

# The Camel Express



Newsletter of the Friends of Niger

January 2025

Friends of Niger 4865 Hwy 234 Box 180, White City, OR 97503

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Dear Readers,

We've been busy processing the avalanche of donations from y'all- woohoo! Your support makes great things possible and serves as a mighty motivator for the board and volunteers. If you have not yet received your receipt for tax purposes, please contact us.

About those volunteers—please join us! Our grant review process is a really fun way to jump in and help out without having to make a long-term commitment, see details in this issue. In other board news, we give our thanks to Brandon Bragato, who has pitched in for two years and is now stepping off the board.

You may notice in this issue we are trending toward providing more information than news of current events. Friends of Niger has always been apolitical and we want to stay that way. It is hard to tell which news sources are accurate and legitimate. Erring on the side of caution, we are choosing to promote more current information about Niger that is non-political in nature. At the same time, we encourage you to try to stay informed of current events and be vigilant about checking sources. (List of news outlets follows).

For a New Year's resolution, let's aim for continuing to be awesome. Next year we can try to be modest, but we hear it's over-rated!

Please JOIN US for our first annual Zoom general membership meeting, **Feb 19**, see details in this issue.

Merci, Fofo, Mun gode, Tanimert, Foma, Thank you --

*Amy Wilson & Scott Youngstedt*

## 1) FON Annual Member Meeting Feb 19, 7 pm Eastern

You're invited to join us Wednesday Feb 19 at 7 pm eastern for our first Annual Friends of Niger Member Meeting. Come hear a recap of the grants program, a financial report, meet the board and get an update on board activities. We're also carving out important time to hear from you. What questions and ideas do you have for our organization?

Last year we realized that we didn't really have a good mechanism for getting input from members. In some respects, your donations speak for you, but we know that the wealth of our organization is also

found in its brain trust. We are always looking for meaningful ways to engage our members in the mission. What questions do you have and what role would you like to play?

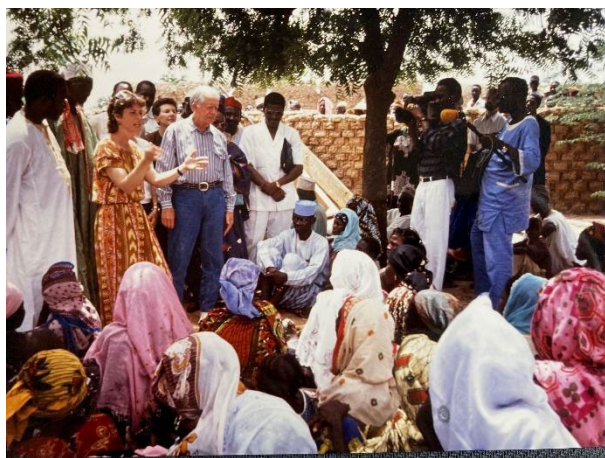
Friends of Niger is inviting you to a special Member Zoom meeting: Feb 19, 2025

## **2) Welcome to our college intern**

We are very pleased to announce that Madalynn Paquette began working with us on January 13, 2025 with a job title of Community Impact Reporting and Communication Intern. Madalynn will work with us to elevate the stories and accomplishments that our Nigérien partners are able to achieve through our grant program. She will help to organize and communicate the results and reports of completed projects to help us better share with FON members, newsletter readers, and prospective applicants for FON grants. Madalynn is a brilliant senior student at Saginaw Valley State University majoring in History and Black Studies (that includes African Studies). She will earn course credit for this unpaid internship guided by Board Member and Professor of Anthropology Scott M. Youngstedt. The internship runs through May 2025. Our sincere thanks to Scott for facilitating this internship which we hope will be a big help to FON and provide an excellent opportunity for Madalynn.

## **3) Jimmy Carter and the worm**

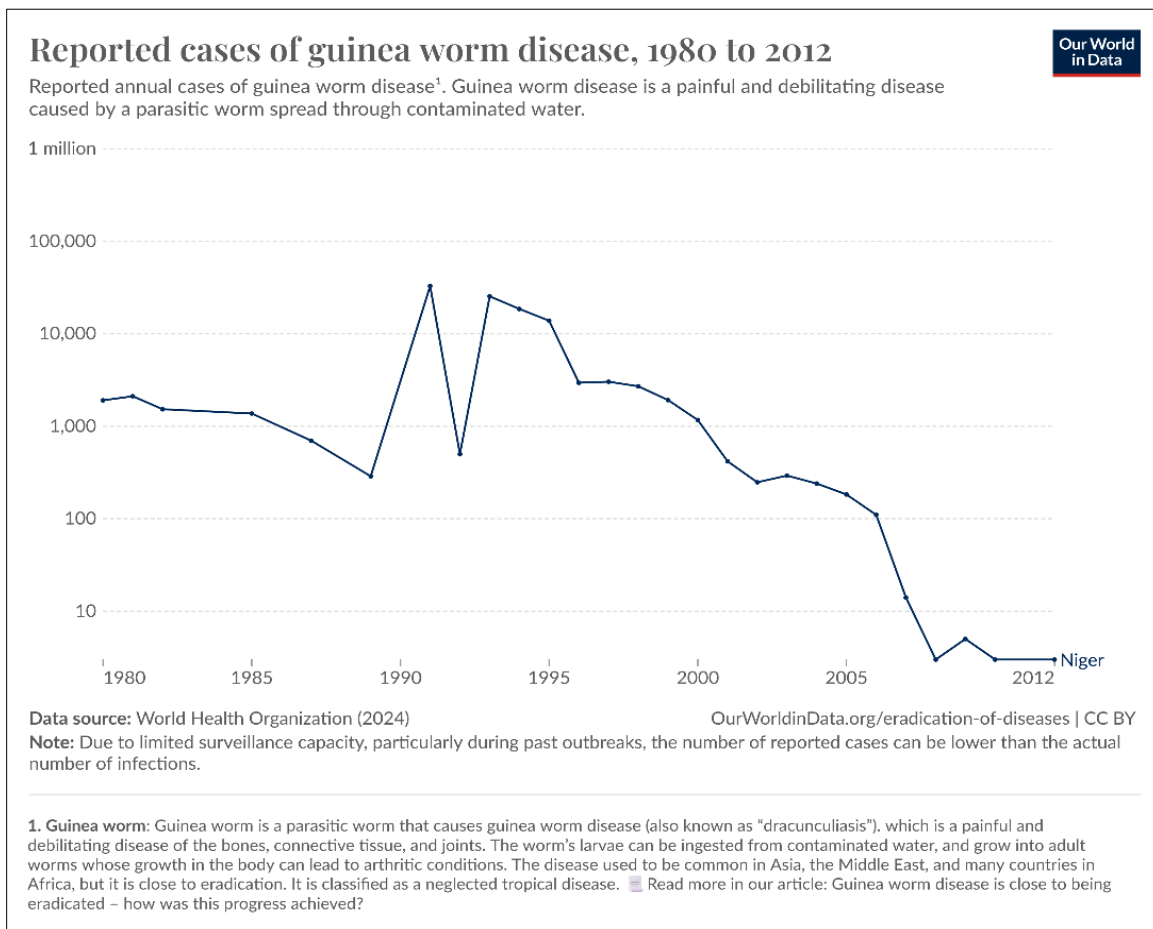
We honor and remember Jimmy Carter and his role in the extraordinary achievement of eradicating Guinea Worm from Niger. It was a great honor for me to meet him in person and participate in his visit to a village where eradication and education efforts were proving successful in 1992.



Check out this amazing website with cool interactive charts like this one that isolates the history of guinea worm in Niger. <https://ourworldindata.org/guinea-worm-path-eradication>

See full story from NPR:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2023/02/23/1158358366/jimmy-carter-took-on-the-awful-guinea-worm-when-no-one-else-would-and-he-triumph>



#### 4) Grant making cycle for 2025- call for volunteers

The 2025 grant calendar has been established. Applications must be received by **May 16, 2025**. Please note that the results of the competition will be announced no later than August 15, 2025. Therefore, no proposed activity should be scheduled to begin before the announcement.

Please share this information with potential applicants. The forms and information are available in French on our website under the tab "A nos amis Nigériens" <https://friendsofniger.org/a-nos-amis-nigériens/infosubventions/>

Members can participate in several ways.

1. Share the Info - email the grant information to potential grant applicants
2. Help Develop a Proposal – work with someone in Niger to help them develop a competitive proposal
3. Volunteer on the Grant Review Team – work with a small group to review a batch of proposals and make funding recommendations
4. Volunteer to be a Project Champion – each funded grant is assigned a champion to act as liaison, coach and mentor

Grant reviews – a reviewer perspective:

*I wanted to share a few thoughts for those of you who might be thinking about being a grant reviewer. The review cycle I participated in was a great experience. And as it worked out, we funded a grant in my village, Ouallam. I can say that Amy and the FON crew are real pros at organizing a decision-making process and the grant applications we had to read were strong. If you've never given away grants before, it can be very rewarding. And*

*the FON folks are supportive and made sure everyone is on the same page regardless of your experience with grants.*

*If you're on the fence about whether to participate, now is the time for all of us to stand up and stay engaged. And the people of Niger sure need the help right now.*

*John Berry, Niger '86-'89*

## 5) Nigerien Nonprofit Survey

In March 2024 we invited NGOs to participate in a survey designed to explore the status of NGOs in Niger. The purpose of the survey was twofold. On the one hand we wanted to better understand the needs of potential grantees in order to tailor our own programs. On the other hand, we wanted to be able to describe NGO work in Niger to others who might be unfamiliar yet interested in supporting the great grassroots work.

The survey represents a small sample and is not an exhaustive study. Some interesting tidbits that we learned from the sixteen organizations who replied to the survey include:

- *All NGOs are registered with the Niger government*
- *Typical staffing is 4-6 full time positions*
- *Good use of volunteers and interns*
- *Women are well-represented in leadership*
- *Most governing boards are elected by the membership of the organization or in open forums*
- *A majority of organizations offered multiple programs*
- *More than half of the NGOs work with international partners who provide a range of support*
- *Sources of funding vary, nearly all list some form of local contribution*

The summarized results of the survey are written up and available on the ABOUT/Documents page of our website [HERE](#).

Please share the survey with any potential donors or supporters you can think of. If you have other ideas about promoting support for grassroots Nigerien efforts please contact us.

## 6) Niger-related News & Info

- Check out this fact-filled website focused on agriculture: <https://reca-niger.org/>  
Réseau National des Chambres d'Agriculture (RECA)  
Chambres d'Agriculture sont des « établissements publics à caractère professionnel ». Elles ont été mises en place par une loi votée par l'Assemblée nationale mais ce ne sont pas des organisations de producteurs de l'État.
- Eva Gretzmacher, an Austrian development worker in Agadez for 28 years, was kidnapped by unidentified attackers on January 12, 2025:  
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/1/13/austrian-woman-kidnapped-by-unknown-assailants-in-niger>

Here are some sources of information to peruse and bookmark:

- ActuNiger: <https://www.actuniger.com/>
- Sahel Research Group – [sign up for email](#):
- RFI in Hausa: <https://www.rfi.fr/ha/nijar/>
- Agence Nigérienne de Presse : <http://www.anp.ne/>
- <https://www.infos-niger.com/>
- <https://tamtaminfo.com/>

- <https://www.lesahel.org/>

Source : Columbia University Libraries : [https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/global/virtual-libraries/african\\_studies/countries/niger/gen.html](https://library.columbia.edu/libraries/global/virtual-libraries/african_studies/countries/niger/gen.html)

## 7) In Brief

*We extend our condolences to the friends and families of Jim Ekstrom and David Nicholas.*

**Jim Ekstrom**, who was Country Director in Niger from July 1973-April 1976, died on January 26, 2025. He had Alzheimer's, and died from his heart simply stopping. He is survived by his wife of 62 years--January 26th was actually their 62nd year anniversary; his son, Matt, 53, daughter Rebekah, 50, who was born in Niger at the Gamkalley Clinic, and youngest, Jessica, 46, conceived in Cameroon but born in the USA; and seven wonderful grandchildren.

Jim and Leslie served as PCVs in Nigeria, 1963-1965, both of them taught English as a Second Language, at the then called, Provincial Secondary School, Funtua.

**David Nicholas**, M.D. passed away on May 8, 2023 in Ashburn Virginia. He loved his time in Niger and signed up for an extra year which influenced his subsequent career in medicine and working in international health programs.

The URC (University Research Co.) family mourns the passing of David D. "Dave" Nicholas, MD, MPH, former URC Senior Vice President who was responsible for the development of URC's global leadership in health care quality improvement. Dave was a pediatrician and public health expert who was admired by all who worked with him as a man of tremendous integrity, humanity, and commitment to improving health services and health outcomes. He recruited and hired many of URC's quality improvement and health systems strengthening experts and was a true servant leader and mentor to all.

**Lasting Impact.** After graduating from Yale Medical School, Dave did a Rotating Internship at the University of Oregon Medical School Hospital in Portland. He then served as a Peace Corps doctor in Niger from 1963-1966, where the Maternal and Child Health Program he helped develop with the Peace Corps Volunteers still operates today. Dave returned from Africa to complete his residency in Pediatrics at Columbia University Medical Center/Babies Hospital from 1966-1969, where he met his wife, Carole.

<https://www.urc-chs.com/news/in-memory-of-dr-david-d-nicholas-1936-2023-former-urc-senior-vice-president/>

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- FON Members may be far flung, but these cities have the highest concentrations:
    - Washington DC- 45
    - Seattle – 31
    - San Francisco – 22So when and where is the party DC folks???
  - Extensive Zarma dictionary including photo dictionary developed by a couple of Dutch enthusiasts- <https://www.djerma.nl/>  
Other links they share including Peace Corps dictionary:  
[https://www.djerma.nl/zarma\\_en/general-info/links\\_to\\_zarma\\_related\\_websites.html](https://www.djerma.nl/zarma_en/general-info/links_to_zarma_related_websites.html)



## **YOUR DONATIONS FUEL THIS WORK**

Friends of Niger is an organization to initiate and support activities related to Niger and its people. We pursue three main purposes:

1. Connecting and engaging people who have connections to Niger including diaspora, and those who have worked or are working in Niger,
2. Supporting development and humanitarian activities in Niger, and
3. Advocating for and educating about Niger.

Friends of Niger is an all-volunteer tax-exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. EIN 65-1267451. To donate write a check payable to Friends of Niger and mail to  
**NEW ADDRESS: Friends of Niger 4865 Hwy 234 Box 180, White City, OR 97503,**

OR go to [www.friendsofniger.org](http://www.friendsofniger.org) to use PayPal.

### **Board of Directors**

Officers: Amy Wilson/President, Alix Barstow Fedoruk/Vice President, Mary Abrams/Secretary & Grants Management Committee, John Baird/Past President; At Large Board members: Paige Pihl Buckley, Alhassan Ali Mamadou Souna, Douglas Steinberg, Nafissa Salihou, Scott Youngstedt, Soufiane Younoussi

### **For more about Friends of Niger:**

- Our website <http://www.friendsofniger.org/>
- Join & follow us at: (Friends of Niger) FON
- Submit news topics and articles: [camelexpress@friendsofniger.org](mailto:camelexpress@friendsofniger.org)
- Contact President Amy Wilson, [president@friendsofniger.org](mailto:president@friendsofniger.org)

**“There is no way to peace; peace is the way .”**

