



VOLUNTEER WORK AT OSU CHILDREN'S HOME IN ACCRA GHANA, WEST AFRICA

Positive changes are popping up in the lives of people everywhere! You and I may never know the full impact of your volunteer work until we get to heaven and see the souls that have been saved as a result of our Volunteer effort.

Volunteers are accepted from all over the world through organizations such as ours, Cultural & Academic Travel Organisation (www.catointl.org). Since 1998 Social Education students from Universities in Denmark have been doing their bi annual practical in the home. Supervision for volunteers is provided by the home.

Volunteers are expected to assist in areas of:

- * Teaching
- * Taking children out for walks, and places of interest
- * Helping with home work
- * Sports
- * Creativity
- * Mending of clothes, furniture, etc, painting
- * Washing, playing and feeding of babies
- * Providing love and attention

THE OSU CHILDREN'S HOME

OSU Children's Home is under the auspices of the Department of Social Welfare, Ghana. Currently, CPSR AFRICA is in collaboration with them to develop a website for it to have a global dimension. The home houses abandoned children from new born to age 12. It is a lively place with vibrant children looking for love and attention.

The OSU Home had over 150 children. They are cared for by the Ghana Government through the Department of Social Welfare.

WHO ARE WE?

Osu Children's Home is a community for orphaned, abandoned and needy children from ages zero to eighteen years. It was started in 1949 by an NGO known as Child Care Society. It was then located in the premises of the present Cripples Home at Kaneshie, a suburb in Accra, the capital of Ghana. In March 1960 the government took over and moved it to its present location. It was put under the management of the Department of Social Welfare and has been as such up to date.

Our Aim

Is to provide a future of hope through
Quality residential care
Education

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Counseling

To children who for some reason have no access to normal family lives
To protect and preserve the rights of children in difficult situations
To afford needy children the opportunity to realize their potentials

Which children are admitted?

Abandoned children
Abused children
Children whose mothers are serving prison sentences
Orphaned children
Children whose mothers have to be hospitalized for a long period and Children infected with the HIV virus.

How do we get the children?

Children are referred by;
Hospitals
The courts
The Police
Social Work Agencies
In order for a child to be admitted the home satisfies itself that there is a medical report to state that the child is fit to live with other children, and a report to state how the child was found, and efforts the agency has made to trace parents/relations. This is to help to ascertain that institutionalization has been considered as a last resort.

What happens to the children admitted?

After admission we make several efforts to locate parents or other family members. With abandoned children if we are convinced after three months that there are no known family members we recommend that they be placed for adoption. Children who have to live in the institution are given the opportunity to have education to any level their capabilities will permit them. If a child is above 18 years and is in school or has to live in the home because there is no where else to go, we continue with care until he/she is able to secure a job and live on his/her own. Children with special problems i.e. disabilities, HIV/Aids, etc are referred to specialist agencies or given special care.

Housing

The children live in four separate HOME UNITS.
One is a nursery unit which houses babies zero to two years. Three other units house children three years and above. Each of these units has a head that lives in the Home Unit with two subordinate staff.

Education

All children of school going age attend schools in the neighborhood. This is to afford them the opportunity of meeting and interacting with other children.



The home has an early childhood development center that caters for those of preschool age and prepares them for basic school.

Education

79 Children are enrolled in schools in the neighborhood. Their fees have to be paid by the home. School fees of 38 out of this number are being paid by the school themselves, individuals or organizations. There are 9 children who have to be enrolled in primary school in September 2004, making it a total of 88 who will be in school, and from September 2004, school fees of 50 children will have to be paid.

Educational Fund

In order to ensure that all school going children have equal opportunity; an educational fund has been established. This fund is yet to be launched officially. Monies collected so far have been put in HFC Investment Services and donors interested in the educational fund are encouraged to pay into it.

Dormitory

There is an emerging problem which has to be tackled before things get out of hand. Many children who have been admitted have no known relatives, they live at the home until they are able to complete school and fend for themselves. Out of the 124 children now resident in the home, 119 are likely to stay for a very long time or till they become adults and can fend for themselves. Sleeping arrangements are likely to create a problem as many 60% of those above 9 years. It has become necessary to get a new dormitory to accommodate such children. Currently the 20 rooms which were built in the early sixties to accommodate 48 children take one hundred. The growing children need to have a place that is spacious enough to allow them play and learn suitably for their ages. The home now has planned to solicit for funds to build a three storey building on the premises, and also have some of the rooms used as a library and sick bay.

Who funds the running of the home?

The home is funded through quarterly subvention from the Department of Social Welfare but this is totally inadequate considering the kind of services rendered. A large percentage of the expenditure is through the goodwill of individuals, groups, organizations and churches.

What do we need?

Cash, food, items
Vitamins food supplement, antibiotics,medecines
Educational materials
Soaps, disinfectants, body creams
Clothing, bedsheets,towels, blankets

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Baby formula
Diapers
Toys, T.V set for educational programs

Volunteers

Address to inquire information:

OSU Children's Home
Department of Social Welfare
P. O. Box 640
Accra, Ghana

PRESS RELEASES

Volunteers in Ghana give children's home a facelift on IVD

ACCRA, 05 Dec 2002--Marking International Volunteer Day (IVD) on Tuesday, 5 December 2002, the United Nations Volunteers programme (UNV) and partners in Ghana organized a day devoted to community work at Osu Children's Home in the capital Accra. Other participating volunteers included members of the UN Volunteer Association of Ghana (UNVA), Canadian University Service Organisation (CUSO), the National Service Scheme, Voluntary Work Camp, CIF and other local volunteers.

The volunteers painted the Home, cleared the surroundings, cleaned the children's hostel and their playground and paved the landscape with painted stones.

Shortly after the work was completed around mid-day, the Honorable Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Gladys Asmah, arrived at the Home and thanked UNV for organizing the event. In her speech, she also praised the volunteers for a job well done and called on all Ghanaians to volunteer their time and resources for national development.

Responding, UNV Programme Officer Joseph Oji of Nigeria thanked the Honorable Minister for taking time off her busy schedule and encouraging volunteerism in the country.

For CUSO Country Director Kwame Oduro, the exercise was proof that people can come together irrespective of their profession, rank, nationality, age, sex and creed to work and make life worth living for the less privileged.

In addition to these activities, UN Volunteers used the occasion to highlight new international development targets under the theme, "Volunteers for Millennium Development Goals". Vice President Alhaji Aliu Mahama's keynote address was read by Cecilia Bannerman, Honorable Minister for Manpower Development and

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Employment. In his speech entitled "Volunteerism, a proven adjunct to national socio-economic development efforts", the Vice President lauded UN Volunteers and volunteers in Ghana for making sacrifices to improve on the plight of their fellow men and women. He listed numerous contributions of volunteers to national development.

Other speakers included Mrs. Agnes Guimba-Ouedraogo, UNDP Deputy Resident Representative and representatives of the volunteer organizations.

After the speeches, an exhibition of volunteer organizations was declared opened. Participants freely visited stands set up by UNV, the Peace Corps, VSO, CUSO, National Service Scheme and Action Aid.

Participants at the IVD events included country directors of the major volunteer sending organizations in the country -- the US Peace Corps, British Volunteer Service Overseas (VSO), Canadian CUSO, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Ghanaian National Service Scheme. Others included Honorable Ministers, Representatives from UN Agencies, NGOs, both local and international, community-based organizations, the media, the private sector, students, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) staff and private citizens.

According to the IVD event chairman, Local Government and Rural Development Minister Baah Wiredu, it was an "IVD with a difference".

Stephen Appiah donates to Osu Children's Home

Stephen Appiah, skipper of the senior national team, Black Stars on Thursday presented items worth nine million cedis to the Osu Children's Home in Accra.

The donation formed part of the player's social contribution to the needy.

Presenting the items, Appiah expressed his gratitude for the opportunity given him by the Home to make his widows might towards the upkeep of the less fortunate in society.

Among the items presented were bags of rice and sugar, cooking oil, soft drinks, sachet water, cowbell milk, oats and two million cedis cash.

Skipper Appiah said the donation would not be the last but the beginning of a long lasting relationship with the Home that would blossom into something bigger in the near future.

The Stars skipper was optimistic that even though the items would not solve all the problems of the Home but it would go in a long way to alleviate some of their immediate needs.

Mrs Helena Obeng Asamoah, Manageress of the Home received the items and

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thanked the skipper for remembering the less fortunate in the society.

She said it is important for all to pull their resources together to help in the upkeep of the less fortunate who are expected to grow up to be the future leaders of the country.

Mrs Asamoah was hopeful that the gesture would not be a one off thing but rather the beginning of long lasting relationship between them for the benefit of the children.

Website for Osu Children's Home

Accra, Aug. 27, GNA- A website was on Friday launched to provide the Osu Children's Home in Accra with an online community which would serve as a convener and a catalyst for donor funding as well as form closer partnerships between the Home and the society

The website, to be accessed at WWW.osuchildrenshome.org, would also afford stakeholders the opportunity to learn about the activities and needs of the Home.

Mrs Mary Amadu, Director of Social Welfare, thanked the GROBOPLUS Limited, for designing the website, which is valued at 10 million cedis, free of charge.

"This will help all who want to have information about the Home to access it and where possible assist," she said.

She said it was envisaged that the new ICT status of the Home would bring about effective management and planning of the institution. Mrs Amadu appealed to donors to assist the Home, expand its facilities to accommodate the increasing intake.

She said since 2000, the Home had admitted about 250 children annually, which is three times higher than the number admitted before this period.

The Home, therefore, needed to expand dormitories and other facilities that were currently very congested to be able to accommodate more children and ensure good health for the inmates.

Mrs Amadu cautioned private orphanages that were not operating under the Department of Social Welfare to register and ensure that they obeyed regulations governing the establishment of orphanages.

She said the proliferation of orphanages was very alarming and should be checked by law, "since some of the operators are said to be using the children to solicit for donor support, and thus refuse to allow adoption."

She further stated that the adoption of such children without the knowledge and involvement of the Department of Social Welfare was an offence and could create a problem for the child, should the adopted parents die without a Will.

Mrs Amadu called for a nationwide education on good parenting to halt the

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increasing spate of teenage pregnancies, irresponsible parenting, abortion and streetism, since those were the remote causes of the current increase in the number of orphans nationwide.

She stressed the need for effective collaboration and networking among all stakeholders to uplift the socio-economic, spiritual and moral status of orphans in the country.

Mr Enoch Currie Tetteh, Managing Director, GROBOPLUS Ltd, said the company would further ensure the provision of a computer laboratory with Internet access, online games, tutorials and many other educational programmes for the Home.

"We will also ensure ICT training for the children at the home to help them compete favorably with the global world," he said. He appealed to potential donors to use the medium to pledge their support for the training and upbringing of children in the home.

THE Manager of the OSU Children's Home, Mrs Helena Obeng-Asamoah, has appealed to philanthropists, organisations and the government to assist the home to put up a new hostel to accommodate the growing number of inmates.

She said due to the lack of enough accommodation, the adolescents and the children were still sleeping together with the children in the same room.

Mrs Obeng-Asamoah told the Graphic in an interview that the home, which was meant to accommodate 65 children, was currently housing 124 inmates which was detrimental to their health and development.

She said the inmates were between the ages of two months and 17years, with majority of them aged between three to 10years old.

She said there was, therefore, the need for the teenagers to be separated from the children since adolescence was critical stage in one's development.

She noted that this was the period where the teenagers needed a lot of space and time to think about their future without any disturbances from the children.

Mrs Obeng-Asamoah said the teenagers did not have any privacy in the midst of the children, and therefore, appealed to benevolent individuals and institutions to support the home to build a new hostel to house the teenagers.

Earlier, His Majesty Academy, a remedial school based in Dansoman, donated food items and money to the home.

The items included provisions, used clothing and toiletries and a cheque for 2 million cedis.



Presenting the items, the proprietor of the academy, Mr Evans Opoku Gyimah, said the donation was part of the academy's social responsibility to support the needy and destitute in the society.

Mr Gyimah said the needs of the home could not be the burden of the government alone, and stressed the need for individuals and organizations to assist in development of the inmates.

Mrs Obeng-Asamoah expressed her gratitude to the academy for the gesture and promised to use the items to cater for the inmates.

About Ghana

Ghana, a former British colony known as the Gold Coast, is a country in Western Africa, bounded on the north and northwest by Burkina Faso, on the east by Togo, on the south by the Atlantic Ocean, and on the west by Cote D'Ivoire. The total area is 238,537 sq. km. (92,099 sq. mi.) The capital and largest city is Accra. Some important cities are Tema, Kumasi, Cape Coast, Takoradi, Tamale.

Ghana has a tropical climate with temperatures varying with season and elevation. The climate of Ghana is tropical with monthly temperatures ranging from 24oC to 35oC. The annual average temperature is about 26oC.

Ghana has an estimated total population of about 18 million (2000) with an average annual growth rate of 3%. Average population density is 50 persons/kmsq. About 66% of the population live in the rural areas. 27% of Ghanaians is estimated to be living in extreme poverty (less than \$100 per annum), with 30% having no access to safe drinking water. 72.5% of children are enrolled in primary school, 60% in primary Junior Secondary School, and 18% in Senior Secondary. 87% of children attend public school whilst 13% attend private school. Adult literacy is about 48% in general, with adult literacy for men standing at 62%, and 36% for women.