Annie Walsh Old Girls Association
Washington Metropolitan Branch

“Exemplifying Christ the Great Architect”

AWOGA Connection
March 2018
Builders (School Song)

We want to build on a firm foundation
on the rock of integrity
We want to set a good example
of truth and loyalty.
If we can meet success or failure,
with courage and humble grace;
and work with zeal for our ideal-
in the world to take our place.
We want to build on a firm foundation,
to keep life’s golden rule;
for Christ the great Architett
made the plan we follow in
the Annie Walsh School.

Non Sibi Sed Omnibus
Editorial Team

Audrey Pabs-Garnon
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Our Thoughts

How do you like our new look? After more than 10 years we felt it was time for rebranding. Not only did we change the cover, but we also came up with a new name; AWOGA Connection. The word “Newsletter” was a misnomer and did not quite reflect its platform. Over the years the publication has evolved from sharing brief news about the Annie Walsh Memorial School to presenting reports, articles and news about the institution and the global AWOGA family. Sylvia Porter created the new design. She did a wonderful job. We love it and we hope you do, too. It is one of many we will be using in the future. Your feedback on the new AWOGA Connection is welcome.

The transparency with which we share activities of the school and association has gained traction. The feedback we get from alumnae is that it is very informative and we should continue this trend. We appreciate the efforts of the various committee chairs that have judiciously and with clarity reported on their activities. They personalize this year’s theme, “Exemplifying Christ the Great Architect” and to follow the plans for the school. This year, the Finance Committee sent the full report as presented to His Lordship the Bishop and Chairman of the AWMS. It is reproduced in its entirety.

In this edition you will learn about the successful implementation of the single shift system. No voice is more vocal or as persuasive as the voice of the students. We asked to hear directly from them on the impact of the single shift system. Reaching this milestone is a major one in the timeline of the Annie Walsh and it is worth noting what the pupils have to say. Their views are perceptive.

We also share with pride the success of the Annie Walsh girl -in and out of the classroom. She is amazing!

As we go forward, the editorial team will continue to use this medium as a tool for sharing development in the

AWMS community and we ask for your support in all our events. Please join us as we reach for our goal.

Marion A. Richards
Public Relations Officer - AWOGA Washington

President’s Message

The past 12 months have been nothing short of phenomenal. I am both honored yet humbled to have been unanimously nominated and elected to be the president of arguably one of the largest and most influential alumni associations in the Washington D.C metro area. The new Executive have enjoyed support from our ex-officio members Mrs. Mimie Williams and Mrs. Rita Johnson, who have continued to provide guidance and advice, as we all become more familiar with our new roles.

My first year in office has been filled with numerous successes, the greatest of which was witnessing the historic moment when the school reverted to its original single shift status. As an organization, the contribution that our branch makes to our alma mater, the Annie Walsh Memorial School in Freetown, Sierra Leone, continues to be consistent and significant. Of note is the pivotal financial contributions that we made to the rehabilitation of the school in preparation for change to a single shift; one of three critical steps on the path to privatization. Donations and contributions from members and our supporters, made it possible for the branch to contribute to some of the mandatory requirements for the process.

In 2016 /2017, AWOGA Washington provided funding for rehabilitation of the IDA building, additional classrooms and teachers’ staff rooms, purchase of furniture, solar panels to provide electricity, funding of equipment and supplies for the Home Economics Department. Added to the list were incentives for staff and funds for hiring cleaners, as well as continued awards of scholarships to meritorious students. On September 11, 2017, over 2,000 AWMS pupils started a regular 8 am to 2pm school day and there was a collective cheer across branches globally, and a big sigh of relief.

The needs are far from met. There are additional projects in the pipeline: namely the resurfacing of the driveway, the rehabilitation of the sports court and the creation of a reserve fund which will be critical for funding of operational needs once the school is independent. The
reserve funds will be used for running the school to cover the costs of teachers & staff salaries and benefits, plus incidentals (until the revenue stream reaches status quo).

To that end, AWOGA Washington now has a newly formed committee that was created specifically to address this challenge of financial sustainability to support the school. I am very pleased to present the members of the AWOGA Washington Strategic Development Committee, charged with exploring ways through which the branch can make meaningful, significant strides towards securing long term resources that will benefit the school. Members of the committee are members who I respect and that I am confident will be diligent in tackling the task at hand. They are Bidemi Labor, Claribel Sawyerr, Tania Faulkner, Franklina Buck, Boi Betty Udom and our treasurer, Jacqueline Jones - Dove. Mrs. Yvonne Kponou, one of the pioneers of the AWMS Development Fund Committee, has graciously agreed to provide guidance and oversight of the committee activities.

In the coming year, I look forward to welcoming new members and, as I mentioned last year, I encourage those of you who have been on the sidelines for years, to jump in!!!

May we all be blessed as we continue in service for our beloved school.

Non sibi sed omnibus.

Marion Koso-Thomas
President – AWOGA Washington

Principals’ Report

Update on the Annie Walsh Memorial School’s Transition to a Single Shift

- It is one of the requirements of the Ministry of Education. With the cooperation of all stakeholders such as the Alumnae and the School’s Administration, the Annie Walsh started operating again as a single shift school on the 11th September 2017. After a short service at the school’s chapel His Grace, Bishop Thomas A. I. Wilson declared that the Annie Walsh will now operate a single shift school.
- In the process of the transition the Boarding Home was renovated and converted to 11 classrooms. The acting Vice Principal, SSS (Senior Secondary School) transferred her office to the newly renovated building.
- Classrooms were refurbished and painted, and furniture supplied through the effort of the Implementation Committee headed by His Lordship the Bishop and chaired by Mrs. Elfrida Scott. Toilets were also refurbished to meet with the demands of the school.
- Though the declaration was accepted by some members of staff and pupils with mixed feelings, everyone concerned with the school promised to work hard to make this process a successful one.

Challenges

- The increase in pupils has resulted in difficulty of student interaction on the school premises.
- School devotion is a big challenge.
- The lunch break period between the junior and senior schools has been staggered to better manage the use of the canteen (cafeteria).
- The school is experiencing shortage of teachers to uphold the system.
- Pupils will be expected to maintain their own schedules and develop good study habits every day in school.

Benefits

- The school’s administration will be able to plan well for the Change of Status of the school.
- The pupils will be able to get home on time, rest, study well and be refreshed for the next day.
- On the whole, with the cooperation of staff members and pupils, the new system that started in September 2017 is sure to succeed.

Ophelia Morrison Principal SSS (Sr. Secondary School)
Antoinette Horton Ag. Principal JSS (Jr. Secondary School)

Retirement

We say, “Thank You and Good Luck” to Mrs. Helen Hamilton, who retired as principal of the Junior Secondary School at the start of the school year in 2017.
Report from the Finance Committee as delivered to the Chairman, AWMS Implementation Committee

To: His Lordship the Bishop, Chairman AWMS Implementation Committee

From: The Chairperson, Finance Committee of the AWMS Development Committee

Re: THE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Purpose
The purpose of this report is to update members of the Implementation Committee on the financial status of the Development Fund and the projects undertaken prior to the shift change on the 11th September 2017.

2. Fund a Classroom Project
Following the letter of appeal from His Lordship the Bishop to the AWOGA branches in the diaspora, the Committee received positive feedback from all the branches as detailed in the attached Schedule A. Few AWOGANS contributed also towards this project.

The total amount received was Le680,185,600 out of which, we paid the contractors (Messrs. Joselin Trading & Construction Enterprises and Mario Construction & Engineering Services) a total of Le631,897,225. We made minor payments of Le5,000,000 to other contractors for preparing the Bills of Quantities and the architectural drawings for the conversion of the Boarding Home.

The amount of Le48,288,375 shown as surplus in the Schedule is the 5% retention fee for the contractors.

3. Desk Sets Project
In order to achieve the Shift Change on 11th September 2017, the Chairperson of the Development Committee made a second appeal to AWOGA branches in the diaspora and AWOGANS nationwide to donate Le300,000 for a desk set.

Again, the response was overwhelming and we surpassed our target by 77 desk sets. The result is shown in Schedule B attached.

Furthermore, it was on the recommendation of AWOGAN Dunni Chalobah that the AWOGA branches in the diaspora started donating towards the construction of the desk sets in August 2012. So far, we have constructed 1,000 sets.

4. Additional Staff
Because of the extensive repairs being done and the additional assets brought into the School, members were particularly concerned about the maintenance of these assets, the cleanliness of the compound and the upkeep of the classrooms and gardens. The Development Committee had a discussion with the Liaison for the AWMS Presidents’ Council, and in response, AWOGA (Washington) volunteered to pay for the services of additional staff stated in Schedule C.

5. Teachers’ Tables & Chairs
Two branches in the diaspora, namely, AWOGA (Washington) and AWOGA (Texas) contributed towards the construction of 30 and 20 sets respectively at a cost of Le350,000 per set.

6. Scholarship
The Scholarship Committee headed by AWOGAN Andrina Coker will meet shortly to award scholarships to deserving pupils. Total contribution from the branches is Le56,782,508.00.

7. Conclusion
To buttress these laudable outcomes from AWOGANS in the country and the diaspora, we are proud to report a total contribution of One Billion Two Hundred Million Leones (Le1.2bn) or (USD 160,000) approximately, already spent to refurbish and equip the School in the process of achieving the privatization status in 2018/2019 academic year.

Our sincere thanks and appreciation go to the Diocese of Freetown, the entire membership of the AWMS Development Committee, our parent branch AWOGA (Freetown), AWOGA branches in the diaspora, especially the Washington Metropolitan branch for its generous contribution of USD9,519 to meet the shortfalls in the various projects when the Development Committee was in dire need of funds to achieve the Shift Change, and AWOGANS Mimie Williams and Yvonne Kponou for their exemplary leadership in their respective roles as Liaison for AWMS Presidents’ Council and as International Link for the Development Committee.

Faithfully submitted

AWOGAN Marcella B. Jones
Chairperson Finance Committee
Report from the AWMS Scholarship Committee

The Scholarship Committee (SC) met on 31st October 2017, to consider the short-listed applications for 6 new JSS & 1 SSS scholarships. There were 17 applicants for JSS and 24 for SSS. The Committee also reviewed the performance of the existing scholarship holders.

Interview for new awards – the Committee interviewed 12 girls in the Junior Secondary School. Based on the parameters set out 6 new scholarships were awarded to:

- a. Sia Sylvia Ngaujah
- b. Keturah Davies
- c. Faith Coker
- d. Marcella M. Bockarie
- e. Isha I. Janneh
- f. Julian D. Conteh

Messie Mattia won the scholarship for SSS.

Renewal of Scholarships – The Committee reviewed the results of the existing scholarship holders and noted there was no adverse report on conduct. The Committee was not satisfied with the academic performance of 4 of the recipients. Members met with the pupils and later their parents to find out what was affecting their performance.

The SC was particularly concerned that there was deterioration in their performance and all 4 girls in JSS are expected to take the BECE exams in 2018.

Findings and Action Items from the Scholarship Committee

- The parent/pupil/SC meetings gave insights into the reasons affecting the grades of the pupils. The SC agreed there was need for remedial help for all 4 pupils and arranged for them to receive extra lessons starting 12th November 2017.
- The SC requested the school’s Guidance Counselors to meet with the pupils regularly.
- The SC is to meet at least twice during the school year specifically to review the performance and conduct of scholarship holders.

Awards Ceremony

The ceremony for scholarship recipients took place at the Chapel on Wednesday, 8th November 2017.

Andrina Coker
Chairperson Scholarship Committee AWOGA Freetown

Presidents’ Council

The consortium of AWOGA branches worldwide, as represented by the AWOGA Presidents’ Council, continues to operate effectively and productively, with branches working collaboratively to provide funding and support for the AWMS’ various initiatives and projects. Our newest sister branch, AWOGA Northern California, established early 2017 under the leadership of Dr. Edwina Davies-Mendes quickly joined the alliance. The year 2017 was especially engaging as the Council focused diligently on two vital initiatives; Single Shift School System Implementation, and Solar Power System Installation.

At the beginning of the school year September 2017, the merger of the senior and junior schools into a single shift meant housing all 2,608 students at the same time. This required additional classrooms, with desk sets for both teachers and students. AWOGA branches collectively funded the following to help the school meet its transitioning needs:

- Creation/refurbishment/renovation of buildings and classrooms to provide the 51 classrooms needed for the combined school population.
- Provision of additional students’ desk sets, and teachers’ desk sets.
- Renovation of IDA Building, and painting of campus buildings and facilities.
- Additional campus cleaning and maintenance staff (groundskeeper/gardener, custodian, cleaner).
- Teachers’ lounge in Senior Secondary School Building (Boarding Home).
- Campus benches (50).

A Solar Power System covering the IDA Building, JSS principal’s office, bursar’s office, physics lab, library, SSS principal’s office, school hall, chapel and adjacent classrooms has been installed. This brings the school a more stable supply of electric power and opportunities for upgrade in communication systems, administrative operations technology, and IT education programs. The IDA Building which houses the Chemistry Lab, Biology Lab, & Home Economics Units, offers other opportunities for enhanced educational resources and teaching programs.

AWOGA Branch Leaders, our AWMS Development Fund Partners, including the School’s Principals, are to
be credited for these extraordinary successes and achievements which are attainable because of their strong commitment and exemplary leadership. **Great Teamwork!!**

The AWOGA Scholarship Committee worked with participating diaspora branches in awarding 39 scholarships to students (19 JSS, 20 SSS). The Committee is to be commended for implementing a remedial and counseling program to shore up performance of struggling scholarship recipients.

Key issues on the Council’s agenda this year are:

- Continued focus on providing support for Change of Status /Privatization, which is scheduled for the next school year that starts in September 2018. This would include; Development of Short Term and Long-Term Fundraising Strategies for sustainability of an independent school, and establishment of a “Reserve Fund” to bolster the school’s financial foundation.

- Continuation of efforts to address several infrastructural needs of the school’s aged facilities that would ensure the safety and security of students, as well as improve overall campus life. This will include repair of the Junior School’s Home Economics Building that was badly damaged during a severe rain storm last year; reconstruction of the Upper Sports Court; replacement of the roof of the Main Administrative Building and Annexes, and reconstruction of the Driveway and Drainage System.

As we embark on our agenda for 2018, we pray for God’s continuing guidance and protection over this alliance of AWOGA branches as we come together to assist our alma mater.

*Mimie R. Williams,*
**Immediate Past President - AWOGA Washington Presidents’ Council Liaison**

**Regentonians: Our Pursuit of Excellence Continues Unabated**

“**The noblest search is the search of excellence**”

As we stand at the beginning of the New Year and look forward with great anticipation the installation of our new Principal, just seven months away, I take great encouragement from these wonderful words of Lyndon B. Johnson.

God has truly blessed our endeavors and rewarded our hopes. The Sierra Leone Grammar School continues to be a force to be reckoned with because of our dogged pursuit of excellence, continued support, and commitment. Evidently, as this year’s West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination demonstrates, four students of our alma mater were among the top five in the country. In fact, three of them were beneficiaries of our scholarship scheme. Furthermore, 98% of this year’s students who took the West Africa Senior School Certificate exams passed and met the minimum requirements for acceptance into colleges and universities in Sierra Leone. That is impressive!

In 2017, we exceeded our expectations in a number and variety of events we organized. Nonetheless, we fell significantly short in our Endowment (Restricted) Fund major investment goal of raising $100,000 and our long maturity goal of three times the annual operating budget ($1.9 million based on the 2013 operating budget of the school). Though we did not meet the overall goal, we are very thankful for the $63,150.00 collected. With this said, we want you to know that the Grammar School needs your financial support, however little. Small gifts have a way of adding up to large sums.

Considering the challenges prior to the start of the transition process, we are happy to report that the Reverend Ken Davies has settled well in his new role as Principal Designate, while our revered, devoted, and indefatigable Principal, Mr. Akinwande Lasite, circumspectly winds down his prodigious career at our illustrious Grammar School. We can’t thank Mr. Lasite enough. The official handing over and installation ceremony is slated for September 11, 2018, at the school grounds. You will also note with interest that construction work of the nine-foot perimeter fence, starting from the main gate at Macaulay Street, and ending at the Sir Samuel Lewis Drive is near completion and likely be completed by the end of January 2018. Meanwhile, just few months ago, the newly refurbished Le 1.2 billion Frank Wood Building (Administrative Building) was officially unveiled and rededicated with much pomp and pride. Construction of a modern...
Cafeteria is underway to replace the “old Market” which has outlived its purpose.

Unquestionably, the association’s most important resource is its members. We are particularly pleased to inform you that our association over the last seventeen months has added several young dynamic Regentonians to its roll. This is a positive sign and we hope other young Regentonians in the diaspora will follow suit. In addition, the association looks to reach out to prospective members who continue to remain on the sidelines. We encourage members, new as well as seasoned to share views, experience or expertise by joining the association and attending our general monthly meetings. Also, plans are underway to update/redesign our current website for increased performance and reliability.

Our relationship with the West-Coast Chapter, the South East Chapter and the United Kingdom Branch remains solid and cordial.

With the generous financial support of our members during the past year, we were able to remit the sum of $28,710.00 to the school. Special thanks to our Individual Alumnus Scholarships sponsors and our Regentonian Family Group Scholarship sponsors.

Ultimately, as we strive to meet the educational needs of young boys in Sierra Leone as well as reshape the educational landscape in our beloved country, it behooves us to continue to pursue the noblest search, the quest for excellence. Then and only then will the Grammar School function as the founding fathers designed and intended it. Hence, our pursuit of excellence continues unabated.

Floreat Regentonia- God Bless Our Grammar School

Rev. Dr. Frank Hume-Dawson
President - SLGSAANA, Washington D.C Metro Area Chapter

Privatization. How Much More...

For a good many years now, Sierra Leoneans have witnessed a tsunami of private schools – be they kindergarten, elementary, primary or secondary.

The tide flowed and parents who ‘got it’, searched for the best for their children, armed with the conviction that ‘the object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives’ (Robert M Hutchins). In other words, offer them a firm foundation for their future – good work ethic, good paying jobs, and raise good kids themselves.

Want to reverse the trend? Definitely not!

So AWOGANS the world over, closed their ranks, put their shoulders to the wheel, bolstered the AWMS Development Fund and rode crest high on the wave to move from a beleaguered system, go unshackled and aim for PRIVATIZATION! WOW! We presented our case to the Government and were granted a three-year transition period.

In Privatization, we get control of girls’ education, bringing it back to what and where it should be, get control of the school environment where teachers can control the classroom (not the other way around), where schoolwork, class work and homework can all be monitored; where teacher pupil ratio is reasonable, contact hours are feasible and standards are high. Such are the attributes of our renown and which will restore our alma mater to its former glory.

ARE WE THERE YET? HOW MUCH MORE AND AT WHAT PRICE?

AWOGANS all, today we stand on the threshold of Privatization. The two shift system with all its frustrations and attendant socio-economic problems is a thing of the past and may it rest there in peace. We welcome and stand strong on the one shift ushered in on September 11, 2017. Indeed, the Lord has brought us thus far. It is His doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

But we still need your commitment, your dedication, your support – moral, social and most importantly, FINANCIAL!

September 2018 when we achieve full and complete privatization is just around the corner. Our sights go further. We have to keep moving because in the words of Anne Murray, we ‘can’t reach new horizons by standing on the shore.’

Let’s commit ourselves to this task set before us. It is incumbent on us to keep our girls focused, for as Michelle Obama rightly says, “Every girl no matter where she lives deserves the opportunity to develop the promise inside her.”

Can we help today’s AWMS’ girls develop the promise inside of them?

YES! WE CAN!!!! – (Barack Obama)
So, let’s forge ahead.

- Increase your giving!
- Commit your experience and expertise!
- Explore new ways of funding!
- Elevate your level of dedication and devotion!
- Give back to the school that first gave to you!
- Give back to the AWMS which has contributed to who you are today!
- Contribute FINANCIALLY!!!!!!

Come back and help! No gift is too small!!!!

WE NEED YOU ALL!!!

Yvonne Thompson-Kponou
International Link

Congratulations! One School – Same Hours

AWOGA LAGOS
On behalf of AWOGA (Lagos Branch) I wish to congratulate the school for reverting to a single shift which will undoubtedly make learning more conducive for the children.

Although we are small in number, we are very enthusiastic about our alma-mater and committed in supporting fund-raising activities for the school. Despite the harsh economic situation in Nigeria we have contributed a substantial amount between February 2016 and June 2017, to meet some of the needs of the school.

We hope to do more soon. God willing! To assist in our fundraising drive, we would like to request a prototype letter from the parent body that we can use when soliciting donations.

God bless our Alma-mater!

Ajibola Shonibare
President - AWOGA Lagos Branch

AWOGA CAROLINAS
Congratulations to the AWMS and AWOGANS in Freetown and the diaspora for the support resulting in implementation of a single shift per school day.

AWOGA- Carolinas was pleased to provide funds for renovation of classrooms and construction of desks and chairs.

Christiana Redwood-Sawyerr
President— AWOGA Carolinas

AWOGA ONTARIO (Canada)
AWOGA Ontario congratulates the board, principal and vice principals for both JSS and SSS on the transition from the two-tiered school system to a single shift in September 2017. We know this was not an easy task to take on but by the grace of God the transition was a success. AWOGA Ontario contributed towards the emergency funding for desks and chairs to prepare for incoming students. AWOGA Ontario members hosted a dancing competition between the different AWMS houses to raise more funds towards the development of the school. It was a fun loving and friendly competition with Caspari winning. $300 Canadian dollars was raised. We are looking forward to having more fundraising activities in 2018 to help AWMS achieve its goal towards providing excellent education for the students.

Millicent Olu- Cole
AWOGA- Ontario, Canada

Landslide Disaster in Sierra Leone and its Impact on AWMS Development Plans in the Regent Area

The main objective of this article requested by AWOGA Washington, DC Chapter is to review and summarize various issues pertaining to the landslide disaster that occurred on August 14, 2017, around Regent in the Western Area of Sierra Leone, and its impact on AWMS’ future development plans in Regent.

I live in the Lumley area of Freetown and the experience of waking up to screaming sirens at about 7 am that fateful morning of August 14, 2017, will forever remain in my mind. Added to that, viewing the Sugar Loaf area a few days later while driving into Regent intensified a permanent image of the damage and loss that over 6,000 people experienced on that day.

The disaster is well documented on the Internet and in various reports and images produced by the Sierra Leone Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). In addition, accounts from international agencies, local and international media houses and individuals are readily available and accessible to
everyone. Much of my review and summary of the disaster is extracted from the World Bank’s report “Sierra Leone: Rapid Damage and Loss Assessment on August 14, 2017 Landslides and Floods in the Western Area.”

Sugar Loaf Mountain is the highest peak in the north of the Western Area Peninsular in Sierra Leone and after three days of torrential rain, a massive landslide on August 14, 2017, slipped into the Babadorie River Valley resulting in flooding in the Western Rural and Urban Area (Freetown) affecting 6000 people with 1,141 confirmed dead or missing.

The landslide damaged or completely submerged several houses and structures, killing residents – many still asleep – who were trapped inside. The collapse of the mountainside took place in two stages – with (1) the lower slope sliding into the Babadorie River Valley and, 10 minutes later, (2) the upper portion, resulting in a "tidal wave" of landmass and debris. Highly mobile, the saturated debris flow carrying mud, large boulders, tree trunks, and other material, advanced toward Lumley Creek with a wall of flood water leading in front. The same day, four other known mudslides were reported in Regent, Goderich, and Tacuguma (chimp sanctuary) with the most devastation being reported in the Regent area.

The mudslide and rain overwhelmed Freetown's poor drainage system, causing flooding in several areas and sweeping vehicles, debris and mud in its path as shown in Figure 3.

According to the World Bank report, “Sierra Leone is prone to natural disaster mainly recurrent floods, drought and landslides, which are likely to be exacerbated by climate change.”

Figure 4 below shows evidence of disastrous landslides in the Freetown Peninsula area as far back as 1945. It shows a plaque at St. John’s Church, Charlotte, set up in remembrance of a disastrous landslide in the area on August 10, 1945. A similar plaque was set up in Bathurst village in memory of those who lost their lives.

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Million $31.65 with housing being the largest (49%) affected sector. The disaster affected 59 schools mainly due to flooding in Regent, Kamayama, Malama, Juba/Kaningo, Lumley, Dwarzak and Culvert. One school was destroyed and others experienced minor damages to the buildings.

Possibility of Seismic Activities in the Regent area

While it seemed obvious that the hot weather and extensive rainfall initiated the landslides, I was quick to notice the heavily forested area around the disaster zone and mentioned in a couple of discussion groups the possibility of seismic activities such as earth tremors and earthquakes. These could have triggered the actual collapse of the hillside, causing a gap, slip or trench into which most of the infrastructure in the area got buried. In my opinion, it was impossible for the clayey landslide to be thick enough to completely bury all the buildings in the area with no trace of roofs and other structures. On receipt of the following press release shown in Figure 5 below from the Liberia government, of a 6.5 earthquake recorded on the Richter scale about 800 Km off the Liberian coast on August 18, 2017, my suspicions were founded but no data has confirmed linkages between the two events in Sierra Leone and Liberia. It would be interesting for further research to be carried out on possible seismic and plate tectonics activities, whether inland or oceanic.

To conclude, I wrote this article from the perspective of an environmental scientist, and as an AWMS alum I am excited about the prospects of the school relocating to Regent sometime in the future. However, this must be after carrying out appropriate evaluation and assessment.

Agatha C. Johnson
Alumna and Environmental Scientist

Impact of the Disaster on AWMS Development Plans in Regent

The Annie Walsh has plans to move the school from its present site in the Eastern area of Freetown to a location already acquired in Regent. Review of the August 14, 2017 disaster and its links to possible climate change and other natural disaster is recommended before a final decision is taken on the actual move.

In this regard, the AWMS needs to:

- Collect historical data on landslides in the vicinity.
- Get an assessment of historical earthquake activities in Sierra Leone.
- Conduct thorough environmental and hazard assessment of the proposed site in Regent, taking into consideration lessons learned from the Sugar Loaf Mount landslides.
- Develop a comprehensive disaster prevention protocol.
- Develop capacities to respond to and prepare for emergencies if the move to Regent is realized.

To conclude, I wrote this article from the perspective of an environmental scientist, and as an AWMS alum I am excited about the prospects of the school relocating to Regent sometime in the future. However, this must be after carrying out appropriate evaluation and assessment.

Agatha C. Johnson
Alumna and Environmental Scientist

Voices of the Students: Integrating into a Single Shift School System

My Observations: The one shift system is all about bringing the two sections of the Annie Walsh Memorial School together as a school. It involves things that were done separately; assembly, school hours, lunch break, end of the school day and others.

I have observed a lot in the past few months since the junior and senior schools merged. In the beginning assembly and devotion were held as one for the whole school, and it was evident that everybody including teachers enjoyed it.
However, we were overcrowded because the school’s population is over 2,000 and the assembly stage in the school’s grounds is not large enough to accommodate us. This improved later when the senior pupils were allowed to hold their devotion separately in the school’s chapel. The junior school now has the assembly stage to themselves.

During lunch break, the JSS and SSS go to the canteen to buy food at different times. This reduces congestion from having the entire school purchase food at the same time.

In terms of teaching, I notice that teachers have more time to cover the subjects because extra minutes have been allocated per period. Now a teacher has time to introduce the topic, explain it at length, give notes and even assign homework. And I believe this has been the primary reason for the school’s outstanding performance this term.

Based on the facts stated above, I can honestly say that I appreciate this new single shift over the two tier system. **My Challenges:** I have faced many challenges since the one shift system commenced. One of these is with school devotion that I already talked about. It was very unsatisfactory as pupils were cramped together and there was so much noise that it made it difficult to control the girls. Dismissal was always a difficult situation to handle.

One of my personal challenges was in successfully carrying out my duty as a school prefect. In the previous setting I was aware we were all in the junior school. However, in the new environment it is hard to determine a senior girl from a junior. I often find myself correcting girls who are in fact my seniors. Most of the time, I want to punish the wrongdoers, but my efforts are always frustrated. Sometimes I would simply agree with them because they are my seniors. At times I am a little afraid when carrying out my duties because I am not sure how far I can go with correcting them.

Another challenge that I face is the restrictions in the school. The junior pupils are not allowed to go to the areas where seniors meet. Even if the matter is urgent you will still not be allowed to, except with permission from the administrative office, the senior prefects or a teacher. But the reverse is allowed, and seniors can use the junior areas.

These are the challenges I am facing in the midst of the ongoing one shift school system. Still, I do like and appreciate it because there are benefits that come with it. For example, with all activities taking place together, it gives us the chance to interact and work as one body. This makes us different from other government schools.

Khadija Jalloh  
AWMS - JSS31

**The Annie Walsh as One Entity**

My personal observations on the single shift system are listed below.

Some of the positive views include junior pupils benefitting from longer class periods. Now all subjects are given equal time and teachers address topics exhaustively.

Under the previous system, seniors who attended classes in the afternoon did not spend as much time as the early shift pupils. Many of them would get home late due to transportation problems. With the new system everyone goes home at the same time and will have enough time to study and do their homework.

The single shift has made certain organizations like the “Literary and Debating Society”, “Scripture Union”, and others operational once again. These organizations were almost dead with the two tier school but now the seniors have revived them.

In every positivity there is negativity. The negative thoughts are on the overcrowding as seen on the stage during devotion.

Another downside is that juniors have limited use of the computer lab, concrete benches and use of the chapel. When SSS students are occupying these areas, JSS students are not allowed there.

In conclusion, the junior pupils are disadvantaged because of the overcrowding of the school.

Magdalene B. Bangura  
AWMS – JSS 3 (1)
Excerpts from other articles

“The system provides room for teachers to prepare adequately … [T]his means that after school closes at 2 pm, teachers could visit the library and internet café to research topics for classes the following day.

“Pupils who have opportunities to attend private classes may do so to improve on their performance in school.”

Sarian Janneh
AWMS - SSS

Membership

In all associations, it is critical to have members; members who would help the association to achieve the goals and the mission statement. The more members there are, the more persons will be available for delegation of duties and tasks. The larger the membership, the more likely the association will succeed. With more members, the more resources the association has at its disposal. These include both membership dues, and the large pool of ideas from which the association can draw on to move forward.

Hence the Annie Walsh Old Girls Association (AWOGA’s) drive to encourage more ex pupils to become fully paid up members, attend monthly meetings and participate fully in AWOGA activities. The Association is not doing badly from the membership point of view. Given that it was founded in 1986 with nine (9) members, today it has at least 173 active members. Not only has the member numbers increased, the composition of the membership has also changed in terms of generations and skills. Older experienced members are now joined by younger members with differing skills and the result is a very dynamic and very vibrant association. The line chart below gives an excellent illustration of the membership progression within the last ten years.

AWOGA is inviting every “old girl” to become a member. If you cannot make it to every meeting and you have ideas, bounce them off to the executive. As a member you are eligible to vote and be voted for in elections. The association also reaches out to members in times of joy and sadness. Come be a part of the team. The more, the merrier.

Waltina Spencer
Member Relations Officer – AWOGA Washington

From the Desk of the Treasurer

Our next fundraising is coming up in October. Ever wondered what happens to the funds collected during the Inter-house Donations Drive?

These funds support worthy causes such as school campus cleaning, replacement of broken desks and chairs in prior years, or renovations of various departments such as the Home Economics Department.

We are on a mission this year to dethrone the reigning champion of the Inter-House Donations – CASPARI. They have consistently out-donated other houses by a 4 to 1 margin. To my Sass, Bisset, Hamblet, Pole & Dunkley Sisters, I am counting on you.

Let’s do this…

It’s 2018! Don’t forget to pay your membership dues. Just $5.00 a month or $60.00 annually.

Effective January 2019 dues will be $80.00 annually.

Send dues to the Treasurer or use PayPal at anniewalsh.org.

Jacqueline Jones-Dove
Treasurer – AWOGA Washington

KUDOS

Fatmatta Binta Jalloh (AWMS) won the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone debate. The topic was, “Respect for human rights as a pre-requisite for a politically tolerant and peaceful 2018 elections”. Contestants were assessed on their knowledge of the subject, composure, articulation and persuasive skills.

The Annie Walsh was among the top 6 schools in Sierra Leone in the 2017 WASSCE results.
ANNUAL DINNER & DANCE

October 6, 2018

9:30 pm – 2:00 am

La Fontaine Bleue

7963 Annapolis Rd

Lanham, MD 20706
This Day in History - March 18

1895 200 African Americans leave Savannah, Georgia (USA) for Liberia.

1922 British magistrates in India sentence Mahatma Ghandi to 6 years imprisonment for civil disobedience.

1939 Georgia signs the Bill of Rights 150 years after the federal government is established.

1965 Cosmonaut Aleksei (Alexey) Leonov leaves his space ship Vokshod 2 and becomes the first person to walk in space. Time is 12 minutes.

1992 Worldwide reaction and victory for De Klerk after white South Africans voted the previous day (March 17) for constitutional reforms that would give legality to blacks.

2013 Explosions kill 25 people at a bus park in Kano, Nigeria.

(Source: Internet)

Did You Know...

The Teaching Service Commission (TSC) of Sierra Leone is chaired by Dr. Staneala Beckley, a product of the AWMS. The TSC was passed by an Act of Parliament in 2011, in response to the Gbamanja Commission that concluded the 2008 BECE and WASSCE poor students’ results were partly due to teachers’ performance. One of the recommendations was the establishment of a, “Teaching Service Commission attending to all matters relating to teachers in Sierra Leone from recruitment to retirement”.

118 is the total number of staff on roll at the AWMS

There are 70 in SSS

1 Principal
1 Vice-Principal
52 Teaching Staff
3 Administrative Staff
13 Ancillary Staff

There are 48 in JSS

1 Principal (Ag)
1 Vice-Principal
35 Teaching Staff
3 Office Staff
8 Ancillary Staff
## In Memoriam

**March 2017 – March 2018**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alumnae</th>
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<td>Ms. Julia Dumbuya</td>
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<td>Madame (Mrs.) Onike Bessey Peters</td>
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Donation/Pledge Form

The Fund for Privatization of The AWMS

Purpose of the Fund is to generate financial resources to support the school’s privatization initiative, as it seeks to restore quality education and standards of excellence for which the school had been renowned.

AWOGA Washington is a Section 501(c)3 nonprofit and your contribution to the “Fund” may qualify as a charitable deduction for federal income tax purposes.

Donor Information (please print or type)

Name
Billing address
City, ST, Zip Code
Phone 1 | Phone 2
Fax | Email

Pledge Information

I (we) pledge a total of $____________________ to be paid: now monthly quarterly yearly.

I (we) plan to make this contribution in the form of: cash check credit card other.

Credit Card

Via PayPal on AWOGA WASHINGTON’S website

anniewalsh.org

Gift will be matched by (company/family/foundation) __

form enclosed form will be forwarded

Acknowledgement Information

Please use the following name(s) in all acknowledgements: __________

I (we) wish to have our gift remain anonymous.

_________________________  ______________________
Signature(s)                Date

Please make checks, corporate matches, or other gifts payable to:

AWOGA Washington
Metropolitan Branch
P O BOX 1864
SILVER SPRING, MD 20902
# AWOGA EXECUTIVE 2017-2019

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<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Marion Koso-Thomas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Audrey Pahs-Garrnon</td>
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<td>Ebun Taylor</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Jacqueline Jones-Dove</td>
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<td>Asst. Treasurer</td>
<td>Marcellina Leigh</td>
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<td>Hilda Macauley</td>
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<td>Mimie Williams</td>
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Membership and Annual Dues

All Ex-Pupils are eligible and invited to become members of the AWMS Old Girls Association (AWOGA). The primary objective of this association is to provide financial support and assistance in promoting the academic, social and cultural goals of The Annie Walsh Memorial School.

Meetings are currently held at:
  Riderwood Village Square
  Clubhouse Building
  3140 Gracefield Road,
  Silver Spring MD 20904
  on the first Saturday of the month, January through April, and August through December starting at 5:00 p.m. (prompt).

**Online registration and subscription available at**
**http://anniewalsh.org/Membership.html**

**Membership Dues: $60.00 per year. ($80.00 effective 2019)**

**Seniors 70 and over $30.00 per year. ($40.00 effective 2019)**

Payment may also be made by check and mailed to:

Jacqueline Jones-Dove
AWOGA Treasurer
P O Box 1864
Silver Spring, MD 20902
2017 Annual Thanksgiving Service