



# GHANA TOGETHER

808 Addison Place • Mount Vernon, WA 98273 • USA • +1 360-848-6568 • info@GhanaTogether.org

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Dear friends,

2017 has been a good year! It is amazing to us what can be accomplished when Ghanaians and Americans join efforts! Please accept our and our Western Heritage Home colleagues' sincere thanks to all our "investors"--- financial, in-kind, and hard-work--- in both the US and in Ghana.

**Our top priority is education!** Getting/keeping students in school, books, school building renovations, technology, toilets...assessing community/family needs...in conjunction with a broad cohort of local leaders.

## Some 2017 Highlights:

- As of September 2017-2018 school year, **we are supporting 59 students in one way or another**---3 in nursing college, 4 in academic senior high, 10 in vocational training, 1 in junior high, and 41 in primary.
- **Western Heritage Home Scholars Charlotte and Philomena were accepted into the Nursing/Midwifery Training College** in Asanta. Classes began in September. They graduated from Nsein SHS in August 2016, worked for one year selling water sachets and other goods, and as part-time office help in a local business. Their "sister" **Dorothy** will graduate as a nurse this month.
- **Frederick graduated from Manye Academy JHS**, and is now attending the Community Development Vocational Technical Institute (CDVTI) to learn to be an electrician.
- **Eleven Apewosika Village School students completed primary school**, leaving 39 classmates we are currently helping in this very poor fishing community. Parents and extended family provide uniforms, underwear, shoes, pen, and notebook. **Ten of our Community Development Vocational Technical Institute scholarship students graduated in August, 2017.**
- **Emmanuella** is doing well in her specialized senior high school for **vision-limited students**. The school has recognized her outstanding musical abilities, and has asked her to join the choir!
- **Francis** is in the last year of **automotive mechanics apprenticeship**. **Eric** has become a fisherman!

## Some Other 2017 Happenings:

- **Shipped lots more books to the Axim Public Library.** The mobile library tricycle delivers books to 15 schools---especially vital for primary students transitioning from learning-to-read to reading-to-learn.
- **Maryanne visited Ghana in May.** She reviewed the projects with James Kainyah, Chair of Western Heritage Home NGO and other leaders, including the Municipal Chief Executive, the Director of the Ghana Library Authority, and the Member of Parliament for the Axim area. **She visited schools and the library.**
- She helped install two **Internet-in-a-Boxes at the Axim Girls SHS** in two computer labs, connecting with about 60 computers, and did some orientation with students. These small "IIAB servers" send signals to computers similar to an internet connection, and contain all of the data of Wikipedia, maps, medical encyclopedia, 2000 or so Khan Academy math and science videos and much else. Amazing!
- Thanks to the WikiMed Foundation, we procured two **medical Internet-in-a-Boxes for the Asanta Nursing/Midwifery School**, containing an enormous digital encyclopedia of up-to-date medical information, videos of procedures, and other info. Thank you **Unleash Kids** for alerting us to these wonderful resources.

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- **Repaired the Axim Girls Senior HS bus.** The brakes failed. The bus hit a small utility building. YIKES! Thank goodness no students were on board! The waiting period for funds from the Ghana Ed. Service was pretty long, and the girls were missing school and events, so we pitched in. The building?? Don't ask!!
- Maryanne met personally with **13 of the young women** who attended the **Days for Girls Workshop we sponsored in 2016.** (DFG is a US-based charity that helps girls stay in school during their menstrual periods.) The girls really appreciated the excellent “facts of life” information given in the workshop, are using the menstrual kits, and gave good feedback, which we communicated to Days for Girls leadership.
- We received 10 more of the **One Laptop Per Child computers** and distributed them to children. Thanks!!!

**So... what's up for 2018? We will continue to get and keep Axim children in school via scholarships or other cost-sharing arrangements. We will look for other opportunities, depending on funding, to support education generally---improvements to school buildings, library programs, technology, toilets, etc.**

Although Ghana provides tuition-free education K-1<sup>st</sup> year SHS at government (public) schools, there are still many children not in school in Axim. Fees, uniforms, no public school within any reasonable walking distance (esp. for the youngest children), single Moms with limited resources, etc. make it difficult for many families.

We have developed effective ways to get and keep kids in school through our partnership with trusted colleagues in Axim, especially Operations Mgr. Evans Arloo's people/computer skills, Queen Mom Nana Adjow Sika's knowledge of families and wise counsel, input from Headmasters/Mistresses, and James Kainyiah's deep knowledge of the community and business acumen.

**That said, we would also love to build more urine diversification/dehydration toilets, supply the library with a few adult-level modern computers and more reliable electricity, ship more books, provide more school uniforms (only clothing some kids have)...Should you be so inspired...hey, you know who to call!!**

**So...we ask for your financial support for our 2018 efforts. We again assure you that we use 100% of your donations toward our projects.** We on the Ghana Together Board handle all administrative costs ourselves, including all travel expenses (including to Ghana), office expenses, mailing, wire/bank charges, etc.

Is it easy? No! Have we had disappointments? Yes! BUT, we believe our 10+ years of experience in the Axim community has uniquely positioned us to insert help where it can be effective. We know the community well, have strong relationships with leadership, and are confident we can put any funds we have to good use.

We especially reach out to those of you who are “**ex-pats**” who may want to help this community in a responsible manner, take advantage of our non-profit 501(c3) status under US tax rules, and ensure that your donation is used wisely. No amount is too small---US dollars go a long way in Ghana!

**If you are actually in Ghana**, and wish to help, you can deposit funds into the Western Heritage Home account at Ghana Commercial Bank. Queen Mother Nana Adjow Sika and WHH Chair James Kainyiah (024-407-2638) have joint signing authority on this account.

**For everyone else, in the US or elsewhere, you can contribute either by check payable to Ghana Together via regular mail, or by credit card via the PayPal link on our website.**

**(<http://ghanatogether.org/HTML/Donations.html>).** ☺☺

*With our sincere thanks...*

*Ghana Together Directors:*

*Maryanne Ward, Louise Wilkinson, Rich Ward, Jerome Chandler, Nathan Ward, and Diana Franco*