



THE MAGIC PENNY

FALL 2014 NEWSLETTER

LETTER FROM LUCY

It has always been my pleasure to return to my home village of Bompehtoke, but now my greatest joy is in visiting the Gladys Caulker LeFevre Primary School. Perhaps what is most “new” at the school this year is that it is simply part of the routine of daily life in the village.

There are new improvements as the funds become available, but The Magic Penny’s vision is for a

long-term self-sustaining educational program. One critical component is assuring that the school has skilled teachers; this is an uphill battle, as most qualified teachers prefer to work in large towns or cities. Recognizing the need to promote and encourage able instructors, Annie Bangura (the Managing Director of The Magic Penny Sierra Leone) and I have paid the fees for two prospective teachers to sit for the Freetown Teachers’ Training College en-

trance exam. Should they be successful, it is hoped that The Magic Penny New York will be able to offer them scholarships for their college education. Commitment letters to teach at the Gladys Caulker LeFevre School will be signed and notarized before such scholarships are made available.

Once again, I thank all of the people who have given so generously of their time and money to make village education a reality in rural Sierra Leone. The Gladys Caulker LeFevre School provides hundreds of children with the hope of a better future, a dream made possible by all of you who have tirelessly responded to the appeals of The Magic Penny.

As always, with enormous gratitude,

Lucy Sumner

President

*Lucy, Sarah Yombo and
the littlest scholars*



Paving!

The Magic Penny New York has sought to provide funding for pavement for several years and it has finally become a reality. (Getting equipment and supplies to distant villages in Sierra Leone is an overwhelming logistical and financial issue). The paving has given the school, and the entire compound, a face-lift; it will minimize the amount of sand that is tracked into the building, keeping the children mud- and dust-free during school hours.



The beauties of concrete!



Providing teachers' quarters (right background) helps to recruit new young graduates to Bompehtoke.



Thirsty, anyone?

Water Well

The Magic Penny built water wells for the school and for the community. Because the school's water well was freely accessed, it had been used by all and had fallen into disrepair. I am pleased to report, though, that the well has been repaired and secured using live trees, a chain and padlock. It is open for use only during school hours.

School Kitchen

A critical part of The Magic Penny's vision for a model community school was the addition of a kitchen that would both use the product of the children's labor in the school garden and provide all of the students with at least one nutritious meal a day. In 2014, an initial sum of \$1000 was disbursed by The Magic Penny New York for the construction of a kitchen and eating area for the children. Cement blocks are being prepared for the eventual construction of an open-air kitchen as soon as the rains end this fall.



Kids come to school hungry, which is why the kitchen is so essential to success!

The Graduate

Congratulations to Francis Bome, our home grown teacher! Francis will complete his teacher training course in August and graduate in April 2015. He will start teaching at The Gladys Caulker LeFevre School in Bompheotoke this September. The Magic Penny board would like to thank Barbara and Arnold Fishon for sponsoring Francis Bome through three years of college.



Lucy's American style

Demo Lesson Schooling in Sierra Leone is very structured and, from my perspective as a student of both Sierra Leone and the United States, somewhat outdated. Students are expected to learn by rote, with little attention given to student participation in the learning process. I am a retired teacher and as such, I observed the classroom interactions. I then offered to teach a few demo lessons; the children and teachers responded favorably to my teaching techniques. There is clearly a need for teacher workshops that can highlight strategies for greater critical thinking and engagement on the part of the students.

Middle School I am pleased to report that there is no question of the villagers' commitment to educating their youth. At a meeting with the community this visit, the parents, especially the women, appealed to me once again for the construction of a middle school. The villagers are very concerned about sending their children, particularly their daughters, to distant towns for more schooling. Leaving Bompheotoke means living with strangers, far from the familiarity of family and friends. Given these conditions, many youngsters drop out of school, while some young girls get pregnant and boys may get into trouble. The Magic Penny Sierra Leone has committed to advocating for funds in Sierra Leone for the construction of a local middle school. And, of course, it is hoped that with the completion of the original primary school model plan, The Magic Penny New York can aid in this project in the future.



BFFs

Donations to The Magic Penny



One World Futbol Project, with the mission “to make a meaningful impact on the lives of youth around the world through the [One World Futbol](#), a virtually-indestructible ball that never goes flat and never needs a pump,” donated 20 soccer balls to The Magic Penny. Annie Bangura, the Managing Director of The Magic Penny in Sierra Leone, was invited by the Ministry of Sports to the launching of the One World Futbol Project in Sierra Leone. Annie also received 20 more soccer balls from the Ministry. The Magic Penny will donate some of these soccer balls to neighboring schools.



Play ball!

Ms. Celia Hatzipavlis, a year 5H teacher at the Ivanhoe Girls’ Grammar School in Australia, shipped a donation of school supplies – 130 pencils, notebooks and scrapbooks – to Sierra Leone for the children of the Magic Penny School at Bompehtoke.



Thanks!

Donations to The Magic Penny

The Caulker Descendants' Association donated \$1,000 to The Magic Penny. This was added to other funds in order to make the paving project possible.

Iman Lee, a Harborfields High School senior, wrote an essay on The Magic Penny for which she won \$1000. The rules of the contest stipulated that the winner donate half of the proceeds to the organization. Thanks to Iman for her donation of \$500 to The Magic Penny!

All eyes on Iman Lee (wearing black)



The Global Justice Club of Harborfields,

led by teacher Michelle DaSilva,



held its annual fundraiser on March 19, 2014, the second one to be dedicated to The Magic Penny. This year the fabulous talents of all involved raised \$6,000 for The Magic Penny – TMP is proud to be adopted as a cause by this remarkable group of students!



From L to R: Tennyson Yillah (headmaster), Daniel Sheriff (volunteer teacher and one of the candidates for the college entrance exam); Ernest Kefay, (teacher); Gary Schulze (Vice-President of TMP); Lucy Sumner (President of TMP), Sarah Yombo (volunteer teacher and the other candidate), Christiana Kainie (teacher), and Patrick Saidu (teacher).



Thanks to Barbara and Arnie Fishon for all the slates!



Off-loading school supplies from Australia.



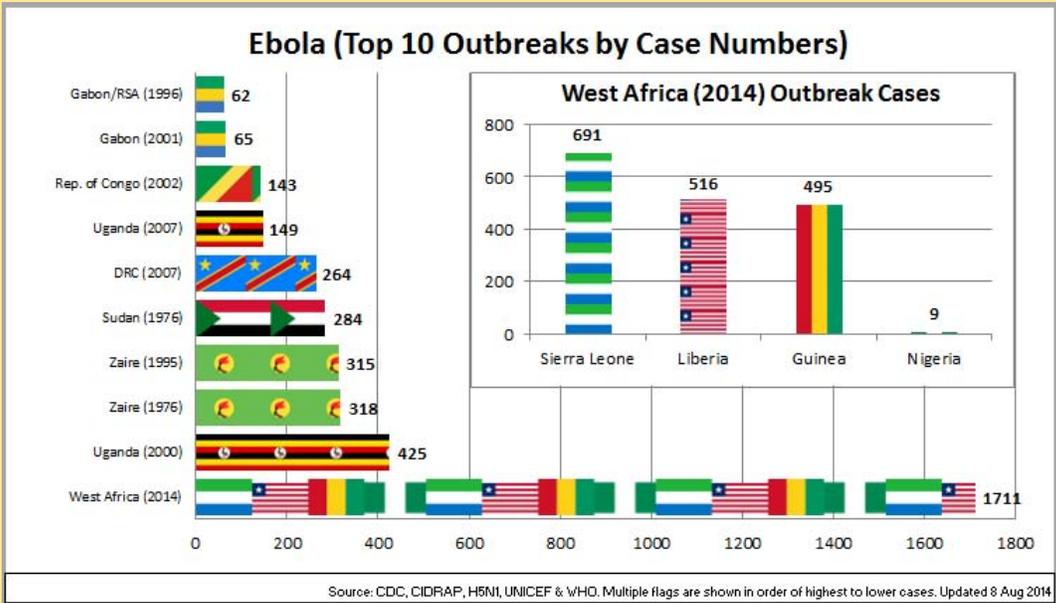


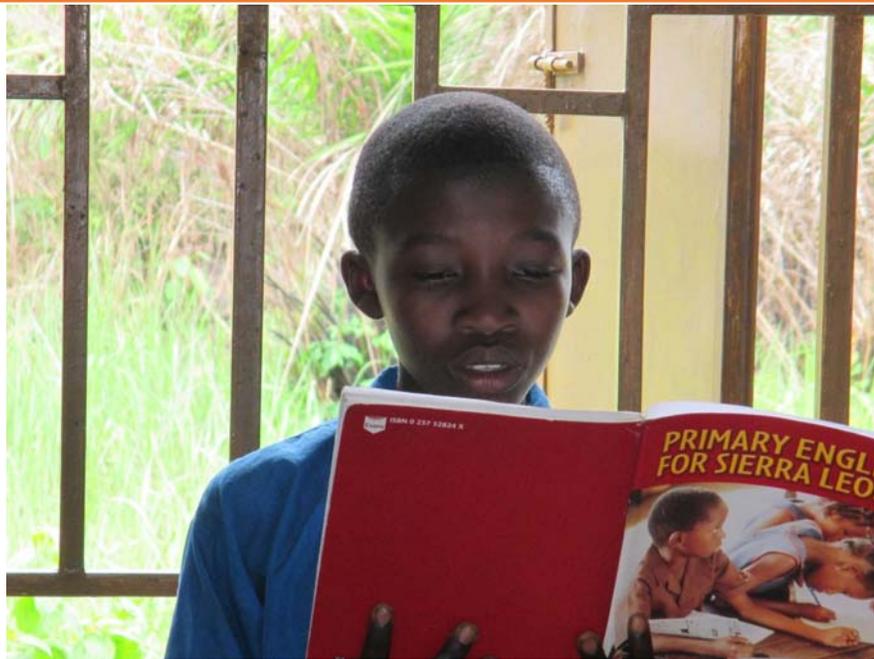
Ebola

The scourge of the Ebola virus is taking a frightening toll in West Africa. As of August 15, Sierra Leone had the greatest number of confirmed cases with an ever-rising incidence and, unfortunately, a spiraling death toll. (The map shows the capital city Freetown; Bompethoke is located on the peninsula just south of Freetown.)

The Magic Penny embarked on a separate fund-raising effort to provide emergency assistance in the battle against Ebola and has raised \$5,315 to date. These funds will be used to purchase such essential items as disinfectant, disposable masks, gloves, gowns, shoe coverings, soaps, alcohol, saline, buckets, transistor radios, and additional supplies of food for those who are quarantined. Equally critical, monies will go toward creating posters and materials to promote greater public awareness of both the disease and preventive measures that must be taken to minimize its impact. Toward this end, the TMP school can serve as a central clearinghouse for anti-Ebola efforts in the larger area.

Those who wish to join with The Magic Penny in this battle can make contributions to the Ebola fund; all donations of any size are gratefully received and are tax deductible.





In Memoriam

We were saddened by the sudden death in February of Pamela Ello Long. Pam was The Magic Penny's "techie," artistic designer (she created this online newsletter), and ardent supporter/volunteer for the past ten years. She will be greatly missed. Thanks to Chantelle Schofield for graciously offering to take over the online newsletter in her stead.





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