

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)





**Peace
Corps**

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

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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 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.

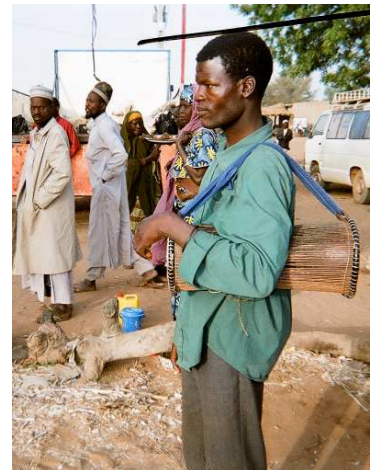
Plumpy'Nut Update

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 Guechemé, 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 Guechemé, Niger. I'm pretty sure about 3000 Plumpy'nut "meals" were distributed through the dispensaire in Guechemé. 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 Guechemé 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

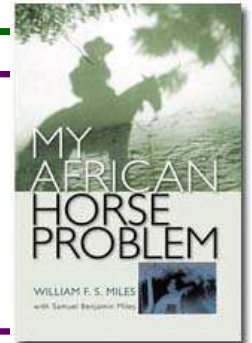
Her Excellency Mrs. Touré A. D. Maiga, Ambassador of the Republic of Niger, and Colonel Touré Abdoul extended their best wishes, peace, and blessings for the New Year to Friends of Niger.

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 Nigerien 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 _____

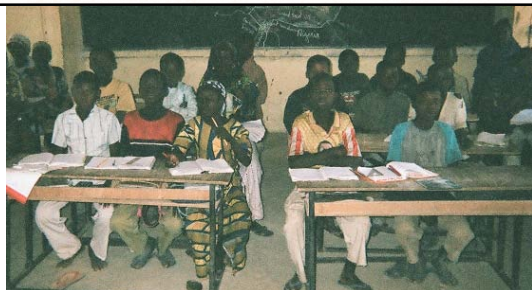
TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

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
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20033-0164**

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