

Statement of the More Than Me Board of Directors

“More Than Me has worked tirelessly to make a positive impact on Liberian children and the communities they live in, even under some of the world’s most challenging conditions. It is beyond disheartening and extremely sad to see ProPublica depict the organization in such a decidedly one-sided, biased and inaccurate manner, and we vigorously deny their characterization of our actions, or lack thereof.

“As an organization whose enduring mission it is to support the most vulnerable girls in Liberia by getting them off the streets and into schools, More Than Me is deeply sorry that in 2013 and 2014, a former staff member who was recommended to us highly was able to exploit his position to commit sexual assault. We extend our sincerest apology to the survivors, and continue doing everything within our power to support them, their families and the community at large who have been impacted by this heinous crime.

“When the brave young women came forward in June 2014 to tell their story, we took swift and immediate action to support them by helping them obtain medical care and social services. We also worked closely with the Liberian National Police and other government agencies resulting in Macintosh Johnson’s arrest in the days after we learned of the assaults. We are strongly committed to the safety, security and well-being of the students who attend the More Than Me schools and we are doing everything in our power to foster a safe and secure environment that will prevent our students from being victimized again.

“We have always considered safeguarding our students our paramount responsibility. From our inception, we had hired a dedicated and experienced team who helped to transform us into the strong organization that supports thousands of students today. Upon learning of Johnson’s crime, we bolstered our Child Protection Policy and protocols, and most importantly provided extensive training to staff and students, including covering what is sexual abuse, how to recognize it and how to report it. We have strengthened our hiring procedures, school security, whistleblower policy, anonymous reporting, staff code of conduct and teacher/student interactions, with the sole intent of protecting our students. We also recognize that it is necessary to continuously work to adapt and improve policies to reflect conditions in Liberia.”