



# GHANA TOGETHER

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Dear friends,

We've had a good year! Please accept our and our Ghanaian colleagues' sincere thanks to all of you financial, in-kind, and "hard-work" investors in the US and in Ghana. For an overview with photos, go to our website, and click on NEWS.

In 2016, together with our Western Heritage Home colleagues, and partners in Axim, we have:

- **Celebrated the graduations** of WHH Scholars Charlotte and Philomena from SHS, and George and Emmanuella from JHS. George now studies welding/fabrication at the Community Development Vocational Technical Institute (CDVTI). Emmanuella attends the Ghana Nat'l College in Cape Coast (senior high) with special facilities for vision-limited students.
- Helped **73 children attend school**, assuming all costs for WHH scholars, and sharing costs with families for the rest.
- Renovated CDVTI's **male dormitory**, complete with **bunkbeds**, accommodating 40 students.
- Completed two new **urine diversification/dehydration toilets (UDDT)**, one for the Methodist-Government Primary-Junior High and another at the CDVTI for the male students. These amazing devices recycle human waste!
- Helped facilitate **Engineers Without Borders Colleen Mitchell and Evan Dahl's** visit to Axim to evaluate the **UDDT toilets**. They provided lots of excellent technical feedback on their original toilet and the two we built using their design.
- Installed a new **water tank** at the Heritage Building, now serving as a senior high dormitory.
- Hosted a **Days for Girls Workshop** at CDVTI, taught by Bernice Ankrah, Ghana Country Director. Both guys and gals were hugely curious about the details of human reproduction, and the girls learned more about menstruation. Each girl received a **Days for Girls menstrual kit**, thanks to the wonderful women at the **Anacortes Days for Girls Chapter**, and learned how to use them so they could attend school during their periods. A huge education enabler!
- Shipped more **books to the Axim Public Library**---not sure how many but the boxes were really big! There still are about 1200 books somewhere on the Atlantic Ocean as we write. The **tricycle-mobile library serves 15 schools weekly**, enabling children from neighboring villages access to books. The Ghana Library Authority provided the Axim Library with another **staff member with computer expertise**. A side benefit is that students can check their test scores and senior high placements via computers right in Axim, rather than spending an hour going to Takoradi by tro-tro. **GREAT!**
- Received more than **100 modern books on all things technical**--electricity, plumbing, construction, etc. -- for CDVTI.
- Enjoyed seeing a real-time **electrical power graph** on our computers here in US, coming from the Axim Girls High School roof to the internet-in-a-box server!! This server provides the girls with Wikipedia, science and math videos, maps, dictionaries, etc., and now they have reliable solar power to it. Thank you, Adam Holt and Unleash Kids!

**So, we wrap up 2016 feeling really good!!**

Our Ghana Together Board met recently to review this year and to **CELEBRATE** our somewhat unlikely **ten-year-journey** – modestly, of course, as befits a sober-minded non-profit like us!! We did have to keep **Jerome Chandler** in line a bit...you know how it is! We just wish our Ghanaian associates could have been there to celebrate with us!

**With our Ghanaian colleagues in Axim, we are proud to say that in the last ten years, together, we accomplished:**

1. **Scholarships:** We helped so many **students** attend school, that we've lost count of just how many.
2. **The Heritage Building:** This building we built (under sponsorship of Seattle-based Global Citizen Journey) has been put to so many uses—Children's Home, student dormitory, meeting space, temporary housing, WHH office, and more. We reroofed it and outfitted it with desks, chairs, beds, tables, water, and electricity.
3. **School Construction and Equipment:** We **renovated four school buildings**, none of which were usable prior to renovation, and **re-roofed a school**. We furnished a classroom with **student desks** at the Anglican School; provided **tables and benches** for the Girls High school dining/assembly building; and **bunkbeds** for the CDVTI guys' dorm.
4. **Educational Support:** We furnished a **Junior/Senior High School Science Room** with materials and written experiments to go with Ghana's science curriculum. **It provides hands-on science for the first time!**
5. **Educational Workshops:** We hosted Leadership and Days For Girls workshops, computer training, and tutoring.
6. **Technology:** We introduced **One Laptop Per Child** and other **computers** now housed in the Library, facilitated **internet-in-a-box** installations at Axim Girls High School and the Library, and provided vocational computers, scientific calculators, and projectors.
7. **Library:** We delivered several thousand **books** to the Axim library, and provided a motor-tricycle with a box, serving as a **mobile library** to 15 schools. We had benches, tables, etc. built for the Children's Room and Computer Room.
8. **Sanitation:** We built two innovative urine diversification/dehydration (dry) **toilets**.
9. **Collaborations:** We assisted Engineers Without Borders (water assessment/toilets), Unleash Kids (internet-in-a-box), and helped a Detroit-area Episcopal Church and an Axim Anglican church set up a crèche (pre-school) in Axim.
10. And...there must be a few more things but enough...and yes, we've had a few disappointments, but all in all...hey! 😊

### **Maybe by now you're wondering---What's up for next year?**

We have discussed next year among ourselves, and with Western Heritage Home leadership. **We have all agreed to focus in 2017 on getting and keeping Axim kids in school via scholarships or cost-sharing arrangements with families.**

Although Ghana has made great strides, and provides tuition-free education through junior high, there are still many children not in school in Axim. For some, the government-funded school is beyond reasonable **walking distance**. Some parents can't come up with the \$10 US for each child's **uniform**, plus additional cost of underwear, notebook, pen, sandals, etc. Some students **drop out to help fish or farm**, so younger siblings can go to school. Maybe Mom's market stall is the sole family income. Maybe the student is exceptional academically but can't fund senior high school. Or??

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 strong recordkeeping/financial skills, Queen Mom Nana Adjow Sika's knowledge of families and wise counsel, input from Headmasters/Mistresses, and James Kainyah's oversight and business acumen. We'll continue to send books to the Axim Library, and shore up other needs, but it seems to all of us that **focusing on education** in this democratic society, especially in Axim with its poverty level, makes the most sense.

**That said, if you, dear reader, are thinking about a GREAT IDEA for us to consider, let us hear you out!!**

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.

**We ask for your financial support for our 2017 goals – focused on the continuing education of Axim's children** – either by check in the mail, or by credit card via the PayPal link on our website. We support business in Ghana as much as possible. If you are in Ghana, and wish to help, you can deposit funds into the Western Heritage Home account at Ghana Commercial Bank. Contact James Kainyah at 024-407-2638.

*With our sincere thanks...*

*Ghana Together Directors: Maryanne Ward, Jerome Chandler, Rich Ward, Louise Wilkinson, and Nathan Ward*