

God's Precious Children  
Mission letter # 2

I am Sarah Hostetter, one of the people on God's Precious Children's board and also the wife of Andrew who wrote you several days ago. Saturday was our last day registering students at Phebe, it was a wonderful day but as usual there were multiple families hoping to get their students onto the program. This is a situation we are in every year, and it continues to burden me that there is still such a need for education for so many children in Bong County and the rest of the country. I am thankful for sponsors like you who have been a part of making a difference in the lives of so many students here in Liberia. We hear stories everyday of students who cannot go to school because of a death in the family or loss of jobs, or no ability to get a job because of the job market being so sparse. Unfortunately, we have to say no often because we do not have the means to sponsor every student. In thinking about this situation where we, who do not live in the country, have to determine who we will put on the program, we felt that we needed to create a more sustainable scenario for the schools to supplement those students who we cannot take.

We have been working with a school in Sanoyea to start our pilot program, God's Helping Hands. This new program of God's Precious Children will help schools become sustainable. As we have been developing the program, we have been working with the management team in Sanoyea to develop a clear and succinct business plan for their agricultural income generating business for Kirsten Marie Jensen Grade School. Allison Atwood has joined our God's Precious Children team this year to help with this program since she is graduating from the University of South Carolina with a major in International Business and finance. She was excited about the God's Helping Hands Program and wanted to write her closing thesis on the business proposal that would be given to each school. Through talking and looking at the program, she felt that with her education and skills in finance she could help us write the business proposal template that we will bring to all of the schools once the pilot program at Kirsten Marie Jensen Grade School kicks off. We felt that because business in Liberia is done differently than the US, it would be helpful for her to learn first hand about business in Liberia, so we invited her to accompany us.

Our meeting with Sanoyea's business team went very well. Allison was impressed with their first draft business plan, and all that they included such as the Risk Mitigation and SWOT analysis, and spoke with them to fill in the missing pieces and balance some of the numbers. We are thankful for Allison's expertise, because although the GPC leadership team is very passionate about this program, we do not have all of the finance education that Allison does. Once the business proposal is complete we will begin meeting with other stake holders, and donors willing to invest in these income generating businesses that will bring funds to the schools and help educate the students to have a trade once they leave high school. Because of inflation in Liberia as many countries experience, the schools are challenged with needing to raise their fees to pay teachers and maintain their school buildings. This prevents many students from being able to attend school, promotes more drop outs, and directly effects the rise of Tuition for TSP. We are hoping that by creating sustainable businesses for the schools they can lower their school fees or keep them the same, and ultimately allow more students to attend school. On our last day in Sanoyea Pastor Edwin and his wife Philomena blessed us with a delicious Liberian meal before we departed.

As we drove back I reflected on the students, the team, and all of the sponsors and the trust that goes into a program like this. I thank God for the beautiful people who have made this organization a success, and also so many caring sponsors who have changed the lives of thousands of kids. Please keep us in your prayers as we wrap up our last couple days here in Liberia.

Your sister in Christ,  
Sarah Hostetter