal.net

and you will find FON on the web and
this newsletter in FULL COLOR at:

www.friendsofniger.org.

Editor: Jude Andreasen

Please send address changes and
corrections, as well as any queries to
The Camel Express at the address
above.



African Nephew Studies in U.S. (cont'd from page 1)



Mourtallah with other international students.

You Can Help!

Niger is a friendly place for Americans. Today, after 45 years of uninterrupted Peace Corps presence in the country, many officials in the democratically-elected government have fond memories of volunteers helping in their villages or teaching in their schools.

Tuition is \$6,143; a physics book \$93. The Bairds have paid most of the first year's expenses, and need help. Mourtallah requires additional support of about \$154,000 to finish his degree and to realize his dream. If you would like to help, here's how.

Tax Deductible Donations, large and small, can be made to a mission project set up to support African students (see www.cccdisciples.org). Checks should be made out to Central Christian Church with "**Scholarship—African Peace Corps Affiliates**" (or just "**SAPCA**") written on the Memo line, and sent to 650 W William St, Decatur IL 62522 . A letter acknowledging the gift will be sent for tax purposes. Donations do not support the operation of any religious organization, and there is no connection with the national Peace Corps program. Alternately, you can give through the PayPal Donate buttons on the church's or the MySpace and FaceBook websites. These scholarships are set up to support any African student with a Peace Corps affiliation. Mourtallah is our first recipient. Our heartfelt thanks for each and every donation.

READ MORE OF THE STORY !

www.myspace.com/mourtallahsstory and on FaceBook

CONTACT US:

John Baird, 76 N Country Club Rd, Decatur IL 62521

Email: ScholarshipAfricanPeaceCorps@yahoo.com

Direct donations are welcome, but are not tax deductible.



Above: Moutallah & John Baird on frozen Lake Decatur.



Left: Jan Baird (Mum) and Moutallah study English.

Rain for the Sahel and the Sahara Expands Aid to Other Regions of Niger

By Bess Plamisciano

Bess Palmisciano, an American lawyer, first met the Tuareg when she traveled as a tourist to Niger in 2000. She was impressed with their independence, hospitality, and hopes for their children, including education. She founded RAIN, which currently provides school supplies to 1,000 students, while about 250 volunteer parents tutor students, manage gardens, teach children about health and raise funds for schools through community businesses. RAIN also helps with AIDS education programs and women's artisan cooperatives. She submitted this article to FON.

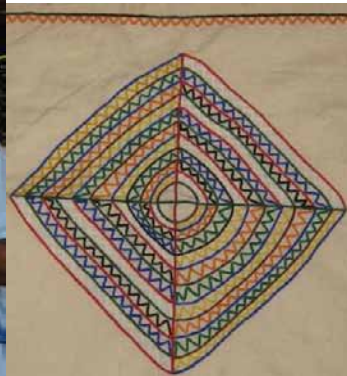
Rain for the Sahel and Sahara (RAIN) has been known as an organization of the Air Massif. But RAIN is growing - working with Wodaabe as well as Tuareg people and expanding its geographic reach to Ingal, Tchintabaraden, Tchirozène, Aderbissinant and, most recently, Tilabéri. We are producing and selling beautiful embroidered products made by the Wodaabe women of Metier Chance Vivre (MCV), a new cooperative at Foudouk Amelteltal. As with all RAIN cooperatives, the women donate fifty percent of their earnings to a fund for their school.

RAIN set off to Ingui and its school, arriving unannounced to find about 15 fathers building a classroom with straw mats hung on a wood frame. Every year they take down what's left of last year's straw classroom and make a new one. This year they will repair the desks and chairs that are broken down after many years of use. This small village has 160 students in its school, many of whom walk up to 20 kilometers each way, every day, to attend classes. The people of Ingui are herders. They are lucky to live near a shallow lake and they find a few fish there, but food is scarce and they'd love to have a school garden, but without a fence the goats eat all the crops. RAIN is now providing the materials for a fence, along with a pump and drip irrigation systems. We've also promised to provide a roof, doors and windows when the community finishes constructing two new classrooms. From our hub in Ingui we'll establish school market gardens, introduce mothers to education through our mentoring program, and develop community businesses to support schools. Take a look at our video, *From A Deep Well*, by linking through our Web site or searching on YouTube.

School Director, President of Parent Committee, and Village Chief

Detail from Placemat

Camel Pillow Cover



RAIN continued

MCV products include pillow covers, placemats with table runners and napkins and tee shirts in a variety of designs and colors. All proceeds of sale go to the women, who put aside 50% to support their children's school. Contact RAIN at liz@rain4sahara.org or by phone at 603-371-0676 for more information or to place an order.



Parents building hangar



Tee Shirt



School Children

NEW FRIENDS OF NIGER T-SHIRTS



Lisa Krusa-McLaren, a talented graphic designer and daughter of a Niger III Peace Corps

Volunteer, designed and donated this lovely T-shirt logo to FON. They are best quality shirts with silk screen colors that won't fade. This first run is being offered at \$15 including postage. They are available in beige, which would have the design as 3-colors, or brown which would mean the 2-color design would be on a brown shirt background. To order yours, send your size (S, M, L, XL) and \$15 to FON at the address on the ORDER FORM (p. 7).

50th Anniversary Museum Exhibition Announcement

Bill Stein, a Niger RPCV who used to serve on the FON board and who is one of the original members of the board for the Museum of the Peace Corps Experience has sent the following announcement:

Friends,

It is my pleasure to inform you that the Committee for a Museum of the Peace Corps Experience has entered into a collaborative effort with the Oregon Historical Society to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps in 2011. Together, CMPCE and OHS will be putting on an exhibit that will highlight the contributions of Oregon and Northwest Peace Corps volunteers to the history and success of this great program. The show is scheduled to run from January to April of 2011.

Oregon and other northwest states have consistently been in the top ten of producers of volunteers. We also boast one of the largest and most active of the returned volunteer communities. Recognizing the significance of these facts, the Oregon Historical Society was persuaded to host our 50th Anniversary exhibit.

This is an exciting opportunity and one that will bring a great deal of recognition to Peace Corps, to Portland and all the RPCVs that reside here. Peace Corps is planning a nationwide series of commemorative anniversary events and we in Portland are thrilled to be part of such a major undertaking. As we go forward with the planning for this program, we will need your help. In 2009 we will publicize specific requests for help with preparing exhibits, collection of items to exhibit (either donated or loaned), oral history recordings, research into Oregon's and the Pacific Northwest's contributions to Peace Corps and for your participation in various educational programs to be held at the museum. Finally, an undertaking of this magnitude is very expensive and your financial support is essential.

Please think about how you can get involved. We need your input and look forward to working with you.

www.museumofthepeacecorpsexperience.org

PCMUSEUM@COMCAST.NET PHONE 503-699-9833

AAWEL Thanks FON for Its Contribution

In December, 2008, FON gave AAWEL a grant of \$2000 to help implement its Second Chance Schools and the Deaf School in Niamey. The schools offer hope to children who have dropped out of school by teaching life skills and a vocational and leadership curriculum. This year four of the schools are beginning by revitalizing their gardening plots and two will start poultry projects. The Deaf School will do both. The projects are selected using a participatory approach, and the profits are used for secondary projects such as sewing and carpentry. They have partnerships with other schools to train teachers in the curriculum. A more detailed report will appear in the August issue of the Camel Express.



**LEFT: Partnership AAWEL and The Deaf School of Niamey: Project Funded by AAWEL and Friends of Niger (FON).
RIGHT: Classroom observation in a Second Chance School.**



FRIENDS OF NIGER 2009 MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/ State _____ Phone (h) _____

Zip _____ Phone (w) _____

E- Mail Address _____

Connection to Niger (RPCV, etc.) _____

Dates in Niger _____ Location in Niger _____

Program or Involvement in Niger _____

Membership Dues & Contributions Help Fund FON Activities - including The Camel Express, the FON website, the FON Archives, and Projects such as Those Listed Below. The Friends of Niger is a tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3). Membership and contributions to Friends of Niger are fully tax deductible.

Please Check Appropriate Boxes

- Enclosed is \$20 for an Individual Membership in FON
- \$55 to cover Individual Membership in both FON & NPCA
- Enclosed is \$35 for a FON Family Membership (2 Members at One Address)
- I am a current Niger PCV, entitled to Free Membership
- I am a New RPCV, entitled to a 1-Year Free Membership

New and renewing members are entitled to one FREE copy of *Brother from Niger*
Format Choice: DVD ____ VHS ____ No Thanks ____

- In Addition to my Membership, I have enclosed a General Contribution of _____
- Instead of Joining FON at this time, I have enclosed a General Contribution of _____
- I want to support FON's Young Girls' Scholarship Program (YGSP) activities with a Contribution of _____
- I want to support FON's Microcredit in Niger activities with a Contribution of _____
- I want to support FON's Youth Education activities **through a NEW PARTNER, AAWEL** with a Contribution of _____
- I want to support the FON Chewable Vitamin Campaign with a Contribution of _____
- Please send ____ copies of *Brother from Niger*/DVD
Format Choice: DVD ____ VHS ____
at \$20 (2 for \$35) (Shipping Included) _____
- Please send ____ Friends of Niger T-Shirts
at \$15 each (Shipping Included) _____
T-Shirt Sizes: S ____ M ____ L ____ XL ____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Make Check or Money Order Payable to Friends of Niger and mail with this form to:
P. O. Box 5823, Washington, D. C. 20016-9998



FON Participation Menu

Indicate your interest with a check mark. Or add something new at the bottom. Tell us how to reach you on Page 11.

- Will help set up local FON group
- Would participate in local FON group
- Will be local FON contact person
- Would be FON contact person for potential PCVs to Niger (contact us at the address on page 11 or via e-mail at j.soloninka@sbcglobal.net)

Other _____

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An electronic FULL COLOR version of this newsletter and previous editions can be accessed at <http://www.friendsofniger.org>

**There is no way to peace.
Peace is the way.**



Friends of Niger
P.O. Box 5823
Washington, D.C. 20016-9998



Address Correction Requested

The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

Volume 24 Issue 2



August 2009

Young Girls Scholarship Program Report

By Daryn Warner

As I wrap up my service in Peace Corps/Niger, it a pleasure to update you on the Young Girls Scholarship Program (YGSP). The incoming coordinator, Lisa Spencer, will send her introductions soon. Until then I hope you will share our excitement at the successes and the lessons we've learned in the last year.

As you know, we strive for a modest program with a big impact. And this year another five scholars have finished their studies. We're proud of them and the 15 girls advancing one step closer. Together, they are an impressive group of young women.

As always there are the usual ups and downs but this year strikes hit the system hard. The year was extended into July for those taking tests (*certificat, brevet, and terminal*) to make up for some of the missed weeks before testing. Exams are finished but, unfortunately, political rallies and public holidays for Republic Day and the referendum have delayed the results. What we do know so far, is that 85% have met their scholastic obligation to the scholarship program. In spite of the challenges leading up to exams, their averages placed YGSP students in the top 10% of their class. Obviously this success is linked to the students' personal motivations but we focus on how to provide the basic study skills and materials as well as the volunteer's mentorship. Even more, we find that building "communities of practice" has been helpful in shaping a successful community environment for the students.

A first step in building these communities of practice has been the Young Girls Scholarship Conferences. Again this year, we invited all scholars to skills building workshops. Team Maradi hosted Hausaphones and Team Tillaberi hosted Zaramphones in Niamey. At the conference the scholars received experience in:

- Peer education, with a special focus on HIV/AIDS prevention;
- Career building skills, including shadowing successful women;
- Understanding money matters; and
- Study skills.

As a second step, we are working to cluster YGSP students. In the past, a student was likely to be the only scholarship recipient in their area. We've found that when a club of scholars can be created all of the students do better. It also allows students and school directors to better utilize the tutoring allowance.

We are hopeful that we will be able to support basic education needs in the communities that host these clusters. Next year we will pilot an effort to provide basic library and public study materials to the scholars' classrooms. This will be in addition to the personal books and materials included in the scholarship.

The next academic year will mark YGSP's 10th anniversary. We will continue to focus on the point at which girls are likely to drop out: when they must leave their home village to continue on to middle school. For many, graduating from middle school, at about age 16, is the end goal. But YGSP is also working to address the second point at which girls are likely to drop (Continued on page 2)



Front: Haoua Maman, YGSP participant.



(YGSP Report continued from page 1)

out: when they must move to an even larger community to pursue a high school education. To that end, Peace Corps/Niger's Gender and Development Committee is working with Pencils for Kids (a Canadian NGO) to fund a pilot project with *lycée* students in the Libore Commune. Six girls in high school will be selected to begin next year. The *lycée* program will be much the same as the *collège* program but recipients will receive increased support to meet the greater academic demands as well as be expected to tutor primary school students. These successes and plans for the future are largely thanks to the Friends of Niger. On behalf of all PCVs, I thank you for your support last year. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact the YGSP Coordinator at: SidaGadNiger@gmail.com. We look forward to many more years of collaboration. Barka da kokari!

Daryn J. Warner

Message from the President of FON

Dear Friends of Niger,

We've heard some great news about Peace Corps over the summer. The new director, Aaron Williams, is an RPCV who served in the Dominican Republic, and there is a possibility that Congress will be increasing the funding allocated to the Peace Corps this fall. This news has been welcomed by all of us who support the Peace Corps goals and initiatives. The board of Friends of Niger continues to hear from our partners in Niger whom you have generously supported; we've included some of their news in this issue. We are also privileged to be part of the work of so many Niger RPCVs carrying on the 3rd goal. Every month we receive emails and letters of RPCVs connecting their local communities with what they learned in Niger, and in several cases, even traveling back to Niger to reengage with many of their Nigerien counterparts of years ago. With the advent of YouTube, we can see the news and good works of people around the world. The YouTube videos from Niger are also growing in number and we have linked a few to our FON website for you to enjoy. The Nigerien movie, *Au Centre de la Terre des Puits et des Hommes*, by Ingrid Patetta, continues to be positively received around the world. <http://cameranomade.net/> In August, this movie was featured in the Underground Outdoors Rooftops Movie series in NYC. Also making movies, Judy Irola, FON member and Niger RPCV, has informed us of her Niger movie project on the journey her "stage" group made to Niger and back to the USA in 1966-1968 <http://www.niger66.com/> We continue to be so proud of the work, efforts, and contributions made by all our FON members. Please let us hear from you!

John

Board of Directors— Friends of Niger

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Editor: Jude Andreasen

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50th Anniversary

Peace Corps 50th Anniversary Digital Library

The 50th Anniversary Digital Library provides a searchable collection of electronic Peace Corps materials from 1961-present, including:

- Photos and stories contributed by Volunteers and RPCVs, using an online submission form
- Digitized newsletters, speeches, annual reports and other key agency historical materials
- Contributions of photos and historical documents from country posts
- Brochures, posters, audio and video clips, and marketing materials from each decade of Peace Corps history.

Peace Corps invites current and returned Volunteers to share a story and/or photos from your Peace Corps experience. Stories will be collected from Volunteers serving in each generation of the Peace Corps, from the 1960s, 70s, 80s, 90s, and on through to the present. By sharing a story and photos that reflect your unique experience in the place and time you served, you will help enrich Americans' understanding of what it means to have been a Peace Corps Volunteer. Many of the stories and photos submitted to the digital library will be used to honor and celebrate our legacy of service during Peace Corps' 50th anniversary celebration in 2011. Digital library materials will be accessible to the public through the Peace Corps website, and will be shared with the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA).

We are currently accepting electronic submission of stories and photos from current and returned Volunteers only. If you are a Volunteer or RPCV, please read the complete [photo submission guidelines](#) and [story submission guidelines](#) for details on what we are collecting and how to submit your materials. If you are not a Volunteer or RPCV but would like to submit material to the Digital Library, please contact us at digital@peacecorps.gov.

Please review the [Peace Corps 50th Anniversary Digital Library Project Material Submission Authorization and Agreement](#) before continuing. Contributors must accept the terms of the agreement during the submission process in order to upload items to the archive.

For more information on what the digital library is and is not, download [Using the 50th Anniversary Digital Library: a guide for the Peace Corps community](#) (PDF).

You can also read our [Suggestions for Individual RPCVs and Affiliate Groups](#) (PDF) for additional ways to help document and preserve Peace Corps history.

Ready to contribute to the 50th Anniversary Digital Library?



Above: Boys at play in Niamey.

Left: Kennedy Bridge Over the Niger River.

Peace Corps Niger Update

By Mary Abrams, Director, PC Niger – July 24, 2009

Greetings,

Welcome back to PC Niger and our ongoing efforts to build a partnership between Niger and the US. I last wrote in 2008 and much has happened on both ends in the meantime. The US elected President Obama and while Nigeriens obviously didn't vote in the election, if they had they would have added significantly to his votes. It was truly fun to have so many Nigeriens following US politics and the victory celebration filled the streets of many Nigerien cities. Ambassador Allen provided an evening fete and invited all Americans and many Nigeriens to celebrate President Obama's inauguration. Even the chatter of Nigerien greetings quieted as the President took his oath.

Politics here have taken a slightly different turn with President Tandja dissolving both the National Assembly and the Constitutional Court as well as several parts of the constitution itself. Things are currently mostly at a standstill but the President's referendum to re-write the constitution is scheduled for 4 Aug which will presumably bring things to a head. The situation is definitely tense and there have even been a couple of physically violent demonstrations but for the most part things are calm. I continue to remind myself and the Volunteers that Niger's democracy is incredibly young so it is not surprising that there be some active discussion about the best path forward.

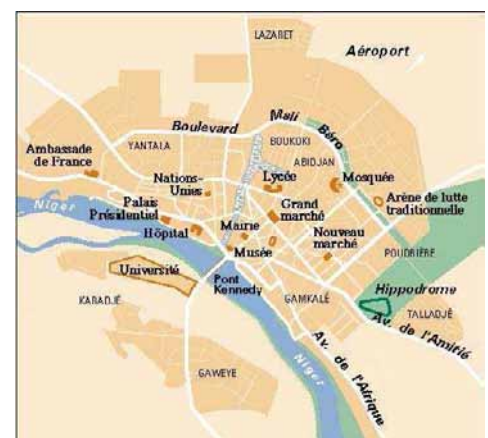
Both elections have had an interesting affect on PC Niger. First of all President Obama's interest in increasing funds to Peace Corps looks like it will result in a healthy increase in our FY'10 budget. Our strategic plan includes, if funds are available,

- expanding to the east (eastern Zinder and Diffa Regions);
- clustering PCVs from our different program sectors within the new local government structure (communes);
and linking their work directly to the commune development plans;
- increasing the functionality of our Eastern Regional Office so it can better support PCVs programming, training, medical, and security needs;
- Increasing our numbers from around 120 to 130 Volunteers on the ground.

The Nigerien political maneuvering has had a slightly more complicated effect on Volunteers and PC Niger. As always, we are remaining apolitical in the ongoing debate around the constitution, referendum, and elections. And as always, it is hard for our Volunteers to be an integral part of their community and not get caught in these discussions. This is particularly difficult for our new Municipal and Community Development (MCD) Volunteers who are charged with working with commune governments and community groups to support the still very young move to decentralization. This resulted in a lot of work by our new APCD for MCD to develop talking points and scripts in local languages to help Volunteers finesse this delicate balance.

In addition to working our way through the political dance given our apolitical nature, there have been several instances when we have had to restrict Volunteer movement. With the upcoming referendum vote, we anticipate more security issues but honestly hope this resolves itself peacefully. In the meantime, Volunteers continue to do amazing things. With their communities and other partners they continue to (among many other things):

- Provide health extension work on nutrition, birth spacing, fistula, AIDS prevention and treatment, and basic hygiene;
- Plant thousands of trees that provide shade, nutrition, soil protection, gum Arabic, and firewood;
- Fund and help implement projects to build community wells, millet grinders, schools, and health clinics;
- Work with after school clubs and girls fairs to teach kids about computer/internet use, life skills, hygiene, learning/studying techniques, natural resource/science information, and basic English language skills;



(Continued on page 5)

- Provide gardening space, wells, tools, and materials for gardens that provide improved nutrition and some income generation to schools, women's cooperatives, and communities;
- Provide new communes with maps of their commune, better record keeping, and assistance in finding funding sources for projects in their commune development plans;
- Plan and implement student government elections in primary and CEGs around Niger;
- Provide coaching and general support for sports for kids, particularly young girls;
- Develop and produce radio shows on agriculture extension, hygiene, civic education.

The basic work of a Volunteer in Niger in 2009 has changed some since I arrived as a Volunteer in 1979 but it is still extremely challenging and rewarding. To quote an old Peace Corps marketing tool, it is still the Toughest Job You'll Ever Love.

Sai Wata Rana!

Mary Abrams, Country Director - PC Niger

EDITORIAL NOTE: Mary's letter came to us on July 24. On August 7, Niger's electoral commission released provisional results showing the President of Niger can extend his rule for years past the constitutional limit.

NOTEWORTHY

Congratulations to new National Peace Corps Director RPCV Aaron Williams (Dominican Republic 67-70), unanimously confirmed on August 7, 2009.

Five 1966 Niger RPCVs returned to Niger in 2008 and are producing a documentary that is worth seeing, funding, and disseminating. More in the next Camel Express, but meanwhile, see <http://www.niger66.com> for the trailer.

NEW FRIENDS OF NIGER T-SHIRTS



Lisa Krusa-McLaren, a talented graphic designer and daughter of a Niger III Peace Corps Volunteer, designed and donated this lovely T-shirt logo to FON. They are best quality shirts with silk screen colors that won't fade. This first run is being offered at \$15 including postage. They are available in beige, which would have the design as 3-colors, or brown, which would mean the 2-color design would be on a brown shirt background. To order yours, send your size (S, M, L, XL) and \$15 to FON at the address on the ORDER FORM (p. 7).

Third Goal

Dear Friends of Niger,

This summer, answer President Obama's call to serve by volunteering to speak about issues from your country of service! Give a presentation about international children's health issues to a faith-based youth group or in the children's section of your local library. Visit www.serve.gov for opportunities to volunteer and share your host country cross-cultural insights. Visit www.peacecorps.gov/thirdgoal as your one-stop shop for how-to tips and resources for planning a great Peace Corps Third Goal activity! Don't forget to register your Third Goal participation online. Your official participation counts in helping the Peace Corps gain greater support from Congress.

With warmest regards,
The Third Goal Team
For more information:
Peace Corps Third Goal
Domestic Programs
Second Floor
1111 20th St. NW
Washington, DC 20526



WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT

On July 18, 2009, Dr. Christopher Zoolkoski, of Galmi Hospital in Niamey, Niger, married Nancy Beltramo in Portland, Oregon. Dr. Zoolkoski lost his wife last year, and Nancy lost her husband to cancer seven years ago. Nancy was a supervising pharmacist at Emmanuel Hospital in Portland, and has volunteered at clinics in India, Honduras, and Guatemala. They invited FON members to their wedding, and board member Gabriella Maertens was able to attend. The Zoolkoskis and Chris' children will return to Niamey after Christmas. The FON Board donated \$200 for children's chewable vitamins for Galmi in honor of their marriage.



UPDATE ON SECOND CHANCE SCHOOLS (AAWEL)

Dear Friends of Niger,

Greetings to all of you. I am pleased to share with you some very good news about the Second Chance schools. With your sponsorship, we are able to provide effective technical support. This is the first year that the second school fifth graders were able to participate in the national achievement examination. All the students from the five schools that AAWEL and ONEN support successfully passed the test. This is a first in Niger!

We at AAWEL and ONEN believe that the extra-curricular support, which includes both academic and leadership skill development, has enabled us to enhance students' competence with regard to literacy, mathematics and critical thinking. Some of the students scored such high marks that they won prizes. The award ceremony, at which the Minister of Education will present the prizes, has been delayed due to political activities. We are preparing our annual report and will include statistics and information on the ceremony in our next communication. We now have a solid foundation for continuing our work in both the second chance schools and the deaf school. We will continue to focus on the literacy, life skills and leadership skills, and we also have sewing machines and materials for the poultry project.

Once more, I would like to thank you so much for your support to AAWEL. It means a lot to us, and more importantly, to the students who are given hope for a second chance. We hope we can count on your support for the coming year.

Best regards, Hassana Alidou, AAWEL

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FON Participation Menu

Indicate your interest with a check mark. Or add something new at the bottom. Tell us how to reach you on Page 11.

- Will help set up local FON group
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- Will be local FON contact person
- Would be FON contact person for potential PCVs to Niger (contact us at the address on page 11 or via e-mail at j.soloninka@sbcglobal.net)

Other _____

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An electronic FULL COLOR version of this newsletter and previous editions can be accessed at <http://www.friendsofniger.org>

**There is no way to peace.
 Peace is the way.**



Friends of Niger
P.O. Box 5823
Washington, D.C. 20016-9998



Address Correction Requested

The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

Volume 24 Issue 3



December 2009

Friends of Niger Donations Hit the Mark

FON Supports Grassroots Projects That Improve People's Lives

FON board members, in consultation with Peace Corps staff, current PCVs and RPCV contacts in Niamey, continually evaluate small projects throughout Niger and make FON contributions to those with low overhead and high impact and sustainability. This issue of the Camel Express gives a glimpse into several of those projects. The longstanding Young Girls' Scholarship Program (YGSP), which has the most PCV involvement, and which provides Nigerien adolescents with the academic and financial support to continue their education, has a new PCV coordinator. Boston's Northeastern University RPCV Professor Miles continues to promote the third goal by teaching his students about Niger and funding small projects. AAWEL Second Chance Schools' dedicated staff members help impoverished children in Niamey to continue their education and provides vocational and leadership skills.

Rencontre et Action is a local microcredit non-governmental organization (NGO) founded by a Nigerien teacher in 2004, lends money to women in poor neighborhoods around the ever-growing metropolis of Niamey. Mollie Zapata, a Boston University student reports on this NGO.

In addition, Niger RPCVs independently fund projects they have identified, such as ABC Schools and the PlumpyNut Project. The daughter of a Niger RPCV, and current board member, has started a new project, ABC Schools, to provide quality education in privately-financed schools open to all Niger's children, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, or religion. RPCVs have also united to fund distribution of Plumpy'Nut to regions of Niger where drought-induced famine has increased the number of malnourished children.

These are all worthy projects lending a hand to those in need who also have the motivation to help themselves. Please consider sending a donation, which you can designate to a specific project, or contribute to the general fund. All donations to FON are tax deductible.



Left: Mrs. Baraze Salamatou Katambe, President of AAWEL/Niger (left) and Mrs. Oumarou Aminatou, Secretary & Treasurer of AAWEL/Niger (right). Right: The Minister of Education presides over the donation ceremony.



Letter from the Peace Corps/ Niger Director

6 December 2009

Dear Friends of Niger:

I know many of you have heard of the recent security problems we have been having here in Niger and are all concerned about what that means for the Peace Corps program. As a result we've all been quite busy for the past 3 weeks and I apologize if you've had to rely on rumors during that time. Our highest priority has been and continues to be assuring the safety and security of the Peace Corps Volunteers on the ground so other communications have fallen off a bit.

The security of westerners, including unfortunately Americans, has been threatened throughout the sub-region (Mauritania, Mali, and Niger) over the past year by a series of either successful or failed kidnappings associated with the Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Within the past 3 weeks there have been an unsuccessful kidnapping attempt in Tahoua, Niger; a rumored but unsubstantiated attempt near Gao, Mali; a successful kidnapping of a French NGO worker in Menaka, Mali (just on the other side of the Niger/Mali border); and the successful kidnapping of 3 Spaniards along the coastal road in Mauritania. The attempt in Tahoua was particularly troubling because it appeared to target some US Embassy staff staying in a hotel and we had several PCVs sited within about a 50 Km radius (one actually in Tahoua) at the time of the kidnapping.

In response to these security events, Peace Corps felt it prudent to consolidate all PCVs and then assess the situation. The good news was that we were able to consolidate 95% of our PCVs within about 8 hours and all of them within 24 hours. This very rapid response, even with Niger's infrastructure challenges, is a great credit to our PCVs and our staff, particularly our regional staff. The result was that on 14 November (just prior to the incident in Tahoua) we had 118 Volunteers and 37 Trainees in Niger and on 16 Nov (the day after the event) we had all of them accounted for and safe.

Peace Corps continues to monitor the situation but our preliminary assessment led to the decision to reduce the number of PCVs/Trainees in Niger to allow us to better assure the safety of those remaining in country. We reduced our footprint primarily with three actions:

PCVs scheduled to complete their service in December 2009 were allowed and encouraged to leave a few weeks early, all but 5 of them chose to do so - 2 will be extending.

All other PCVs were encouraged to seriously consider the change in security and decide whether they were willing to continue their service under increased notification and travel

Continued on page 3

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The **Camel Express** is the periodical newsletter of **Friends of Niger (FON)**. FON can be contacted via the post at P.O. Box 5823

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Editor: Jude Andreasen



Update on Niger from the PCD (continued from page 2)

restrictions. Those who did not feel safe continuing their service in Niger were given the option of returning to the US with the possibility of re-enrolling in another program. We anticipate about 10-15 PCVs will choose to leave due to the security situation.

The Trainees will all transfer as a group to PC/Madagascar with one exception who will go to another program. We were most concerned about this group because, as brand new PCVs not yet integrated and with minimal language skills, they would be the least able to respond appropriately to any security challenges. They are a fabulous training group so it was very difficult to make this decision and we will miss them but know they'll do very well in their service.

In addition to reducing the numbers of PCVs, Peace Corps has decided it is best to remove PCVs from the areas most geographically exposed to the Niger/Mali border. This has meant the (at least temporary) closure of the entire Tahoua Region (Team Konni) and the closure of the northern parts of the Tilliberi (including the Gotheye Cluster) and Maradi Regions. This also was a difficult decision since these are all areas where PCVs have served needy and receptive communities for many years.

All the PCVs who have been serving in these areas are being offered the choice of relocating within Niger for the remainder of their service or of returning to the US. About a quarter have chosen to return to the US and the rest will finish their service here in Niger. In total we will have about 12 - 15 PCVs who choose to return to the US due to the security situation.

It is a hard thing to see so many PCVs finish their service - most more or less on their original schedule but some earlier than anticipated - so we are busy supporting both staff and the remaining PCVs. We ask that you all remember that Peace Corps and Niger have had an outstanding partnership since 1962 and we hope to continue that partnership. During those 47 plus years more than 3000 Volunteers have served in Niger some during times as challenging from a security standpoint as our current situation. We anticipate having many more PCVs share the great opportunity to live and work with Nigeriens over the coming years.

Mary Abrams
PCD, Niger

FON's new Board Member for Membership, John Baird, was a Niger volunteer for 3 years in the early 1970's, and was featured in the April 2009 CEX for his sponsorship of a Nigerien student. He sent the following message:

Greetings FON members. I am honored to come on the Board with the assignment to increase FON membership. I see this job as larger in scope than just working to increase our numbers - it is an opportunity to tap into the special relationship that we Niger RPCVs have with the people of Niger, and to make a difference. Like many countries around the world, Niger is a troubled place, but with FON, we have unique connections for helping out. Read this Camel Express to see what FON is doing, and with relatively small numbers! We are about 200 out of some 3000 who have served in Niger since 1962. Could we double our membership and our service to Niger? That prospect inspires me! Let's get going! Please send names and addresses of all Niger RPCVs you know. Don't worry if they're already FON members - we'll cross check. Despite the serious concerns expressed in her riveting report from Niamey (in this issue), Mary Abrams also remains optimistic. Let's feed that hope! John

Friends of Niger at Northeastern University

Pop Quiz: *What's the first goal of the Peace Corps?* (Answer: assisting other countries in their development.) *What's the third goal?* (Answer: educating Americans about these other countries.) *How do you combine goals one and three?* (Answer: read on).

At Northeastern University (NU) in Boston, students of Professor William F.S. Miles (better known as RPCV Bill Miles, TEFL, Magaria, 1977–9) have teamed up with Friends of Niger to launch the first FON–U.S. University collaboration. Thanks to a \$500.00 grant by FON, matched by Bill's department at NU, students in the seminar on Development Administration and Planning have designed and funded a real-life development project for a village in Niger. The students –with no previous connections to Niger – are now strongly connected to a community in that otherwise “off-the-American-radar” country.

This FON-sponsored project was an integral part of the course. Students spent the first weeks of the semester reading about successful projects throughout the developing world and about rural life and development activities in Niger. (In addition to *Reasons for Hope* by Krishna, Uphoff and Esman, assigned readings included such classic texts as the *Camel Express* and the FON Website.) The students then proposed, in writing, individual project ideas that their fellows took a week to critique. Then came the toughest part: hammering out a collective proposal that the students were to deliver, as a role-playing simulation, at a meeting of Friends of Niger.

Only this was no simulation: unbeknownst to the students, Bill had arranged for FON treasurer Larry Koff to make a jaw-dropping appearance in class. The connection between Boston-based students and far-off Niger was greatly intensified by the encounter, as Larry followed the students' presentation with accounts of his own Peace Corps experience. At the next class, one student said she regretted not having asked Larry, “What is it about Niger, or about your experience there, that keeps you connected after so many years?” Larry's response to the students could probably speak for many FON member, regarding the “attraction of living outside one's bubble and connecting to some very special people, relationships, and experiences.” Quite relevant, too, is that as “the world continues to shrink, the absolute necessity of making these connections into more sustainable relationships grows in importance.”

The students' final project has three components: microcredit financing (2/3 of which is dedicated to the neediest women in the community); supplies and furniture for the village schools; and market hangars (for the farmers and women's associations.) The funds will be made available after the mayor of the community receives the proposal, consults with the concerned village associations, and conveys their approval. On November 26, 2009 Professor Bill publicly presented the new FON–NU collaboration in New Orleans at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association. His hope is that FON becomes a model for other RPCV groups looking for ways to merge those first and third goals of Peace Corps.

Continued on page 5



Professor Miles and students at Northeastern University, and photos of villagers in one site where the project will be implemented.

NU Students as Friends of Niger (continued)

Student Reactions to the FON-NU Collaboration

“The experience was far more educational than any depiction of a case study in a textbook or classroom lecture.” – Anna Weber

“To come up with developmental ideas for a geographically distant community, which I had never known about, was nerve racking.” – Maysa de Oliveira

“Being a part of the improvement of the village made us feel like a part of the community.” – Thomas Morgan

“I became quite passionate to ensuring that the quality of this project was something worthwhile.” – Roselys Esteve

“The opportunity to design a development project in Niger has been very educational....” – Arleaya Martin

Best, Bill (Niger, 1977–9) Prof. William F.S. Miles, Department of Political Science
Northeastern University, Boston

Young Girls Scholarship Program Update

Dear Friends of Niger,

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as the new GAD/SIDA/YGSP representative. I have just finished serving a year as a health volunteer in the Maradi region. I am very excited to be starting this exciting and challenging new position.

I come to Peace Corps from Mount Holyoke College where I studied a lot of gender and women’s studies, so I am very excited about focusing my energies on something I am so passionate about.

This semester we have 12 girls enrolled in middle school with a YGSP scholarship, and we hope to bring two more girls next semester. There are a lot of different girls from last year and they come from every region of the country. We were very lucky to have four girls from last years scholarship successfully complete all their classes and get their Brevet, which means they can move on to high school and that they have a huge advantage if they chose to seek work outside of women’s traditional roles. We had some excellent

applications this year, and the selected scholars have aspirations to be doctors, midwives, judges and lawyers. The incredible opportunity this scholarship affords young girls in Niger is only possible through your generous and continued support.

Peace Corps volunteers and school officials and teachers will work closely with the young girl scholars, to ensure that they have the most successful and advantageous school year possible. Volunteers regularly meet with school staff, families, and scholars to monitor the young girls’ progress.

Please don’t forget to check out the Youtube channel, sidagadniger! There are a variety of videos updated regularly!

Sincerely, Lisa Spencer

AAWEL Second Chance Schools

The Second Chance Schools are located in three of the poorest neighborhood of Niamey: Tallaje, Kouara Tagui, Zarmaganday. They are government schools managed by a local NGO called ONEN. The responsibilities of ONEN is to develop and promote curricular innovations which contribute to improving the quality of basic education by ensuring access to out-of-school boys and girls. With the financial support from Friends of Niger and other sponsors, Alliance for African Women Education and Leadership (AAWEL) developed a partnership with ONEN in order to build the capacity of ONEN members and the Second Chance School teachers. They have 2 programs: The Out-of-School Leadership Academy and the School-based Academic and Life Skills Enhancement Program. Both programs focus on academic literacy and problem solving, including numeracy and mathematics as well as life skills. In the summer of 2009, 5 teachers and 76 students from 5 Second Chance Schools participated in the Out-of-School Leadership training implemented by AAWEL and ONEN.

AAWEL and ONEN provide further support to fifth grade Second Chance School learners who are taking for the first time the end of primary school examination. Students from the Second Chance Schools are not obliged to take this examination, but those who pass can be mainstreamed into formal secondary school, and even if they do not go to secondary school, the Certificate can provide them better employment opportunities. To donate, see the membership and order form on page 11.



AAWEL staff present donated material purchased with FON funds to the Second Chance Schools of Niamey.





Left: Pedagogy specialist Brigitte, ABC founder Amina and ABC Niamey staff Maliki, Rahila, Chitu, Biba and Mariama meet to prepare for > the 2009–2010 school year. Right: Amina with Azize & Tasala.

Project ABC Schools

Board member and RPCV Pat Alio's daughter founded ABC Schools in 2009 to help meet the need for quality education. The first school opened in Niamey with preschool and kindergarten classes. The school will eventually include classes from preschool through high school. ABC-schools provides bilingual instruction and exposure to technology. Classes are taught in French and English, because of the need for English in the world today and the fact that languages are best learned at an early age. Computers are used as learning tools to help children discover technology at an early age. ABC - Niger works in partnership with CORNER-STONE in Niamey, Niger and the First Baptist Church of Temple Terrace, Florida. More information may be found online at www.ABCschools.org.

About the founder, Dr. Amina Alio:

Amina Alio was among the fortunate 4% of Nigerien students to receive a university level education. Born to a former American Peace Corps volunteer from the United States and a Nigerien father, Amina attended public school in Niger but was able to come to US to complete her last 2 years of high school. This transition from public Nigerien schools to schools in the United States was an illuminating experience that created in her a desire to help improve access to and quality of education for children and youth in Niger. She believes that education is the foundation for economic development, improved health, and enlightenment. Since completion of a BA from Liberty University (VA), a Masters and a PhD from the University of South Florida, Amina worked conducting research in education, health and community development. Her dissertation research in Applied Anthropology focused on examining the education system in Niger, identifying the cultural and pedagogical gaps. While doing the research in Niger, after having lived in the US for close to a decade, Amina realized the great need that existed in just about every area of human development. The primary problems are not only poverty, but lack of proper knowledge and information on basic science and technology. Only education can reverse these trends: quality, well-rounded education. Amina's dream has been to build schools that will provide quality education to all children in Niger, regardless of their socio-economic class, ethnicity, gender or religion. Many children in rural areas have no access to schools, or the few schools around are overcrowded. Because the government sees the need for additional schools in Niger, it has been very supportive of Dr. Alio's initiative.

"I truly believe with all my heart that education is the only way to improve quality of life and to aid in development of the country." Amina is not only creating schools, but has been conducting research in other areas of health and women's issues. Her work has been published in several professional journals and attests to her dedication to making a difference in her country of birth. Amina's mother, Pat (Johnson) Alio, (Peace Corps 1964–1966) taught in Niger from 1964 until 2005 when she returned to the US. She has returned to Niger to help with the school. She will use her experience to train teachers and help develop and implement the curriculum.

Plumpy Nut

GET A MAN TO FISH

The philosophy of the Peace Corps has always favored teaching for self-reliance and sustainability. We took to heart that old saw:

Give a man a fish and he eats for a day,
Teach a man to fish and he can eat for life.

When Sandy Leeder, Jack Saunders and I worked in agricultural cooperatives in Guecheme and Lido (1966-1969), we worked with farmers to use affordable animal-drawn agricultural equipment (rather than hand powered) to increase the land they could cultivate. We supplied loans to allow for the purchase of fertilizer and insecticide; we taught basic democratic practices and literacy so that farmers could run their own coops and insure they got a fair deal on the sale of their crops (peanuts at that time). In the 1960s, the peanuts were sold in the shell and sent to France where they were made into oil. Niger lost the mulch/fertilizer value of the peanut shells and most of the profit on the sale of the product. Our green revolution was a mixed blessing. When the Middle East oil squeeze hit in the 1970s, Niger's farmers found they could not afford the petroleum based agricultural chemicals we had convinced them they should use. They had, over a thirty year period, to cultivate more land to feed a growing population (public health programs were succeeding in keeping children alive who once died before the age of five).

When we returned to Niger in 2006, we had an interesting conversation with the chief of the village of Lido (the same man who was chief when Jack arrived in 1966) and his advisors. They explained that the millet yield per acre was one fifth of what it was when we worked there. In what was surely part Nigerien politeness, they asked us to come back or send new Peace Corps Volunteers.

In 2007, Peace Corps Volunteer Chris Stillion organized an acacia tree planting project in the area (we RPCVs funded it). Eventually the trees will yield nutritious seeds to feed animals and people, and the trees will help in soil development and resist desertification. There are better wells in the area than there were in 1967. Some people can grow vegetables, but

millet cannot be grown in Southern Niger without adequate rainfall, and there must be some steps taken to improve soil fertility over the long term to sustain even the present population. There will be years when the rain is late or light, and during those years, some people (often young children) will go hungry for some time. This is one of those years. Plumpy'nut is a highly nutritious product made from peanut butter and sweet milk made and sold in Niger. A box of 150 child portions is sold for \$70. We are asking for contributions to pay for the food supplies that will be provided in Niger for Nigerien children. The estimate of the local dispensaire is 1500 children will be malnourished this year. We are using any money raised (\$2000 in the past three days) to pay for Plumpy'nut.

I have been taking checks made out to me:

Joel Neuberg
555 DuFranc Avenue
Sebastopol, CA 95472

but if you need to take a tax deduction, you should make checks out to Friends of Niger, and I will get the check to them and the receipt to you. When times are better, when rain is adequate, the people we feed this year, will feed themselves and others.

Thank you,
Joel Neuberg (Niger 1967-1969)



Rencontre en Action By Mollie Zapata

Two years ago I participated in the Boston University Study Abroad program in Niamey, not knowing fully what to expect, but eager to discover a world beyond my own. The experience tapped into so many emotions —it was challenging and fascinating, yet heart breaking and scary. Though the classes I took taught the textbook knowledge and the trips we went on were entertaining, I am most grateful for the opportunity I had to work with Rencontre et Action, an upcoming microfinance NGO. Rencontre et Action defines the “grass roots organization”. Staffed entirely by volunteers, this NGO works daily to promote economic growth in the community, assisting marginalized women living on the outskirts of Niamey by providing no-interest loans and savings bank services. For a mere \$50 (about 25 CFA), Rencontre et Action provides a woman with worth – the means to feed her family and gain financial independence from her husband.

Nouba, a teacher by profession and volunteer by passion, founded REN after he became disenchanted with the bureaucratic workings of other aid organizations. “Why do you need fancy pens and folders? That money could enroll two more women!” He explained. In 2004, Rencontre et Action began helping the women of Niamey start businesses and save money. Like the Grameen Bank in Asia, R&A has succeeded in creating a form of sustainable economic development on the smallest level. Without the help of R&A, poor women often spend their daily earnings on the next day’s materials or on the immediate needs of their families, ensuring that they remain entrapped in the cycle of extreme poverty – nothing saved, and no hope for a better future. The agents of R&A serves as teachers, informing women how to save money and budget their spending; emotionally, the agents function as friends, acting as a benevolent savings bank and lending organization to give these women a shoulder to lean on.

While I lived in Niger, I became well acquainted with Nouba and his staff. These dedicated volunteers work with women in Kouara Tegue and Goudel-Tchangarey on the outskirts of Niamey. When I asked about his motivation for starting R&A, Nouba explained that women are the backbone of the family, yet receive no help, guidance or motivation to save themselves from their impoverished situations. While there are various ways for men to receive loans, there are very few options for marginalized women. For a woman to sign up for Rencontre et Action’s program, she must first determine what type of business she wants to start. Most women make fari masa, sell rice and sauce, or embroider. The agent then works with the woman to determine what materials she needs to start her business and her repayment and savings deposit plans. R&A initially buys materials for her, but at the end of the 3-month period, the woman will have paid back her loan and saved enough to finance her business needs herself. This form of sustainable development ensures that the woman does not go into debt, and that she learns how to run her own business.

(Continued on page 10)

Rencontre et Action *(continued from page 9)*

Since I left Niger, Nouba and his associates have worked tirelessly to maintain Rencontre et Action. There are currently about 100 women participating in the program, but hundreds more have felt the helpful hand of R&A since its inception. In Kouara Tegue, for example, a woman started a successful milk business that now employs five other local women. R&A knows sustainability is key: hundreds, if not thousands, more women want to enroll.

During my time with R&A, we registered over 50 women from Goudel in one day. Women literally lined up to talk to the agents. In one day, 50 women saw their futures at the front of a line. Unfortunately, all those applications had to be filed away due to lack of resources. Each applicant was genuinely grateful for the opportunity and all were willing to wait patiently for their loans to come through. Less than 50 U.S. dollars could make the difference for each woman. As current clients repay their loans, that money is used to expand services to more and more women.

The ultimate goal, however, is more than simply financing small businesses. Rencontre et Action's purpose is to teach poor marginalized women the inherent meaning of saving, and how it can change their lives. "Family" is a universal language, and when money is put in terms of family health, the message is easier to convey. With R&A, the women always have access to their savings if need be, but independent sustainability takes ultimate precedence. As a former volunteer and "Honorary Agent" of R&A, I can attest to Nouba's sincerity and honesty. He works tirelessly to assist women in the community: "When you see a need, and you are able to help, it is your responsibility to fulfill that need." This year, R & A made loans to women in three neighborhoods of Niamey: Lazaret (72 women), Koira Tégui (83 women), and Goudel (137 women).

2011 is the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps! 2012 will be the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corp Niger!

Niger RPCVs visited Niger as a group for the 35th Anniversary in 1997, and FON organized another trip in 2002. Now is the time to start planning a trip in 2012. Anyone who would like to volunteer to be the organizer will be given assistance, address lists, and access to the Web site and Camel Express for contacting interested parties. If you think you would like to organize the trip, contact the President, John Soloninka, at the postal or e-mail addresses on page 2.



There is still time to get your new Friends of Niger T-Shirt or get one for a friend as a holiday gift.

This first run is being offered at \$15 including postage. They are available in beige, which would have the design as 3-colors, or brown which would mean the 2-color design would be on a brown shirt background. To order yours, send your size (S, M, L, XL) and specify brown or beige. Send \$15 to FON at the address on the ORDER FORM (p. 11).

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- I want to support FON's Youth Education activities **through a NEW PARTNER, AAWEL** with a Contribution of _____
- I want to support the FON Chewable Vitamin Campaign with a Contribution of _____
- Please send _____ copies of Brother from Niger/DVD
Format Choice: DVD _____ VHS _____
at \$20 (2 for \$35) (Shipping Included) _____
- Please send _____ Friends of Niger T-Shirts
at \$15 each (Shipping Included) _____
T-Shirt Sizes: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____ T-Shirt Color: _____ brown _____ beige

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

Make Check or Money Order Payable to Friends of Niger and mail with this form to:
P. O. Box 5823, Washington, D. C. 20016-9998



FON Participation Menu

Indicate your interest with a check mark. Or add something new at the bottom. Tell us how to reach you on Page 11.

- Will help set up local FON group
- Would participate in local FON group
- Will be local FON contact person
- Would be FON contact person for potential PCVs to Niger (contact us at the address on page 11 or via e-mail at j.soloninka@sbcglobal.net)

Other _____

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An electronic full-color version of this newsletter and previous editions can be accessed @ <http://www.friendsofniger.org>



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Address Correction Requested