



Photo by Ann-Eve Cunningham

Vice President Boakai Lauds FFW for Empowering Liberian Women

Monrovia, December 2010 - Liberia's Vice President Joseph N. Boakai, Sr., says the contributions of the Foundation for Women in post-war Liberia are immeasurable. He observed that the Foundation is not only empowering women financially through microcredit, but giving them a semblance of education through adult literacy programs.

"Besides, the sisterly environment being fostered among members of the Foundation for Women will create one big family of women across the country and therefore help to strengthen the peace and ensure rapid development," Vice President Boakai observed, adding, "I assure you it will become a movement because it will empower men and women".

He made the remarks on Tuesday,

December 14, at the Third Celebration and Fund Raising Rally of the Foundation for Women Liberia. The program held at the Paynesville City Hall, was attended by FFW microcredit beneficiaries from around the country.

The Liberian Vice President said it was unbelievable that the program which was launched in 2007, now covers 58 centers in nine counties, adding, "You have not only empowered women, you have even touched the lives of the disabled who are usually looked down upon as mere street beggars". "Indeed, the FFW is growing day-by-day. I would like to see the Foundation for Women's micro-loan reach all communities in Liberia," he further added.

Vice President Boakai thanked the

Founder and CEO of the Foundation for Women, Ms. Deborah Lindholm for the initiative which, he noted, is touching the lives of not only women but the disabled as well.

Vice President Boakai who proxied for President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the program, pledged US\$5,000 on behalf of Government, and assured that the Liberian

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"Without the Foundation, I don't think I would feel complete...I feel like a woman, a mother and now an entrepreneur. An opportunity is the best gift." - *Elsa Urzua*



Deborah Lindholm and Emily Peal at Third Celebration

Government would continue to work with the FFW and support its microcredit program.

In remarks at the program, the Founder/CEO of the Foundation for Women, Ms. Deborah Lindholm informed the gathering that the Foundation's members in California have purchased a van for the disabled in Liberia and that the van has already been shipped and will be in Liberia in the not distant future.

Also in remarks, the Chief Executive Officer of the FFW Liberia, Mrs. Emily Peal said she was delighted that since the FFW microcredit program was introduced in Liberia, it has proved to be very unique, not only because it provides microloans to its members, but also because it assists them when they are ill and empowers them to read and write. "We don't just give loans and walk away. We are concerned about whatever happens to our women," she observed.

She disclosed that the program is now in Zwedru, Grand Gedeh County and Sinoe County, and that about 33,000 women and disabled persons in 58 centers in nine counties are currently benefitting from the Foundation's microcredit program.

Mrs. Peal said in the next four to five years, the FFW will cover all the 15 political sub-divisions of Liberia.

An estimated US\$7,575.00 was raised in cash and pledges, with Vice President Boakai pledging US\$5,000 on behalf of the Liberian Government and Ambassador Dew Mason pledging US\$2,000.

Credit: <http://emansion.gov.lr/>

Ecommerce Site Unveiled

We are thrilled to announce that the Foundation successfully launched a robust

ecommerce store. The online store gives FFW microentrepreneurs greater visibility and an opportunity to sell their products on the global marketplace. Online shoppers can now purchase the products and services of microentrepreneurs from any location and at anytime. Shoppers will be able to create their own personal accounts and enjoy the option of submitting and managing recurring orders.

Please browse and shop at www.foundationforwomen.org/store.

FFW Board of Trustees

As we start a new year with inspiration from those we serve, it is time to recognize those in transition in service on the Board of Trustees.

First a sincere thank you and best wishes to Judy Horton, Michelle Muscat, and Pam Mudd for their enthusiasm, dedication, and steadfast support for the Foundation and microcredit cause. Their service on the Board is deeply appreciated. Next, a huge congratulations to Jan Tuttleman for her support and leadership in the grant proposal to the Leichtag Family Foundation. More kudos to Jan for being recognized with the San Diego Business Journal's "Women Who Mean Business Award" in October. Jan is a key leader on our Board and in our entire community.

As sad as it is say farewell it is our great good fortune to say hello to the newest additions to the FFW Board of Trustees. Gustavo Lasala is joining us with six years of experience in Microfinance with Accion Texas and in his current position with Progreso Financiero. John Milikowsky, a highly respected local attorney, is bringing his legal experience along with a special interest in finance. Jackie Helm,

Meet a Foundation for Women Microentrepreneur



My name is

Sandra Romero

I was born in Los Angeles but moved to Baja California at a very young age. I attended school in Baja and at the age of 16 decided I wanted to learn about business. On my school vacations, I went to work with my aunt and uncle in Southern California. I would save all the money I made working to buy and resale clothing. All of the profit I made went to supporting my family. I also saved enough money to pay for my own schooling; I would attend school in the day and work at night. Upon completion of my studies I got an administrative job with the Mexican government.

While I was growing in my career, I realized that I wanted to give my children and husband a better future with more opportunity, so I left my job and we moved to San Diego. I began a new career with SwissJust (a home based business specializing in products for the body and mind) selling aromatherapy and health products and realized I liked being my own boss. When I heard about the Foundation for Women, I knew it would be a good fit to help me achieve my goals. I am now on my second loan, my business is growing and I have met so many wonderful women in the same situation. I am so happy to be part of Foundation for Women.

The Foundation for Women is proud to feature Sandra Romero of the National City Microcredit group this month. Sandra recently qualified for her second loan with FFW. She has been a great inspiration and has provided continuous support for the women in her group. Sandra has also taken the initiative and signed up for Cisco Business Training classes, offered by FFW, that will give her the tools she needs to launch her business to the next level.

a well-known leader of fundraising and philanthropy in La Jolla, will join us on the board and chair the fundraising committee. Elsa Romero, partner and CPA with AKT LLP specializing in non-profit accounting, was recommended by the Leichtag Family Foundation. Elsa will chair the Finance Committee. Francesca San Diego, a partner in Quest Business Consulting, has wide international experience and will help us with the Liberia microcredit program. Carmen Bianchi, a business consultant and teacher of SDSU, will round out our board with business acumen and a penchant for marketing. We welcome our new board members and say a very grateful thank you to our outgoing board members!

Foundation who made first-time grants and to the Tarsadia Foundation, which made a grant for the second year.

Every week entrepreneurial women come to group meetings, develop their business plans, gain some education on financial and business management – and wait for their first loan.

We want to more than double the number of San Diego women we serve and continue to expand our success in Liberia. Thanks to these supporters, 2011 is off to a good start!

If you have not yet made your gift, please consider getting your 2011 off to a good start by going to www.foundationforwomen.org and click Donate.



Money Matters

While some say that the best things in life are free, we all know that money DOES matter – especially to the poor women that FFW serves with very small loans. These few dollars mean that women can buy supplies, market their products, hire help, or rent space.

Because of the generosity of individuals and foundations, FFW will be able to make more loans in the early part of 2011, expanding the San Diego Microcredit Program. Special thanks go first to our many individual donors who made gifts in 2010 – some of whom make gifts every month and many who give every year. You are the core of our support, and we appreciate your continuing generosity.

We also send thanks to PIMCO Foundation and the Hand to Hand program of the Coastal Community

San Diego Program Notes

Foundation for Women is currently operating 11 loan and saving centers across San Diego County; Carlsbad, Chula Vista, City Heights, El Cajon, Encinitas, Escondido, Fallbrook, National City, Oceanside, South East San Diego, and Spring Valley. We look forward to opening up another center on the campus of University of San Diego in early January 2011.

We welcome FFW members and donors to visit the centers and see firsthand the impact that their contribution is making in the community. The hands-on visit will give FFW members and donors an opportunity to meet the women we serve and hear about their dreams and aspirations. Please call us at 858-483-0400 to schedule a tour.

The San Diego microcredit women are looking for volunteers and mentors to help teach ESL classes, basic marketing

and sales skills, health/wellness tips and financial literacy. The women understand that they can only fulfill their potential and build successful businesses if they embrace a holistic approach.

We are also pleased to announce a new partnership with Cisco Entrepreneur Institute to provide on-line computer literacy training and business classes to our microentrepreneurs. These classes are being taught by three FFW microcredit recipients who were selected for their technology know-how. A big thank you to Media Arts Center San Diego and the Chula Vista Library for their support in opening up their computer labs for these classes- we are so grateful for your partnerships.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

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