



B.A.S.I.C.S international

MAY EDITION



A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Happy June! Just six more months to Christmas, and of course I am excited as its my favorite time of the year. This Christmas will be super special; as it's my 20th year celebrating with the children of Ghana. On December 5th 2020, B.A.S.I.C.S turns 20; however we will start the celebration as soon as the ball drops (New Years Eve), welcoming a new year, and reflecting on the past 19 that we have provided much needed programs and services in Ghana, and New York.

As we reflect on the past years , we must look ahead. This reminds me of the Sankofa adinkra symbol. Which states, you must know where you came from in order to know where you are going, The bird is looking back.



BASICS has made a remarkable impact in Ghana, through the support of many friends and donors. We have hosted dignitaries, celebrities, groups, and over a thousand of volunteers. Our impact has been significant; Since the year 2000, B.A.S.I.C.S International has impacted over 300,000 through community outreach, provided 2190 educational sponsorships, of which 1200 was provided to the girl child. We have provided shelter to over 27 at risk girls, served over 400,000 hot meals, and made it possible for 5 (and counting) university graduates. We have opened our doors to over 1000 volunteers, that represent 21 countries, and fully funded 2 Fellowships to US University grads.

But our work is not done. We will continue empowering children, women and communities; through providing access to quality education, we will continue providing the social services and support to ensure each child stays in school and reaches the highest level; which will guarantee "her or his" social inclusion, and brighter future. We will continue empowering communities through skill development, knowledge, and resources. We will continue making a difference.

We cannot do this alone, as we have not done any of this without your help. We are therefore launching a 2020 campaign. On the last page of this newsletter, we are inviting you and your friends to join us in sustaining B.A.S.I.C.S for the next 20 years, through making a \$20 donation. We invite you to find 20 friends (actually 19 friends) to join you. You can also set up a recurring donation of \$20.00. We are also looking for corporations to make a pledge for the next 20 months or 20 years. We know with your investment ; we can make a bigger impact. I hope I can personally count on you.

Please feel free to call me directly to discuss how you can start a campaign to help us reach our 2020 GOAL. I can be reached at pwilkins@basicsinternational.org or 718-454-1273 (USA) or 0277-512671 (GH)

Feel free to write us and tell us what you think of our newsletters; or to include someone on our mailing list. info@basicsinternational.org



Patricia Wilkins
Founder & Executive Director
B.A.S.I.C.S International

Savannah State University Students collaborate with B.A.S.I.C.S

May 23, ushered in a team of seven volunteers from the Savannah State University (a public historically black university in Savannah, Georgia. It is the oldest public historically black university in the state. Under the leadership of Dr. Deloach (Social Work Department) , the student will spend 30 days in Ghana, engaging in community work and service to help make a change in the society. Some students share their service learning and study abroad experience:

Story by: **Tho'Mesia Moore**
International Issues of Social Work-Ghana

Being here at B.A.S.I.C.S International has been such a learning experience from day one up into this point right now. I was not only able to pour into other students but allow them to pour into me as well. I remember the feeling that came over me the first day I arrived to B.A.S.I.C.S. I did not know what to expect I was just excited to meet the kids. Upon arrival we were greeted by a Ghanaian with a glowing smile, handshake and welcome. Nii followed by showing us around the Chorkor community. He exclaimed, "In order to understand the kids you must also understand where it is they come from". All I could do was smile hearing those words, because I couldn't agree more. We toured the community of Chorkor visiting the living area, seaside, and Great Kwame Nkrumah Memorial School where most of the kids attend school. I was so excited to meet each of them. I was greeted by smiles, hugs, and laughter taking out my phone to record, take pictures, and make videos. I remember trying to put my phone back up and many of them saying, "Madam please let's take more". It brought pure joy to me.



After meeting the kids that we would be working with this joyful spirit the kids possessed followed them and myself through the few weeks I spent here at B.A.S.I.C.S. Not only were they able to share their culture, but I was able to share mine as well from sharing American snacks such as Slim Jims, Rice Krispies, Now Later's and Winter Fresh gum, and more. As well as the students teaching me their tribal language GA and constantly correcting me saying "Madam I do not speak Twi. I am GA", when I constantly said Medase (which means thank you in Twi (a language spoken by another tribe, but often known by foreigners) .



It taught me a lot about their culture from the different languages that is across the region. I formed such a close bond with each of the students I worked with from discussing God, teaching them about positive affirmations, and allowing them to give me advice about how to grow closer in Christ. I was amazed by the intellect each child possessed. As we close up our time here at B.A.S.I.C.S a part of me is saddened and happy. Happy that I was able to make a difference in a child life but also saddened that this departure is coming to an end so soon.

Looking at this experience from my field of Social Work has helped me to understand the importance of human services in the community. In other words, B.A.S.I.C.S International is a human service that provides an outlet for the kids, food, tutoring, and homework assistance. For some kids this is an environment where they can just be a child. This also may be a place for someone who receives their last meal of the day, and I am thankful we have services like B.A.S.I.C.S that strive to lend a hand in the community.



It also expanded my mind from just thinking domestically. Being in Ghana made me look at life in an international aspect and know that life is bigger outside of what is presented in front of you. I know that this is not goodbye but until next time, and I pray that B.A.S.I.C.S continues to serve a purpose and calling in each child life, giving them hope that no matter where you come from you can be what you want to be, if you work hard at it you can be what you want to be...

Savannah State University Students collaborate with B.A.S.I.C.S

Lydia Prince

Savannah State University: Biology Education Major

Upon our arrival to B.A.S.I.C.S International, my fellow Savannah State Tigers and Professor Deloach were greeted at the gate by the security guard with a simple yet powerful statement of "You are welcome," a continuous theme not only at B.A.S.I.C.S, but throughout Ghana. We were then greeted by B.A.S.I.C.S staff member, Nii, a very eager, kind, and knowledgeable Ghanaian whose positive energy radiated as he gave us a detailed tour of B.A.S.I.C.S, the Great Kwame Nkrumah Memorial School, the Chorkor community, and the former facilities where B.A.S.I.C.S began.

During the tour, we interacted with the students of the Great Kwame Nkrumah Memorial School and took photos with them. Next, we visited the former B.A.S.I.C.S facility, which is now utilized as a sewing headquarters for Hedzole (a women-based project under B.A.S.I.C.S that sell handbags, pillowcases, quilts, etc.) . Our last destination on the tour was through the Chorkor community to view the seaside. Upon us reaching the sea, the locals demonstrated how they prepare and cook the fish, a main commodity, in their unique ovens. After the tour, my classmates and I were introduced to the rest of the BI staff and were briefed on a video that summarized the purpose and goals of B.A.S.I.C.S.



As the SSU students were split into groups with the B.A.S.I.C.S staff and their specific group, I was paired with Jonathan and the Grade 8 group. He informed me that students were bright and well behaved, an understatement as I met the 7 students who were so diligent and focused to do homework right after school. They were also very patient with me as I learned their names and asked questions about their culture and interests. On one occasion, they were so surprised I had never heard of Ghanaian artists like Shatta Wale and Wendy Shay. However, with the research of a few YouTube videos and their sing-along, I began to develop a student-teacher relationship with them, a key component to a cohesive classroom.



Since they had shared some of their culture with me, I had certain American snacks and candies I shared with them giving them Twix, Kit-Kats, Rice Krispy Treats, and Goldfish (Xtra Cheddar) and for the most part, they enjoyed it. So, I was glad we could exchange aspects of our culture and both parties be receptive to it.

Another impressive moment during my first day at B.A.S.I.C.S was Harambee, where the students come together in exercise, song, and dance. I recognized some familiar songs and dances such as Gig-a-Low, and as they recited the pledge, I noticed it mirrored the lyrics of "I Can," by American rapper Nas. They also gave praises to God by delivering the Lord's Prayer and the Child's Grace before they ate dinner. These familiar aspects made me feel more comfortable and connected with the students. In fact, one day my classmate, Mesi, and I were actually invited to lead a Harambee exercise, and another classmate, Niyada, led the Harambee with yoga positions on another day.

As my experience with B.A.S.I.C.S International comes to an end, my SSU classmates and I wanted to end with a lesson featuring a 3 Station Rotation making Affirmation Jars, creating Stress Bottles, and Making Your Dreams a Reality. The Affirmation Jars involves writing positive affirmations to put in a decorative water bottle which serves to Bottles focus on creating a "lava lamp" like bottle to reduce stress and calm nerves. encourage and boost self-esteem by pulling a positive note from the jar.

The Stress Bottles were filled with water , glitter and oil, and you should shake it when you feel stressed (which most didn't understand what is stress, until Auntie Pat explained it as Wahala) . Finally, the Making your Dreams a Reality segment highlights long and short-term goals. With this in mind, the students will also be creating an elevator speech: a quick introduction of themselves and their potential career interest.



Reflecting from an educational perspective, I have gained much insight from working at B.A.S.I.C.S International. Although the poverty and socioeconomic status of the Chorkor community affect the children's home lives, they still are granted great educational opportunities at B.A.S.I.C.S. Particularly, the huge interest in Chess can become a great tool that can carry them far if they happen to become involved in competitive tournaments. Additionally, the weekly spelling tests, reading time, French lessons, and their interactive clubs of sewing and bead-making make them exceptionally well-rounded students.

To conclude, as I continue my collegiate matriculation into December when I graduate, I hope to stay in contact with B.A.S.I.C.S International to set up some form of consistent communication through either Pen Pal or Skype with my own students. This way both set of students are introduced to different cultural perspectives and can spark a multicultural curiosity that will lead to them perhaps traveling abroad.

A QUEST TO EXPLORE - MICHAEL AND JANET

With a sack of rice on his head, and a suitcase filled with gift items, Michael Rawlings and Janet Postier made an incredible entry to B.A.S.I.C.S last Tuesday May 21, 2019. A quest to explore Ghana and our Chorkor community led Michael, a historian and genealogist, and Janet, a teacher to spend some time with our children, engage with staff and teach us a few songs.

They were given a tour of our Social Intervention Centre (Nana's house, including the Library, Staff room, Media room and the Computer lab). They also visited our Social Enterprise Centre (Hedzole), where they interacted with the ladies, and got to see some of their products made with African fabrics (pillow case, tote bags, bedspreads). They toured the Chorkor community which including visiting The Greater Kwame Nkrumah Memorial School (a tuition based school; where 95% of our children attend). They posed in took pictures in the newly renovated classrooms, which BASICS has been working on since January; as part of ensuring children have a friendly conducive learning space; which results in quality education.



After having a feel of where we live, our visitors made their way back to the centre, to meet the children who had just returned from school. After our visitors introduced themselves, the children asked them questions concerning their life choices, and the challenges they faced growing up as children. Michael shared his experience, "being an only child from a family of farmer, with little formal education, there was so much expectations from me to do better, I had to put so much efforts to succeed, sometimes, it felt like I was being pressured, but I knew they wanted the best for me".



PLG is an all-girls health awareness club in Chorkor called Power of Love Girls Club. Through weekly meetings we address health issues relating to menstrual health and hygiene, sexual health, and sexual rights. Through group discussions, educational presentations and guest speakers, the club educates girls ages 10-19 about their bodily changes and teaches them how to prepare and manage them.

The education that this club will provide is lacking in the homes of our students hence, the urgency in discussing menstrual hygiene and its linkages to sexual health and rights. There are many cultural and social taboos and traditional beliefs that lead to ignorance and improper education. By having open dialogue in each meeting, by presenting accurate and informative information, we believe that our team members will become more educated on their own bodies and will take their education and teach others who also lack the proper education in these various topics. The goal is to empower young girls and equip them with the information necessary to make healthy and autonomous choices.

New York University (NYU) Students; Kate Ferrall and Mickayla Helen Coutinho Brandao during their study abroad semester in Ghana, spearheaded setting up the club; under the supervision of our Executive Director, Patricia Wilkins. At the end of their internship, they conducted an interview with one of the students. And we would like to share this interview in full content with you.

An interview with Elizabeth Lamptey (age: 14) on Teenage pregnancy in Chorkor

Q: Do you think teenage pregnancy is a big health issue in Chorkor?

Elizabeth: Yes, it is a big issue here in Chorkor

Q: Why do you think that teenage pregnancy occurs?

Elizabeth: There is not enough proper education, families - parents send their daughters out to get money/have sex/ get pregnant

Q: What is the main issue that causes teenage pregnancy?

Elizabeth: Poverty is a main contributor



Q: Without naming names, have you seen anyone close to you, such as students at B.A.S.I.C.S, neighbors, or family members become pregnant at a young age?

Elizabeth: Yes, know some in my community at home and school who dropped out because they got pregnant

Q: How did witnessing this make you feel?

Elizabeth: yes , it made me feel sad... "we all need to go to school and graduate together" but she dropped out of school because she became pregnant

Q: Is the issue of teenage pregnancy ever discussed among your colleagues/friends or family?

Elizabeth: school with friends, never at home... friends are not serious about the discussion

Q: Would you feel comfortable raising the issue with a boy child at B.A.S.I.C.S if he told you he was considering having sex because he started dating?

Elizabeth: Yes, I will feel comfortable telling them about teenage pregnancy/telling them the right thing to do.

Q: If a younger boy did not understand the issue of teenage pregnancy, how would you explain it to him?

Elizabeth: Teenage pregnancy is not good, she needs to go to school at least to the senior level, look for a proper job then basically have her fun

Q: What advice would you give him?

Elizabeth: They shouldn't go to places where there are a lot of boys, don't go into boys rooms ... do not approach men

Q: How do you think the issue of teenage pregnancy would be solved?

Elizabeth: Public education should provide sex education, moms can explain sexual education to their daughters

My first year in Senior High School (SHS)

Issah, a first year student & B.A.S.I.C.S Beneficiary tells his experience.

My name is Sabani Issah. I am 17 years of age, and attends Oda Senior High School, in the Eastern Region of Ghana. I am in Form One (1) and offers Agricultural Science. My first day at school was a memorable and exciting one; since that was my first time in that environment. I was introduced to new students from different places and cultures.

As it is the tradition in most S.H.S in Ghana, I was warmly welcomed by my seniors, my chopbox and trunk were checked to ensure I had all items required of a first year student. My Dormitory Prefect and a few others helped me check into my dorm and was assigned a bed. Two days after my arrival, we had an orientation to educate us about the rules and regulations governing the school. The class schedule was appropriately fixed. We understudy ten subjects and each subject is allocated 45 minutes duration. After school activities are actually fun, we get the chance to engage ourselves in clubs and sporting activities, cadet, etc.

On weekends, the campus becomes exciting but engaging; with washing of school uniforms, morning preps and having breakfast. We are served 3 meals a day.

As a boarder I benefit a lot, we have extra classes after school, and go for preps in the evening to get ourselves ready for the next day's lesson. Comparing to day students, they also do have extra classes but don't get the opportunity for preps either in the morning or evening like how we do.

Oda Senior High School is really a nice school with a welcoming environment.



#IAMHEDZOLE (FREEDOM)

OTHER FEATURED NEWS

empowering women to be self sufficient (Rhodaline Aryeetey, 21, share her story)

"Life hasn't been easy after school, I had to depend on my parents for almost everything I needed. But now that i'm self sufficient, am able to provide for myself and even take care of my sister's children" says Rhodaline, a beneficiary of B.A.S.I.C.S who now works with Hedzole.

My name is Rhodaline Aryeetey, am 21 years old and live in Chorkor with my parents. I entered B.A.S.I.C.S at the age of 7, and started schooling from kindergarten until I completed Senior High School (SHS). B.A.S.I.C.S has been my main support till I completed SHS. Afterwards, life has not been easy. I had to depend on my parents for every little thing I needed, since I was not working after school. After spending a few months at home, Aunty Pat had a meeting with those of us who had just completed school; to discuss future plans aside furthering our education at the tertiary level. She informed us about the Hedzole program (sewing and needle work) being headed by another former beneficiary. I showed interest and enrolled in the program. Prior to that I had a little knowledge in sewing from the sewing club at B.A.S.I.C.S. Also, I studied Visual Arts in SHS and so have a passion for Print and Textile works. By entering the program, I have learnt how to use sewing tools, how to fix some of the tools we use at work and improved on my **straight stitches** which used to be a challenge for me when I enrolled. Hedzole has imparted my life tremendously. Am now able to assist with payment of rent and utility at home. Prior to my enrolment with Hedzole, I was not regarded as a source of financial support to the family, but after I started working with Hedzole, my family now regard and include me in family decisions.

To ensure I don't run out of cash and only depend on commission from my work here at Hedzole, I also engage in a small scale business by selling slippers at home which is managed by my mother while am at work. B.A.S.I.C.S is the source of my success; financially, socially and academically. I would have been influenced negatively by my peers in the community, and could not have guaranteed my current social and economic freedom if not for the handup given by B.A.S.I.C.S.



PRODUCTS

Bed Spreads, Pillow Cases, Table Runner and Bed Runners

Hedzole (pronounced Hey Jo Leh) Meaning "Freedom" in the language of the Ga people. Is a social enterprise under the umbrella of B.A.S.I.C.S. B.A.S.I.C.S International empowers women through providing economic independence, which results in social inclusion. Purchasing an item made by the women of HEDZOLE- empowers women, community and a nation.



Items are available in our Ghana office (333 Ama Twitwegu Street, Chorkor) or New York Office and Showroom (162-04 Tuskegee Airmen Way, Jamaica New York) To order items or visit one of our showrooms call: 0277 512671 or 718-454-1273 or email us at Hedzole@basicsinternational.org

OUR COMMUNITY

Each year before the celebration of Homowo, there is a ban on noise making in the Ga traditional area. Homowo is celebrated in remembrance of the famine that once happened in the history of the Ga people. This year's ban commenced on May 13 and will end on June 13, it forms part of the customs of the Ga people. During this time, all religious bodies and institutions residing within the Ga states are entreated to respect this directive, as a sign of respect to one another. There should be limited or no gatherings, no loud music at home or on streets.

Walking through Chorkor and its environs, one will find the once lively place now very quiet, especially on weekends. Most fishermen will be seen mending their nets or spending more time with their families as there is no fishing until the ban is lifted.

The ban on drumming and noise making is a key feature in the activities leading to the celebration of the Homowo festival by the Ga people. This period is used to fast and pray for peace, success and welfare of the Ga-Dangme people and the country.



DID YOU KNOW?

Kejetia market is the largest open air market in West Africa, located in Kumasi, the Ashanti region's capital. Everything under the Ghanaian sun can be found there, from local crafts such as sandals and beads, to second-hand clothing and jeans. There are also meat corners and a wide variety of fruits and vegetables.

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

Join us in the 20 give \$20.00 in 2020 CAMPAIGN



B.A.S.I.C.S International is turning 20 very soon, and we are kicking off the celebration with a fundraiser to ensure we are around for the next 20 years.

We invite you to donate \$20.00 and then find 19 friends to donate \$20.00.

How? simply ask for a pledge sheet to be sent to you, and then start asking 20 friends (oops 19 friends, because you will make the first donation). Friends can either make the donation online, or give it to you directly; and then you send it to us. You write their name on your pledge sheet- and BOOM you are done- your completed your 2020 campaign

Are you ready for 2020? Come on the countdown starts now

Email us at 2020@basicsinternational.org

or call 718-454 -1273 (USA)

0277 512671 (GHANA)

RECURRING DONATION

Consider making a donation

Recurring donations are our bread-and-butter here at B.A.S.I.C.S. It helps us plan for the future and allows us to grow faster.

Make a recurring donation to one of our projects, or simply make your donation a general donation, leaving us to choose which project is currently most in need of support.

Any amount is appreciated, no matter how small.

You can make your donation via PayPal, Cheque, Credit Card authorization form.

If you'd like to chat to us first, please get in touch!

SPONSOR A CHILD

An investment of \$1,000.00 per child/per year ensures students receive quality education, uniforms, books, supplies, lunch, health insurance, supplemental tutoring, extra curricular activities, psychological support and a hot dinner- every school day (including long vacations).

Follow link below;

<http://basicsinternational.org/take-action/findyourchild/>

SUPPORT OUR PROGRAMMES

Consider making a donation.

Programs like #IAM Hedzole, Rerun Thrift and Break the Cycle directly benefit our social intervention programs. By patronizing, donating and spreading the word, you are helping us to keep our purpose alive.

Follow this link:

www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1347773

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME/ VOLUNTEERISM

Whether it's for 1 day, 1 month or 1 year, volunteering doesn't mean you can't have fun, see Ghana and serve.

Let us help you.

Contact details: Ghana

Project location

4 Kojo Armah Road

Chorkor, Accra, Ghana

Located on the road behind Chorkor Police Station.

BASICS International

P.O.Box CT 3727, Cantonments Accra

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