

HELPING ALL WE CAN...ONE AT A TIME.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Deanna Wallace
AAO Executive Director

I hate to start this note with upsetting news, but there's no way to gracefully segue into it. **We are being forced to move from our current rental property — most likely by the end of April.** What we have feared is now actually happening. We're looking for a new home, but, as of this writing, I don't know exactly where we will end up.

As I've mentioned in past notes, our landlord raised our rent to a level that was impossible for us to match — especially at a time when our funding sources, through circumstances beyond our control, have been **slashed by more than 60%**. We've cut as much as we can from our bare-bones budget, but, even with that, we can't hold on much longer without an infusion of funding.

Our staff in Sierra Leone has been scrambling to find places to **temporarily house the children**, while we work on finding a more permanent solution. A local church may help house some kids — temporarily, at least. We are also working with social welfare for some cases, but there's not a lot they can do. We have some older "children" (almost adults now) who we hope to help transition to living independently.

Our goal is to pare down our number of kids by as much as possible, right now. Then, in the future, if we eventually receive the funding for it, we can take in new kids in need. In the meantime, we will house a smaller number, and put more emphasis on our school, for our own kids and other children in the community.

➤ Here is an estimate for what we **CURRENTLY** need:

- **\$10,000** for annual rent on a smaller place, to house our remaining children.
- **\$4,000** to help the older children transition to living independently.
- **\$5,000** to cover moving costs and the set-up of a new home.

That's an estimate of \$19,000, in total, that we need right away. Of course, we also continue to need regular funds to cover the basic essentials of food, school and medical care.

I know this is troubling news to all of you. Believe me, the day-to-day uncertainty of the situation gives all of us (from the paid staff in Freetown to our volunteers everywhere else) sleepless nights. I will make sure to keep you posted with the latest developments. **In the meantime, I ask for you to share our need with others, give as much as you are able, remain hopeful and help us provide for the kids still in our care.** They need all of us now more than ever.

Thanks for giving over \$500 in March 2019:

Yvonne Katter

And thank you to our regular monthly supporters, who make our work possible!



IN HAPPIER NEWS...

Our sweet **Abigail** won a prize at the end-of-year school awards, as "**Best Behaved Pupil in JSS 2 Silver**." We are so proud of her! And the joy on her face is just what we need to see right now!



Paris to Bristol Cycle Challenge 2019!



"**Team Tom**" (currently with 12 glorious members and, already, several wonderful donors) is at it again to raise funds for AAO. They've assembled a "motley crew of cyclists" (their words!) with the ambitious notion of pedaling from Paris back to Bristol in three days. Their longest, grueling day of riding will be 180km, but they've proven that they will do anything for the kids! **We love "Team Tom!"** If you'd like to sponsor their ride, or just check on their progress, you can click on their fundraising page:

www.uk.virginmoneygiving.com/Team/ParistoBristol2019