



Thanksgiving 2017 First Graduating Class - July 15, 2017

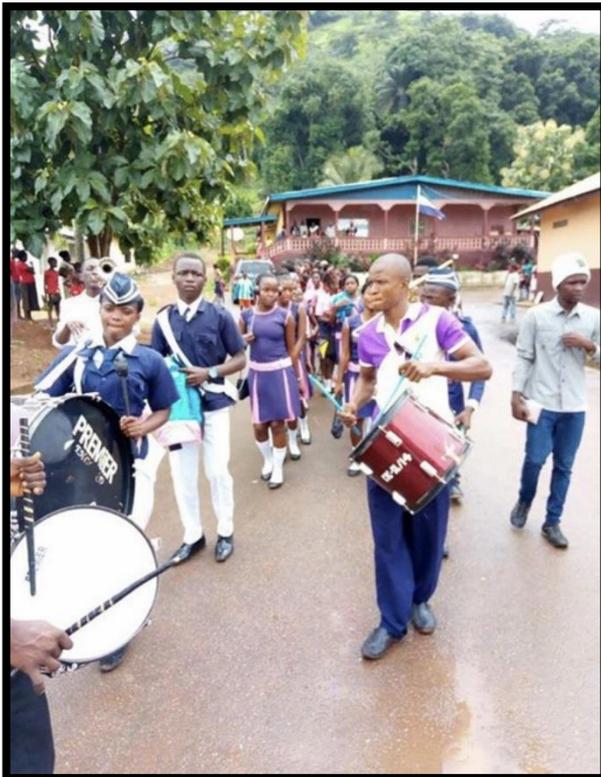
Dear Friends of Schools for Sierra Leone,

Meet the first graduating class of Kabala Christian Schools. Look at these beautiful young adults! We feel overwhelmed with gratitude, amazement, and delight.

They are readied to take up career pathways. We pray they will ably support the urgent needs of people in Sierra Leone. Their people fight for health in a nation that suffered Ebola. They need agriculturalists where 59% of people wake up not knowing how they will eat. They need businesses and economic enterprises to grow an economy in one of the very poorest nations on earth. They need environmental care where weak knowledge results in fatal mudslides. They need ethical leadership where corruption threatens. This was always our hope.



Together we have seen the little school through hardships that included staff changes, building projects, and teacher training. We've worked through Ebola, government changes and much more. In all of this, God has been so faithful to us. We felt it expressed in our hearts – but also in your prayers and gifts; the steadfast dedication of donor partners, school staff, parents, the local community of parents and the Kabala churches.



Readers of this newsletter have made this joyful day possible. Just imagine! In a place of tremendous paucity of material (but abundant richness of faith and love), in just 10 years, we have developed a campus that includes:

- A primary school structure.
- A junior secondary school.
- A senior secondary school.
- A kitchen, offices and resource room.
- Solar power to facilitate more technology and lighting.
- Uninterrupted supplies of notebooks and basic texts.
- A library that services all the children and staff.
- A fully stocked laboratory.
- A computer lab, now in development.
- Primary and secondary teachers.
- A school board who now fully oversees school development.
- Such humble supports as latrines and a well.

For anyone, like myself, who has seen schools across Sierra Leone, these are mighty accomplishments. We give God the glory – but thank you for letting Him work through you. Parents and a community have seen hope nourished for a better future in Sierra Leone.

Behind every graduate ... The Primary School!

Yes! The results are posted. Every primary school child passed the national exit exam. Again, we thank God, our teachers and you for this powerful indicator of learning success. Even so, we continue to work for higher levels of ability and independent reading skills. Last August, Sarah Kluitenberg led workshops for two weeks at the school. We hosted a total of 400 local teachers! Additionally, we will do assessments again this January to continue to develop instruction that better targets children's learning needs.

We are working hard to keep developing children who can read and write independently; do arithmetic; and have the needed foundational knowledge in their subject areas. This is a challenge in an area where books are rare and teachers are weakly trained. Additionally, these are the children of child soldiers and parents who were displaced during their adolescent years. Their parents suffered trauma and great deprivation. This situation also shows why it matters so much that our emphasis is *Christian*. Forgiveness, redemption and service are part of the message every day.



In January 2017, **we welcomed Mrs. Finah Kamara**, the new headmistress of the primary school. She is an able teacher. Her 1st grade class outscored first graders from almost all Sierra Leonean schools. She brings energy, passion, vision and practical thinking to the position! She guides her staff toward more effective teaching.

She –and we– hope to add a preschool to the primary complex one day. As research shows, this strongly supports better outcomes during first six years in school – hence secondary school! And as the secondary school begins its second stream of students, we hope to see an additional stream at the primary level, one day.

With this newsletter, we are celebrating our first graduating class. In our next newsletter we look forward to telling you about another astonishing development. There are a number of schools springing up in the area, modeled on what we are doing in the Kabala Christian School Complex. Inspired by the Christian passion of teachers and their children, they are working to develop educational opportunities in their own communities.

For now – we celebrate! Together, on this side of the sea, we give thanksgiving. We invite you to share this prayer, from Philippians 1:3-7, with us, as together we thank God for our colleagues and friends in Sierra Leone:

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. Being confident of this: He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ... I have you in my heart...

Jo Kuyvenhoven

John Loeks
Schools for Sierra Leone
2121 Celebration Drive NE
Grand Rapids MI 49525
616-447-4220

www.schoolsforSierraleone.com

