



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

JANUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER



**“when I grow up...
I want to be a doctor”**

NAOMI TETTEY, 12 YEARS OLD

Happy New Year

Patricia Wilkins, Founder and Managing Director

New Year is a time for resolutions, new agendas and reflections.

This newsletter is a time for me (and others) to reflect; and to share on the past year. Reflections display our growth, agenda, mission and accomplishments. As always I am proud to be the Chief Editor; however my reign as the sole creator is slowly coming to an end. This edition, I passed the baton to a host of staff, volunteers, and Jess O'Farrell, a long time friend and supporter to BASICS, and one of our newest board members. As soon as Jess was sworn in, she announced that she would like to get the newsletter written and published. She worked as a true editor, assigning stories to different people; identifying what we should talk about; and creating a blue print for future editions, so you don't have to wait so long to hear stories from BASICS (just in case you are not on Facebook.) So first, I say; thank you to Jess and team for their hard work on this wonderful edition.

My first reflection would focus on 5th December; as that day in 2000, I stepped foot on African soil for the first time; very naïve and eager to make a difference. The memories still linger at the first smell, the first sight and the curiosity in my mind on how this will all play out. It was all a new adventure, without a plan of my own, but with a design of a higher power. We can say the rest is history; but its too current; still existing and still cultivating. Each day, a new chapter is being written or captured in pictures; too many stories and pictures for a newsletter of Facebook; but surely enough for a book or two, which I am working on.

I believe this edition, displays our accomplishments and strength in overcoming hurdles and challenges that we were faced with this year, but it's part of a bigger story, aren't they all? For example, the story about the 8 students entering High School; is our largest graduating class ever. Others have entered and even completed high school; and some have reached university; but never have we had 8 students enter at the same time. Amongst the 8; five finished with distinctions; gaining access to some of the BEST high Schools in the country. Unfortunately, one student whose sponsor has been so

diligent through the years to support her; wasn't serious about entering high school; and left the program.

A mother's pride is immeasurable, and therefore I cannot explain the joy, I felt in our latest achievement. It felt like yesterday, that I walked the beach and met each one; being neglected of an education, but eager to attend. That's the beauty of BASICS, knowing each child and having a relationship with it. Times have changed; and the organization has grown and I don't do the outreach on my own anymore; but rather with a team of staff, interns and volunteers, but building relationships remains our goal.

Another sign of growth and change is our recent Fellowship program; which was graciously funded and supported by the Diamond Family Foundation (DFF). The Diamond Family Foundation Fellowship provides university graduates hands on experience in international development. Two Fellowship positions were offered this past year, and the program is now accepting applications for 2016/17. Fellows support our efforts of creating blueprints for a sustainable organization.

As we grow, we must continue to learn. In October 2015, I had the opportunity to travel to the USA in to attend the Board Source Leadership Forum. I want to thank all my special friends; who generously gave to fund the trip, allowing me to participate in such a dynamic gathering of leaders in the industry. I walked away, feeling more empowered with a stronger understandings of non-profit board governance. A sure recipe for sustainability. One of our invaluable ingredients, is our supporters and donors; great, small, old and new. We could NEVER, do this if it wasn't for you. WE are proud to say, despite the challenges (recessions, etc) we have accomplished something special TOGETHER.

A great African proverb states "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together". This brings so many people to mind; who are always with me, in my thoughts, prayers, and continue to support BASICS. I want thank Her Excellency Mrs. Matilda Amisshah-Arthur-the wife of the Vice President of Ghana for her continued support over the past years. We first met over 10 years ago attending the same church. The support started years before her husband became the Vice President, but BASICS is never forgotten. This past Christmas, Her Excellency visited the center and donated food items,

books, candies and two live sheep. It added to our annual celebration, which is generously funded by Myra Msibi, who visited Ghana years ago, but always thinks of the children at this time of year and sends a donation to help with the Christmas party. Then there is Mr. and Mrs. Alexander from Texas; a retired couple who visits Ghana yearly, and never forgets to visits or volunteer at BASICS. There are so many, and surely by naming just three; will get me in trouble, but each of you know who you are, and in time; I will publicly salute you as well. But the message; is the appreciation I have for your faith in me; as the gatekeeper of BASICS. The past 15 years have been wonderful; and I never regretted; despite becoming tired and sometimes worried about where the funds will come from. But then GOD sends an angel to me. God sends me a sign, or gives me the strength to carry on.

So as I enter the new year, I have set some goals and resolutions; that will bring about change, and improvements for me and BASICS. This year, I will spend about 3-4 months in the USA, visiting, churches, sororities, fraternities, schools or many of your homes. Fifteen years, that is how it all started; telling friends of the great work being done in Ghana. As mentioned, I am working on a book or two, and I would love if you would invite me to speak about it, and share stories of my time in Africa for the past 15 years. I know you will enjoy this edition; but it is such a small insight and reflection of BASICS. There's more!! I hope to hear from you soon, to book a date or two.

Again Happy New Year, and a BIG THANK YOU for your SUPPORT since 2000.



Presenting our 2015 graduates

BASICS is proud to present our 2015 graduates! This year nine students took the BASICS Education Certificate Examination (BECE) and **all** students passed. Eight of the nine students presented here will now continue their education in Senior High School (SHS.)

Congratulations Delphina, Isabella, Grace, Obed, Rhodaline, Sandra, Jonathan, Mavis and Diane for passing your exams.

SHS is neither free, compulsory nor afforded to many in Ghana. University remains to be an illusion for children in impoverished communities such as Chorkor.

Sponsorship for high school cost \$1000 USD per student, which covers school fees, boarding, feeding, furniture, uniforms and tuition.

In 2016, 12 students will be completing Junior High School (JHS) with hopes of entering SHS in September 2016. They will *all* be in need of sponsors to make this a reality.

Would you like to sponsor a child to SHS?

Co-sponsoring a child to high school is possible at BASICS. Your whole family can support one child, or perhaps your workplace, or group of friends can pool resources. If you'd like to know more please get in touch. A schedule of payments can be arranged



Delphina Mensah

Age: 15, Aspiring Fashion Designer/
Broadcast Journalist

Delphina entered BASICS International at the age of 6 years old, and was placed in Kindergarten.

Prior to entering BASICS, she had no prior education. Delphina is an A student, who enjoys African dance, writing poetry, choreographed ensembles, playing the Atenteben (local flute) and loves to read.

"I want to go to Senior High School, so I can attend university, which is my ultimate dream"

Isabella Lamptey

Age: 16, Aspiring Journalist

Isabella, entered BASICS, at the age of 8 years old. Prior to entering BASICS, she had no prior education. Shortly after, her mother died from an unknown illness leaving she and her siblings in the care of an elderly grandmother. With nine children to care for, her grandmother found it difficult to maintain the expenses of feeding all the children and sending them to school.

"I want to prove to those that said I cannot finish, that I can. And I want to go to achieve my goals of becoming a great journalist."





Grace Allotey

Age: 16, Aspiring Nurse

Grace entered BASICS International intervention program at the age of 11, while still in school. Her parents at times found it very difficult to maintain the cost of sending their children to school, so their education was always at risk.

"I want to attend Senior High School to achieve my goals and also to be the first one in my family to finish school."

Obed Tagoe

Age: 17, Aspiring Army Officer

Obed entered BASICS at the age of 9. Prior to entering BASICS, he had no education. He often dreamt of going to school and begged his mother on a daily basis; however was always told when she got some money she would send him. He learned about BASICS, and begged his family to get him enrolment. Today, Obed is an exceptional student, who has embraced his sponsorship immensely. He was skipped to the 3rd grade while in 2nd Grade; and has maintained an A average throughout primary school.

"I want to attend SHS to learn more, and to also it help me choose what I will be in the future"



Rhodaline Aryeetey

Age: 21, Aspiring Nurse

Rhodaline entered BASICS at 11 years old with no prior education. Rhodaline recalls being enrolled in BASICS and placed in Kindergarten at the age of 11. She remembers everyone laughing at her, and being the biggest person in the class.

Often she wanted to stop; as so many other children had done so. While in Class 2, she made a promise to her family; that she would complete school.

"I want to attend SHS to improve on myself and be the best, and also to prove to society, that I can do this".



Sandra Ofori

Age: 16, Aspiring Actress

Sandra was enrolled in BASICS intervention program, at the age of 7 years old. Prior to entering BASICS, she had no formal education.

Both parents struggled to make a living, and could not send their children to school. Today Sandra is an A student despite many family obstacles; which threatened her schooling and livelihood. Sandra loves to dance, talk, read, and is very confident.

"I want to attend SHS because I want to be an Actress, and have an education. So I know Senior High School, is just a step towards achieving my goal."

Jonathan Kotey

Age: 17, Aspiring Lawyer

Jonathan entered BASICS International at the age of 7 with no prior education.

Jonathan recalls being excited about the constant promise from his mother that he will go to school tomorrow. He recalls going to sleep dreaming of the tomorrow, that he would attend school. For him tomorrow never came, but only an excuse, that she still didn't have the money to send him to school.

After so many excuses, he took things in own hand; and went to work in the local market, thinking he can save enough money to attend school,; but he never did. So he continued to work until BASICS came along and placed him into our sponsorship program.

"I want to improve on what I have learned in Junior High School and to learn more about my career."



Mavis Lartey

Age: 20, Teacher / Visual Arts

Mavis entered BASICS at the age of 9 with no prior education. Mavis nearly dropped out of school, when she was in class 3, due to the corporal punishment of a teacher who felt she was not learning fast enough.

Her family was encouraged to discharge her from school, as the teachers didn't think she could complete. Mavis has beaten the odds, and proven her teachers and family wrong.

"I want to attend SHS to achieve my goals and then help my community, by educating other children on the importance of an education and staying in school."

When I grow up, I want to be...

Careers Day

It was careers day at Mamprobi South 3 Basic School where, many of the children attend. Children were encouraged to dress up in costumes of professions that they aspire to be in the future. We have future Bankers, Doctors, Footballers, Nurse, Pastor, Teachers and Soldiers. Interestingly the only soldiers were female and a tribute to the spirit of equality and diversity highly encouraged at B.A.S.I.C.S. After careers day, a group of Ghana soldiers and police paid a special visit to BASICS and took a picture with the future soldiers.



Isaac Opata Old student returns

Isaac Opata completed High school in 2008 under the BASICS sponsorship program. During high school he used whatever pocket money given to him by BASICS to buy seedlings for his family farm. Isaac had dreams of entering nursing school. Isaac did not achieve the grades to enter school, so he returned to his family farm.

Today Isaac is the owner of 200 acres of farm land where he grows coco yams, corn, pineapple and other produce. He never fails to visit Aunty Pat and bring items from the farm for the BASICS feeding program





Bucking the Trend Bintu's story

Bintu was enrolled in our program in 2002 at the age of 9. Entering kindergarten at such a late stage presented some challenges for her, and doubts to those watching. Despite the odds, Bintu was steadfast in her journey to have a sustainable life and future. In 2014 Bintu completed high school, with aspirations of becoming a Fashion Designer. Her grades on the West African Secondary School Examination were not impressive in all subjects; which altered her plans to enter university.

With the support of BASICS Bintu has now enrolled in a work-study program with Kad Manufacture, a leading clothing manufacturing company in Ghana. With six months of training under her belt, she has accomplished many things that she never thought were not possible. Bintu has opened a bank account, learned to sew garments, and is getting closer to becoming a Fashion Designer; by understudying her master; Linda Yaa Ampah.

Special thank you to Bintu's sponsor since 2002: **Springfield Gardens United Methodist Women** whose mission initiatives include; providing opportunities to grow spiritually, equipping women & girls to be leaders, providing transformative educational experiences, organizing for growth & flexibility, and, working

Rising to the challenge

Perfect attendance

High performance self discipline and are strongly valued here at BASICS. Children are expected to make their education a top priority in order to stay enrolled in BASICS programs. Children are accepted into the sponsorship and intervention program if their social and financial circumstances hinders their engagement with school. Ensuring that children stay in school, attend everyday, and perform *above* standard is a challenge we face each term; as some students take more time to adjust to such requirements. Despite the odds, some students have risen to the challenge.

Today, we say CONGRATULATIONS to these children, who have perfect attendance and scored 100% on their weekly BASICS spelling test. BASICS looks forward to receiving local school reports cards soon, and is confident there will be more reasons to celebrate!





Brighten Your Corner With Webster University

As you walk through Chorkor, dust clings to the air as a result of the Harmattan season, leaving everything in a dull, familiar beige. However, despite the Harmattan, and its enveloping dust, the dry season is no match for the bursts of color that now speckle the two roads that house both of our centers. Thanks to **Brighten Your Corner**, a beautification project led by the BASICS team in partnership with Webster College, the bright, bold, BASICS green can be seen near and far on 40 handmade flower pots delivered throughout the community. Brighten Your Corner highlights the importance of beautifying ones own community; this year, BASICS decided to shed light on the importance of preserving greenery while adding a splash of color to our streets to inspire others nearby to do the same.

On Saturday, October 31st, over forty Webster College volunteers, students and faculty alike, teamed up with our program's 85 children and 13 staff to brighten our corners. Volunteers gathered at Nana's House for a warm welcome before heading over to Nana's House 2 to paint handmade Wawa board flower pots in the eye catching, apple green. Together, children and volunteers potted each plant and

hand delivered the products to selected homes and shops within the community. The sea of green and Webster purple certainly caught eyes as we flooded the streets with pots; many community members even asked how they could receive a plant of their own.



After all deliveries were made, everyone gathered back at Nana's House for a closing fellowship lunch. The celebratory goodbye was complete with a traditional African dance performance by the P1-P4 classes, and Words of Wisdom from a few Webster students, encouraging the children to continue pursuing their education and to reach for the stars. All in all, we say a huge thank you to Webster and all of our volunteers for helping us create a brighter, bolder and GREENER Chorkor.





Restoring Sight in Chorkor

Eye checks for those in chorkor

Three years ago, Founder Pat Wilkins was diagnosed with closed angle Glaucoma and underwent emergency surgery. Over the course of her recovery, Pat had a difficult fight with the condition, and in 2014 was told that she would go blind. Not taking no for an answer, Pat travelled to the USA and sought help at one of the best eye hospitals in the USA. Today Pat still has her vision!

Unfortunately, not many are as lucky to have the means, family support and finances as Pat. Motivated by her near-brush with blindness, BASICS partnered with the Ghana Blind Union, and watched hundred of mums, dads and children of Chorkor get their eyes checked for free. Eyeglasses and eye drops helped the people of Chorkor

improve their eye conditions, which they believed had no cure.

Unfortunately there were several severe cases in both adults and children, and BASICS is still exploring treatment for these patients.

The Ghana Blind Union attributed the high number of cases to excessive exposure to fire smoke. Most women in Chorkor are fish smokers. Other causes for the eye conditions were attributed to dirty environments, consumption of dirty water, non treatment of eye diseases in their early stages, and close proximity to the sun.

This initiative would not have been possible without a generous donation from Mr James Barnor, whose donation is still currently supporting prescriptions and getting further tests for those who need it.

Water Tanks

For over five years BASICS had no choice but to purchase water since the government supply was shut off in the area. Needless to say, this is an expense that we couldn't afford, but had no choice in the matter. A trunk load of water, which fills one tank cost approximately 200.00 GHC (equivalent to \$65.00 USD), and with over 150 children in and out of the centre each day, this was required twice a month. In addition, drinking water had to be purchased, as the source of the water being delivered was not secured, and we could not risk using it to cook or drink.

In 2014, two volunteers; a mother and daughter duo witnessed this burden on BASICS, and decided to raise money on our behalf. The funds were used to purchase two additional tanks; which would harvest rain water; which can be used to flush toilets, clean and water plants. This has helped us tremendously. Thank you Audrey and Mia Hall (and Friends)



CHOKOR
BY: AUGUSTINA NETTEY

A community full of lovely people
With abundant gifts of nature
The breeze from the sea
The variety of fishes we are blessed with
Unity and harmony is our hallmark
Fishing is our major occupation
We are always happy
Because every rain they gives us hope
A hope that renova our strength
A strength that make us believe we can
thril the name of "Chokor"
Long Live "Chokor"
God Bless "Chokor"

POEM
By: FRED A NETTEY

BASICS, BASICS, BASICS
The place of hope for children
A place full of talents and success
I believe in the promise and the possibility
I know with Basics I can
And I can be what I want to be
Great and a wonderful person I belong
The stepping stone of my success
The foundation of my future
I can always proud to be part of Basics
Basics: We are a promise
Basics: We are a possibility

Above: Poem by Augustina Nettey, 16 years old,
Junior High School 2

Left: Poem by Freda Nettey, 14 years old,
Junior High School 2

Give a little: Get a lot Volunteering at BASICS International

Every volunteer who passes through our gates at BASICS is unique. We welcome people from all walks of life, and love it when they are able to return. If you'd like to Volunteer at BASICS, please get reach out to us at volunteer@basicsinternational.org

You're never too old to Volunteer

The story of Grandma Dee

I would like to share with you some of my experience volunteering in the BASICS International summer camp this past August and September. Although I was only able to be there two hours twice weekly, for six weeks, I found it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. A long life, I might add, now that I am 86 years old.

Most of my time there was spent with the beading class, who welcomed me warmly every morning. Two of the girls, Mercy and Joann designed and made a lovely green beaded bracelet (I helped a little) that I gave to my daughter for her September birthday.



A few times I was assigned to assist in the crocheting class. I informed the students that I was a knitter, and had never learned to crochet. Well, within minutes of sitting down, a pile of yarn and crochet hook was placed in front of me, and two girls immediately gave me lessons on how to make a purse.

Whenever I had to navigate the stairs to the different classrooms, (there are no hand railings to hold on to) within seconds one or two students or staff held my elbows and guided me safely up and down the staircase.

Staff members rescued me immediately when I looked lost or puzzled about where to go next. Someone was always there in the blink of an eye to guide me. I shall always treasure their warmth and welcoming.

The most moving experience was the farewell ceremony on my last day. The students and staff presented me with a certificate (framed and hanging on my wall here in California) two books made by the students, beads, a BASICS tee shirt, and several other goodies which I treasure. They started singing a goodbye song, which brought tears (happy and sad tears) to my eyes.

For a rich and rewarding experience to anyone who visits Ghana, volunteer at BASICS International, try it, you'll like it.

Grandma dee



Anna returns home

The story of Anna

Anna a former AFS volunteer from Germany took time off to visit B.A.S.I.C.S on her trip to Ghana to reacquaint herself with host family and the great memories she left behind on completion of her voluntary service in Ghana at B.A.S.I.C.S . Anna, volunteer with BASICS in 2010 for one year; and promised to return. The kids she worked with were so happy to see her and that she kept her promise.

Something New

The story of volunteer Fiona Knieling



In Germany I work with different groups of children. But I wanted to experience something new. I wanted to work with children I don't know and who live in a different environment.

In the beginning we had to get to know each other. I had to find out in what they are good at, what they like or dislike, and where I have to put in the most effort. I asked the children in my class these questions, but they didn't say everything. Of course not. But after some time the children came to me more often just to have a talk and I was able to find it out.

They challenged me in many ways. I had to be authoritative and at the same time I wanted to be a friend! I had to force them to do their homework

or work I prepared for them so many times and meanwhile tried not to be taken aback.

Even though they challenged me, the moments I won't forget are more. Once when a girl from my class brought some toffee and gave one to me, on which was written '**don't forget me**'. Or all moments when they understood something new. When I worked with the arts and craft group and saw the wonderful results at the end. When I had an idea of how to treat a certain topic. When they really read their book in library time and were able to explain the content to me afterwards. Almost everyday when the children came from school and we had some time to what about whatever they wanted to. The new story from school or why they are dirty. Most of the times cause they played Football!

The importance of Arts

The story of volunteer Christina Alexander

My name is Christine Alexander and I am a film and psychology student from New York University. This fall I had the amazing opportunity to intern with BASICS International. I led a film program for P6, a class of ten of the most interesting, boisterous and endlessly joyful teenagers I've ever met. Over the course of three months, we talked about character development and acting, cinematography, editing, and the power of image to create a story.

In what was definitely the most humbling experience of my life, P6 helped me completely redefine my understanding of how and why we tell stories, how and why we teach art to young people. From making fun of High School Musical to dressing up as spiders to running around in the near darkness interviewing the citizens of Chorkor, it was a challenging and completely exhilarating journey. I feel proud to have learned that while understanding another culture's relationship with creativity is deeply complicated, creative joy is universal and necessary.



Floods & Fire in Ghana

It started off as one of those wet, rainy, cold evenings that would usually usher in an exciting and chilly, good-sleep inspiring night on June 4, 2015. But that was not meant to be. As the rain entered its third hour around 7:30 pm, it became palpably clear that the city was headed for trouble. Roads were flooded, drains were overflowing, and the rain water had turned Accra into a deep-brown sea.

Just when the rain subsided and everyone thought a recovery was in sight, an explosion at a fuel station at Kwame Nkrumah Circle (a busy landmark in Ghana) swept red-hot fire over flood waters burning human bodies and everything else it came across. Nearly 200 people dead, and damage of properties up to several millions of Ghana Cedis.

Both water bodies have become an eyesore, choked with refuse, debris from floods and other weeds blocking vehicle and pedestrian movement which prevented many from going to work, market, school or visit family members. The disaster

inconvenienced many traders who lost their goods to the flood at the Pedestrian Shopping Mall at the Kwame Nkrumah Circle.

Meanwhile at B.A.S.I.C.S, practical measures were put in place in making sure our children were safe. We delegated staff, volunteers and interns to various homes to do a headcount of our children and access the community. All children were safe, but Chorkor was not spared of the natural disaster. Many homes had flooded, aluminium roofing sheets were sighted lying on the ground, and the sea had no resemblance of a place where children played and fisherman earned their income. The seaside was covered with tons, if not miles of plastic debris, that had washed to shore. In next days, weeks, and months, communities came together to clean and restore.

As a result of the floods, Ghana faces huge environmental and sanitation challenges. Only a few months away from the rainy season, we pray that some of these challenges have been addressed; and lives with be spared in the case of another such flood.

The 2015 Accra floods resulted from heavy continuous rainfall in Accra, the largest city in Ghana. The rain started on 1 June 2015. At least 25 people have died from the flooding directly, while a petrol station explosion caused by the flooding killed at least 200 more people.



Lillian Afladey

P6



I draw a picture of a fisherman just to say something small about them. Fishermen has to fishes on Monday to Sunday but never goes to fishing on Tuesday. Some days when the fisherman goes to fishing they find it easy to get fish but sometimes too hard to find some fish. During Christmas the fisherman try to do something small in front of the sea they sing in honor of the sea on a boat. And when it's time to do it on the sea they also do the same thing but without a boat.

Drawing by Lillian Afladey, 13 years old, 6th Grade

Staying Connected Grace United Methodist Church

During a recent visit to the US, founder Pat Wilkins was invited to speak at Grace United Methodist Church in Lynn, Massachusetts. It was nearly 10 years ago that BASICS International was first introduced to Grace UMC through parishioner Sarah Calliento. Sarah visited Ghana in 2004, and returned several years later. Sarah



stayed connected and committed to helping BASICS through donations and sponsorship. Other members of Grace United Methodist Church continue to sponsor children and support programs of BASICS.

Pat Wilkins, and Former Board Members; Rachael Cromwell and Malika Watson, visited the Lynn area where they were hosted at the home of Sarah Calliento. They arrived with car full of African artifacts to be sold to raise money for the mission. After they arrived, Sarah and Malika started baking delicious bread pudding for the Fellowship Mission Dinner that same afternoon at church.

Pat was welcomed warmly at the Fellowship Mission Dinner by Rev. Sandra Bonnette-Kim and parishioners. The tables were decorated with Sarah's personal African woodcarvings, collected on her trips to Ghana. BASICS shared gifts of bags made by the children with all the invitees.

The following day, Pat Wilkins was the guest

speaker for the Sunday morning service, where she shared a brief story of how she began mission work, and how BASICS was started. A video presentation of the works of BASICS was shown to the congregation, and the floor was opened for questions.

Grace United Methodist Church is making plans



Diamond Family Foundation Fellowships

In September, BASICS took an exciting step forward thanks to the generosity of one incredible partner. The Diamond Family Foundation funded two fellowship positions at our Intervention centre here in Chorkor. We are proud to name the program in their honor: **The Diamond Family Foundation Fellowship**

Investing in people; in leaders, is how BASICS International is building a sustainable future. The Diamond Family Foundation Fellowship provides further training and development to university

graduates who are interested in international development, social work, social enterprises, and who show a commitment and passion to working with children.

BASICS has been operating for fifteen years under the leadership of Founder and Executive Director Patricia Wilkins. Pat knows the organisation intimately, and the programs have been refined over 15 years of learning. The time has come to transfer this knowledge and design systems that will ensure BASICS is self-sustainable, and can continue working towards its mission long after the founding members have moved on.

The two fellowship positions will lead on-ground operations in Chorkor: **Program Manager** and

Business Developer (Social Enterprise.) The two fellows will work together to improve community outreach, and provide support to the Executive Director on strategy, program management, fundraising and capacity building. These two roles will be the foundation of a future management structure that will naturally form as BASICS evolves.

Applications are now being accepted for the 2016/17 Fellowship Program. Visit our website for more details or contact a Fellowship Coordinator at fellowship@basicsinternational.org

The Board of Directors grows

Fellow board members Ms Pat Wilkins, Mrs Sandy Bright, Mrs Stephanie Aladenoye, Mr Scott O'Halloran, Mrs Ronya Foy and Mrs Lenora Gates welcomed four new members in September 2015:

Mr Kweku Fleming Ghana, DC

Kweku Fleming is a design consultant who collaborates with companies and inventors to develop new products and innovations to existing products. Since 1992, he has served in the consumer goods, telecommunications, and manufacturing, developing products that range from wireless telephones to designer luggage. Fleming earned a B.S. in electrical engineering and an M.S. in mechanical engineering and product design from Stanford University. He has worked with companies such as Walt Disney Imagineering, Embarq, Jet Blue, Alcoa, and the United States Patent and Trademark Office.



Kweku's Favorite Things: Sunny beaches, rhythm & blues, Live performances & prawns!!!

Dr Kehinde 'Kenny' Ajayi Boston, Ghana

Kenny Ajayi first learned about BASICS when she met Pat in Ghana over ten years ago. Since then, she has visited Chorkor several times and was deeply inspired by the commitment BASICS has made to supporting children in this community. She looks forward to becoming more involved in BASICS as a board member and is excited about the future of this dynamic organisation.



Based in Boston USA, Kenny is an assistant professor of economics. She teaches courses on economic development and her current research focuses on education and youth employment in Africa. She has spent several years studying the secondary school admission system in Ghana and is passionate about improving educational opportunities for underprivileged students.

Kenny's favourite things: dancing, sunshine, mangoes, listening to the ocean

Lily Kpobi Accra, Ghana

Lily Kpobi is assistant lecturer and clinical psychologist from Ghana where she works with various groups of women and children in understanding mental health and well-being. She first got involved with BASICS as an intern in 2012, and worked with the children and staff of BASICS in individual and group sessions. Despite the fact that her internship officially ended three years ago, she has continued to be a part of the BASICS families through child interventions and staff development.



Lily has two Masters' degrees, the second of which focused on evaluating existing structures and systems in mental healthcare. Her research areas have included understanding the unique roles played by cultural factors in mental health in Ghana, in order to inform better interventions, particularly in women and children. She looks forward to sharing these insights to support BASICS in its drive for change at the community level.

Lily's favourite things: traveling, all kinds of music and God!

Jess O'Farrell Melbourne, Australia

Jess O'Farrell is a digital producer from Melbourne, Australia. She was first introduced to BASICS in 2009 when she volunteered for 2 months. During her stay she tutored girls in the IGAP program, and ran an extracurricular class with students who were interested in film making. The class wrote a script, and starred in their very own film: BASIC STUFF.



Jess studied Media and Communications at RMIT University and thrives on her job as a video Producer in Melbourne. She has worked on short films, feature films, documentaries and corporate video, and is passionate about video as a form of communication. Jess enjoys combining her passion for production with international development, and is travelling back to Ghana in April 2016 to create video content for us.

Jess's favourite things: Harry Potter, Survivor, and Kele wele!

MARY TETTEH

17th December 2015

Kontomire Stew /Kon-toom-ree/

Kontomire stew is a traditional, and delicious, dish prepared here in Ghana. It is also a healthier option for those looking to incorporate a few more greens into their diet. There are many variations on the traditional dish, which make it all the more appealing to those with varying tastes in seasonings, and most importantly, spice! Kontomire is best enjoyed with a side of boiled yams, cassava, white or brown rice, plantains or even just a bit of bread.

Serves 2-3 individuals

Measurements are listed as a suggestion but can be altered based on your preference

Ingredients:

1 bundle of Coco yam leaves (or greens/ spinach as a substitute)
¼ cup Palm oil
2 medium sized crushed tomatoes
Powdered pepper or 2 chillies (optional)
2 chopped onions
Crushed ginger and garlic mix
Magi (or bouillon cube or preferred seasoning)
Optional addition of your choice
Fish: wele, salmon or poku (catfish or snapper will also do)
Chicken
Meat

Instructions

1. Chop coco yam leaves into thin 1cm slices.
2. Heat palm oil in a medium sauce pan and fry onions until golden (approx. 5 min.)
3. Add crushed tomatoes, chillies, garlic mix and seasoning. Let cook for 10-15 min on low heat, stirring occasionally. The mixture will eventually form a gravy-like consistency.
4. Fry or lightly cook your meat of choice.
5. Add meat to the mixture. Simmer on low heat and stir regularly.
6. Rinse and drain greens before adding to the mixture. Cover and simmer on low heat for 10-15 minutes, or until greens are completely soft and cooked. Stir regularly and gently.
7. Your stew is now ready!



This is a tree it contains many of leaves.
It is a mango tree

Drawing by Mary Tetteh, 13 years old, 7th

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