

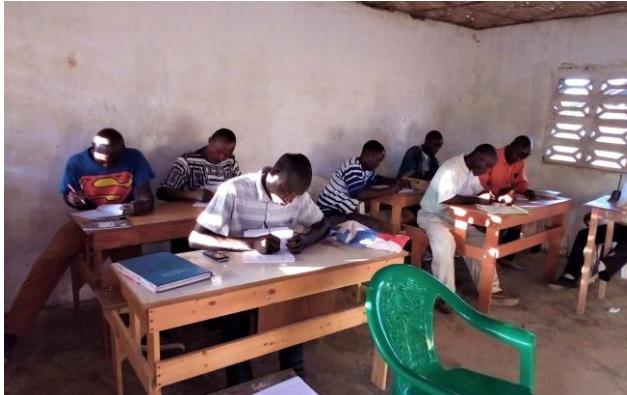
Liberia Education Update

November 2020



Richard Zarwolo leads teacher training in Boway.

Obelia Scott Ross teachers wrote daily reflections on what they learned during the training.



Obelia Scott Ross UMS teachers leave school after a day of training.

Teacher Training at Obelia Scott Ross United Methodist School (UMS)

In 2001, the Liberia Annual Conference of The United Methodist Church provided training for elementary school teacher certification in collaboration with Liberia's Ministry of Education. The training was held on the Ganta United Methodist Mission Station. Richard Zarwolo was one of the teachers who participated in the 2001 training and earned a teaching certificate. He went on to earn an Associate Degree in Education and then a Bachelor of Science Degree in Christian Education. Bro. Zarwolo was born in Boway, Bong County, where the Obelia Scott Ross UMS is located.

When I met with the Obelia Scott Ross UMS teachers in August 2020, they told me that they wanted to have a refresher teacher training workshop before the new school year official opens on December 1, 2020. Bro. Zarwolo offered to volunteer to conduct the training. My first meeting with Bro. Zarwolo was refreshing. He expressed the importance of student-centered learning, getting to know one's students, and taking students from the known to the unknown. We met again to plan a four-and-a-half-day training for the elementary school teachers at Boway's only school. Seven of the nine teachers attended and fully participated in every session of the training from November 17 to 21, 2020. Training topics included lesson planning, testing and evaluation, classroom management, and early childhood education. I am thankful for Bro. Zarwolo's enthusiasm and desire to give back to his hometown.

UMS Annual Principals Retreat

The United Methodist Schools Principal Association held its annual retreat at Tubman-Gray United Methodist High School on the Gbarnga United Methodist Mission Station in Bong County from November 24 to 28, 2020. Twenty-eight United Methodist Schools were represented at the retreat including Obelia Scott Ross UMS. The principals elected officers, finalized the calendar for the 2020/2021 school year, and had discussions with the Ministry of Education's Assistant Minister for Basic and Secondary Education, Felicia Sackey Doe-Sumah and Deputy Minister for Instruction Alexander Duopu. We were blessed to have these two government officials with us at the retreat.



The Youth for Change National Debate Championship was held at the Monrovia Vocational Training Center (MVTC) in Paynesville, Montserrado County.



Principal Association President, Glenn Pelenah, takes notes while Assistant Minister, Felicia Doe-Sumah speaks with principals at their retreat.



The Ganta UMS debate team spent 2 weeks at MVTC and prepared daily for debates by researching topics.

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Ganta UMS Debate Team Wins National Championship!

After winning the Nimba County debates, the Ganta UMS debate team left Nimba for two weeks to compete in the Youth for Change National Debate Championship in Paynesville, Montserrado County next door to Monrovia. I had the pleasure of being with the team as they prepared and then on November 29, 2020, watching the team win the final round to become the national champions with a prize of US\$2000.00 from Orange Liberia.

The final round question was "You are a talented middle-class person in your late twenties about to start a career. Is it better to choose a job that pays more money but for which you have no passion or a job that pays less but for which you have passion?" The GUMS team eloquently defended the motion that it was better to have a job for which you have passion, noting that those who have passion solve problems and contribute to society, innovation and inventions come from passion, and passion is a prerequisite for happiness. Money is not a prerequisite for happiness. Seven out of nine adjudicators voted in favor of the GUMS team.

On behalf of Nimba County, GUMS debate team captain, Albert N. Joe, receives the certificate and trophy from championship sponsor, Orange Liberia.

