



SOS:
Newsletter

March 2014

BUILDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN SIERRA LEONE

IN THIS ISSUE

Dear Supporters

Sheiku Mansaray

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the dedicated volunteers of the Schools of Sinkunia, we would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation for all your support and financial donations over the years. Without your contributions we would not have been able to continue to fulfil our dream of building educational opportunities in Sierra Leone. We asked you to build a school and you did. We asked you to provide scholarships for students and you are. We would like you to know that we are accomplishing those things we set out to do which we have highlighted in our newsletter.

This newsletter will share with you the progress we have made in the previous year, highlight our future plans and opportunities, and invite you to visit our newly constructed website (www.schoolsofsinkunia.org) so that you may learn more about our work in Sinkunia, Sierra Leone.

With your invaluable support through your generous contributions we were able to accomplish much over the last year.

We want to say thanks from the bottom of our hearts to all the people that contributed one way or the other in achieving our primary aims and objectives as well as thank all of those who donated items for us to take to Sinkunia, Sierra Leone.

We ask you to please continue to visit our website for the latest news.

We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions.



School Construction

Find out the latest in school construction with a round-up on the latest in new and existing developments.

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Scholarships

The latest with regard to our Scholarship program.

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School Construction

One of our major accomplishments a year ago is the completion of a huge building with 3 classrooms, a store, library and an office for the principal. Each classroom accommodates 90 students each. Historically, dropout rates were quite high so it was decided that completion of the building should be a priority. We are pleased to announce that the building has been completed and it's now being used by the students.

The completion of this building is a huge success as it's the first Senior Secondary School in the entire region. Students from all the surrounding villages and towns come to this school. Even students who left for other cities have returned back to this school due to the level of discipline as well as the outstanding academic performance of the school. Thanks for your support which has drastically reduced the dropout rates as well as reduced the difficulties and challenges faced by students moving far away from home. This building was named after the current Paramount Chief PC Alimamy Lahai V for making education number one priority and for his outstanding role in creating educational opportunities for the people of his chiefdom.

Construction of Harris Hall

As mentioned, due to the very high academic performance of the school, students from all



over Sierra Leone comes to Sinkunia Secondary School so as a result there has been an increasing need for more room to accommodate the influx. To address this pressing need, thanks to the Harris family who made an initial donation of the sum of \$9000 to the SOS for the commencement of the construction of an additional block which will comprise of 3 large classrooms that will accommodate 90 students each, a store, a library and an office space. This building will accommodate the students that are expected to progress to 5th and 6th form next year.

First Nursery School Building opened in Sinkunia Town

A newly built and well-furnished nursery school has been formally opened in Sinkunia. SOS is currently working in collaboration with the nursery school by providing training and support to the teachers and the kids.

Solar Panels

Thanks to a different donor the two original senior secondary school building is currently powered by solar which has given the students the opportunity to be able to study at the school overnight under solar light other than using candles or kerosene lamps.



Kainde School Lunch Program

As the local Sierra Leonean saying goes "an empty bag cannot stand", a hungry child cannot concentrate and learn. Thanks to the SOS UK Branch we are pleased to announce that with your support the Kainde School Lunch Program has been revived and the students are guaranteed a meal a day which they might not get if they stay home. We now cook for 675 students and offer little incentive to 3 volunteer cooks.

School Supplies and Furniture Donations

Special thanks to Emma Grohmann who donated huge number of stationery (notebooks, pens, pencils, erasers, sharpeners, crayons, rulers and textbooks to over 100 students and 10 teachers) as well as classroom furniture to The SOS UK Branch.

CHANGING LIVES...



College Candidates

Some of the faces that could be helped by the scholarship program.



Scholarships

Thanks to the generous donation from several key donors, our scholarship program has been extended again from 12 students in 2012 to 42 students in 2013. Our "Beyond Sinkunia Scholarship Program" awarded 4 annual scholarships to the highest achieving male and female students based on the West African Senior School Certificate Examination scores and recommendations from scholarship committee.

SOS is very pleased to announce the new scholarships awarded by various donors. On behalf of the people of Sinkunia, SOS wishes to express their sincere thanks and appreciation to various donors who had and continued to give students the opportunity to be educated.

Bacon Family Scholarship

"Beyond Sinkunia" This is a 4 years scholarship which was awarded by the Bacon Family. This scholarship was awarded to students venturing beyond Sinkunia to go to university in other parts of the country. It covers tuition, books, transportation and all other needs that will make their time away from home less challenging.

Lily Smith Scholarship

This scholarship was awarded by one of the founding members of SOS and the youngest donor who is also a college student to a very hard working but untrained and unqualified community teacher Balla Musa Kamara. Thanks to Lily Balla now has the opportunity to complete his Higher Teacher's Certificate at the Port Loko Teachers College in Sierra Leone while he continues to teach.

Corvallis High School Softball Team Scholarship

This scholarship was awarded by the Corvallis High School Softball Team in honor of Lily Smith who is a former player, co-founder of SOS and has visited the schools in Sinkunia twice. The scholarship is to be awarded to a Senior Secondary School student that is preparing for the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination.

With your financial assistance, we are currently assisting 4 students who are now in their 2nd year of University. We plan to continue making annual awards to the highest achieving students. Awards are \$1,500 per year for each student. This scholarship helps pay tuition, books, transportation, maintenance and other living

expenses for the students living away from home. These scholarships will be awarded annually while maintaining financial assistance to previous recipients until they complete their University degrees. This is a most ambitious project and can only continue with your financial support.

Other Named and Ongoing Scholarships

The other named and ongoing scholarships are the Jean and Stan Adams, the Maryanne and Warren Staton and the Mrs. Paula Schudel Scholarship. If you are interested in having a scholarship in your name, your loved one or organization, please contact us. You can donate to a specific scholarship account or ask for your donation to be directed to the general scholarship fund.

VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES UPDATE

SOS volunteers headed by Emma Lewis, Peter Blanchard and Sheiku Mansaray are in the process of registering a UK branch of the SOS which will carry on the activities of the SOS in the UK. Sheiku Mansaray has just returned from Sinkunia after a brief trip to meet with the school and community to identify the site for the construction of the Harris Hall which will serve as the extension to the Senior Secondary School and will accommodate the 5th and 6th form students. Sheiku will be going back to Sinkunia in the summer to start the construction of the new building.

INTERNATIONAL PHILANTHOPY

We are pleased to announce that The Corvallis High School Softball Team in United States has chosen Schools of Sinkunia as their team's International Philanthropy.

SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS

SOS would like to extend special congratulatory message to Paramount Chief Alimamy Lahai V who celebrated his 20th anniversary of good governance as a paramount chief on March 11th 2014. SOS wishes him many more happy and peaceful years to come.

Looking to the Future

Primary Goals

Our primary goals for this year are:

- Raise more funds for the construction of the new building before the start of the next academic year when the building will be needed to accommodate the students that are being promoted to 5th and 6th form.
- Furnish the newly completed building with chairs and desks to accommodate the number of students
- Ensure that the scholarship and lunch programs are financially sustainable.
- Equip the libraries with text books and other essential educational equipment. The schools currently lack basic educational materials including textbooks and all other educational materials.

Future Goals

As we gain confidence that our primary goals are financially secured we will look towards adding new goals based on the needs assessment completed by Sheiku Mansaray this year which identified the following needs as part of our future goals:

- As Sinkunia is a remote and isolated community, creating basic incentives to attract teachers is a major challenge so a crucial future challenge is to continue attracting and retaining skilled teachers in the school through the introduction of remote allowance and basic teacher's incentives bonus.
- Provide support to hard working teachers to acquire more training, skills and qualification that will enable them to continue their good work of passing on knowledge to the students
- Establish computer labs in both the primary and secondary school which currently have no computer facilities and as we all know, preparing students for success in the modern world will require the students to develop ICT skills in computer use.
- Establish science labs in both the primary and secondary schools
- Building recreational facilities such as a gym, basketball, volleyball and or soccer field are also a future needs.
- School Band – SOS will like to appeal for school bands for the primary and secondary schools as they currently don't have any band even for thanksgiving ceremonies.

AROUND THE SCHOOL



Early School Life

The learning process begins early, with the new Nursery school, here children pose for the camera, before beginning their day of learning.



Learning from a young age

Education opportunities are available to the very young, where they are taught to a high standard by dedicated staff.



Learning at all ages

Schools of Sinkunia strives to provide education to children of all ages.

Thank You

We want to say thanks from the bottom of our hearts to all the people that contributed one way or the other in achieving our primary aims and objectives as well as thank all of those who donated items for us to take to Sinkunia, Sierra Leone.

We ask you to please continue to visit our website for the latest news.

www.schoolsofsinkunia.org

You can also follow us on Social Media;

www.facebook.com/schoolsofsinkunia

twitter.com/Sinkunia



We welcome your comments, questions and suggestions.

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