



The CHALLENGE

MOVING EARTH TO SHARE HEAVEN **JANUARY 2023**

Early Milestones

**Laying A Foundation
In West Africa**

**Staying True To
Our Calling**

A Message From The
Executive Director

**Many Parts,
One Body**

FIA Shipping As The
Hands & Feet Of Christ

FULL-TIME MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY



DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

JOB DESCRIPTION

Friends In Action International is actively looking for a dedicated and enthusiastic Director of Communications to serve from our Headquarters location in Elizabethtown, PA. This key ministry position is essential to support the ongoing work of the mission. As FIA is in a time of transition and growth, there is great opportunity to develop and re-define the position.

Duties will include managing external communication channels (social media platforms, helping to manage the organization website, and responsible for media relations), writing copy and managing the publication of the organization newsletters and memos (digital or print), and adhering to a company brand in publishing content and marketing materials.

The Communications Director's main responsibilities focus on keeping our constituents, followers, and supporters informed of the local and international activities of the mission. Managing a group that includes graphic design and web development, the Communications team works to develop the org's communication strategies, developing digital, video, and printed media to be managed across a variety of communication platforms. The FIA Communications Director will work with leaders across the organization to identify, define, and produce messaging based on the needs of the organization.

REQUIREMENTS & SKILLS

- Excellent communication and writing skills
- Demonstrate knowledge and proficiency with communications technologies
- Understand principles of copywriting, graphic design, layout and publishing
- Familiarity with social media platforms and social media marketing
- Team player and cross-team communication skills



INTERESTED?

Scan the code to learn more
& download the application.

OR CONTACT ANDY BACHERT,
CHIEF OPERATIONS OFFICER

717.546.0208 | AndyBachert@FIAintl.org

STAYING TRUE TO OUR CALLING

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MATT DURKEE



Proverbs 17:17 (KJV)

“A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.”

Last year, Friends In Action International celebrated its 30th anniversary by sharing a wealth of CHALLENGE-edition “God stories” demonstrating God’s love and faithfulness. Though I’m relatively new to the position of Executive Director (but not to FIA, having served on the field since 2009), these stories helped me truly appreciate how much we have grown from our first days.

Throughout our history as an organization, the activity (what we do as a mission) has grown, and how we’ve responded to our challenges has also evolved. Humble beginnings

led us to provide project support in infrastructure and community development, health and hygiene services, and crisis response and relief services. It has been said that “a hungry heart has no ears”—by building relationships, investing in people, and meeting critical needs, opportunities are created for hearts to hear the truth.

Even as we have grown over the years, something that has never changed has been our *why*. We exist to provide the means and resources to support our Gospel partners in sharing the truth

of Jesus Christ with a world dying apart from Him. For those of us who know the truth of the Gospel, we are meant to wrestle with the question, “I have this hope, so what am I doing with it?” We have this hope, and it’s meant to be shared.

As a group of do-ers and go-getters, our response is ACTION. We may not be the ones doing the talking when we serve with our partners, but by supporting them, by God’s grace, He uses our actions and service to build bridges of peace into hard-to-reach places for the Gospel. Each work we partner with lays a foundation

that shines Truth and Hope into the darkness.

Over the past 12 months, I have seen a surge of requests for partnership, from Friends, people, and organizations asking FRIENDS to help in the unique way God has equipped us to serve. With more than 20 trips planned in 2023 and exploring additional future ministry relationships, this growth is exciting and challenging. As the Lord increases our capacity to support others, I am convinced that we need to stay true to our *why*. To focus on the places that need us most and to

For those of us who know the truth of the Gospel, we are meant to wrestle with the question, “I have this hope, so what am I doing with it?”

IN THIS ISSUE

P. 4-5 | In this issue of the Challenge, we share the establishment of new relationships in **West Africa** as our FIA field team pioneers in a new country.

P. 6-7 | We also highlight the long-standing U.S.-based partnership between the **FIA Shipping Ministry** and OffGrid Tech, a ministry of ETHNOS 360 that supports FIA personnel and projects.

By God’s grace, we’re ready for the next 30 years of touching another million people’s hearts!

P. 8 | We have **more trips** planned this year to carry out the Great Commission than at any time in our history. Skilled and unskilled laborers are welcome. Please take a moment to review the upcoming trips, and if the Lord is calling you, please call us.

be where help is hard to come by. To come alongside those without the means or ability to go the distance themselves.

This year, you are invited to better understand the *why* of the various ministries and projects of Friends In Action International through our CHALLENGE stories. Test us, our convictions; see what drives us to engage where we do and why. See that we are committed to serving as we’ve been called. My prayer is that the Lord will challenge and inspire you to consider how you can be part of the bigger picture of what God is doing through FIA at home and around the world. Whether you pray, give, or go, be part of our Savior’s plan to make Christ known to the last, lost, and least, wherever He calls us, until all have heard. Be a Friend In Action. ■



Early Milestones

LAYING A FOUNDATION



Working in a predominantly Muslim region, what we need most is prayer. Prayer for the Lord to help us as we build strong new relationships. Prayer not to unintentionally insult the local culture or offend the people. Prayer for the love of God to capture hearts and free them.

JEREMY EFFLER | WEST AFRICA FIELD LEADER

We have been working to establish and develop the new mission compound in West Africa, “Shiloh,” in a region with virtually no established Christian churches and very few Gospel workers planting churches. Our relationships in the community are fragile but strengthening every day.

Through purchasing the mission land, God blessed us with the opportunity to build trust and find favor among the locals. We explained to the village chief, whose permission we needed to buy the land, our hearts desire to be a part of the community, to bring

clean water, build our homes, and hire local workers whom we could teach trade skills. Our commitment to the community won him over. Now he visits us about once a month for tea and to view our progress. Dropping in is the polite thing for him to do - say hello to his neighbors.

We met Amari*; a hibiscus farmer, when we were searching for property. He unsuccessfully tried to dissuade us from buying this land. Before we began building, my family and I would visit him with bread and cooked meals. We developed an agreement to allow him to use part of the land to supplement

his income. We've reached a significant milestone - Amari went from rejecting us to becoming our friend.

And as only God can script the story, his son, Aadan*, is now an employee of FIA. Our God is good! Aadan works with FIA foreman Matt Walsh as a day laborer during the week, helping with well-drilling and learning masonry, electrical work, and welding skills. Aadan is also our night guard; he sleeps seven nights a week at Shiloh. His wife and infant baby visit each day. He has a modest home in a part of a shipping container, and his water is from a hand-dug well.

*Names have been changed for security reasons.

Aadan is not a believer. Neither are those on the construction and labor crews we've hired to help us build our homes and compound at Shiloh. Working side by side with Aadan and the other local men has allowed us to get to know them, and they get to know us. They experience our work ethic, observe our communication, and how we get along. We live out the Gospel in front of them, practicing grace and demonstrating peace. We pray that as we live out the love of our Savior in relationships with them, we can build relationships that will lead to opportunities to share the Truth of the Gospel.

We're asking for prayer for the Holy Spirit to soften Aadan's heart and for him to come to Jesus. In years past, FIA worked in a country that seemed more open to hearing and accepting Jesus. There were instances when we saw the Lord move in the lives of 15-20 people at one time, causing them to put their faith publicly in Christ and transform an entire village. Now that we have moved, this is not the case or the environment where we find ourselves. In this community, we could work with one person for five or six years before having a single conversation about Christ. It is a slow and time-intensive process, but if Aadan puts his faith in the Lord, he and his family will substantially impact the entire community.



Our prayer is that as we live out the love of our Savior in relationships with them, we can build relationships that will lead to opportunities to share the Truth of the Gospel.

Our team, with the help of Aadan and local workers, has made much progress this year in developing the land and compound at Shiloh. They've helped us build our homes as we look to live with them in their community and started on a large multipurpose building where we hope to hold church services and eventually reach out into this community. This month, a team will help drill a well to provide the Shiloh community with water, which will also support a garden project on Shiloh-land for widows and at-risk women to grow food for their families. The water and garden were one of our commitments to the village when we asked to buy land to live among them – they have been waiting and watching to see if we are faithful to keep our word. Through this, we strengthen our relationship with them, showing Jesus through our actions, eventually leading to sharing Truth.

Whether it is drilling wells, working on construction projects, or teaching trade skills, ministry is taking place by building relationships that will bridge culture, language, and religion. When we first moved to this country three years ago and prayed about what ministry could look like, we asked God to open doors, to help us understand what would be needed, and to help us remain flexible to bend to His will. He has done that for us. We believe we've been called here to work on "hard ground," to live as his witness so that someday there will be a harvest. We ask for your continued prayers for our entire team, Aadan, and the men working alongside us. Pray for strength. Pray for wisdom. Pray for the relationships. Pray in faith that one day we will share about Aadan calling on the name of our Lord. ■

Ephesians 6:18 (KJV)

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints..."

Many Parts, One Body

**FIA Shipping as The
Hands & Feet of Christ**



For more than 23 years, Friends in Action International Shipping and Warehouse Ministry has been the body's hands and feet, supporting and partnering with those who speak life to God's Word through relationships. Impacting more than 140 ministries and 900 missionaries in more than 50 countries, God uses FIA's warehouse facility and expertise in rules and regulations to ship physical goods worldwide in partnership with other Christian organizations sharing the Gospel with unreached people groups.



OffGrid Tech

One such partner is OffGrid Tech, a ministry of Ethnos360 that “assists ministries in managing the physical aspects of furthering the Gospel in remote locations.” They specialize in solar power and water purification solutions, providing solar panels, batteries, and technology to assist missionaries and their friends living in “off-grid” locations around the world. This solar equipment helps power their homes, small utilities, and even water pumps for local wells, efficiently providing clean water to hundreds of local natives.

Levi Pitman and his wife Jenn have lived at an “off-grid” location on an island in Vanuatu since 2018 and now have three young children. They recently returned to the field and discovered the batteries for their solar system, which they received from OffGrid Tech, had died. “As missionaries living in a remote country, we're thankful for our solar system from OffGrid Tech. Without them and FIA shipping, we would be without power. Thank you for all you do for missionaries around the world. Y'all are making a difference for the Gospel,” shared Levi Pitman, FIA field leader in Vanuatu.

“When we at OffGrid Tech share our ministry with people, one of their first questions is, 'how do you ship all this overseas?' Without our partnership with FIA, we wouldn't have an answer for them!” said Kevin Kellenberger, consulting and development, OffGrid Tech. “FIA provides the bridge that gets our systems at OffGrid Tech from our building to a missionary's location.”

Shipping a solar panel or lithium batteries for collecting electricity from solar panels is more involved than shipping household goods or construction materials. “We build plywood crates to protect the panels from overseas transportation movements,” said Barry Johnson, FIA shipping manager. “International regulations and agreements

control how we can ship the batteries in an overseas container. These are dangerous goods, so we also build crates for their protection.”

Kellenberger stated that OffGrid Tech saves time and money for its staff and missionaries through pre-built packages. FIA enables them to ship complete, robust, tested solar systems guaranteed to be installed on time and will work 99.9% of the time.

Friends in Action not only ships these materials to remote locations, but they also stock the batteries and solar panels in their warehouse in Middletown, Pennsylvania, in preparation for future orders.

In Deed and Truth

An in-country partner blessed by the relationship between FIA and OffGrid Tech is In Deed and Truth, a ministry serving in South Sudan that also brings the Light of God to the world. "Our Mission Hospital runs entirely on solar. The incredible team at OffGrid Tech designed a system to incorporate current and future use. Even in the rainy season, we barely use our generator. They not only designed it but also installed it," said Suzy Kuj, co-founder of In Deed and Truth. "What made it super easy was their good working relationship with Friends in Action. Crating our solar supplies and arranging the appropriate clearance was so smooth. I can't imagine trying to do that by myself. Everything arrived in-country undamaged."

Glorifying God & Empowering Those In Need

These are just two examples of the hundreds of shipments that have departed from, and continue to depart from, the Friends in Action shipping department. The FIA Shipping team understands that, while their role in missions is not "on the ground" in those remote locations, their professionalism and commitment is indispensable in sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in some of the most remote locations on earth, effectively working as "one body" with their global partners.

The Shipping ministry's partnership with OffGrid Tech, In Deed and Truth, and many others brings God the glory and empowers those who so desperately need these services to share the love of Christ effectively. ■



1 Corinthians 12:14-15, 18-20 (KJV)

“For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? ...But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body.”

2023 TRIP OPPORTUNITIES

A short-term trip can be an adventure of a lifetime! On a trip with FIA, you'll see the work of God on the mission field, be a blessing to another culture, and discover how your skills can help further the Gospel. Use your trade skills to help make Christ known by volunteering on one (or more) of FIA's upcoming trips.

Learn More: [FIAintl.org/get-involved/trips](https://fiaintl.org/get-involved/trips)



SCAN CODE TO
LEARN MORE



Bible Teaching



Nicaragua | 1 week, July
Bible teaching team working with the Rama Indigenous People

Well Drilling



West Africa | January 22-29
Drilling water wells to support partnership outreach projects

Mexico | 2 weeks, April
Drilling wells to support a mission hospital water supply ministry serving in the Sierra Madres mountains

USA Teams



Missouri
Interior remodel of residential dwellings at ETHNOS 360 mission training center in Camdenton, MO. General laborers, interior finishing, plumbing, electrical workers needed

Team 1 | Feb 11-19
Team 2 | Feb 25-Mar 5
Team 3 | Nov 11-19

Wisconsin | June 9-25
Roofing project (gable-end extension) at ETHNOS 360 training school in Waukesha, WI, in addition to other renovation work (exterior/interior)

Construction



Uganda | Feb. 10-24
Interior finishing (building wood cabinets/shelves, installing interior doors, wood-slat ceiling, ceramic tile, painting, welding (deck rails and perimeter fence)

Nicaragua | March & April
Construction of a community kitchen and meeting space (earthworks & foundation work, fabrication and installation of steel-frame structure. Welders, tractor operator, general laborers needed

Vanuatu | April 13-29
Timber-frame construction (rough and finish work), residential electrical, plumbing, cement-boarding and finish work. Specialized and general laborers needed

West Africa | 1 week, May
Steel-truss fabrication (welding) and installation of steel-frame equipment hangar

Vanuatu | July 6-21
FIA Base Repair and infrastructure (steel frame and wood frame construction, plumbing, electrical, interior and exterior finish work)

Vanuatu | July 6-21
Water Project Development, launching Phase 1 development work (road works and excavation, remote site access and materials stockpiling). Equipment operators and general laborers needed

Mechanical



Papua New Guinea | Feb 4-25
Heavy engine vehicle repair and base operations maintenance

Vanuatu | Feb 23-Mar 12
Mechanical service and repair of road-works and construction equipment, to be used for launch of Water Project in July 2023

Mexico | April 15-22
Providing mechanical services to support vehicle and equipment maintenance programs for a remote mission hospital. Automotive mechanics needed

“Traveling with FIA is a chance to truly make a difference in the world...I don't want to look back on my life and say 'I wish.' I want to say, 'I did.'”

Derrin Sample
FIA Volunteer in West Africa
June 2022



**FRIENDS
IN ACTION
INTERNATIONAL**

United States Headquarters

✉ PO Box 323, Elizabethtown, PA 17022
📍 3950 E Harrisburg Pike, Middletown, PA 17057
Phone: 717.546.0208 • **Fax:** 717.546.0214
USA Email: FIA-USA@fiaintl.org
501(c)3 Non-profit Organization

Canada Headquarters

✉ PO BOX 901 Stn Main, Guelph, ON, N1H 6M6
Phone: 905.642.9531
CA Email: office.fiac@gmail.com
Charity Number: 818791212RR0001