

# FROGS FANFAIR

MARCH 2011



FROGS is a Registered Charity No. 1069168

## AGM 2011/Thank you Buffet

All members are cordially invited to attend the Annual General Meeting of Friends of Gambian Schools, to be held at the home of Sue Townsend, Chairman :-

**Delmede, North Street,  
Sutton Valence,  
ME17 3HU**  
on  
**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> April at 7.30 pm**

We are sad to report that David Jordan, who has been a valued member of the Committee for the past 10 years is standing down. We wish him and Barbara well for the future and FROGS will continue to support them in their worthwhile work in The Gambia.

If you would like to be considered as a member of FROGS Executive Committee, please let any Committee member know at least 14 days before the AGM.

The meeting will be followed by a Buffet meal – please ring or email to let me know if you will be attending, for catering purposes please.

We look forward to seeing you.

Sue Townsend  
Chairman, FROGS

## *A Report on the Development of Gertrude's Workshop. Motto: For the Advancement of Young People.* *Sally Reader*

In April 2007, FROGS provided the funds to convert an outhouse in Gertrude Campbell's compound in Banjulinding.

Two rooms were decorated and brought up to standard by tiling the floors, fitting nets on the windows and furnishing the other rooms with tables and stools. Metal shelving, sewing machines, threads etc. were also provided.

Gertrude opened her doors to take students who could enrol to study needlework, cookery, nutrition, tie and dye, and basic English and mathematics.

The first academic year saw just six students enrol, and it was a struggle for Gertrude to manage, but then she struck lucky.

In early 2009, the Gambian YMCA had been given a grant by the Big Lottery fund in the UK. This was to be used to educate disadvantaged and under privileged young people in life skills.

The YMCA was then looking for suitable tutors and venues in Western Region, and Gertrude's name was put forward. The premises were visited and Gertrude's teaching observed and found favourable. So the YMCA agreed to enrol 10 students for a nine-month intensive course on tailoring.

They are enrolled during February. Notices announcements and course details are funded by the YMCA and the nine-month courses start in March.

During the course they are taught basic English and mathematics, easy book keeping, measuring, cutting out and then stitching and general sewing. At the end of their nine months they are producing well made and stylish outfits for all ages.

For the academic year of 2008-2009, 10 students were enrolled, boys and girls, and at the end of the course eight graduated with certificates and the opportunity to either apply for a micro loan from the YMCA to start their own business, or be helped to find employment with an experienced tailor.

The academic year of 2009-2010 went even better, with 15 students enrolling, 13 girls and two boys. Their ages ranged from 16-27, and they all had different levels of education, but were willing to learn. Three of the students were Christian and the others Muslim.

At the end of this year's course 13 students graduated, receiving their certificates during a long ceremony at Brikama College Campus. Gertrude's little group was one of many. Over 180 young people received certificates in tailoring, dressmaking,

welding and iron working, cookery, hairdressing and beauty and carpentry.

The YMCA scheme is an excellent one and is being run most efficiently, giving young people a chance to get into employment. This year four of Gertrude's students applied for a micro loan.

FROGS members, Lynne and Terry Arlow, my friend Janet Daniels and I, were all at the ceremony to cheer "our" little group on, as they proudly receive their certificates, and to watch their short drama presentation about how good Gertrude's Workshop is. We wholeheartedly agree with that!



Well done Gertrude. Setting up the workshop has been a very worthwhile project. Long may it continue!

**FROGS Partnership with the US Peace Corps.**  
***Sally Reader***

Since 2006, when we were first asked by PCV Jim Hedgecock to help with the conversion of a disused room into a library, at St. Theresa's LBS, Fola Bantang, Upper Saloum Region, FROGS has maintained a friendship and partnership with the US Peace Corps. Jim is now back in Alaska, no doubt feeling the cold!

These young people come to needy parts of the world, in this case The Gambia, to help in three different dimensions - Health, Education and Agriculture.

They are all volunteers and come to their country of destination for a minimum of two years. Before leaving the USA they learn a language that can be used in their host country. So as far as The Gambia is concerned that is either Mandinka, Wollof, Jola or Manjaka -none of which are easy to learn!

They then have a short orientation time before going to their "home" village where they are housed with a family and host parents.

I personally think they are very brave as most placements are singular unless a couple happen to be married. .

We have worked here with several PCV's and they have all been excellent.

Ellie - she instigated Project 51, the building of a feeder school at Paleleh in Central River Division, way out in the sticks. When Ellie's administration skills were recognised by HQ, she was recalled to the Kombos and Jess took her place.

Jess has since seen the Paleleh Feeder School finished and a kitchen built and garden planned. She has also been instrumental in overseeing the conversion of a disused classroom block into a staff quarters at Baati Ndaar, also in Central River Division, and Project 71 on FROGS books.

The involvement of Amanda in a furniture project at Berending SSS, Lower Niimi Division, North Bank, meant that the work is proceeding satisfactorily and at the moment on schedule. This was Project 79, where the senior secondary wood working pupils are making furniture for the schools use and FROGS are funding the materials.

Sally and her friend Janet met up with these and many more PCV's at the showing of a documentary called "Female Role Models" at a local restaurant.

The film, made and edited by Amanda and a young Scot named Peter, currently a volunteer at the Gambian YMCA, is to go on tour, or on trek, to be shown to young people in the provincial towns and villages, to encourage them to spread their wings and take some of the opportunities now available to young people in The Gambia.

Long live the Peace Corps and long may we work with them. After all we all have the same goal, to help young people in The Gambia realise their potential. (see below for 'Thoughts from a PCV')

**FROGS fund a pit latrine 'up country'**

***Gloria – PCV***

On Friday I had to take over the pre-school class. It was a terribly windy day and dust was blowing everywhere. I sent the little girls 4 at a time to the pit latrine with an older student and as they disappeared into the dust I asked - why would anyone ever build a pit latrine so far from the school?! Then it all made sense! They didn't want to go through rock and so they built it by the drainage ditch so it wouldn't be so hard to dig! ! ! !

Well, my Mali Brothers came from the land of rock and I had served in Uganda where every pit latrine had to go through a layer of solid quartz after two meters. So we didn't know you couldn't dig through this rather soft, crumbly volcanic stuff which the Sarahule call impossible rock. I had sort of expected the community to gather round and dig the pit latrine. But they gathered round and looked at the site for two weeks! So I asked my Mali neighbours to do it and they completed the job over the weekend. A beautiful pit! One meter by 2 meters and a depth of 3.5 meters. Everyone had to come see it and claimed responsibility for such an accomplishment. They declared that it should last for at least 20 years maybe more.

I feared a child might fall in it and so it was announced at the assembly on Friday for the children to keep away from the area for if they fell in we could never get them out. There was a moment of silence as the school pondered this statement. Then there were solutions offered ....a rope.....a ladder. Praise God, no one fell in and yesterday the contractor laid the concrete foundation with the venting pipes over the pit and again the Mali boys made the bricks which we need.

Below are pictures of the covered pit and the new bricks drying in the sun.



Thank you for funding this project and I know it will make a difference to the lives of these children.

**Thought from a PCV working with FROGS**  
***Jessica Walton PCV***

After two and a half years of calling The Gambia home, I struggle to find an appropriate farewell. I have lived and worked as a United States Peace Corps Volunteer in rural Paleleh and urban Kanifang as an environment and natural resource management technician. However, as many who have worked in development know, my work was not limited to my specific training. As a volunteer, I had been taught to listen to the host country nationals and communities I work in. The request in Paleleh was overwhelmingly unanimous: schools! With absolutely no idea of how to go about it, but determined to give it a shot, I took a friend's advice and contacted FROGS.

From my initial first impression of the charity (a clever acronym and energetic Founder of FROGS, Sally Reader), I had no idea how much work I'd do with her over the next two years. I have been involved in numerous FROGS projects throughout the country, from providing Jolly Phonics materials for teachers to building an entire school from scratch. Now, I feel fortunate enough to call Sally and her husband close friends.

As a volunteer constantly searching for meaningful, high impact work, I found FROGS projects to be immensely fulfilling. Some days, at my wit's end, trying to encourage better environmental practices, I could tune in to the voices of children carried on a breeze coming from the direction of the school, and find peace.

Five of the children whom I lived with in Paleleh no longer have to walk five kilometres to the nearest school after FROGS helped fund the building of a

school there. This gives them time to work with me on their maths. It also gives them self confidence and a bit of free time to better themselves. I can assuredly say that some of the children in my host family would not be attending school if FROGS hadn't supported us in Paleleh. Now, seven surrounding villages also send their children to this new educational hub.

Working with the Head Teacher, we appealed to the Government of The Gambia to expand our three room, mud block school house into a proper Lower Basic School. After much waiting, this term will be held in a new, larger school house, complete with an even larger garden space. Environment and education. My dream come true. Peace of mind. Sustainable, meaningful work. Thank you FROGS for a perfect farewell.

***Note from Sally:- Jess is packing up and due to go back to USA..but FROGS means a lot to her.. I SHALL MISS HER ..!***

### **FUTURE DATES**

We are having stalls at the following events:

*Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2011*  
Open Garden at the home of  
Sue and Paul Warren (FROGS Members)  
42 The Goldings  
Rainham  
Kent  
ME8 0AX

*Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2011*  
Bearsted Village Fayre

*Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2011*  
Aylesford Village Festival

If anyone is able to help at any of these events, or wants further details, please contact us.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Keep up to date by watching our Website on**  
**[www.friendsofgambianschools.co.uk](http://www.friendsofgambianschools.co.uk)**

### **GIFT AID**

By a simple signature on our Membership Form by those of you paying tax, we are able to claim back tax for FROGS through the Gift Aid Scheme.

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