



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

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

This year was to mark my 20th year in Ghana, and 20 years of B.A.S.I.C.S existence. It should be a time to celebrate and reflect on the beginning, the foundation, the pillars of how this mission started nearly 21 years ago. My time of reflection of course took me to reminisce about my time in Russia, which I thought was one of my biggest challenges in life, but that was overtaken by the time I served as a Refugee Case worker in Western Africa. Staring war in the face, and looking at the remnants of each applicant who was applying for asylum; left me feeling solemn each day for the 18 months I traveled to the bushes of Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast, Guinea and Ghana. Although the memories do not depart my head, and so often I am reminded of the stories of blood shed, murder, rape and hunger; its just a memory for me. I prayed I would never have to experience witnessing such hardship again. I have been fortunate that I landed in a country which has not seen such disasters of the war of Liberia ;or the hunger of refugees who lived in the forest, while they escaped. Ghana, is noted as a peaceful country and most recently, one of the best places to visit in Africa. It's a developing country (some even say developed). We have KFC, Burger King and Pizza Hut and other amenities that make you feel we have arrived.

But a pandemic can shed light on a situation that makes you see things clearer, whilst some still can't see. On March 16th, schools were ordered to close, however the elite international schools closed a week earlier. Students were told to go home and distant learn. Those equipped, got their schools on Google classrooms, and students in Ghana sat behind their computers and learned. However, there were many schools that didn't know what distant learning looked like, because they don't have electricity, computer labs, trained teachers, and children come from homes, that also lack electricity, computers, and living space. The community I work in is known to be densely overpopulated, lacks infrastructure of plumbing and electricity in homes. An average home for a family of 5-10 people, is 20 feet square, made from wood, concrete and some even mud.

Most children are under the care of grandparents, as parents have left to look for work. The average income is \$2.00 a day, while some can proudly say they make \$5.00 a day. However during the shutdown, most of these incomes went to zero. Families who have children on our program are ensured their wards receive 2 meals a day, as we pay for school lunch and provide dinner each night. But when schools were closed, all of this ended. Children were left to do nothing. But in a community like this, *doing nothing* also means child labor, stealing, teenage pregnancy (at the age of 12), hunger, illiteracy, and school drop out (when school resumes). So in my mind, we were at war, and we needed to go to battle for our kids and our children and community. Not very sure of where to start, we acted on what was the most obvious; provide water so people can wash their hands and stay healthy. But it wasn't enough, so the troops were gathered and we got to work. We couldn't wait to see the worse, as it was worse was obvious. This edition gives you a glimpse of how we are filling the gap; which comes with a lot of consequences; including risking our own lives, but also backlash from some people who don't think we should work (despite getting approval from the Dept of Social Welfare), and the lack of funding. Please read through, and know that your donation will help in a **HUGE** way. Please be in touch if you are not sure how to donate, I will walk you through. **Also, please share this edition with everyone you know. Post it on your social media pages, send to family and friends, celebrities, churches, organizations. We need people to learn about our work.**

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](mailto:info@basicsinternational.org)

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



# B.A.S.I.C.S OPENS CENTER FOR CHILDREN

During this covid\_19 pandemic period , B.A.S.I.C.S as a Social intervention Program, received consent and permit from the Department of Social Welfare to operate and serve the Chorkor community. As a result of this permit, B.A.S.I.C.S opened its door to children in Chorkor to feed them , provide tablets and internet for distant learning on Wednesday, April 22, 2020. During the three weeks mandatory lockdown, staff followed up on children daily, through phone calls to their parents and guardians. Prior to opening the center to the children, measures were put in place to ensure the safety of the children and staff.

## OPENING DAY

To ensure social distancing is observed, we run a shift system where the lower grades come in morning and the upper graders come in the afternoon. Each day, our team arrives early to disinfect areas (tables, chairs, and surfaces ), place hand washing stations outside and on the compound and to welcome students. Children must wash hands, and then have their temperatures checked to make sure no one walks in feeling very sick. Regular washing of hands has become a part of our daily life. There are a lot of washing hands areas and sanitizers around to ensure we are all being safe.

## FREE NOSE MASK FOR ALL

For a community like Chorkor, sensitization about Covid-19 is not something that most people take seriously. So, we have taken it upon ourselves to educate and sensitize children on how to be safe at the center, and at home each morning through our " Say it loud" sessions. To ensure everyone's safety, face masks were given to children and staff on the first day of arrival. We are safe when we all protect and keep ourselves safe, by wearing our nose mask at all times, no matter how uncomfortable it may seem to be.

## FREE LUNCH , FREE LUNCH BOXES

Providing a hot meal is an essential part of our day. Before Covid 19 pandemic, under our Sponsorship program, we provided two meals daily to children in Chorkor. As a result of Covid 19 pandemic, schools were closed and children were denied this privilege . To fill the gap, hot and nutritious meals are served daily to children who visit our center. The first shift, which hosts primary level children receive breakfast and lunch, while the second shift for Junior High, Senior High and Tertiary level, receive Lunch and snack. Meals are hearty, hot and nutritious. In our attempt to ensure there is less contact during lunch time, children were asked to bring their personal bowls from home . However, our founder and Executive Director, Pat Wilkins surprised all the children by providing portable lunch boxes for them. These lunch boxes are to help keep food warm, and also offer children an opportunity to save some of their food to be sent home.



## DISTANT LEARNING - ONE TABLET FOR EACH CHILD

Schools closed, sending most children home with no means of accessing learning materials. B.A.S.I.C.S equipped these children by providing them with work books, puzzles and some essential learning materials, before shutting down in March. Our center has been opened to children, however, we are supporting them with tablets for learning. This is to ensure our children do not feel left behind academically. Each child is assigned to a tablet for use, and only used by them. Digital learning is the new wave, and we want to ensure our children are enjoying every bit of it. Special thanks to Compu Ghana, and everyone who donated towards the purchase of the 50 tablets. We appreciate your love and support.



## WEEKEND FOOD PACKS TO CHILDREN

Over the weekend, when we are not open; children are not guaranteed a meal in normal circumstances. However these are not normal times, which has put a heavier strain on families who are living on \$2.00 a day to feed their family consistently. For years, B.A.S.I.C.S has recognized that this is a problem for children, and sought funding to implement a weekend food pack for children; but was unsuccessful. However, as Covid-19 hit Ghana, things seemed dire, and we had to ask for support, and we received it to launch the weekend food packs. Food packs are child-friendly, nutritious, nonperishable and easy to eat. Food packs are distributed on Thursday, and provide enough food that a child can easily assemble into nine healthy meals. This helps ensure that children will have food over the weekend and return to us on Monday ready to learn.



## DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE ELDERLY

The aged in Chorkor, consists of men and women, who primarily have worked as Fishermen, Fish Smokers, Traders or Domestic workers. These occupations don't come with pensions or social security benefits, therefore many seniors have zero income and rely on family members or are forced to continue to work. Each year, B.A.S.I.C.S sponsors a party to honor our seniors and send each home with a bag filled with food items. However we know that during the Covid-19 pandemic, families are feeling the strain and therefore seniors are left to fend for themselves.

B.A.S.I.C.S has made a commitment to help our seniors (70 years old +) by delivering weekend food bags containing breakfast drink, milk, bread, kenkey, gari, tissue paper, margarine, fruits, mackerel, sardines, rice, etc. These items are varied each week based on what is most needed and available. Food deliveries are made possible each week, through the donation of individuals and organizations around the world. We say a big "Thank You" to you all.



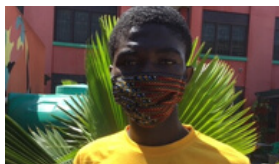


## How COVID-19 pandemic has affected me and my community

Covid-19 pandemic has affected me and my community in diverse ways. Some of which are; It has improved upon the hygiene of people in my community as it brings about hand washing, which is a major problem. In my community, hand washing was not the norm, but due to Covid 19 pandemic, the community has learnt to wash their hands as they fear they might contract the virus. It has brought hunger to some people. In my community, some people feed from hand-to-mouth. For instance, when the lockdown was in session, people in my community found it very difficult to eat as some of them were hand-mouth-workers. Hand to mouth meaning those who eat from earning they make in a day. This refers to people who mostly hawk on the streets, sell foodstuffs in order to feed and those who work to eat. It has also made my community very calm and conducive.

In the wake of Covid-19, pandemic, people in the community socially distanced themselves which wasn't so at first. At first, people used to just fight, quarrel, and also wander around making the roads filled with huge masses of people. But as the pandemic has arrived, people now stay at home. To me, it has made it impossible for me to go to school and church. But, as it is part of the preventive measures, I have to comply. It has introduced me to e-learning, which is a good initiative. E-learning has helped me get access to major things and textbooks I never had at school. It has brought up the creation of a platform for high school students to learn at home. This initiative has compiled all textbooks, past questions and even videos formats and quiz as well as lab practicals we can do online. It has also broadened my level of understanding as I learn at my own pace and also join forums to discuss major issues online.

Joy Adevu  
SHS 1 student



Emmanuel Tetteh

How Covid-19 Pandemic affected you and your Community (Write or Draw)

It has killed confidence in people and has brought fear.

It has made people very civilized and educated.

It is like the world has come to an end.

It has brought Isolation between humans.

It has killed the Culture and Identity of people.

Emmanuel Tetteh  
JHS1 student



## COMPU GHANA DONATES 10 LENOVO TABLETS

As a way of ensuring our children have access to learning materials during this Covid-19 period, individuals and organizations donated towards purchasing tablets for each child. Compu Ghana, Ghana's premier retail outlet for I.T products, services and accessories also donated 10 Lenovo tablets towards our distant learning program. Our children are very excited about their new tablets, and promise to keep them safe. We appreciate your kind gesture and support. Thank You.



## NKULENU DONATES KENKEY TOWARDS FEEDING PROGRAM

In response to the unprecedented need caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we made a call for help with regards to food items donation, to help people in Chorkor. Nkulenu Industries Ltd, a Ghanaian owned leading food processing company in Ghana, owned by Dr. Mrs. Esther Ocloo (Nee Nkulenu) responded by donating 500 balls of Kenkey toward feeding the community. We served some of the kenkey with mackerel to the children at the center, and sent them home with some for the weekend. We were able to hand deliver kenkey and other essential food items to our senior citizens in the community as well. We are very grateful and appreciate the love and support bestowed upon us and the community during these trying times. Nkulenu followed up with their donation, by pledging to donate 100 balls weekly and subsidize the balance, so B.A.S.I.C.S can afford to provide this local dish to children and seniors weekly.



## FLUTE WITH DELA BOTRI

On Thursday April 30, Dela Botri, known as the flute (Atenteben; a bamboo flute from Ghana) magician, a Ghanaian African Traditional, Highlife, Jazz musician and a teacher visited our center to teach and interact with the flute team. The smiles on the faces of the children showed how excited they were to learn at the feet of such a great man, Dela Botri. The session began with children playing a song they had learned; for him to review their skills level. He also taught a few children who had no prior skills, but were eager to learn how to play the basic keys and hold the flute. He played a few of his songs and taught children how to play them as well. It was such an honor working with you, our children love and cherish every time spent with you.



## Hedzole PRODUCTS

Bed Spreads, Pillow Cases, Table Runner and Bed Runners

Hedzole (pronounced Hey Jo Leh), which means "Freedom" in GA; a language spoken by the GA tribe. Hedzole is a social enterprise under the B.A.S.I.C.S umbrella, which 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 512 671 or 718-454-1273 or email us at [Hedzole@basicsinternational.org](mailto:Hedzole@basicsinternational.org)

### Meet our environmental friendly Shopping Bag

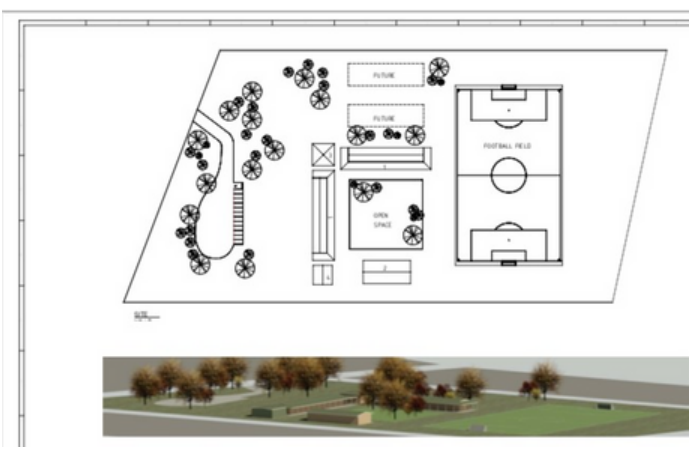
Lined with recycled rice bag sacks, and covered with African prints from Ghana West Africa; this bag is great for the beach, supermarket, market, or just to swing over your shoulder.

Did you know HEDZOLE- can custom make a bag for you? Get in touch asap [Hedzole@basicsinternational.org](mailto:Hedzole@basicsinternational.org) or 0277 512671



B.A.S.I.C.S international is building Ghana its first sleep away camp for children. A fresh air camp site for children; filled with activities , dormitories and love. Whilst the camp, will 100% subsidize children from inner city communities, it will be open for a fee to all children in Ghana.

Our goal is to get PROMISE CAMP open for August 2020- just as we celebrate 20 years ( yes, B.A.S.I.C.S is turning 20 in 2020).



**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/>  
 Zelle: [donate@basicsinternational.org](mailto:donate@basicsinternational.org)

**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](http://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1347773)  
 Zelle: [donate@basicsinternational.org](mailto:donate@basicsinternational.org)

**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  
 Ghana, West Africa.  
 (+233) (0) 277 320 925  
 (+233) (0) 277 512671

**Contact details: USA**  
 Mail all correspondences and donations to:  
 BASICS International  
 c/o 112 23 196th Street  
 St Albans, New York 11412  
 Ph: (718) 454 1273  
 Visit our satellite office at: ( by appt only)  
 Thomas White Jr Foundation Building  
 162-04 South Road (Tuskegee Airmen Way)  
 Jamaica New York

