

The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

Volume 25 Issue 1



April—May 2010

Two Anniversaries to Celebrate: 50 Years of Peace Corps in 2011 50 Years of Peace Corps Friendship with Niger in 2012

Celebrate PC Niger's 50th Anniversary by Participating in a Memorial Book Project

Dear Friends of Niger,

In 2011 the United States Peace Corps will be celebrating its 50th anniversary as an agency and many events are planned for that celebration. In addition, in 2012, Peace Corps will have provided 50 years of volunteer service in Niger. We are working to assure the strong, long term partnership between Peace Corps and Niger is celebrated appropriately for both anniversaries.

Niger has gone through many changes over the past half-century, and many of the positive changes can be attributed to work done by PCVs. Today, the Peace Corps presence is strong in the minds and hearts of Nigeriens from Ayorou to Diffa and from Bilma to Gaya. We hope to continue this partnership for many years.

To commemorate 50 years of Peace Corps' work with the Nigerien community, we are compiling a book of photographs and text to illustrate this long term partnership. We would like to include the widest possible selection of photographs and written documents to best reflect the efforts of past and present volunteers in Niger.

Submissions will be edited and selected by a committee of volunteers and staff, and will be printed in a book which will be available for purchase. Partial proceeds will benefit future Peace Corps Niger projects through Friends of Niger. We invite you to submit photos or writings that you would like to contribute to this effort by contacting us at pcnigerphotobook@gmail.com. In mid May we will be sending out the exact specifications for photographs and written submissions with a deadline for submittals.

We do not currently have a record of all Niger RPCVs, I am starting by asking you to forward this email on to any of your "stage"-mates, colleagues, and friends who may have photos or writing to submit. Please have them contact us at this email address (pcnigerphotobook@gmail.com) if they are interested in the project.

Thank you so much for your time and hopefully submissions! Sannuku da aiki ! Fonda goy!

AAWEL Update: Niamey Second Chance and Deaf Schools

These pictures were taken in January when AAWEL and its partners Ecole des Sourds, (ONEN and Association of women from Bani Fandou, which joined AAWEL under the leadership of Fatouma Alidou) organized a party at the Deaf School. This event's was to provide AAWEL's financial and logistical support to the Deaf School parent association and pupils for vocational training and curriculum development. (Continued on page 6)





Letter from the Director

Message from the Niger PCD - 2/28/10

Dear All,

I am sorry I've been a slow correspondent these last few months but frankly its been a bit wild over here. I do want you to know we are all fine and that PC Niger is back in fairly normal operations after the coup. Those of you who have been in Niger for similar events know that they tend to be quite constrained and "professional." This one definitely seems to be following that pattern.

I want to let you know of a project that we are just getting off its feet here in Niger and that will implicate FON if you are so willing. We have a very talented photographer who happens to be one of our current PCVs and she has proposed to collect photos and written documents from RPCVs across the year, edit them into a book, and sell the book to raise money for PC Niger projects via FON.

Marisa has done a lot of leg work already on editing and publishing software so technically we are ready to start contacting folks for names and/or photo contributions. Hope this finds you all well - it is HOT here again already.
Cheers, Mary

Celebrate 50 Years Of Peace Corps In Niger With A Trip Back To Niger

2012 marks the 50th year of Peace Corps' service in Niger, and we are in the early stages of planning a trip back to Niger. The specific dates are yet to be determined, but if you have any interest in joining us, or would even like to get involved and help organize a trip to Niger in 2012, please send an email to trip@friendsofniger.org telling us who you are and how many might like to join us. If you have specific ideas about what you'd like to see or do while in-country, send them along!

If we get enough people, we can make this happen just like we did in 2002 for the 40th anniversary, when a diverse group of RPCV's, plus some of their family and friends, toured the country, visited their posts, camped in the desert, and was lauded by the US and Nigerien governments for their service over the years.

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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

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



Peace Corps 50th Anniversary—2011

Please make plans to join the worldwide celebration of Peace Corps' 50th Anniversary. Visit the PC 50th anniversary site to see how you can participate and celebrate: <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/content/50th-anniversary-campaign>. Also, visit the NPCA's "Bringing the World Home" page, your guide to making an impact locally and globally at <http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/bringingtheworldhome>.

September 22-25, 2011: 50th Anniversary Festivities in Washington, DC.

NPCA suggests **Saturday, September 24** for meetings for country-of-service updates, receptions, luncheons, dinners and parties. FON is looking for people (especially those living in the Washington, DC metropolitan area) who might be interested in helping plan a get together for that Saturday. In the past there have been FON dinners at local DC African restaurants, informational sessions, and a meeting with the Nigerien Ambassador. If you are interested, please contact Penni St. Hilaire at tommyt@erols.com or (202) 966-4087 or John Soloninka at president@friendsofniger.org.

Plumpy'Nut Update

As highlighted in the December issue of the Camel Express, plumpy'nut is a nutritional product produced in Niger, made from peanut butter and condensed sweet milk. It has been used throughout Africa in times of hunger. Three Niger RPCVs (self-proclaimed geezers from California, namely Joel Neuberg, Jack Saunders, and Sandy Leeder) organized a funding drive and, with additional donations from FON, have arranged for production and distribution of thousands of emergency meals of plumpy'nut to Nigerien children. These photos, taken by Sanda Tankari of Guecheme, were sent to express the gratitude of some Nigeriens to the many RPCVs who continue to care about their welfare. Excerpts of Joel's note:

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your contributions (Thanksgiving to Valentine's Day) to the effort to feed some of the hungry children in Guecheme, Niger. I'm pretty sure about 3000 Plumpy'nut "meals" were distributed through the dispensaire in Guecheme. I sent Sanda some disposable cameras and he has sent them back, so here are some pictures of the Acacia trees planted in 2007 with the help of World Vision & PCV Chris Stillion, children in school and at the dispensaire, and a gentleman standing with a kolongu drum. Sanda assures me the drummer will make and Sanda will mail any number of drums we can sell in the USA. Except for the Tuareg jewelry I see advertised on the WEB, talking drums may be the most in-demand Niger export. Let me know if you want one; I'm sure I can get one for you wholesale. I have received no response regarding the low fuel, low smoke stove kits I sent, so I must assume the stove business has not caught on in Niger. The people we spoke to in Lido and Guecheme thought of our years of service (1966-1969) as the "good old days" of adequate rainfall, harvest, and food. The government of Niger that claimed there was no food crisis there has fallen. Perhaps our governments can work together to help the people of Niger help themselves to a better future. You have

certainly done your part.

Best regards,
Joel Neuberg



Local Niamey School Aims to Go Global!

Hampaté Bâ Competes to Win GlobalGiving's Open Challenge

Collège Amadou Hampaté Bâ is a private, coeducational, non-denominational secondary school in a popular neighborhood in Niamey called Dar-es-Salam . To an ordinary onlooker, nothing sets this "collège" apart from other middle schools serving students from low socio-economic backgrounds. A closer look at its history however reveals a different story.

From 1991 through mid-2007, Hampaté Bâ functioned as a typical, non-subsidized, mediocre middle school. In 2007, the school changed hands, and new management began a bottom-up professional development approach and a process of self-transformation to a progressive teaching/learning experience within a supportive, happy school atmosphere. In less than two years, the school has "turned around," as shown by:

Dynamic Classrooms: reduced from 80 to 40 students.
Secure Climate: No corporal punishment or verbal humiliation.
Gender Equality: Girls and boys have equal rights and responsibilities.
Character Education: Respect, cooperation, healthy competitive spirit.
Improved Teaching: Training circles attract teachers from other schools.

"Les amis de Hampaté Bâ", the nonprofit organization, is looking to provide the means for their partner school to turn underprivileged youth, **especially girls**, into a positive and responsible force both in the school and within their community. To reduce the high turnover rate and have a stable, motivated team of teachers, the school must offer decent salaries, without increasing either class sizes or school fees. That is why your help is needed.

One way for this project to become visible and receive donations is for it to secure a permanent spot on www.GlobalGiving.com, the internationally recognized marketplace for philanthropy that connects individual donors to the causes they care most about. In order to secure that spot, the Hampaté Bâ project has to win the GlobalGiving "Open Challenge" by raising \$4,000 from at least 50 unique donors between **August 15 and September 15, 2010**. The three projects that raise the most funds will receive supplementary cash bonuses from GlobalGiving. The project with the greatest number of unique donors will also be awarded a bonus of \$3,000.

You can help Hampaté Bâ earn a spot on GlobalGiving for as little as \$10! GlobalGiving is about the power of collective giving, and so every donation, no matter how small, will make a difference. Please watch for the August issue of the Camel Express where we will be giving you the link to our project page on GlobalGiving and asking you to help Collège Amadou Hampaté Bâ win the competition! In the meantime, if you want to learn more about "Les amis de Hampaté Bâ" and its partner school, please visit these websites. <http://www.amishampateba.org> & <http://www.hampate-ba-school.org>



Best Wishes for 2010 from Madame Ambassador

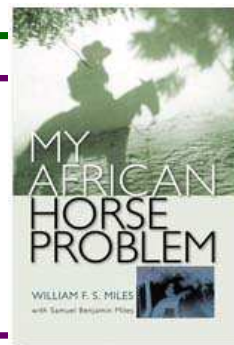
Her Excellency Mrs. Touré A. D. Maiga, Ambassador of the Republic of Niger, and Colonel Touré Abdoul extended their best wishes, peace, and blessings for the New Year to Friends of Niger.

Facebook Niger Cause

Daryn Warner, former coordinator for the Young Girls Scholarship Program (YGSP) in Niamey, and Vicky Pridgen (RPCV) have offered to launch an appeals page for Niger using Facebook’s “Cause” feature to raise money for FON projects, including the YGSP. They suggest it could be a permanent page with folks donating in lieu of buying someone a gift. As in, “Rather than give me a birthday gift, donate to my cause.” Stay tuned for more information, or, if you’re on Facebook, check out the causes.

My African Horse Problem

Professor Miles of Northeastern University has published a book entitled, **My African Horse Problem**. The publisher’s link (http://www.umass.edu/umpress/fall_08/miles.htm) is on the Friends of Niger Web site.



Thank you to The Pittsburgh Foundation

FON acknowledges The Pittsburgh Foundation for its generous \$1,000 grant in January, 2010. The Foundation and its supporting organizations donate millions of dollars in grants to a vast array of nonprofit organizations, student scholarships, and medical researchers.

Donations have come in for the YGSP, Plumpy’nut, Microcredit, and AAWEL. FON gratefully acknowledges all donations and will ensure their use as designated.



NEW FRIENDS OF NIGER T-SHIRTS

There is still time to get yours!

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. 7).

Northeastern University (NU) - Niger Project Update - Yekuwa/Yekoua Development Project

On December 26, 2009, NU Professor Bill Miles met with local officials about the 2009 project funded by FON and the NU Political Science Department.

Professor Miles sent this update:

My latest trip to Niger was very successful, especially from the FON-NU collaborative perspective. I had a two hour meeting in the project village with representatives from the mayor's office, women's association, farmer's association, and schools. The vice-mayor and representatives of the associations were all very appreciative of the 3 streams of developmental partnership that my students were now able to offer thanks to the FON partnership: microcredit (especially for the women); marketplace enhancement (for both women's and farmer's association); and school supplies. The mayor gave me his handwritten letter of appreciation. Vice-Mayor Sani Oumarou (who, I later realized, was one of my two top students when I was a PCV in the Middle School of nearby Magaria) presided over the meeting. In sequence, we went over the details of the three prongs to the class's proposal: education; women and farmer marketing; and microcredit.

GALMI HOSPITAL UPDATE

Chris & Nancy Zoolkoski provided news in February: One of our neediest patients in the hospital tonight is Harouna, who was in a high speed car accident and came to Galmi with a broken right leg and a crushed left leg. The left leg was amputated, but he has been in traction to try to heal the right leg. Today, Dr. Sanoussi and I decided he needed more than traction, which works in some cases if the bones fuse. We've been blessed over the past few years to have visiting orthopedic surgeons for about 2 months out of every year. (We need others like them!) Dr. Johnstone and Dr. Ulmer have taught Christopher the SIGN technique of placing intramedullary rods in long bone fractures without the need for the intraoperative x-rays that are used back home to confirm the position of the hardware during the surgery. The surgery seems to have been successful. The Galmi OR has some fantastic Nigerian surgical assistants and anesthetists that make the work easier and more fun. Tomorrow we will be able to encourage Harouna to try to get out of bed using a walker and to help him get his strength back. Pray with us that Harouna's leg will heal strongly and without infection and that we will be able to help him regain his mobility and independence. Hôpital de Galmi, B.P. 44, Madaoua, NIGER christopher.zoolkoski@sim.org

UPDATE ON SECOND CHANCE SCHOOLS (AAWEL) (Continued from page 1)

The ceremony was organized under the leadership of Aminata Oumarou, Hassana Alidou and Ousseina Alidou along with AAWEL consultative board members Mr. Sibibe Saidou, and Mr. Boubacar Alzouma. AAWEL International Board Member Pamela White and the FON contributed to the funds and provide continuous support to AAWEL's work in both the Second Chance and the Deaf Schools of Niger. The event was well reported on TV-Dounia over several days. This led to new support and partnership for AAWEL. Mr. Tahirou Seydou a businessman, offered to sponsor AAWEL's projects in the Deaf school. The Secretary General of AAWEL - Niger visits AAWEL-sponsored schools and recruits new donors and members. Pamela White and Steve White provided \$600 dollars to support AAWEL in Niger Second Chance and Deaf Schools., and other volunteers and members are coming on board. We would like to thank all of AAWEL Members and supporters and we are requesting continuous support. Best regards, Hassana Alidou, AAWEL



FRIENDS OF NIGER 2010 MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/ State _____ Phone (h) _____

Zip _____ Phone (work/cell) _____

E- Mail Address _____

Connection to Niger (RPCV, etc.) _____

Dates in Niger _____ Location in Niger _____ Program/Involvement _____

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

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 _____
at \$20 (2 for \$35) (Shipping Included) _____

Please send _____ Friends of Niger T-Shirts **SPECIFY BROWN OR BEIGE**
at \$15 each (Shipping Included) _____
T-Shirt Sizes: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____

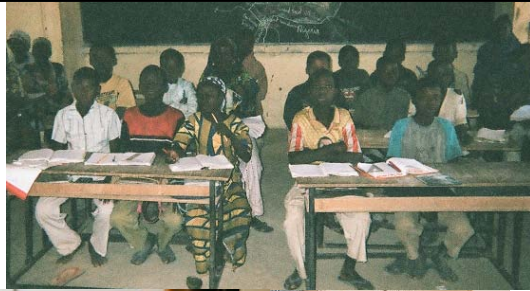
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

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

Funds Needed for Children's Vitamins

FON requests members to contribute to the Children's Chewable Vitamin Program. This program, made possible by the travelers and PCVs who transport the vitamins on their journeys back to Niger, is only possible with your contributions. Galmi Hospital is among the few hospital distribution points.

**Celebrate 50 Years Of Peace Corps In Niger
With A Trip Back To Niger in 2012
See Page 2 for details**



**Plumpy'Nut Photos by
Sanda Tankari**



**Friends of Niger
P.O. Box 5823
Washington, D.C. 20016-9998
20033-0164**

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

The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

Volume 25 Issue 2



August—September 2010

Peace Corps Niger Welcomes New Director Valerie Staats

New Director Valerie Staats sent the following letter to Friends of Niger

Orange-headed lizards ... red dust ... goats of all sizes ... laundry hanging on barbed wire ... quiet calls to prayer ... much greener than I expected ... *Bonne arrivée* ... these are among my first impressions, as I recently shared in the Peace Corps Niger newsletter, of this marvelous, challenging, and heart-tugging land called Niger.

Thrilled to be here in Niger and already loving the Niger volunteers, trainees and staff, I arrived on the auspicious date of July 4th and had a helpful nine-day overlap with outgoing Country Director Mary Abrams. As you already know, RPCV Niger Mary moves on to be Country Director in Rwanda after four years in the role in Niger. She will be missed.

This is my second time living in a Muslim country, the first as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Morocco. There I experienced three full Ramadans, and we are now into the first week of Ramadan in Niger. Islam seems to be practiced in a quieter way here. There are of course the five daily calls to prayer coming through sound systems from many neighborhood mosques. But perhaps because there are many non-Muslims in Niger, the overall effect is somewhat muted.

Much has happened in my first weeks on the job, including the arrival on July 8th of a wonderful group of 33 trainees in the youth, education, and municipal development programs. They are installed at Hamdallaye and, as I write this, about to leave for two weeks of language immersion in either Hausa or Zarma. We're also exploring with PC headquarters the possibility of some French immersion training being made available to PC posts in West Africa.

We've had three warden messages (if you know that lingo, it's an advisory or warning from the State Department) since I've been here, the latest one also resulting in a "stand fast," when we require some or all of our Volunteers and Trainees, depending on the circumstance, to stay put where they are and keep out of potential harm's way by not traveling. I'm pleased to report that not only did we have 100% compliance from our Volunteers, but also everyone remained safe and there were no incidents. This is due to great Volunteers and great Staff.



You may have heard in the news media about drought, floods, famine, and diverse food availability in Niger. All are true, and interconnected. The ground is so bone-dry that when we do get the quick, heavy rains of this rainy season, it doesn't sink in. Food is available - fruit, vegetables, grains, some meat, dairy and eggs - but the prices are very high, often more costly than the same foods in the States. As Niger is cash poor, we have a domino effect with dire consequences. One runs out of adjectives when trying to convey the situation. (Continued on page 3)

Valerie Staats sent this photo of PCV Sarah Conway works with girls in a day-long workshop in Dogondoutchie in July.



Message from the President - 8/23/10

Dear FON Members,
We want to sincerely thank Mary Abrams for her years of service to Niger, and wish her well on her new assignment; at the same time we want to officially welcome Valerie Staats as the new Niger Peace Corps country director. We look forward to working with Valerie and her staff.
Unfortunately, we again find our Nigerien family and friends confronted with a food shortage and have witnessed over the past several months the international response albeit more needs to be done. The entire Friends of Niger community extends our heartfelt prayers and tokens of support during this difficult time. And as Ramadan is upon us, we remember our many obligations and ask forgiveness for those obligations we have left undone and unfulfilled. While the hope that springs forth from those tiny millet seeds nourished with the late arriving rains helps our Nigerien friends keep their faith for better days ahead, we are reminded by the passing of one of our members, Jane Huser Maxwell, that the small contributions we made when traveling through Niger will also nurture and sustain those tender millet seedlings and the will of a village to a bountiful harvest. Please join with me in celebrating Jane's life and the life of the several other Niger RPCVs who are no longer with us by supporting Jane's memorial fund to address the current hunger crisis and future development initiatives in Niger. Peace. John

Celebrate 50 Years Of Peace Corps In Niger With A Trip Back To Niger

2012 marks the 50th year of Peace Corps' service in Niger, and we are in the early stages of planning a trip back to Niger. The specific dates are yet to be determined, but if you have any interest in joining us, or would even like to get involved and help organize a trip to Niger in 2012, please send an email to trip@friendsofniger.org telling us who you are and how many might like to join us. If you have specific ideas about what you'd like to see or do while in-country, send them along!

If we get enough people, we can make this happen just like we did in 2002 for the 40th anniversary, when a diverse group of RPCV's, plus some of their family and friends, toured the country, visited their posts, camped in the desert, and was lauded by the US and Nigerien governments for their service over the years.

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Editor: Jude Andreasen

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



Peace Corps Niger Welcomes New Director

(Continued from page 1)

So far I've been able to visit Volunteers in Dosso, Birni N'Gaouré, Guéchémé, Dogondoutchie, Tibiri, and of course throughout Niamey and numerous visits to the Hamdalle training site. The Volunteers are just like you were: excelling in language skills and integration into the community, living beyond spartan, bonding tightly with each other and with their host families. They may have cell phones and jump on the Internet when they're in Niamey, but otherwise, [la plus ca change](#) ...

As you can see from these short notes, I have lucked into a challenging and inspiring set of circumstances. Thank goodness for the wonderful Volunteers, past and present, and all the support we are getting from Friends of Niger, Peace Corps Washington, and others. Please keep Niger close to your heart this year.

Valerie Staats
Country Director

Call for Nominations

The Board of Directors of Friends of Niger is pleased to announce FON Board member elections 2010. The members of the board are elected by the FON members every two years. 2010 is an election year for Friends of Niger. **See page 2 for list of current board members.**

In 2008, all the FON members who submitted their names for election were placed on the board by acclamation. This year we are seeking your participation in the election process and encourage you to submit your name for board membership. If you would like to nominate yourself for the FON Board, please complete a brief resume following the guidelines in the form below. Please submit your nomination by September 30, 2010. (If submitting electronically, submit by September 30th; if submitting by mail, please have your nomination post marked by September 30^h.)

Please send your nomination to FON by post or email to:

Friends of Niger

PO Box 5823

Washington, DC 20016-9998 Email: President@FriendsOfNiger.org

NOMINATION FORM

Friends of Niger * Board of Directors * Elections 2010

I. I am a member of Friends of Niger, and I would like to stand for election to the Board of Directors:

Please Print Contact Information. Name : _____

Address: _____

Email address: _____ Phone: _____

II. Tell us about yourself. (This information will be shared with the FON voting membership).

Dates you lived, worked, or served in Niger and location: _____

If you worked in Niger, for which organization did you work? _____

Other information about your experiences in Niger or life experiences that you would like to share.

III. What experiences, ideas, service, or vision would you be willing to bring to the table as a member of the Board of Directors of FON? (Please limit your response to one-half a page).

Peace Corps Niger Welcomes New Partner: The Jane Huser Maxwell Memorial Fund



Jane wrote: "I was born

Friends of Niger has partnered with a group of Niger RPCVs who support grassroots projects in honor of their deceased "sister," Jane Huser Maxwell. The Sisterhood submitted the summary below.

Jane (1944-2009) served as a PCV in Filingue 1967-69. She worked in maternal and child healthcare, and came to love the desert landscape and the warm and wonderful Nigerien people. Jane returned to Niger twice in recent years. She supported various Nigerien initiatives which sought to better the lives of Nigerien women and children, including village-based women's micro-credit groups, girls' education projects, and work with handicapped children.

Jane had a passion for young children. Her life work was in the field of early-childhood education. She died on June 24, 2009 after a short battle with cancer, and is survived by her two adored daughters, Alia and Sahara, her beloved grandson Anthony, and scores of loving friends.

When Jane traveled in Niger in 2002, a life-long bond was formed with six other fellow-RPCV's- henceforth the Sahara Sisterhood*! This group of seven women became fast friends and subsequently met and traveled together several times a year. The tradition continues, minus our beloved Jane.

In Jane's memory, we have established the JANE HUSER MAXWELL MEMORIAL FUND under the auspices of the Friends of Niger. The impetus for this fund was the one-year anniversary of Jane's death, and the current on-going hunger crisis in Niger, brought on by sparse rains in 2009 and the resulting crop failures. The first contribution from the Fund, in Jane's name, was to an FON-selected project addressing this hunger crisis. The Sisterhood hopes to establish a more sustainable fund to support Nigerien initiatives in Jane's memory, and welcomes your contributions. We plan to allocate funds to projects and initiatives at the grass-roots level in Niger - initiatives which support Jane's life-passions for the Nigerien people, and most especially children, women and education.

The Sahara Sisterhood consists of seven women - Jane (now deceased), Linda Hager Bailey (Jane's Peace Corps roommate and lifelong friend), Elizabeth Griffin, Ricki Hall, Charlene Pratt, Pamela Britton White, and Kyle Hording. All, save Kyle, were PCV's in Niger at one time or another - Kyle 's love of Niger came later, during our shared 2002 sojourn in Niger.

Donations to the Fund may be made payable to the Friends of Niger. On the memo line, direct the contribution to the "Jane Huser Maxwell Memorial Fund." All contributions are tax-deductible. We will continue to use the Camel Express to report on the various initiatives supported by this Fund.



Jane as a proud Cal graduate in her luxury suite.

The Jane Huser Maxwell Memorial Fund (continued)



The Seven Sisters of the Niger Sisterhood, left to right: Kyle Hording, Jane Huser Maxwell, Charlene Pratt, Linda Hager Bailey, Pamela Britton White, Ricki Hall, Elizabeth

Unique Opportunity to Help a Worthy Niamey School

The April 2010 Issue of the Camel Express Showcased
 The Hampaté Bâ Middle School Competition to Win GlobalGiving's Open Challenge
It's Up to Us!

"Les Amis de Hampata Ba", the non profit supporting the Amadou Hampata Ba Middle School in Niamey, has been selected to participate in the Global Giving Challenge for September 2010. During the month of September, the association needs to prove that it can raise funds, and if it succeeds, it will have the privilege of appearing permanently on the GlobalGiving Web site, providing continual revenues from International donors and benefiting US donors on their tax returns.

Collège Amadou Hampaté Bâ is a private, coeducational, non-denominational secondary school in a popular neighborhood in Niamey called Dar-es-Salam. The school has a **bottom-up professional development** approach and a **process of self-transformation to a progressive teaching/learning experience within a supportive, happy school atmosphere.**

Now it is up to us all to help out with the challenge! Here are some important guidelines: Each of us needs to find about 10 people who are willing to give at least 10 dollars each. **The challenge consists of raising a minimum of 4000 US dollars in one month (September 2010), which means the association needs to aim for at least 200 donors if each donor gives between 10 and 20 dollars.**

The donations for the "Les Amis de Hampata Ba" project must be submitted by Internet on GlobalGiving's Open Challenge page between Sept 1st and Sept 30th.

This is a fabulous way for us to raise money for the Amadou Hampata Ba Middle School and at the same time help the association gain international recognition.



So, get ready and set to go! All it will take is a few clicks on the computer. Start thinking of family or friends who would be willing to help out with this kind gesture that could make such a difference in the life of secondary students in Niger by giving them equal access to affordable, quality secondary education. Just go to <http://>



FON Has Another New Partner: Boston University (BU) Niger Project

The following letter was transmitted by Sue Rosenfeld, former FON Board Member and current Director of the Boston University Study Abroad Program in Niger.

Fofo! Sannu! Hello!

My name is Jonathan Remple, or as my Nigerien friends call me, Betoji. As you may well know, a food crisis is gripping the Sahel. Currently **80% of Nigeriens face food shortages** (defined as not having more than 10 days of food). That is 12 million people and 400,000 children face the potential for starvation within the next month to 4 months. Realizing the necessity for action, I and two fellow alumni of the Boston University Study Abroad Program created Niger Food Relief to motivate BU Niger Alumni and anyone connected with this amazing country to act. Within 24 hours, we collected over \$1,000. So far, 368+ Nigeriens will have food supplies for at least one month. I say this statistic with confidence because of our partnership with The Nomad Foundation (recommended to us by Sue Rosenfeld), which is a Nigerien, grassroots, 501(c)(3) non-profit. You can find more details about their accomplishments here: (www.nigerfoodrelief.org). 100% of the money we raise is used to purchase 50 kg sacks of grain, distributed to Northern Niger where drought is most severe.

We are contacting Peace Corps partners and reaching out to RPCVs and our extended community to ask for your help. As Sue reminded me: *No donation amount is too small. If **everyone** connected to Niger gives **\$10**, we have such a large network of Niger Alumni, Peace Corps Volunteers, and the organization Friends of Niger, that we can **save thousands of lives**.* Since our donations go directly to the purchase of emergency food relief (not one cent goes to administrative costs or advertising):

\$10 Feeds a Family of 8 for One Week.

To Donate: please go to our website at www.nigerfoodrelief.org, click on the 'chip-in' button on the home page, and follow the instructions. All donations through the chip-in account go directly into The Nomad Foundation's pay-pal account. As The Nomad Foundation is a 501c3 Non-Profit, all gifts are tax deductible.

FRIENDS OF NIGER T-SHIRTS

**There is still time to get
your new Friends of Niger T-
Shirt .**

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. 7).

FRIENDS OF NIGER 2010 MEMBERSHIP & ORDER FORM

Name(s) _____
 Address _____
 City/ State _____ Phone (h) _____
 Zip _____ Phone (work/cell) _____
 E- Mail Address _____
 Connection to Niger (RPCV, etc.) _____
 Dates in Niger _____ Location in Niger _____ Program/Involvement _____

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

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 grassroots projects through the Jane Huser Maxwell Memorial Fund, **a NEW PARTNER.**
 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, AAWEI**
 with a Contribution of _____
 I want to support the FON Chewable Vitamin Campaign with a Contribution of _____
 at \$20 (2 for \$35) (Shipping Included) _____
 Please send _____ Friends of Niger T-Shirts **SPECIFY BROWN OR BEIGE**
at \$15 each (Shipping Included) _____
 T-Shirt Sizes: S _____ M _____ L _____ XL _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____
 Make Check/or Money Order to Friends of Niger and mail to: P. O. Box 5823, Washington, D. C. 20016-9998

Funds Needed for Children's Vitamins
FON requests members to contribute to the Children's Chewable Vitamin Program. This program, made possible by the travelers and PCVs who transport the vitamins on their journeys back to Niger, is only possible with your contributions. Galmi Hospital is among the few hospital distribution points.

**Celebrate 50 Years Of Peace Corps In Niger
 With A Trip Back To Niger in 2012
 See Page 2 for details**



Friends of Niger

P.O. Box 5823

Washington, D.C. 20016-9998



Address Correction Requested

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

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



The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

Volume 25 Issue 3



December 2010

Peace Corps Niger Looks Back at 2010



Students at Amadou Hampaté Bâ School, which, thanks to Friends of Niger members' generosity and timely contributions, earned a permanent place on the Global Giving web site.

Peace Corps Niger and Friends of Niger Once Again Make Powerful Partners for Change at the Local Level

Once again in 2010, the partnership of Peace Corps volunteers and staff, Friends of Niger, and RPCVs has contributed to development by supporting many small projects and schools with low overhead, 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, Emily

Bird. She provided the following summary of this year's YGSP progress:

Young Girls' Scholarship Program Update, Peace Corps/Niger - 2010-2011 School Year

Peace Corps Niger has already begun sponsoring young girl scholars as part of the Young Girls' Scholarship Program for the 2010-2011 school year. So far, 7 young women have been provided school supplies, books, school uniforms, money for tutoring and a family contribution to be used at the young girl's discretion. 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. They will be asked to present the progress of their scholars before each subsequent funding period (December and March) and the YGSP coordinator will be collecting photos and personal statements and stories from each girl to compile at the end of the school year.

The past year was a difficult one for YGSP and PC Niger as a whole. Due to security issues, volunteers were pulled from a number of posts, mainly in the Tahoua region and this affected five scholarship recipients. Their disbursements were paid out for the school year but as there are no longer volunteers in these villages, we were unable to continue them. Fortunately, three young women were able to continue their scholarships this year and one scholar has completed her fourth year of middle school (CEG) and will be going on to high school this fall. Due to an abrupt decrease in PC Niger's volunteer numbers, fewer PCVs applied for YGSP funding. However, the next year will bring two new groups of volunteers to Niger, and there is a lot of interest in the YGSP program. YGSP will be focusing intensely on these seven scholars to ensure their continued success and working with volunteers to recruit new scholars to the program and build our numbers back up.



**Peace
Corps**

Letter from the President

December 2010

Dear friends,

At the end of another year of fund raising and sharing the good news from Niger, I want to thank you for your partnership and support of Friends of Niger. Our FON membership remains steady as does our budget and financial support of Peace Corps Niger programs and national Nigerien NGO projects. While the majority of our operating funds continues to come from you, our members, we have received, upon recommendations of our members, significant donations from organizations including The Pittsburgh Foundation, KOKARI, and the Manhattan TheatreSource. We have assisted with individual member fundraising activities for well construction, micro-credit and education projects. Also our FON website and newsletter have enabled several organizations and projects in Niger to promote their activities. For example, in our last issue of the Camel Express, we highlighted former Boston University study abroad students Jonathan Rempel and Laura Parker and their efforts to raise funds for emergency food relief in Niger; since then, they have raised over \$12,000 to support the hunger relief work of the Nomad Foundation NGO in Niger. Chapeau!

We are encouraged to hear that many of you continue to travel to Niger, some on a regular basis; we want your stories, pictures and videos for the Camel Express and the FON website. Some social media sites have excellent materials about Niger, but we want more direct and personal stories from you. A recent example of a new look for Niger is captured on a video we were pleased to discover on YouTube and have since linked to the FON home webpages. The video was filmed as through the eyes of a PCV traveling at break-neck speed through Niger; at first the images pass by too quickly, but looking back on our own personal experiences, we can remember that even though some days seemed like we were stuck in a Ground Hog Day-like scenario, it all ended too soon. Be one of the first to see this montage of PCV video clips edited by the talented Marisa Wong (Niger, 08' - 10') and set to the music of the Strokes, "It's hard to explain." The music and images will grab you and take you back to those days and places that still, after several years ... we find hard to explain.

On behalf of the Friends of Niger Board of Directors, I want to thank you again for remembering our friends in Niger this past year and to wish you a Happy and Peace filled New Year!

-John

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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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Or by e-mail at

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and you will find FON on the web and this

newsletter in FULL COLOR at:

www.friendsofniger.org.

Editor: Jude Andreasen



Peace Corps Mourns the Loss of Volunteer Stephanie Chance

WASHINGTON, D.C., Oct. 8, 2010 – Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams is saddened to announce the death of Peace Corps volunteer Stephanie Chance in Niger. Stephanie was discovered in her home in Zinder. The exact cause of death remains unknown, but it appears at this time that it may have been from natural causes.

"This is a loss for our community. Peace Corps volunteers represent the best America has to offer – compassion, generosity of spirit and an enthusiasm for what is possible through cooperation. Stephanie's sudden passing is terribly painful for the entire Peace Corps family," said Peace Corps Director Aaron S. Williams. "Our thoughts are with her family and friends."



Stephanie, 26, a native of Phoenix, Ariz., arrived in Niger for training in July 2010 and was sworn-in as a municipal development volunteer on Sept. 23, 2010. She had recently arrived at her site in Zinder and was busy getting to know the community to help the local officials better coordinate local government services and collaborative planning.

"My aspirations for my community are to assist them in identifying their needs, and helping them imagine the changes they would most benefit from," Stephanie wrote in her July 2010 aspiration statement about her work with Peace Corps.

Before serving with Peace Corps, Stephanie was an experienced certified public accountant. Through Peace Corps service, Stephanie hoped to gain a more global perspective and a better understanding of other cultures. She held a B.S. in business administration and an M.A. in accounting from the University of Arizona.

In recent weeks, Stephanie had made significant progress in learning the local language of Hausa. In September, she completed nearly three months of intensive pre-service training in the village of Hamdallaye, Niger. She was fond of her host family and enjoyed talking with them in her newly acquired Hausa. Stephanie was an active leader among her training group. She organized basketball games and coached local youth in the sport. She was known by Peace Corps training staff for her smile and willingness to help others. She cared about the people of Niger and found ways to contribute, including participating in the annual tree planting to celebrate Nigerien Independence Day and promote conservation.



UPDATE ON SECOND-CHANCE SCHOOLS
by Pamela Britton White

These children truly are “left behind” – the many children of Niger who receive no formal education whatsoever. Consider this: In 2000, 34% of Nigerien children were receiving schooling; of those, only 40% were girls. Think about it: of 100 children, 34 attended school, 13 of them girls; the other 66 went un-schooled (per the 2009-10 annual report of the Nigerien Organization of Innovative Educators [ONEN].) Even among those who enroll, drop-out rates in many of the poorest districts are high, and success rates on end-of-year exams are less than 50%. In these poor districts, parental distrust of the educational system is rampant – why invest in costly school fees when the outcomes are so dismal?

Enter ONEN – a group of veteran Nigerien teachers who conceived the idea of “Second-Chance Schools” – and AAWEL (the Alliance for African Women’s Education and Leadership)* who partnered with them to bring the concept alive. Second-Chance Schools are primary schools with a curriculum tailored especially for older-entering students – ages 9-14. The curriculum is four years, versus the usual six in traditional primary schools. And in addition to academics, the Second-Chance curriculum provides solid training in vocational skills – life skills – to enable these children to thrive as productive Nigerien citizens, whether or not they pursue further formal education beyond the primary level. In 2005, after studying the conditions, the first Second-Chance School program was instituted in three outlying districts of Niamey where school enrollment was particularly low; the first cohort of 250 children (50% boys, 50% girls) were enrolled in the 4-year Second-Chance curriculum. Following their completion of the program, the second cohort was enrolled in 2009: 219 children (47% boys, 53% girls).

The program has experienced great success. Of the first cohort, almost 60% completed the 4-year curriculum in 2008. One hundred percent (100%) of those taking the end-of-primary exams passed, many (including girls) scoring at or near the top of their testing groups. After 4 years in the Second-Chance program, these students had caught-up or surpassed their peers in the 6-year traditional program! Seventy-six (76) are now enrolled in CEG’s (secondary schools) – an opportunity they almost missed! Many others – no longer age-eligible for entry into CEG – received a certificate of primary-school completion – itself a valuable resource in Niger – and valuable academic, life/vocational and leadership skills. For all, truly, a second chance on life.

WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT THE SECOND-CHANCE SCHOOLS?

The Second-Chance School program was founded so that children normally un-served by Niger’s educational system would have a shot at education – children for whom it would normally have been “too late.” With its focus on academic empowerment (language and math literacy) and the integration of vocational/life skills and leadership skills, the program seeks to prepare children for a productive life. Initially the program lacked sufficient means to make great strides, but when AAWEL joined the team (with financial support from FON), the program gained considerable traction. ONEN and AAWEL have lofty goals: to promote effective quality education for Niger’s children by developing new teaching approaches adapted to Niger’s socio-economic realities, to develop school partnerships with community involvement, and to mobilize parent participation.

Some of the keys to success: AAWEL has initiated extensive and on-going teacher training and curriculum development, essential to the success of the program. The summer-school program is key to reinforcing academic learning. The full integration of the vocational training component into the curriculum is an essential ingredient, often applying academic learning such as math to real-life skills. With AAWEL’s donation of additional sewing machines, as well as fabric rollers and other tailoring accessories, all students in the second cohort of 219 children

Continued on page 5

AAWEL Second Chance Schools—*continued from page 4*

Here begun training in tailoring skills. And in 2009, the vocational component was expanded to include gardening (with a focus on environmentally-friendly methods).

The ONEN/AAWEL partnership now works in five Second-Chance Schools. In addition, AAWEL now applies the curriculum to their work in Niamey's Deaf School (originally founded by a PC volunteer), in coordination with the neighborhood's women's association and the Association of the Deaf.

"One of our goals" says Hassana Alidou, founder of AAWEL, "is to make the program sustainable. To help schools and families recognize and harness resources within the community, and to promote an understanding that we have access locally to resources for a better education. It isn't always necessary to have major NGO funding to accomplish goals - we can do a lot with a little." Participatory decision-making has also been a welcome innovation - involving students and families in decisions about the future of the program, the types of vocational offerings, etc. As academic and vocational programs flourish and prepare children for a better future, parent trust and confidence in the educational system has risen. Praise from the Ministry of Education for the extraordinary success of Second-Chance students on end-of-primary exams has also shone a welcome spotlight on the program's successes. "At AAWEL We believe that all children, girls and boys have the potential to be productive human beings. Therefore we believe in empowering every child by helping them develop life skills and literacy in both their mother tongues and French. We believe children are tomorrow's leaders. Investing today in quality education help us to prepare a brighter future for these children and the society."

THE FUTURE

As the Second-Chance Schools program continues to grow and to deepen its effectiveness, there is much to be done as funding allows. On the academic side, teacher training and curriculum development are on-going ventures which continue to enhance teacher capacity; a train-the-trainer model will lay the groundwork for future replication and sustainability. The summer-school programs have proved invaluable for students' academic success - well worth the continuing expenditure of summer teacher salaries and related expenses. And on the vocational side, maintaining and expanding the vocational/life skills component is a major goal: continually replenishing supplies for the tailoring and gardening programs - fabric, needles, seeds, etc.; building fences, wells and irrigation for a more effective gardening program; expanding vocational offerings to include, perhaps, carpentry, or poultry farming, or motor-bike mechanics, depending upon expanding resources and student interest.

Friends of Niger's support of AAWEL has been invaluable to the success of the Second-Chance Schools program. As Ms. Alidou says, "we can do a lot with a little." - AAWEL looks forward to a continued partnership with FON in this venture. Contributions are welcome! - checks payable to FON should note "AAWEL" on the memo line.

 * AAWEL is a small NGO based in Niger and the US, which works on several fronts to better the lives of women and girls in Niger. It has partnered with FON on this Second-Chance Schools project, and has expanded the project into Niamey's Deaf School as well.

 Pamela Britton White (RPCV 1969-70) works closely with several of AAWEL's projects in Niger. She worked in school-based projects with both AAWEL and ONEN during visits to Niger in 2006 and 2008.



Letter from Peace Corps Niger Director Valerie Staats

Happy to report that on Friday, October 22nd, we welcomed a new group of Trainees (health and agriculture), who now number 41 in all and who are already well installed with their host families. In fact, they've already completed their "demystification" weekends at sites along with a two-week language immersion in the field. There is no better balm for our post at this time than receiving a wonderful new group of enthusiastic Trainees.

We need balm right now due to the October 7th death and loss of a new PCV, Stephanie Chance (see her bio elsewhere in *Camel Express*). We think about Stephanie and her family every day. No cause of death is yet identified, but it appears to have been of natural causes. My time in Phoenix, Arizona with Stephanie's family was very well spent. It was heartwarming to see Stephanie's friends and colleagues from grade school, high school, college, and Ernst & Young turn out. Peace Corps held a small private ceremony with Stephanie's immediate family in which Chief of Staff Stacy Rhodes and I presented them with U.S. and Peace Corps flags, in beautiful wooden cases, with brass plaques memorializing Stephanie, and I gave her brother the flag that draped Stephanie's coffin throughout the trip back to Phoenix. The new U.S. Ambassador to Niger, Ms. Bisa Williams, attended the public service and made remarks, as did I and several others from Peace Corps. There were 6 Peace Corps staffers there in all, including RPCV Niger Daryn Williams, who COSed in 2009 and some of you know. I hand-carried to the family many handwritten letters from Stephanie's stage mates and site mates in Zinder.

Camels don't stop for red lights. Now that I am driving in Niamey, I mingle among the many types of traffic: cars, bicycles, bicycles with precarious loads, motorcycles, pedestrians, small taxis, bush taxis, buses, hand-carts, trucks, goats, cattle, sheep, and camels – all sharing the public thoroughfares in one giant, collective act of trust. For it is only that trust, as far as I can tell, that propels the stately camel and his cargo slowly and methodically through bustling intersections and red lights. Gently do these camels pass among us, lifting their feet one by one, looking straight ahead, moving forward no matter what is going on around them. Perhaps we can take a lesson (or two) from the camels: put one foot in front of the other, trusting that though the journey may seem slow and even contain some dangers, we will somehow, eventually, get where we need to be. Isn't that what it's like to be a Peace Corps Volunteer?

(Continued on page 7)



Letter from Peace Corps Niger Director Valerie Staats (cont'd)

Speaking of journeys, I traveled a bit in Niger during November, including a 2-day road trip in the Dosso region, visiting 8 Niger PCVs along the Gaya and laterite roads, and 2 Benin PCVs over the border into Malanville. I loved visiting our intrepid Volunteers in their villages, ranging from newly installed folks to one about to COS in a few weeks. As many of our Volunteers have discovered, if there was a Volunteer at their site in the past – whether one year or 25 years ago – the entire village remembers that person and what s/he was like!

Speaking of old-timers (myself included), I spent Thanksgiving with our Trainees at Hamdallaye, our beautiful training site. We laughed, sang, danced, and stargazed – and feasted on a mighty meal of roast chicken, mashed potatoes, squash, and more. We had some special guests: Eliot and Marcia Christian (Marcia was a Niger PCV in the 1970s in Dogondoutchie, and she and Eliot were married there); Nelson Cronyn and Judith Keller, both Niger PCVs in the 1980s, now living in Niamey for the school year; and finally, Miki, a new JICA Volunteer who was just installed in Hamdallaye town. As a Trainee and I took turns saying brief blessings, we could look around the circle of more than 70 Trainees, staff, and guests and truly feel part of a special family on Thanksgiving. For as all Friends of Niger know, once you become a Peace Corps Volunteer, you join a big, welcoming family that lasts the rest of your life.

Valerie Staats, Country Director,
RPCV Morocco

UPDATE ON THE JANE HUSER MAXWELL MEMORIAL FUND

Jane Huser Maxwell (1944-2009) was a PCV in Filingue 1967-69. She loved Niger and her people, and returned to Niger twice in recent years. Her ties with volunteers from the early era were strong, and she is deeply missed by many RPCV friends. The Sahara Sisterhood – a group of seven women – old and new friends – all former Niger volunteers – established the Memorial Fund in her honor, and many friends have made contributions, as have others interesting in the Fund's mission.

The intent of the Fund is to support Nigerien-led initiatives at the grassroots level. During Jane's lifetime, she supported several such initiatives, including village-based women's micro-credit groups, girls' education projects, and work with handicapped children. The support of such initiatives will generally require hand-carrying funds to the groups in question, since they often lack both literacy and bank accounts. When that is not an option, we will also periodically provide financial support to small NGO's doing work at the grassroots level. To date, donations to the JHM Fund have totaled \$4,330.

Disbursements have been made as follows:

- \$500 to the Nomad Foundation (www.nomadfoundation.org) for their famine-relief work in Niger's north during the recent hunger crisis.
- \$1,000 donor-directed to Doctors Without Borders (www.DoctorsWithoutBorders.org), for their famine-relief work during the hunger crisis.
- \$400 to RAIN for the Sahel and Sahara (www.rain4sahara.org), for their work with Niger's nomadic people. RAIN builds schools, digs wells, creates gardens and libraries, works in adult literacy, etc.
- \$800 to AAWEL (www.aawel.org) for their Second-Chance Schools program
- \$800 to AAWEL (www.aawel.org) for their work with rural women's associations.

If you are interested in donating to this Fund, make checks payable to FON, with "Jane Huser Maxwell Memorial Fund" on the memo line.

GALMI HOSPITAL UPDATE

At Galmi Hospital we are encouraged during this time of millet harvest with a respite from the food shortage crisis. However, the generous rains have also brought a severe malaria season here and in much of Niger. Our beds are full with sometimes 2 to 3 children per mattress. Patients are often referred to us from neighboring government clinics and from MSF for blood transfusions for severe anemia. We're thankful for Friends of Niger for the Children's Chewable vitamins, which have been put to good use.

Our surgeons have also been busy treating the many injuries that come in the door. We are now using equipment donated by SIGN to repair femur fractures. This technique allows patients to be up walking the day after surgery. The challenge is to educate the population to bring such fractures in early, while they are still treatable. Although we often see complications resulting from traditional treatment of fractures, we want to partner with and not compete with the traditional bone setters to provide the best outcome possible for each fracture victim.

We had a welcome visit this month from Dr. Aaron Scott, an ER physician from Spokane, who returned to Galmi to provide our midwives and OR staff with a review of neonatal resuscitation. Many babies who are born not breathing can be successfully revived if the proper steps are taken that Dr. Scott reviewed with us all.

Blessings to you! Christopher & Nancy Zoolkoski

Dr. Joe Starke repairing a deep hand laceration



LEFT: Nurses caring for a malaria patient.

RIGHT: Dr. Aaron Scott teaching neonatal resuscitation to our OR staff.



Les amis de Hampaté Bâ School Has A Permanent Place on GlobalGiving!

Thanks to FON's generous support and massive mobilization, not only did Les amis de Hampaté Bâ earn a permanent spot on GG, but the non-profit also won the **bonus prize for the largest number of donors!**

Les amis de Hampaté Bâ note that this challenge has provoked a great interest for the cause of Nigerien students internationally. AHB students will now have a chance to better themselves and the world through innovative programs that will be implemented at the school. **Extra time, extra help, smaller classes and better trained teachers are already making a difference!** Since October 2010, the first phase of the remediation project has started for secondary students. Eighty students (45 girls and 35 boys) were subdivided into tutoring groups of 15 for their French classes. Textbooks have been ordered in France and will soon be sent to the school in Niamey. This will allow students to follow a rigorous language program and thus improve their limited French proficiency.

"Before, our teachers paid attention to the good students only. Now they spend more time with the ones who are behind level!" Student from 6th grade. *"Sometimes you have to go slow in order to go fast. Spending more time on the basics, particularly French, represents a pathway to higher achievement in all subjects",* says Djamilou, the newly hired and trained French teacher.

As a start, 9 teachers have attended 4 professional development sessions and these training workshops are beginning to alter instructional behavior in a way that benefits students' learning. Through analysis of student data, the sharing of student work, continual dialogue among the staff, 90-minute learning blocks, and homework sessions in the morning and evening, teachers hope to address the significant academic and French language skill gaps of entering students, and thus reduce the dropout rate.



Les amis de Hampaté Bâ are extremely grateful for FON's on-going support and cannot wait to share with the members the progress students at Amadou Hampaté Bâ are making with this new program as the school year goes on. You can visit the project's permanent site on GlobalGiving, follow its progress, and support it by going to:
<http://www.globalgiving.org/projects/provide-low-fee-quality-education-for-students-in-niger/>

BOSTON UNIVERSITY NIGER STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS RAISE THOUSANDS FOR NIGER

BU graduates and Study Abroad Alumni Jonathan Remple, Max McCarthy, and Laura Parker established Niger Food Relief to raise money for starving communities affected by the famine in Niger. The group raised \$12,000 within 3 months from alumni and affiliates, and working with Leslie Clark of the Nomad Foundation, they provided a month's worth of food to 3,600 Nigeriens.

Pat Alio, Board Member and Niger Liaison, has resigned. FON thanks Pat for her service and contributions. There were no new nominees and it was agreed by acclamation that the current board would remain.

Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps

The National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) will be sponsoring a 50th anniversary celebration of the Peace Corps September 21 through September 25, 2011 in Washington, DC. The events include an advocacy day on the 22nd which will include Congressional meetings, a rally and a reception at the end of the day. There will be preparatory meetings the night before. Friday, September 23rd is a day of service which begins with a rally and includes working with charitable organizations. Both activities require pre-registration. Go to the website: peacecorpsconnect.org for further information and registration. On Saturday there will be an NPCA Board of Directors meeting, the annual general meeting and a group leaders' forum. This will be followed by an interactive forum on development issues. The day will culminate with a formal gala from 5 to 7 pm. Sunday morning there will be a program at Arlington Cemetery, a wreath laying at the John F. Kennedy grave site, and a march across Memorial Bridge to the National Mall.

Friends of Niger is planning to organize a dinner either Friday or Saturday evening as well as programs related to Niger, most likely Saturday afternoon. We would appreciate information on who may be coming and interested in joining us for dinner and other programs and if there is a preferred night for the dinner. We would be happy to have your help in planning the event. Please respond to Penni St. Hilaire at tommyt@erols.com or 202 966 4087.

The 50th anniversary of Peace Corps will also be a focus of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall in Washington, DC., June 30 through July 11.

NOTEWORTHY

ATTENTION NIGER RPCVS— OPPORTUNITY TO RETURN TO NIGER!

There are 4 six-month openings for Peace Corps Response Positions in Niger starting in March 2011. They are RECORDS MANAGEMENT TRAINER, NATIONAL MUSEUM/ZOO ASSISTANT, IT SPECIALIST, AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT. For details and to apply for these positions, go to www.peacecorps.gov and click on Peace Corps Response on the lower left. This is your chance to return to Niger for a short period of time and Reconnect in a productive, worthwhile way.

UW-Madison is hosting Peace Corps and Africa, an event to honor Wisconsin's 50-year involvement in Peace Corps, from March 24 to 26, 2011. Hosted by the African Studies Program, the gathering will bring musicians, artists, story-tellers and thinkers to campus to celebrate, reflect and debate on the legacy of Peace Corps in Africa. Both former volunteers from all over the country and a wide spectrum of participants with ties to Africa are planning to attend. Events will include panels, discussions, StoryCorps interviews, art exhibits, dance and a keynote speech by current PC director Aaron Williams. Participants can register at <http://africa.wisc.edu/peacecorps/registration.html>

Les amis de Hampaté Bâ is one of the 200 GlobalGiving organizations the Ford Motor Company has selected to be eligible for a \$10,000 grant as part of the launch of their new Ford Focus! Ford will select 50 individuals to test drive the car and, for their time and trouble, the 50 winning applicants will be given \$10,000 to donate to the charity of their choice out of that list. Applications are being accepted now on the **Ford Focus Facebook page**. The 50 will be chosen on a number of criteria, but the size of one's sphere of influence and the NUMBER OF "LOVE IT" our video gets will be a big factor. So can you please help us spread the word? Can you and your friends who are on Facebook help us get those "Love it" for our video. Our video is called "**Solar Powered Distance Learning in Africa**" and the page to go to is <http://apps.facebook.com/globaltestdrive/showentry?entryurl=%2Fcontests%2Fshowentry%2F679017%2Fnull%2F4>

FRIENDS OF NIGER 2010 - 2011 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

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 _____ 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

PRIVACY POLICY

Your contact information is requested and maintained by FON so that we can contact you in the future. FON will not share your contact information with any third party unless you indicate on this form to that you would also like membership in the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA).

The Camel Express

Newsletter of the Friends of Niger



Friends of Niger
P.O. Box 5823
Washington, D.C. 20016-9998
20033-0164



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Editor: Jude Andreasen

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