



## CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We are grateful again for what the Lord has been doing and continues to do through Bridges of Hope for the people in Liberia. We are thankful for your support both prayerfully and financially. Our financial needs are being met through your generous gifts and student scholarships. God has been so good to us!

Another successful school year ended August 6th and we are awaiting communication from the Ministry of Education as to when school can start for the 2021-2022 school year. The students are learning and growing in the things of the Lord each day. I am so proud of them. God is to be praised for all that is happening at the school.

Some of you, may have received, or will be receiving a new student profile. This is because students drop out of school for reasons unknown to us. We work hard to communicate our expectations for participation in the scholarship program and our team is working to resolve issues of student turnover.

We continue to work toward the church and the hospital projects and resolve the land issue. We hope to find the land God wants for his ministry in Liberia. Please pray with us as we seek His divine intervention.

Also, please pray with us as we think about planning a mission trip next year to disciple our students. The date and time will come later as details are planned. If you are interested in this trip, please let us know. We are thinking VBS or an Awana type ministry. If you have other ideas, please share them.

May God be with all of you in your continual endeavors on behalf of Bridges of Hope and Hope Christian International Academy.

**Martin Digler** Chairman, Bridges of Hope, Inc.



## A HISTORY OF BRIDGES OF HOPE, HOPE VILLAGE AND HOPE INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

by Joel Schwiesow

The foundations of BOHI were established in 1999 when I visited Liberia on a short-term medical mission trip where I met the young Martin Digler. The following year he came to live with my family and attend SDSM&T. In the ensuing years a dream of his sister, Marie, and brother-in-law, Rev. Victor Padmore was made known to us by Rev. Padmore when he visited Rapid City. They had a large dream, a vision for a school and orphanage in rural Liberia. Funds were donated to acquire property and in September of 2005 Bridges of Hope was incorporated as a South Dakota non-profit organization.



In January of 2006 – a team from Engineering Ministries International traveled to Liberia to survey the property and to layout a school and the placement of village homes. I carried \$10,000 in cash with me that January, a gift from a near relative that had lost a 14-year-old son to a sudden disease. Those funds allowed construction to begin while the engineering team was onsite and the foundation for 6 classrooms was laid. Charitable status was soon granted by the IRS and by the Fall of 2006 those six classrooms were



almost complete, and 120 students were in school. Twelve months later in the Fall of 2007 six more classrooms were complete and 240 students were enrolled. Today, 345 Nursery through 12th grade students attend school in 15 classrooms.

Over the first few year's individuals and churches funded homes that accommodated teacher's families and several orphans. Through many gifts wells were dug, generators arrived and now, thanks to electricity and a submersible well pump, water is lifted into a tower providing running water to the school and housing area.

Through the years many dedicated board members, volunteers and donors made significant gifts, hosted fund raisers, and traveled to Hope Village to monitor the progress. With the establishment of a scholarship sponsor program, so ably managed by Arlen & Gwen Pequette, we no longer struggle to meet monthly needs and that has allowed other gifts to maintain and improve the facilities at Hope Village.

With the advent of Martin & Stephanie Digler stepping into leadership a few years ago, the number of teachers, administrators and support staff has grown as has the quality of instruction delivered to the students. It is no longer just a school in rural Liberia providing basic education to knowledge hungry children. Hope International Christian Academy is building a Christ-centered curriculum in the school and a program of professional development for the staff.

## CAREER DAY



On July 23rd, students from nursery to 12th grade participated in Career Day. Three students from the 11th grade presented different careers: Mary Boimah presented on journalism, Emmanuel Cooper covered the topic of AFL (Armed Forces of Liberia), and Timothy H. Kollie informed the students about a career in pharmacy. (also, see photo at top of page one.)

## FLUENCY MEANS "UNDERSTANDING"

The US National Reading Panel has defined fluency as "the ability to read text quickly, accurately, and with proper expression." Successful readers not only must-read words correctly but must also connect words quickly and automatically. In addition, they must read with expression to bring meaning to the text. All three of these working together create good comprehension and bring overall success in reading.

During this past school year, we conducted two fluency assessments at Hope. Next year, our goal is to have three assessments. The data gathered will be used to measure growth as well as communicate and encourage students to continue working hard to reach fluency goals.

## 17 TEAM MEMBERS PLAN FOR MEDICAL MISSION TRIP OCTOBER 7-23

Team members from South Dakota, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Arkansas plan to go to Liberia in October. There will be a team providing surgery at Phebe Hospital and a team providing clinic services and education at Hope. God willing, we will also have revival services in the evenings at Hope campus as well as discipleship opportunities. Please keep the team in your prayers.

## SPONSOR NEWS

Currently we have 298 of the 345 students sponsored at HICA. We are thankful for God's provision and grateful for your partnership. A reminder to those who sponsored students annually (\$240) in 2020; please renew your sponsorship for 2021 if you have not already done so. Also, keep us updated with new credit card information. Any questions, contact Arlen and Gwen Pequette at 605-430-2545, email [gwenarlen@gmail.com](mailto:gwenarlen@gmail.com), or see our website: [bridgesofhopewestafrica.com](http://bridgesofhopewestafrica.com)

**Reminder to Sponsors:** You recently received a postcard with guidelines to send your student a letter. Letters must be received by September 30th.

**A NEW WELL FUNDRAISER**

THIS PHOTO SHOOT WITH HELP US RAISE MONEY FOR A BRAND NEW WELL FOR THE FUTURE SITE OF A NEW CHURCH AND CLINIC IN LIBERIA.

**WHAT: Photo Shoot Fundraiser**  
**WHERE: Chapel in the Hills**  
**WHEN: 09/25/2021, 9AM - 2PM**  
**COST: \$30 for a mini photo shoot**  
**GOAL: \$5,000**  
**VOLUNTEER: Nicole Hofer**

Call Nicole Hofer at 605-391-8252 for an appointed time for your photo.

### Our Heartfelt Thanks!

Every month we receive gifts both large & small that allow us to improve and maintain the facilities at Hope Village. Recent gifts allowed us to re-roof & refurbish the homes which had deteriorated. The same homes & the school received fresh paint inside & out. Projects on the horizon include replacing the library that will hopefully contain a computer lab; constructing a shower facility for village residents, the completion of the student sanitary latrine, delayed twice by scheduled groups being unable to travel in a year of Covid and completion of fencing to bring safety and security to the campus. We are an all-volunteer charity with no overhead. Banking and accounting expenses are funded by board members. Travel to Liberia is self-funded. Virtually 100% of your gifts support our efforts at Hope Village and your gifts are used wisely. Your generosity is much appreciated.