

January 27, 2018 Sierra Leone Travel Team Update

Congratulations to the team on a job well done! They completed their construction work and developed a plan for the the next projects at the Hospital. The closeout assessment at Centennial was also completed, bringing EWB-LVP's first international project to a very successful finish. They are driving back to Freetown today but here are Herb's most recent updates:

On Thursday, we held the CIIB* meeting and presented the results of the audit. We discussed both strengths and areas of concern. The two major areas of concern were the high power consumption at the library and the lack of routine maintenance of the solar and water systems. The CIIB decided to hold a follow up meeting within the next two weeks. We toured the facility and showed key issues related to maintenance. A highlight of the meeting was when a goat walked through the meeting participants.

****CIIB is the Centennial Infrastructure Improvement Board. It was established at the beginning of our work at CSS to oversee the projects and the care of those projects after we leave.***

The construction team has nearly completed the toilet facility. The doors are installed, plumbing is complete and will be tested tomorrow, all tile was completed and a valve box was built.

Friday, we finished the toilet facility today. Joan gave a short training to the nursing staff on use of the facility. We had our closing meeting with the hospital staff, and discussed the visioning session, the toilet facility and possible future projects. Tomorrow, we leave for Freetown.

Overuse and lack of routine maintenance are big issues in Sierra Leone as they are in much of Africa. We have worked very closely with CSS on maintenance and proper use. For example, when we installed the classroom lighting system, the travel teams spent a lot of time training teachers, administrators and students on the limits of the system. Despite a few rocky patches along the way, the school did a great job restricting usage to three hours each evening. They did so well that the PV system battery actually lasted as long as designed (5 years) despite the addition of four security lights. They have also been successful in keeping the administration system within the design limits. As Herb mentions in his update, there is still work do be done on training at the library but let me share my text to the team after finding out about the library:

"I am so thrilled to hear there are computers being used in the library! A bit of perspective ...When we arrived at CSS for the first time there were no computers in the library. There was no electricity to power the computers in the library. Or to power lights in the library. In fact, there was no electricity anywhere on the campus and almost no electricity in all of Mattru. And at that time, there weren't any books in the library. In fact, there was no Library.

After our first trip in 2010 the school got a grant to rebuild the library. After a few more years a donor from the UK donated boxes and boxes of popular books although no textbooks. In 2016, Rotary provided a mountain of textbooks on many different subjects. In January of 2017 we ran power to the Library, providing lights for evening work and for outlets in anticipation there would someday be computers in the library. And now in 2018, after a Sierra Rutile donation, there are 15 functioning computers being used in a library with lights, books, textbooks and electricity. Absolutely amazing."

Many thanks to our travel teams and to all who have donated their time, money and support for you made this amazing project happen.

Congratulations to all!

Tom

The new toilet facility! Note the handwashing station on the right side.





Training the nursing staff on the new facility. Many people in the area have never used a toilet before.

