

News from Ghana and beyond...

B.A.S.I.C.S
international
Brothers and Sisters in Christ Serving

APRIL 2022 EDITION

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

It feels so great to be back. It's been nearly 2 years since our last newsletter (June 2020). Our past newsletters have been able to tell stories and show photos of the activities and achievement of the organization, it put faces to the stories, and gives each donor, partner and friend- a bit of an insight to who we are and what we are doing.

When we didn't have the manpower to produce the newsletter during the pandemic we turned to social media hoping that you would stay connected. Contrary to what is said that the elderly don't use IG, FB, etc, I can beg to differ, as one of our dearest friends, Grandma Dee who is 90 (+) years old, stays on top of what we are doing through FB. . And then we have a few youngsters in their 70-80's also keeping an eye on us on IG. . But as things are starting to get back to normal worldwide- we would like to officially announce our team is growing and our newsletters are back.

It might take us until the next edition to get back into full swing. In the meantime, I leaned on the BASICS family to contribute to this edition. The random stories you are about to read are testimonies, reflections, and insight from children, volunteers and staff.

This pandemic taught me to strengthen my faith, and taught me to persevere. I didn't give up, and I didn't slow down. It was a time, our community and children needed us most- and we were there, working the front line. Our organization answered the call by producing masks, providing meals to seniors, and keeping our doors open so children had a safe space to go when school closed down completely for 10 months.

During the pandemic- a group of ladies who were led by Bintu Baka (a beneficiary of BASICS since she was 7 years old) , were our heroes. They are all part of our skill training social enterprise HEDZOLE, which means Freedom. They produced thousands of masks, bags, runners, bedspreads and more. These items were sold in Ghana , US and Europe. Each purchase provided a steady stream of income to the group of women; who have the duty of caring for themselves and families. Hedzole income stream; also allowed BASICS to provide hot meals to hundreds of children and families. Our bags were a hit in every sense of the way. And we say thank you. Please consider purchasing more as our work is not done.

SO you turn this page, I want to say thank you to each and every one of you that stuck with us these past 22 years but mostly importantly these last 2 years. We did it together- and I am forever grateful.

Aunty Pat
Patricia Wilkins, Founder

WHAT'S IN A GREETING

By Keren Amattey (Facilitator)

Greetings are very important in the Ghanaian culture. When you enter a room, you must greet those that you meet in the room. It's customary to greet from the right to left and also greet elders or a Chief first.

At B.A.S.I.C.S, we try to instill the same cultural practices in our children. The first thing a child does when he or she reaches the gates of this establishment is to wash their hands because Covid is still very much around and we have to be safe. With clean hands, they each receive a snack to happily munch on. From my first sentence, I'm sure you have already guessed what is next.

Each Facilitator is expected to stand at the gate and greet the children. "Hello", "Welcome, how are you doing"? Are common welcome greetings. That way, the child cannot skip by without saying a hello or a good afternoon. As much as greeting is important, this is also a time to make the child feel at home.

If you are a new Facilitator like me, It also gives you the opportunity to ask for the name of the child. After making sure that every child is present and accounted for, the day at B.A.S.I.C.S truly begins!!



THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

(Joyce Lamptey, High School Graduate)

It is said "there is no place like home" but I also say there is no wonderful and happy place like Basics International, Nana's house. Sweet Basics International. A place where illiteracy and poverty is ended through quality education.

It has been very helpful to the Chorkor community and Ghana as well. Basics International has designed a vacation program for children after vacating from school which is non academic and exciting as well because it is often said "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". During this vacation program, children are introduced to activities like Bead making, crocheting, Sports, Arts and Crafts, sewing, cultural dance amidst others.

Through this the children are able to learn a lot of things and skills which become part of them in their everyday living.

Through the arts and crafts they are able to learn so many kinds of designs and book making. The sewing classes make it easier for those who want to take Fashion Design at senior high school.

Many of the ladies, who have worked with our social enterprise "Hedzole" which produces bags and others, first learned sewing when they were young children at BASICS. Most of the children really enjoy this vacation program therefore always want to be at the centre away from home when school is closed. Indeed Basics International, Nana's house is a sweet home like no other.

CHRISTMAS DAY WITH THE OLD FOLKS OF THE CHORKOR COMMUNITY

(JOSHUA LARTEY; HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE BENEFICIARY OF BASICS)

B.A.S.I.C.S International celebrates Christmas in so many ways normally kicking off the first week of December with a tree lighting. After the decoration are up and beaming through the community, it's time to invite everyone in. The first group is the old people above 70 years. The second one is for beneficiaries' friends and the last one is for the entire B.A.S.I.C.S family (staff, volunteers, and B.A.S.I.C.S children). This has been an annual tradition of B.A.S.I.C.S for the past 21 years. Even through the pandemic, it was still held but safety protocols were observed.

I choose to write about the one with the "OLD PEOPLE OF THE LAND " because there are many blessings in it and I think their endless prayers are what have kept the organisation moving till now.

"OYI WALA D)N, NYOMOR AJOR BO"... is a Ga saying that means "Thank you, God bless you." The founder Patricia Wilkins often receives this from the old folks and it indicates many blessings for both her and the organisation.

ENTERTAINMENT

We engage them in fun games such as Ludo, Oware, Drafts, Cards, Connect 4, Spin and Win and many more. Awards are given to winners of each game to get them more engaged. On top of that songs from highly sensational musicians are played to get them shaking and moving their body as a form of exercise especially at their age. And don't be mistaken, the old folks can move.



GIFTS AND INCENTIVES

It's a festive season so B.A.S.I.C.S decides to spark up their Christmas with gift Hampers/ Bags (that are made at BASICS).

The bags are filled with foodstuffs and other things to keep them through the festive season and to let them know we haven't forgotten them. They are given things like bags of rice, oil, fruits, bread, bags of water and on top of that, an amount of money is given to them for transportation



SIGNIFICANCE/IMPORTANCE

B.A.S.I.C.S International believes strongly in the well-being of people so being able to organise such occasions for them will relieve them from hunger and boredom. Most seniors in Chorkor, worked in occupations that didn't offer them pension or social security ; so as they have surpassed the age to work they are left with very little to care for themselves. The day is also a way of showing appreciation to them, for allowing the existence of the organisation in this particular community.

LEARNING A NEW LANGUAGE IN GHANA

FINN (A.F.S VOLUNTEER)

Different from what you might be used to in Europe or America, Ghana, or West Africa in general, are not one-language nations. There is no such thing like “Ghanaish” or the Ghanaian language. In Ghana, you can find up to 75 different languages. Some of these “dialects” are very different from one another, whereas some are quite similar. If traced back, most of those dialects will lead you to one specific ethnic group or tribe who established that dialect thousands of years ago. The particular area of Ghana which was inhabited by the members of one ethnic group, is nowadays the area where their dialect is still being spoken.

Therefore the 75 different dialects are spread throughout Ghana.

As a volunteer, the first dialects I came in contact with were Twi and Ga.

From what I know after 3 months in Ghana, Twi is the most popular and supraregional dialect. Many people, even though they originally speak a different dialect, are able to speak Twi.

Therefore, Twi is the dialect which we volunteers were recommended to learn. I wanted to do that but because neither my host nor my colleagues and the children at B.A.S.I.C.S speak Twi, it was very difficult for me. I am not the type of person who can learn such a difficult language without the help of a native speaker. The other dialect I mentioned earlier, Ga, is mostly spoken in parts of Accra like Chorkor. This is where B.A.S.I.C.S International is located. Due to that, the mother tongue of most of the children who come to B.A.S.I.C.S is Ga.

Originally I never thought of learning Ga, but some weeks ago some children from my class and I somehow had the idea that they could teach me Ga. I really liked the idea and the thought of being able to communicate with them even better.

We started with some basic expressions which could be useful at work like “sit down, come here, how are you” etc. Even knowing those basics is very nice. When I talk in Ga to the kids who don't know that I am learning the language, their reactions are very priceless. When I leave Ghana in 8 months, maybe, I might even be able to have a real conversation with them in Ga.



SAY IT LOUD : ETIQUETTE

BY KEREN AMATTEY (FACILITATOR)

Every Monday at 5:30pm, after having a hearty dinner, the children prepare for SAY IT LOUD. If you don't already know what SAY IT LOUD is, it is a discussion we have with the children about issues they face in the society. Basically, a time to interact with the kids and get them to speak their minds on selected topics. This past Monday, the topic, “ETIQUETTE” was presented to the children. With each topic we choose, there is a relatable memory verse attached to it. Some of the questions we posed to the children were, “What comes to mind when you think about etiquette.” and “Mention the types of etiquette that you know.” Etiquette is important and the earlier you teach a child, the longer it stays with them. At BASICS, we teach children to eat with a fork and knife and not to talk when eating.

US NAVY BAND VISITS GHANA



B.A.S.I.C.S was among three NGOs to have their students honoured with a musical performance by the US Navy TopSide band in Jamestown on 22nd March. The 8-member team, which is stationed in Naples, Italy, was hosted by the US Embassy. The band performed a variety of New Orleans music, rhythm and blues. It entertained the children so much that they joined them by clapping and dancing. The purpose of the event was to expose the children to a different side of music as well as deepen the relations between the two countries.



“Music is a thing that connects people, gets us all dancing, smiling and happy and being in Ghana, in this beautiful country, playing for these kids here is going to be an experience I am going to remember my whole life”, said Musician Surface Welfare Kent Grover, leader of the band. After a thrilling performance with much energy spent, snacks were shared amongst the children and supervisors. Before the band's performance, they spent time at BASICS, indulging in a buffet of Ghanaian dishes which was prepared by our in-house cook; Auntie Doris. BASICS got a “seal” of approval for the variety of dishes and local drinks that were provided. (they even took some to go)



MY JOURNEY WITH BASICS INTERNATIONAL

(JONATHAN KOTEY)

My name is Jonathan Kotey, and I am a beneficiary of Basics International. B.A.S.I.C.S, a Non-Governmental Organisation, has helped transform the lives of many families in the Chorkor community through their social intervention program. I am very happy and proud to be one of numerous success stories of this wonderful organisation. I became a beneficiary of B.A.S.I.C.S at the age of 7 along with my junior brother. We did not attend school due to the inability of my parents to afford school fees. B.A.S.I.C.S became my saving grace at my time of need. Through the help of Ms Patricia Wilkins, I was enrolled in the B.A.S.I.C.S transition program.

The transition program is a restart program under the "Back to School" program which helps train and rehabilitate children, ages 6 and above, who have had little or no education. The transition program also helps prepare children for mainstream schooling. We are taught basic etiquette and social skills. B.A.S.I.C.S has been responsible for my education and development since I was a child and continues to do so. I live in a community where education is not a priority. You are either expected to be a fisherman, following in the footsteps of your father, or a fish smoker like your mother.

Thanks to Auntie Pat, I am the first in my entire family to have completed Junior High School, Senior High School and now an undergraduate at the Ho Technical University studying Industrial Arts. It has not been an easy journey for me, and there have been times when I felt like giving up on my education especially after four years of trying to get into the university.

I have learnt a lot through this period and one of the major lessons was not to give up and that no matter the situation, there is always light at the end of the tunnel. I owe a lot of gratitude to two people in particular, Auntie Pat and to my sponsors for their unconditional love and support. I say AYEKOO!!

WAAKYE AS A DELICACY

"WAAKYE IS ONE OF MY FAVOURITE GHANAIAN DISHES", JAKOB (A.F.S VOLUNTEER) SAID.



Waakye has become one of the most popular dishes in Ghana over the past few years. It comes from the Northern part of Ghana, but is eaten through all regions of Ghana. The dish is a blend of both rice and black-eyed peas cooked in sorghum leaves that gives it that reddish-brown colour. It is impressive how food culture can change in a short amount of time. Waakye used to be a delicacy that was enjoyed at lunch or dinner. Now, it is popular to eat in the morning, even as early as 7am. It is usually eaten with "shito (pepper sauce)" and/or stew as well as boiled eggs, spaghetti, salad, fish, meat and what is known as "wele". You can say it's a huge meal!! But don't worry you are allowed to pick and choose.

STORIES FROM OUR SCHOLARS

We asked our students during their school break to contribute to the newsletter- and this is what they wrote. Please note these stories are their words, reflections and insights. It's things they learn, hear and see. We try to allow freedom of speech however we still hold a duty to discuss these things without students, especially when their facts are not correct.

SMALL HISTORY OF GHANA

BY SHADRACK QUARTEY, 11TH GRADE

Ghana was once called the Gold Coast.

Ghana has the most natural resources that has helped the country to develop this far. We have great men in the country that helped fight for independence from our colonial masters and see to it that the people in the county can steer the affairs of the country. The Ghana flag is red yellow green and a five pointed black star in the middle of the flag/

The meaning of the colours used are red which stands for the blood of our forefathers, the yellow also stands for the mineral found in the county namely gold, diamonds, bauxite , etc. The green stands for the green vegetation in the county which are able to get cocoa , timber, and others for exportation and the government generates revenue for the country to finance its project work in the country. the black star in the middle of the flag represents the hope of the Africa.



EDUCATION

BY EZEKIEL N.A KOTEY

Education is needed by everybody. Some people did not get the chance to go to school but some of us have gotten the chance to go forward but we are fooling with it. Everybody demands someone, demands equality, demands respect and simplicity but boldly demands our Human Rights. Education is the key to success. Some people just want to be like me, want to go to school but they were prevented by some things like Peer pressure, Teenage pregnancy, Streetism, Broken homes, Poverty, school drop out and sicknesses like HIV/AIDS, Gonorrhoea, Syphilis and some other sicknesses. Education helps us to become what we want to be in future . It also helps us to meet great people in life and go far. Without education, you cannot achieve your dreams and goals. Moreover, I want to be an engineer when I grow up and I strongly know and believe that without education I cannot achieve my goals. Finally, education is very important and everyone needs it.

CHESS

BY JEREMIAH ADJETEY

Chess is a game played between two opponents. The chess board contains sixty-four squares and the squares are thirty two black and thirty two white.

The pieces are king, queen, knight, bishop, rook, and pawn. Each piece has their main role on the board. The king is the most important piece on the board and it moves everywhere but one step at a time. The queen is the most powerful piece on the board and it moves everywhere. The knight moves L-shape, the bishops move diagonally. There are two bishops on the board. One moves on the white squares and the other on the black squares. The rook moves everywhere but horizontally and vertically and the pawns move once or twice. It moves twice when it is the first move of the pawn. There are titles in chess. Some titles are Candidate master, Fide master, International master and Grand master. The highest title in chess is the Grandmaster and the titles are permanent. No one can take a title from you. When you are a chess player, the best way to improve on your performance is by solving more puzzles and practising more tactics. like pin, fork, skewer, check and checkmate. Chess helps us to improve on our calculation and our thinking abilities.



ABOUT MY MOTHER

BY COMFORT DEVEER



My mother is a respectful person. She gives to people when they are in need of something. I love my mother because anything I want from her she always gives it to me. I appreciate what my mother gives to me but some children don't appreciate what their mother gives to them. I know that my mother suffered before she gained money. It is not only my mother who suffered before and she gained money but a lot of people suffered before they gained money. My mother always tries her best to make me proud and further my education. Now BASICS International is now paying my school fees and everything for me and now I am in boarding school and my mother is also expecting to see me in a successful life and she is always proud of me. One day, my mother will see me grow and be a responsible person. When my mother is sick, I am always worried about her. I love my mother very much because I care for her and she also cares for me and my siblings. This is the reason why I am writing about my mother because if you have a mother who always appreciates what she always gives to you, your life will become very lovely and simple.

WHAT I LEARNED IN SCHOOL

BY JEFFREY NEEQUAYE (GRADE 8TH GRADE)



Today's news is about how Ghana misuse its minerals and the effects it brings to the people living in Ghana. Ghana has a lot of minerals but let's take the oil drainage and talk about it. Ghana is recorded to be the richest country in oil drainage. Ghana received about 1 billion thousand a day at the oil drainage at takoradi. Now some of the minerals like gold which is mined at Tarwka are not used wisely and now they are getting finished. In the next 15 years minerals like God , oil, diamond magnesium would be finished in ghana. The effect it will bring is that the next generation are going to suffer for petrol , kerosene etc. to fill their cars. They would have to pay more money to be able to fill or change their cars to electric.

Some trees like timber are being cut without planting new ones and it will be some time where there would be no timber to be able to use at tourist sites in ghana. People of the nation let us use our minerals wisely so that the next generation would not suffer. This is the end of our news.

HISTORY ABOUT GHANA

VINCENT YARTEY

Ghana is a peaceful country. Ghana means “a warrior king”. Ghana was then called the Gold Coast. Countries like Britain, Sweden, Portugal came to colonise Ghana.

The first European country to arrive in Gold Coast was the Portuguese. They came in the year 1471. They came to meet Nana (King)

Kwamena Ansah at Elmina at the Central region of Ghana (cape coast). The King gave them a piece of land and they built the first castle which is the Elmina castle in 1482. The Portuguese came to trade with the Gold Coast and later started trading from gold to humans. Because of this a lot of wars started like the Yaa Asantewaa war, Sagrenti war , Akatamanso war and so many more. In the year 1847 ,the Britain also came to Ghana and started doing the slave trade. Britain introduced formal education , crops like cocoa and also introduced new towns and cities . On the 24th August 1947, the

Ghanaians formed a political party which was U.G.C.C.(United Gold Coast Convention). The motto of the party was “self government in the shortest possible time.” The leaders of the party were Paa Grant and J.B danquah and the members were the ig 6. On the 12th April 1949,

another political party was formed by Dr Kwame Nkrumah which was the C.P.P (Convention People's Party). The motto of the party was self government now. On 24th August 1947, J.B. Danquah suggested the name Ghana for the Gold Coasters. On 6th March 1957, Ghana gained independence by Kwame Nkrumah, the first President of Ghana.

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MY FIRST DAY AT BASICS INTERNATIONAL

BY GABRIEL OFOLI NII LARYEA

Hello, my name is Gabriel Nii Laryea Ofoli. Today, I am going to talk about my first day at BASICS International. I was eleven years old when I came to BASICS .

The first day I came to Basics international, the students were writing their spelling words. Previously, they wrote their spelling words on Fridays.

When I came in, they gave me a sheet of paper and my madam started calling out the words to me to write on the paper.

After writing my words, my madam told me that if I knew any of the meanings I should write them down. At that time, I knew only two of the meanings and wrote them down on the paper. Whenever we are writing spelling words, there's a time to write and a time to stop. They rang the bell to stop spelling words so I gave my paper to my Madam. After the spelling words,

Sir Nii said we have "Say it Loud." I was there wondering what is "say it loud" and I asked a friend beside me. He said it is to talk about an issue and I'll understand it. They put us in groups class 3 and 4, 5 and 6 and the last group was J.H.S. Our madam told us to go to our groups so we went to a room and sat down. At that time, I was in class 4 . Our madam started to talk to us about Peer pressure. She asked us what we know about Peer pressure.



One boy beside me raised his hand and said if you are at home and your friend comes to you and forces you to do something or go with him or her. At that time, I didn't understand what Peer pressure was. When we were done with our "Say It Loud", they said we have activities like dancing, arts, singing etc. I chose dancing because I love to dance whenever a song is played. So I went to the dancing class and my dance teacher was Aku. She started teaching us a new move and that time was so amazing for me at BASICS International. That was my first day at BASICS International.

MY COUNTRY GHANA

BY HENRY THOMPSON

Ghana is a free country where there are human rights. The first president who gained it's independence on 6th March, 1957 was called

Dr Kwame Nkrumah. The currency we use is Cedi. Ghana has a lot of minerals such as Oil, Salt, and Gold. Ghana's national anthem was composed by Theodosia Okoh. Ghana has footballers like Abedi Pele, Asamoah Gyan and Andrew Ayew. Kofi Annan was a U.N General Secretary in Ghana. When Ghana gained independence Dr Kwame Nkrumah made a speech that "Ghana, our beloved country, is free forever " Ghana has a lot sports activities such as football, boxing, high jumping, sack race, and singing. Ghana has many tourist sites such as Boti waterfalls, Bui dam, Adomi bridge, canopy walk and Kakum National forest. Freedom and justice is the slogan of Ghana.

The reason why I am writing about my country Ghana is because it is a free and a lovely country.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR B.A.S.I.C.S ?



With 20 years of success behind us, we are looking forward, and creating additional ways to empower our youth, BASICS International will open Ghana's first ever Fresh Air Sleep Away Camp CAMP AKLOWAH

AKLOWAH - meaning Village in 'Ga' is a fresh-air STEAM camp situated on eight acres of land that opens up a new world for urban youth during long school breaks and holidays. The camp will become their home away from home providing creative approaches to learning that use Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue, and critical thinking. CAMP

CAMP AKLOWAH is an eco-friendly serene, refreshing and welcoming environment for 150 children at a time to have an experience of a lifetime -- away from their overcrowded home community which fails to offer sufficient recreational and learning opportunities.

CAMP AKLOWAH will be Accra's only true sleep-away camp and will expose children to nature, wholesome activities, new skills and opportunities .

CAMP AKLOWAH will empower youth to develop their individual potential. Children will come together to create memories that will last a lifetime. Every holiday at CAMP AKLOWAH is filled with fun, friendships, learning and excitement. Our campers develop and improve skills through high-level instruction, and will be encouraged to try new things while learning about others and themselves. Campers will enjoy every moment of vacation camp while they grow in confidence, leadership and self-esteem in a secure, community environment.

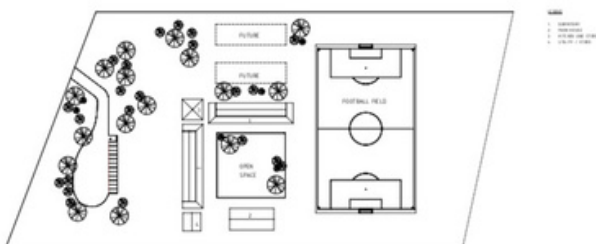
Camp AKLOWAH is in need of your help to ensure we complete construction, implementation and OPEN our grounds for the children by 2023. (Our original date was August 2020, however due to Covid 19, our major fundraiser was cancelled;) which halted the process.

Camp AKLOWAH master plan includes a nature trail, Experiential Garden, a curated mini-arboretum with a variety of plant life useful for food, health, spices. playing fields (soccer pitch, basketball court, skateboard course and tennis court) will encourage organized play and open space for free-spirited fun.

The Camp buildings will include dormitories (boys and girls structures) and a Commons Pavilion which will house the IT center, musical and dance studio, cafeteria, and multi-use pavilion spaces.

Our goal to raise \$2million is reachable with friends like you. Consider naming a building or work area after a loved one, organization or yourself.

Donate today, or be in touch to talk about Camp Aklowah.



HELP SANDRA AND GRACE ATTEND UNIVERSITY



Meet Grace and Sandra. Many of you know them already as they have been beneficiaries of BASICS since they were in kindergarten.

They completed high school 3 years ago, and have been working at BASICS as Intern Ambassadors. Today, they have earned admission to an University in Thailand and have been offered a full scholarship for a 4-year Bachelor of Arts degree in the Science of Creative Intelligence for Management.

They are required to cover expenses such as airline tickets, visa, passports, laptop , insurance and pocket money.

They are in need of \$5400.00 each (total \$10,800.00) to cover airfare, visa, laptops and other incidental cost. Consider investing in the once in a lifetime opportunity for these girls. Make a donation today.

<https://basicsinternational.org/sandraandgrace/>

SPONSOR A CHILD

An investment of \$1,500.00 per child/per year ensures students receive quality education, boarding, uniforms, books, supplies, lunch, health insurance, supplemental tutoring, extra curricular activities, psychological support . And programs during school breaks and holidays, which include a hot meal daily.

SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMMES

CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION - IN ANY AMOUNT-

Follow this link:
www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1347773

Zelle: 718 454 1273

Cashapp: \$Basicsintl

CHANGE OF ADDRESS :

WE are no longer at our previous address on 196th STREET . Please see our new USA mailing address below.

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