

We strive to bring education, shelter and sustainability to the people of Liberia, West Africa.



it's our
10
YEAR
ANNIVERSARY

In 1999 I accompanied, David, a fellow member of my church to Liberia where he was to install a generator that would power the upcountry hospital, known as Phebe.

Phebe Hospital was built in the 1960's to US standards by the cooperative effort of Lutheran and Methodist missionary societies. Unfortunately, the hospital had been severely vandalized ("ruined" in the local vernacular) during the civil war and it was obvious that the staff was demoralized by the condition of their workplace.

"The world is growing smaller and we can not ignore those in need any longer."

My effort at the hospital was to offer an inservice to the local anesthesia providers but the anesthesia machines had been vandalized and so every surgery from c-sections to gallbladders was being performed under a "dissociative" agent used to cloud the senses. I was able to

cobble together one working anesthesia machine from the parts of three "ruined" ones and so we began to provide the first general anesthesia to patients since the rebel damage.

One late afternoon, I took a short cut through labor & delivery and found an infant weighing no more than 2 1/2 – 3 pounds lying in an open window. It had been placed there by nurses knowing it was too small to survive. I had noticed an incubator in a storage area and retrieved it, cleaned it, transported it to the delivery ward and placed the infant in it. With David accompanying me I returned to check on the infant but found him back in the window. The nurse kindly but firmly informed me that the child would not live and she would not use up the few resources at her disposal in trying to delay the inevitable... I made a decision to baptize the infant and told David we would utilize sprinkling versus immersion as I did not want the nursing staff to think I was hastening the baby's death. The baby did not last the night.

I had heard mission presentations but I always felt that what I had to offer was too little to make a difference but a two and a half week trip

has turned into what is now a ten year effort to improve the lot of at least a few Liberians. I learned that it is not the size of the gift that makes a difference, it is the gift itself. Much can be accomplished with little in third world economies. Two dollars pays a day's wage to a laborer happy to have a job in the presence of 75% unemployment. Ten dollars buys seed, twenty dollars fertilizer. Fifty dollars purchases a 100 pound bag of rice and 3 bags will feed the leper colony for two weeks. One hundred dollars pays a teacher for a month and brings a free education to 30 children in a country without public education. Twenty-five hundred dollars brings a well and clean water to an entire complex of villages in an area where water borne disease is the only major health threat to infants and the elderly.

There is no end to what might be accomplished if we each contribute from our abundance. The world is growing smaller and we can not ignore those in need any longer.



Joel Schwiesow

Excerpts from "Thoughts upon returning from first trip to Liberia in 1999"

HOPE VILLAGE IS TEN YEARS OLD!

Bridges of Hope, Inc. and the effort in Liberia is 10 years old this year. The first six classrooms opened their doors in the Fall of 2006 to 120 students eager for an education, now there are 14 classrooms serving almost 400 children. From the beginning our goal for Hope Village has always been self-sufficiency. Why? If our efforts can help those we support in Africa become self-sufficient, the benefits of those efforts will live on beyond our lives. This is not an idea we came to ourselves. A long-time Liberian missionary, a woman who happened to grow up in Wall-SD, challenged us early on to avoid the fate of so many African charitable efforts that lie abandoned or unfinished when founders, organizers and donors have run out of money, lost interest or died.

Victor & Marie Padmore, founders of Hope Village, report that in spite of a drop in rubber prices, income from the first harvest was used to purchase materials for tapping the rubber trees and to purchase, transport and plant cocoa seedlings. While it took 7-10 years for rubber trees to mature, it will take 4 years for the cocoa plants. Farm income also allowed self-funding of operational expenses such as instructional materials, government taxes, "text fees" for graduations, and school uniforms. Pigs are being sold for \$100 U.S.



SCHOOL HAS RESUMED AT HOPE VILLAGE



This means it is time to once again address the ongoing need for support of students, teachers and orphans in Liberia. In our country there are many giving and charitable opportunities for the generous of heart to choose from, however, it is unlikely that most charities

contribute virtually 100% of receipts as Bridges does in support of our efforts at Hope Village, Liberia – West Africa. This is possible because we have no overhead thanks to funding from our board of directors.

Please visit our website to see what your support can do and thanks to all who remember us when planning charitable giving.

www.bridgesofhopewestafrica.com

SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER

A spaghetti fundraiser is being planned for Saturday, January 14, 2017 from 12pm-2. It will be held at the Rapid City Moose Lodge on 841 E Saint Patrick St. Cost will be \$5 per person or \$20 per family of 5 and more. Look for more details online, in the mail, and on



social media. We will also be seeking a few personal "treasures" for a silent auction to further support. If you have items you would like to donate for the silent auction, please let us know right away.

CAN YOU GO WITHOUT IT?

A few dollars can go a long way when they are spent in Africa and we all spend a few dollars each week on such things as specialty coffee and fast food.



OUR CHALLENGE: Forfeit one of those purchases each week for one month and at the end of the month send those dollars you saved to Bridges of Hope, Inc. We also challenge you to be creative; go the extra mile. Can you go two months? Start our challenge when **you** want to. You won't miss that small sacrifice and your gift will go far in support of Liberian children.

If you take our challenge, you can send your money to us at PO BOX 8265 – Rapid City, and SD 57709 or online (via PayPal) at:

<https://www.bridgesofhopewestafrica.com/donate/>



Rev. Padmore – founder of Hope Village - with the truck we purchased for them in 2007.

WE ARE SEEKING NINE \$5,000 DONORS TO HELP US PURCHASE A NEW TRUCK FOR HOPE VILLAGE

Presently, we have raised \$15,000 and have another \$10,000 in pledges which brings us to \$25K out of the \$45K needed. We hope you will help. The truck will replace the vehicle we purchased for them in March of 2007, which now has in excess of half a million miles. This vehicle is the only means of transportation for the administration of our school & orphanage – Hope Village. It is used to transport people, rice, food stuffs, education materials, farming tools and crops. A new vehicle is necessary to help this mission effort become self-sufficient.

You can donate any amount to this effort. If you are being led to make a larger contribution or want to learn more, please email us or call our treasurer, Joel Schwiesow, at 381-3823.

Learn more at:

bridgesofhopewestafrica.com/the-great-truck-need