



12/13/08

Dear Friends of the Mali Assistance Project,

I would like to update you with the recent efforts of the Mali Assistance Project (MAP), founded in 1999. MAP was created to help the villagers of Foutaka Zambougou, Mali, West Africa, fight famine, drought, disease, and build a sustainable infrastructure for the future. Part of this effort has included supporting the school since 1999 with salaries for the teachers, funds for school materials - books, pencils, paper - and providing funds for village-style desks and benches to be built for the three classrooms, and blackboards,

This year, MAP is providing the funds to build a new school, and the villagers of Zambougou are providing all of the labor. A new school is required at this time because the old "traditional mud-brick" school built 35 years ago, with funds for materials provided by the Saudi's, is now collapsing. During the months of October and November, MAP provided \$11,000 toward the materials (cement, sand, re-bar, etc.) for the villagers to make their own concrete bricks to build their new school. This school should last 100 years or more. The foundation is poured and enough bricks have been made for the 4-classroom building to now be constructed half way. The structure is standing right now with walls built to half of the height they will be. With the fund-raising event on December 6th (The Sagittarius Ball), \$3500 more will be wired for more raw materials to continue with the construction.

We have a Malian engineer who volunteered to design the school. He also created a materials list with estimated costs. Another \$15,000 is necessary to buy the essential supplies to build more concrete bricks, and purchase windows, doors, and the metal roofing. The villagers of Zambougou are providing all of the labor.

We all know the importance of schools and education here in the US. A basic education and a high literacy rate are mandatory for any group of people to govern themselves in this highly complex world and to compete in economic markets. Mali is one of the poorest countries in the world. The peaceful population in Mali is vulnerable to outside influence. It is imperative for them to have the education to be able to make proper decisions for their community; for the people to be capable of communicating with their own government; to stand up for their rights; for young people to learn to create their own business or to learn the best agricultural model for their area; or to have options for a good occupation to raise and support a family.

Additionally, having a proper education ensures that the people of Mali will not fall victim to the influences of fanatical fundamentalist Jihad leaders, who are now making their way into African countries offering money to entice young men to join them. Without an education and options, innocent and naive villagers may not understand the dangers that may be presented to them.

Building this school, and then other schools in the villages of Mali, and in other areas of West Africa, has become of the utmost importance for the security of our world and for freedom and democracy in this area.

For all who have helped the Mali Assistance Project make many incredible, life-changing achievements thus far, we extend our deep appreciation. Given that our own economy is in upheaval at this time and for the unforeseeable future, it is a sacrifice to make contributions to non-profit organizations. With this understanding, any contribution you may be able to make to help to build this school would be most appreciated.

Please take a moment to read this NY Times article about Mali and the threats to its security and peace, and ultimately the threats to OUR security and peace as well.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/13/world/africa/13mali.html?ei=5070&emc=eta1>

With gratitude for your "moral support" and financial support.
Thank you very much.

Karen Marx, Founder and Executive Director of MAP in 1999
Abdoul Doumbia, Master Drummer from Zambougou, Mali, Co-Founder of MAP

Tax-deductible donations to be made out to "The Mali Assistance Project"

And mailed to:

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