



The Victoria-Taiama Partnership

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Registered Charity # 88848 8400 RR0001

Newsletter 2019

Hello Friends of the Victoria-Taiama Partnership!

WITH YOUR DONATIONS,

We have continued to SAVE ONE LIFE AT A TIME in:

- **Health** (*Primary Care, Maternal Health, Eye Health*)

- This year...
- Official Accreditation by the Sierra Leone Government for our Health Centre! This opens the way for future collaboration and partnerships for our programs.
- 60 assisted births at the Judy Smith Health Centre
- 100 mothers participating in weekly pre and post-natal programs
- 50 children per month vaccinated and monitored in our Under-Fives Program
- 50 mothers participating in 3X/WK nutrition program for babies of weaning age
- Two new solar lights for nighttime births; New solar fridge for vaccines
- Overhead fans for cooling patients and medications
- Medications for the health centre and eye health programs
- Over 1000 children and adults treated for eye conditions
- Over 500 visits to our Primary Care department for treatment for malaria, typhoid, colds and infections.



AND...

to **IMPROVE ONE LIFE AT A TIME** in:

Education (*Zoie Gardner Scholarship Program, Vocational Education in Soap-making, and Agriculture*)



The \$25,000/year Zoie Gardner Fund and your donations over the past 4 years has allowed us to:

- Train 45 women to make soap. All were given a micro-loan to allow them to begin their own soap-making business. All micro-loans have been repayed,
- Provide scholarships to 40 girls so that they could attend secondary school. Because free education is now part of the new government mandate, these funds will now be diverted to supporting women in getting a post-secondary education
- Provide student housing and a house mother for 6 girls who needed safe accommodation
- Purchase 30 solar lights so that the girls can study after dark
- Employ a tutor to work with the scholarship students
- Provide sexual education and the option of contraceptives for scholarship students (girls must drop out of school if they become pregnant)



- Provide scholarships to 10 women for post-secondary school. Three of our students have now graduated and are working as nurses or teachers.
- Provide training for 45 women to participate in an agricultural project. The project trained 3 groups of 15 women who worked on 3 farms. They were given loans to buy tools and seed. All loans have been paid back. They are growing ground nuts, vegetables.
- Buy 3 solar panels – one each for Zoie Gardner, Judy Smith and student housing



SPOTLIGHT ON MR. ERIC SAMA

Eric has been part of the Victoria-Taiama story from the beginning.

The story began in 1974 when Maureen Mark met Eric Sama while she was volunteering in Sierra Leone. Eric was about 12 years old.



In 1990, Eric became a teacher at the Ahmadiyya Primary school in Taiama, Sierra Leone. In 1993, Maureen and Eric formed a Pen Pal Club between their students in Victoria and Taiama.

But in 1997, war ravaged Taiama. Eric, his family and

many students became refugees.



Eric was sponsored by Maureen and a group of fellow teachers. Eric came to Canada in 2000 as a refugee. In 2004, he became a proud Canadian citizen.

Eric's official role in the Victoria-Taiama Partnership began in 2001. In that year, the Taiama school re-opened but only four classrooms remained. Once the funds had been raised to help rebuild the school, Eric returned to Sierra Leone with the funds and to co-ordinate and oversee the rebuilding. As a member of Taiama community with knowledge of local people and business practices combined

with his honesty and passion, he played, and continues to play, a critical role in ensuring that the project went forward.



This was the first of 11 trips that Eric has made to bring healthcare and education to his community. Each trip follows a similar pattern: requests are made, goals are set, money is raised and Eric flies to Africa. While he is there, Eric negotiates and co-ordinates the fulfillment of our goals and then ensures that we have competent, honest representation and oversight in Taiama.

We wish to acknowledge and celebrate 20 years of service that Eric has given to his community. Because of him, and the people who have believed in him, Taiama now has: a school able to educate 400 students gr.1 -10, more girls have the opportunity to stay in school and possibly learn a trade, women who have learned to make and sell soap or to farm more effectively, additional wells for clean water, latrines, and greater access to health care such as, eye care and safer birthing conditions.



Thank you, Eric for your commitment to bring health and education to the village of Taiama.