



WHAT'S OUR WORTH?

"Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." Matthew 10:31

When I was young, my family spent many weekends selling antiques and trinkets at local flea markets. My parents had a knack for knowing what shoppers found valuable. Setting the right price determined if we sold the item or continued to take it home each week – sometimes for many weeks.

Many of us spend a good deal of time appraising worth. We check Zillow to see our home's market value. We research our car's trade-in price on Edmunds. We scroll eBay listings finding similar items so we know a good starting bid. In many ways, we do this with people too. We scan a room and decide to whom it's worth talking. We follow important celebrities online and try to emulate them so others will also acknowledge our importance.

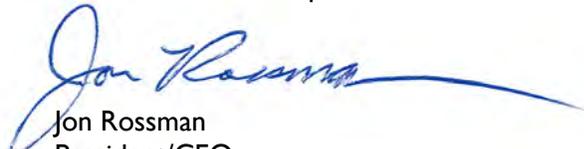
Part of our work in Liberia is demonstrating the intrinsic value we all have as children of God – created in his image. It's easy to look down on the materially poor with their lack of nice clothing, formal education, literacy skills, indoor plumbing, and – the list goes on – when we view them through the lenses of the world. In my experience, material poverty is often linked to spiritual poverty. Trauma from Liberia's civil wars and high unemployment exacerbate the problem. Poor self-worth fuels low self-esteem which undermines confidence and self-respect, leading to fear. And fear lowers motivation, entraps us in unhealthy conditions, locks us in harmful relationships, and dims our vision for a better future.

Fortunately, we are unconditionally valued in God's eyes. Our worth is not based on the appraisal of others but on the opinion of God. Jesus tells us we *"are of more value than many sparrows."* We can be confident – we can *"fear not"* – that we're more valuable than an antique, a house, a car or even a tiny bird. We don't need to be afraid of the future because God will be with us through it all. When asked,

"What's our worth?" Jesus answered with his willingness to pay the price of his own life on our behalf – and on behalf of our Liberian brothers and sisters.

And so, there is no comparing, no haggling, no bartering, no bargaining with God about our worth. He sees us through the lens of Jesus' resurrection and we are appraised at full value. In making plans for 2023, we pray we can view everyone in Liberia through this same lens of Jesus' love as we work together to overcome material and spiritual poverty – and build a shared vision for a better future. Thank you for your continued prayers, generous financial support, and endless encouragement.

Worth more than a sparrow,



Jon Rossman
President/CEO



SAVE THESE DATES

Mark your calendars and join us for these fun and important upcoming events:

March 13, 2023

7:00-8:00pm

An Evening in Liberia

Join us for this live virtual event where you will:

- ◆ Enjoy photos and videos of life in Liberia and how God is working through our school.
- ◆ Learn ways your gifts are making an impact.
- ◆ Q&A with Gbarnga Mission Board members.

April 1, 2023

Matching Gift Opportunity

Gbarnga Mission is participating in a United Way of RI virtual fundraising event called **401 Gives** which offers over \$75,000 in matching gift challenges throughout the day. Sign up and give your gifts more impact!



Supporters on our email list will receive more details on how to participate in these events.

Email us if you'd like to take part too:
info@gbarngamission.org

STAFF PROFILE | QUITA LABLAH, HEAD OF COOKING STAFF

Quita Lablah, respectfully known as Ma Quita, was born at Phebe Hospital on June 8, 1968 and has always lived in the Green Farm section of Deanville Community.



Because her family was poor, she never attended school but spent her days farming. She has been together with her husband, James, since 1988. Ma Quita and James have six children age 15- to 33-years (two others died during the civil war).

Ma Quita began cooking when she was 8-years old and her first attempt

literally started off rocky. She did not properly sift the rice and fed a meal to her mother with a pebble in it. As her cooking skills improved, she learned to master the "big big pot." The community loved her food because "it was sweet in their mouth." Life, however, has not always been so sweet.

She recalls times during the war when her family fled to the bush and hid, praying the soldiers would pass without finding them. Rebel threats were ever-present and Ma Quita recounted an incident when James was stripped: "My husband made to naked him and the soldiers hold a gun to him. He dropped his arms. They let him go." She is confident that God's protection helped them safely endure the war.

"Thank you, by the grace of God, you are helping our children."

From the first day singing joyfully in worship when the school land was dedicated, Ma Quita has been part of this mission. She worked hard to brush the property and cook for the construction workers as the first classrooms were built. When school opened and a school lunch program began, she was our first choice to be Head Cook. She leads a staff of four other cooks, plans meals, procures ingredients, and manages the kitchen finances. She loves working every day with the other women and says, "we're friendly and laughing so we don't feel [the hard work]" of preparing and cooking nearly 200 meals each school day on charcoal fires.

Ma Quita is vitally important to GLTC's success, not just because of her culinary skills but because of her family's community involvement. She attends the Deanville Lutheran Preaching Point, participates in the Dialect Choir singing worship songs in Kpelle, and, despite growing up illiterate, learned to read the Kpelle Bible and shares scripture lessons in Kpelle. She says she loves to go to church each week and "tell God thank you."

GLTC brings her great joy because before it existed, "children used to walk on the highway and get hit by motorbikes." When asked why she loves GLTC she says, "children go to other schools and teacher is on a phone [and not teaching]. They promote students but they can't read. I love to send my children to GLTC because children in 3rd grade can write but other school's 12th graders can't write."

Ma Quita feels a great deal of gratitude for the many supporters in America. To you she would like to say, "Thank you so very much. Thank you, by the grace of God, you are helping our children. We pray for you and tell God thank you!"

And for you, Ma Quita, we tell God thank you, too! ❖



Ma Quita (L) cooking rice in the "big big pot" and (R) plating the many school lunches

Brushing the property and hauling wood



Emmet Anderson (L), Principal Sumo, and Charles Yeebahn (R). Emmet and Charles are community health advocates

COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVOCATES

One of Gbarnga Mission's four **Areas of Impact** is health initiatives. Good health enables parents to better care for their children; healthy children attend school more regularly and learn better; healthy adults work more leading to higher family incomes and overall improvements throughout their communities.

Although US mission teams with health expertise are important for assessing students at GLTC, caring for community members at outreach clinics, and offering training in hygiene, malaria prevention, and more, this is not a sustainable solution to the long-term health needs in Deanville. Capable health care workers exist within this community.

We began a pilot program to engage community members with healthcare training to act as **Community Health Advocates**. Community leader, Emmet Anderson, and nursing student, Charles Yeebahn, make regular household visits to assess health needs, provide support for basic medical issues, and refer complex cases to appropriate medical facilities for treatment. They advocate for the patient, connecting them to the best resources, and ensure proper care is received. Early intervention should reduce severity and associated costs. Please pray for this new initiative as we strive for sustainable, community-based solutions. ❖

MESSAGE FROM A PROUD SPONSOR

I'm a proud supporter of Gbarnga Lutheran Mission Project for several reasons. First and foremost, because its creation was the result of listening to the people of [Deanville] when asked what their primary need was: high quality education for their children. These Liberian families wanted their children to have the opportunity to reach their full potential and access to a local school was critical. Second, the school was built with local hands, and with environmental justice in mind. Solar panels provide the energy source to power new wells so families drink clean water. Third, the goal of the school is sustainability which means vocational training for parents as well as building a poultry farm. I'm grateful for the opportunity to sponsor a student's tuition as I know she is receiving an excellent education and healthy meals. The sponsorship team helps me stay connected with her by exchanging letters and photos. The Gbarnga Lutheran Mission is culturally competent and respectful of the local community. They use every donation dollar wisely. ❖



~ Tara & Tim D.

Child Sponsor & Gbarnga Mission Supporter

You can change a life just like Tara. Sign up today at www.gbarngamission.org / sponsorship

AGRICULTURE & VOCATIONAL FACILITIES

Construction work is completed on our new office and storage building for the Agriculture department. This will be used by Andy Konah, our Farm Manager, and his staff to safely store tools, seed, fertilizer, and harvested goods awaiting use by the school lunch program or for sale at local markets. We thank God for providing the needed resources and pray this facility will support this farming initiative as we strive for sustainability at GLTC.

Thanks to generous contributions, we are able to build our Vocational Training Building to house the Baking, Soap Making, and Tailoring classes. ❖



Our new Agriculture Office & Storage building



Block laying begins for the new vocational training building

PRAYERS & THANKSGIVING

- For Charles Yeebahn and Emmet Anderson as they give their time as Community Health Advocates in Deanville.
- Thanksgiving for Ma Quita Lablah and her cooking team for providing healthy meals to our students and staff.
- Gratitude for generous supporters enabling construction of the new vocational training building.
- That GLTC students will find their worth in Jesus' love for them.

PROJECT SUPPORT NEEDED

- Community Health Advocates stipend & supplies: \$200/month
- Vocational training supplies: \$3,500
- Agricultural support (seeds, tools): \$500
- Child sponsorships: \$30/month or \$360/year

WITH GRATITUDE | BILL MEYER

Since 2018, Rev. William Meyer has served as Sponsorship Coordinator for Gbarnga Mission. We are grateful for his hard work expanding this program, often through his vast network of contacts. Through his efforts, it is not only a stable source of financial support for our school but is a means of building relationships between sponsors and students — and a conduit for sharing Christian faith across the ocean. Bill will step down from this position but remains a Board of Directors member. Please join us in saying, **“We thank God for you!”** ❖

Gbarnga Lutheran Mission Project, Inc. is a 501(c)3 nonprofit (EIN # 46-5637972).

Gbarnga Mission is constructing and staffing the Gbarnga Lutheran Training Center (GLTC). Our mission is to share God's love as we facilitate Christ-centered education, community development, economic opportunity, and health initiatives in rural Liberia.



Gbarnga Mission

Gbarnga Lutheran Mission Project, Inc.
445 Elmwood Avenue
Providence RI 02907

Sharing God's love through Christ-centered education in Liberia



You can give Christian education to a girl like Hawa

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Yes, I'd like to sponsor a child for \$30 per month (\$360 per year).

I prefer to give a one-time gift of:

\$30 \$360 Other \$ _____

Contribute by check or **sign up online** at www.gbarngamission.org and click **“Sponsor A Child”**.



Mail to:

Gbarnga Lutheran Mission Project, Inc.
445 Elmwood Avenue
Providence, RI 02907

Gbarnga Lutheran Training Center | 2022 Staff



Thank You!

Amuchain Cooper, Registrar

For Sharing God's Love!

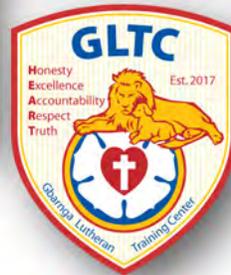
Nathaniel F. Sumo, Principal



COOKS

L-R: Cythia Richard, Quita Lablah (Head Cook), Lorpu Spencer, Korto Kollie, Sonnie Logan

ADMINISTRATION



TEACHERS

L-R: Sharon Meyer (Mentor), Naomi Sackie, Theresa Goaneh, Emmanuel Veleme (VP of Instruction), Darlington Kollie, Amelia Dennis (Helper), Annie Dolo (Helper), Archie Fahh, Garmai Barclay, Hannah Kollie, Dolo Tokpa, Patrick Henry (VP of Administration)



SUPPORT

L-R: John Flomo (Driver), Titus Gboklah (Janitor)



SECURITY

L-R: David Kermue, Moses Gidding, James Woi (Head of Security), Wilmot Willie, Winston Flomo, David Barkolleh, Jerry Williams



POULTRY

L-R: Bendu Sackie, Mamie Nana, Tryphinia Nyan (Manager, not shown)



AGRICULTURE

L-R: Andy Konah (Manager), Jutomue Togbah, Lorpu Gray, Victory Paye, Oretha Kamokai, Ellen Flomo, Peter Mulbah, Oretha Varney, Marie Flomo

"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." Proverbs 19:21



Gbarnga Mission

2022 Year End Review



It's been said that "hope is not a strategy" and so we set goals, list objectives, and plan our lives to improve our odds of success. And yet God's wisdom shared in Proverbs says "it is the Lord's purpose that prevails." As we reflect on 2022, we



are grateful for His guidance and pray His purpose continues to prevail through our planning for 2023.

The charts below summarize our year-end financials and illustrate our ongoing commitment to minimizing administrative and fundraising expenses. This year, nearly **97% of your gifts** went directly toward changing lives and sharing God's love in Liberia. Although overall income was down, support through Child Sponsorships rose 25% due to increased sponsorship participation



and more consistent giving. This is a vital area of support as student enrollment increases with the addition of a grade level each year. Gifts to the **Liberia Legacy of Hope Endowment Fund** continued. Though stock market volatility resulted in a negative annual return for the Fund, the current balance is approximately \$96,000.

Your confidence in our ministry enabled us to be recognized as a "2022 Top-Rated Nonprofit". We are thankful God continues to bless our efforts and eagerly await His direction. The following are select 2022 highlights from each of our **Four Areas of Impact**:

EDUCATION

- ◆ 133 students enrolled in nine classes: N1, N2, K1, K2, and Grades 1 through 5.
- ◆ Additional teachers added for Nursery and Grade 5 classes.
- ◆ 70 adults enrolled in tailoring, soapmaking, and baking Vocational Training classes.
- ◆ Foundation construction completed and initial block work started for the new vocational training building.

- ◆ GLTC hosted the 2022 teacher training program for Liberia Reads! in the Bong County region.
- ◆ 2 teachers completed their AA in Education degree programs, one teacher continued his BA program, and a fourth teacher began her AA degree.
- ◆ Teacher mentoring supported by a \$30,000 Global Grant from Rotary International continued.
- ◆ New curriculum was piloted in K and 1st Grades that integrates Christian faith across all content areas.
- ◆ Learning Centers introduced in Library.
- ◆ Laptops and computer training classes provided to teachers acting as VP for Instruction and VP for Administration.
- ◆ Memorandum of Understanding signed with Lutheran Church in Liberia permitting use of campus land for 50-year term.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ 3 new hand dug wells converted to handpumps for safer drinking water.
- ◆ Support provided to new medical clinic to construct water tower with reservoir tanks.
- ◆ 200 Good News Bibles provided to local Lutheran preaching point for distribution in community.



ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- ◆ Hiring of Farm Manager and 8 helpers has significantly expanded agriculture initiative.
- ◆ Hundreds of fruit, coconut, palm, and nut trees planted on campus will benefit school lunches and generate income.
- ◆ Agriculture Building constructed for office and storage.
- ◆ Blockmaking sales have increased slowly.
- ◆ Poultry Manager was replaced in effort to introduce new farm protocols and expand sales opportunities.

HEALTH INITIATIVES

- ◆ Shipment of medical equipment, hospital beds, monitors, etc. received at Deanville Community Clinic.
- ◆ 400 mosquito bed nets distributed to GLTC staff and Deanville families after malaria prevention education with heads of households.
- ◆ Over 400 students, staff, and community members received health assessments and medical attention.
- ◆ Two Community Health Advocates added to visit the village and identify health issues before they become insurmountable.

