

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

JUNE EDITION

B.A.S.I.C.S
international
Building and Sustaining a Thriving Community

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

Can you imagine, putting your mind to something- and being so determined to succeed? When Covid- 19 hit Ghana in March, 2020, I read, researched, and watched every news report on it. I became obsessed, but also realized I had work to do to help others. I crossed my T's, dotted my i's. I got my mask, shield, gloves, sanitizer, and even spare water and soap in the car. Like many; I removed my clothes before entering the house; washed my hands often, and of course social distanced from everyone. I became the little old lady that always had tissue in her bag, and wipes to clean any surface I knew I would touch. My grocery shopping became a whole ordeal that normally left me quite tired. I had wipes, and spray in my bag to clean any shopping carts, and to offer help to others. I brought my own shopping bags, made by the ladies of B.A.S.I.C.S, never touched anything on the shelf, unless I was purchasing. Once home, I removed any original packing, disposed of everything else, repacked in zip-lock bags and washed my hands in between.



So I was well equipped for this war. And indeed we were at war, with a virus we couldn't see or hear; we just knew it was lurking around; but we were ready. Each day, the children went through a drill - a mini Say it Loud discussion about Covid-19, and how they can protect themselves and families. So now the troops were ready to go out and educate their families. **But then the unthinkable, happened... I got the Virus!**



I carried this practice to work, and ensured everyone adhered to the new rules, the new normal. The children were not exempted from this new practice, and hand washing stations were placed at 10 spots around the B.A.S.I.C.S compound. Kitchen staff were split up, to ensure we always have a cook at all times. Staff had to clean down tables, chairs with alcohol, bleach, etc. Water was mixed with bleach to ensure we can get any germs off your hands. I recall one staff member saying “ Madam I don't think we should use bleach; and I replied “ I am a bleach baby, and I am still alive.



I started not feeling well, mild cold symptoms, which obviously is strange as I live in a hot climate. But then the body pains came; so I thought “ Oh I have Malaria! I tried to go to the pharmacy to get some drugs, as I often do without a prescription, but was told I needed a prescription from the doctor. Times have really changed. The days were over when I could walk in the pharmacy, and say “ give me cipro, chloroquine, etc! (feeling like a doctor in my own right)

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER



So, I decided to call a doctor (a real doctor) a friend, and went down the list of my ailments, and he suggested; I get tested for Covid. Immediately after taking the test; my mind started racing that I got it at work, and that means the staff and children might also have it. Although I was still waiting for my results, I decided to test my entire staff and some children. The next day, I learned I was positive, but the following day, the other results came back from the staff/ students and they were all negative. Everyone was ordered to self quarantine for 2 weeks; just in case- but thankfully nobody showed any signs of sickness.

On my 22nd day of quarantine, and receiving medical treatment at home for Covid related issues, I broke my silence. I decided to tell my story to everyone on social media, what it was like to have the virus, the pains, the myths, the effects, and how much it cost to get treatment at home. I wasn't sure what the outcome would be as Ghana was witnessing so many cases of stigmatization, and anyone with Covid seemed to be in hiding. After telling my story, many people called me to thank me for being bold and honest, but others had questions; if their symptoms sounded like they had the virus (I felt like I was a doctor again) and with each question I simply said “ get tested!. If you didn't catch my story, you can find it on Instagram [@basicsinternational](#) page.

During this time; everything stopped at B.A.S.I.C.S. The doors closed, the gates closed, and there were no children coming or going. In the 20 years, we never had to turn the children away, but this time was for their own good; we thought. Food deliveries stopped, meals stopped and distant learning stopped.

On 22nd June, I learned I was **Covid negative** , and I was free to come out. Not quite strong enough, but it was time to open the gates of B.A.S.I.C.S again. We invited children to come to the center to pick up packages of food items, and to just see their faces. There were some missing faces, and their whereabouts were unknown to their friends. Times like this makes me reminisce of why we committed to be available and accessible 365 days a year; as our work has been essential for a long time. Unfortunately, we will see some pregnancies when this is all over, as well as school drop out. Children in communities like this, need guidance, and support, and often are forced to make decisions as part of their daily survival. It just means we have more work to do.

I am left with the aftermath of healing; getting my body back to feel 100%, exercising, breathing well, eating well, keeping my immune system strong, fighting the fear of getting it again, removing the thoughts of how I got it the first time, and of course protecting everyone else. All of these are personal burdens I am dealing with and the psychological effects of Covid. But then after all of that, I am still the Executive Director of B.A.S.I.C.S, and had to deal with laying off the staff, some after serving B.A.S.I.C.S for 5 years. Due to Covid, we have experienced a decline in donations, especially corporate donations that we receive every month. This surely has affected our programs. We lost some of corporate sponsorship, or donations decreased- due to Covid ; so after 3 months of retaining staff; we had to make the painful decision to let them go, as we weather this storm.

We will continue to serve the community and children, and plan ahead; but rely on volunteers, and our older children (university students) to keep things going. We will continue with outreach, providing food, essentials, etc to the children- and provide programs, through volunteers like Chess, Flute, Dance, and academic enrichment opportunities.

We hope that you stay with us, and continue to support- this is when we need you the most.

Consider supporting either our **food bank program**, or 2021 summer camp program (we would like to take 60 kids to camp this July and August) -- or help us construct Ghana's first- ever **Sleep away Fresh Air Sleep away Camp-** (opening 2021), we need your help?

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

Committed to NO CHILD left behind

The reality in Chorkor...

Over the past few months in the face of Covid-19 pandemic, B.A.S.I.C.S has been very committed to NO Child is left behind. Schools and businesses were forced to close in order to stop the spread of the virus. Most parents were forced out of their jobs to sit at home with their children, surviving on the little savings they had. In communities such as Chorkor where most children are left unsupervised, many unspeakable things happen in times like this. Most children are forced into criminal activities, child labour, sexual abuse and prostitution, which leads to school drop out.

The double track / shift system in Chorkor

As an organization invested in the welfare of this community, B.A.S.I.C.S had to intervene using a new system of allowing children into the center, "a Safe Space". We launched a new shift system aimed at providing children with space for learning, access to toilet facilities, nutritious meals and clean drinking water.



This new program is to make sure we are not only ensuring children are staying on top of their academics, but ensuring their safety as well as providing some form of financial support to their families. Each group is assigned to a specific sitting area, seats are 6 feet from each other. Children wear their nose masks at all times and washing of hands is a mandatory requirement. There is little or no contact between children and facilitators.



To ensure observance of social distancing protocol, children in the lower grade arrive in the morning for breakfast, e-learning, lunch and close for the day. Upper graders including Senior High Students and post Senior high schoolers also arrive at noon, have lunch, e-learning and snacks before they close for the day.



Chorkor E-learning program using Tablets

In our commitment to NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND, we reached out to people for assistance, to help create a digital learning program for children in Chorkor. Today, every child in our program has a tablet assigned to them.



With these tablets and access to the internet, they are able to continue to learn while schools are closed. Learning programs installed on tablets are tailored to the needs of each class group. Facilitators assigned to each group assist children to navigate the different resources and learning materials on their tablets.

There is little or no contact with children, this is to ensure the safety of everyone. Tablets are wiped /disinfected and stored for use each day by our IT personnel. This E-learning program is our best hope of keeping children engaged and prepared for when schools reopen.

OUR CHILDREN ARE SPEAKING AGAINST VIOLENCE



Keep the PROMISE alive



Children are the future of this world
 Their smiles today give us strength for tomorrow
 They are like flowers, unique in their own way
 Violence today robs them of a better tomorrow
 Let us fight for a better tomorrow void of discrimination
 Let us fight to keep our PROMISE alive
 Together we STAND for PEACE and FAIRNESS
 #solidarity #istandwithyou #blacklivesmatters

Birthday With a Purpose.

Birthdays are a time to celebrate with friends and family —but they're also the perfect time to serve a community. On Sunday, 28th June through the generosity of FOOD for ALL, a non profit organization in Ghana, 150 children and 50 senior citizens were treated to a dinner to celebrate the 30th birthday of Edmond Jacob Hoffman.



Guests were given hot meal packs and seniors were sent home with an additional food box. At the end of the day Hoffman had a conversation with our Aunty Pat and said “ I am so thankful for the reception, I feel so humbled today. Thanks for helping me find the true meaning of my existence”



Hoffman, was joined by friends from church, who came to serve the food, and clean up when everything was over.

They greeted each person , as they entered, engaged with the children and seniors, and asked the elders for advice; which they easily obliged. Hoffman said the advice that stood out the most was “ **Love for all Hatred for none, EVEN when you have the right to hate, still demonstrate LOVE**”

Consider spending your birthday with us, and receive the biggest gift ever - gratitude.

Our FIGHT continues

It's impossible to ignore that diet, has a lot to do with your immune system, and your immune system has a lot to do with Covid 19. After taking a 5 weeks break, due to a possible outbreak of Covid at B.A.S.I.C.S. (see founders story) and loss of funding , B.A.S.I.C.S resumed its food package deliveries.

During the lockdown, we implemented a weekly food package for children and seniors, but on May 21st, things were stopped, when our founder learned she was positive for Covid. On June 17th, 50 seniors received home deliveries of rice, cooking oil ,sardines and clean drinking water. Items were donated anonymously but had a desire to help Chorkor fight hunger, and build immune systems.



Our FIGHT continues

The children were not left out, and received food packages for the week, which contained breakfast, and lunch items including bags of clean drinking water. The following week we served hot chicken soup, and distributed food packages to all. Would you like to make an in-kind donation today?

We are in need of rice, oil, tomatoes paste, sardines, tuna, breakfast food, eggs, and drinking water. Lets fight Covid, and build up the immune system of the most vulnerable.

Call 0277 512671 today /
or email admin@basicsinternational.org



B.A.S.I.C.S YOUTH AMBASSADORS; WE ARE HERE TO SERVE

Renaissance Middle School 192 is the home of many powerful alumni including Patricia Wilkins (the founder of B.A.S.I.C.S). At the time she went to the school its name was JHS 192. Although presently a Title I school, the basic principle of **Title I** is that **schools** with large concentrations of low-income students will receive supplemental funds to assist in meeting student's educational goals. However when you walk through the doors of RMS192, you meet children eager to learn and striving to excel. One of the highlights of 192Q are the student run clubs including the Nursing Club, Student Government and Basics Youth Ambassadors (BYA).

BYA is a club founded by Vivian Rodgers-Hill (former Assistant Principal and current board member of B.A.S.I.C.S). She wanted students to maintain their connection to a successful alumni of 192; Patricia Wilkins aka "Auntie Pat Class of 1979, a woman who looked like them, who identified with their plight and showed role model status. Mrs. Rodgers-Hill also wanted to provide and sustain a presence and a connection between B.A.S.I.C.S International in New York and B.A.S.I.C.S International in Ghana. Every student whether in Ghana or New York participates in service projects and leadership skill building. The BYA is celebrating its 10th year at Renaissance Linden Middle School 192 (renamed again).

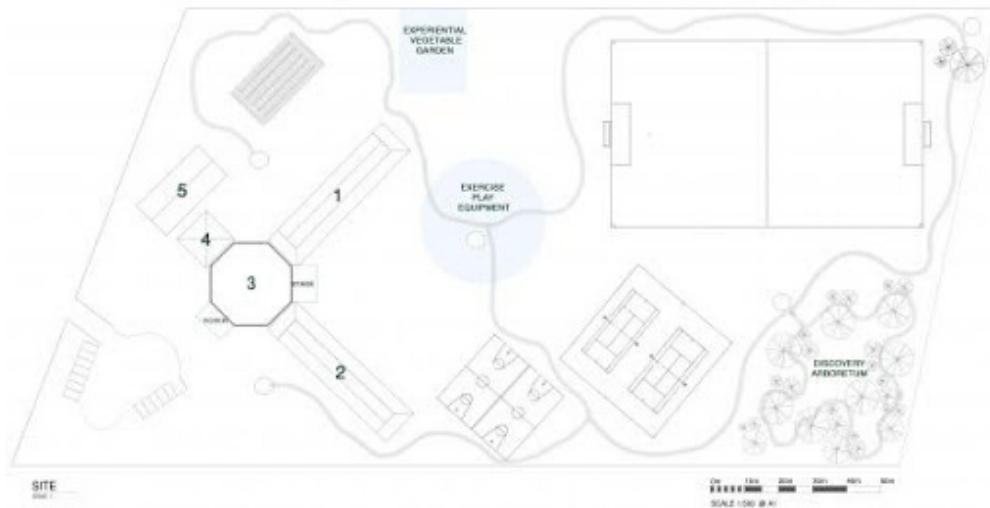
In April we made an inquiry to Ms. Harriet Diaz, Principal of 192 whether she knew how our club members of Basics Youth Ambassadors(BYA) were doing during the pandemic?

We found that at least 20 students were still without tablets for learning and studying. What a great way to exchange services and fill a need. A couple of weeks later with mask and gloves the Principal, Ms. Harriet Diaz picked up the Tablets and covers and delivered them to students. Students later zoomed in using their tablets to say thank you and to show off their beautiful thank you letters.... What a Joy to be of Service....We all have Something to Offer Our World.

Are you in NYC, considering volunteering with BYA, contact us at volunteer@basicsinternational.org



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 in 2021, BASICS International will open Ghana's first ever Fresh Air Sleep Away Camp. CAMP PROMISE a fresh-air sleep-away camp situated on 8 acres of land that opens up a new world for urban youth. During long school breaks and holidays, it will become their home away from home.

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

CAMP PROMISE will empower youth to develop their individual potential. Children will come together to create memories that will last a lifetime. Every holiday at CAMP PROMISE 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 Promise is in need of your help to ensure we complete construction, implementation and OPEN our grounds for the children by 2021. (Our original date was August 2020, however due to Covid 19, our major fundraiser was cancelled;) which halted the process. Although, CAMP PROMISE is not ready yet, we would like to give our children an experience of leaving the city during these current times of Covid 19. The pandemic has schools shut down and students are being restricted, deprived, and tempted to engage in activities that will hinder their progress.

Consider sponsoring a student to attend a week long- camping project; (at an adjacent site while our camp site is completed.) Students will also visit our camp site and participate in gardening projects, and other outdoor activities. Be a part of the PROMISE .. make a generous donation today. Have a hall/dorm/play area named in honor of you or a loved one. Sponsor a student to attend camp- this July/ August 2020 for \$500.00 /per child (Lodging, food, excursions). Please contribute towards the construction of Camp Promise. Our goal is to raise \$500,000 to complete the camp, and OPEN the doors by 2021.

Camp PROMISE 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. The experience will continue, with excursions to Shai Hill Game , Akosombo Dam, Aburi Botanical Gardens, Water Falls, and of course Mount Afadja, the highest mountain in Ghana.



HELP OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

For 20 years BASICS International has been working in Chorkor; a fishing village and a neighbourhood in Accra, the capital of Ghana. Chorkor is a densely populated community. Due to its over-population, social distancing is IMPOSSIBLE. Children have no space for themselves, or learning.

Many households average 20 x 20 feet, hosting 10 or more people. We are providing sanitation and food for the community of Chorkor, and closing the gap in our children's education whilst their schools are closed. We are in need of help from our international community at this time. Any amount is helpful, please consider donating today.

Consider making a donation

Ways to donate

Momo: 0591 651 000

PayPal : <http://www.paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1347773>

Zelle: admin@basicsinternational.org

Cashapp: \$basicsint (718-454-1273)

**Shop at Amazon and choose
BASICS International (Queens NY)
as your CHARITY**

Make a general donation

Donate via Momo: 0591 651 000

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

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

Zelle: 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.
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(+233) (0) 277 512671

Contact details: USA

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St Albans, New York 11412
Ph: (718) 454 1273
Visit our satellite office at: (by appt only)
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