

November, 2015

Dear Friend:

The holiday season is upon us once again. Like many of you, we at Yo Ghana! are reflecting over the past year and thinking hard about making a difference in the coming one. Far too many people suffer from cultural misunderstanding, and we are hoping you can help us to "light a few candles" in a few corners of the globe by making a small donation.

First, an introduction. Yo Ghana! is one of the best, innovative, efficient, up-and-coming Oregon not-for-profit organizations you are yet to get to know. Approved as a 501(c)3 charity by the IRS in Portland, Oregon in 2013, Yo Ghana! unites students from the Pacific Northwest and Ghana in West Africa through the art of letter exchanges. Our program opens students' eyes to a culture unlike their own, transforming lives in and out of the classroom. Spearheaded by professional educators and administrators ably supported by passionate community volunteers, Yo Ghana!'s unique program enables educators to be inventive and inspirational. Designed for students of primary to high (secondary) school age, we enhance lesson plans, enrich classrooms, and foster new friendships between distinct cultures—and more.

Two months ago Yo Ghana! presented certificates of appreciation to eighteen people in Nima, one of Accra, Ghana's largest slums. Parents who labor all day long for a couple of dollars had donated some \$300 worth of goods and services—from onions to fish to music lessons—to Anani School, a high-performing local elementary school. In return, Yo Ghana! awarded the school a grant to help families pay its annual fees of about \$100. The certificates were a big hit. Madam Samira Makaila "put it in a picture frame and hung it in my room, so that I can see it every morning and tell myself to contribute more because my name is in America."



Presentation at Anani School

Yo Ghana! has also brought the names of Anani School's children to America. We link some 2,000 students and thirty-six schools in West Africa and the Pacific Northwest who send each other letters, art work, and encouragement, transformational exchanges that dissolve stereotypes of starving, pitiful Africans and rich, arrogant Americans. Yo Ghana! "gives people a voice who don't otherwise have one," asserts Head Teacher Delaney Sharp of Black Butte School, near Sisters, Oregon. Headmaster Nipaba Brew of Sampa says that the letters "bring inspiration for everyone involved." "We learned that we are not less than them," remark students at Savelegu Senior High School in the Northern Region of Ghana.

In 2015 Yo Ghana!: facilitated letter exchanges between some 2,000 students; traveled to every one of our far-flung schools in Ghana; awarded grants to ten school-initiated projects in Ghana, from helping to pay the fees of children from poor families to helping to finish kindergarten classrooms that reduced the average class size from ninety to fifty.

In 2016 we plan to: match last year's letter exchanges and school visits; expand our grant program to include more of our Ghana schools; host a conference at the University of Education, Winneba, for at least 100 of our Ghana coordinators, teachers, and students to share their success stories.

We are budgeting \$20,000 for 2016. We would need much more if not for the dedication of our teachers, administrators, and volunteers. Board members and volunteers last year spent about \$8,000 of their own money visiting schools in Ghana and the Pacific Northwest. Educators already stretched thin add Yo Ghana! to their heavy workloads.

So your tax-deductible donation to Yo Ghana! will stretch a very long way to:

- 1) Help thousands of students learn about and from each other.
- 2) Assist Ghana schools already doing a lot with a little to do even more.

Those of you who donate \$100 a year or more will be recognized in our annual report and will receive hard copies of our quarterly newsletter. But any amount is very welcome as well as tax deductible, and contact us if you would like to purchase Yo Ghana! t-shirts, bracelets, stickers, pens, or pencils as holiday gifts.

Mail a check made out to Yo Ghana! to c/o 4920 NE 35<sup>th</sup> Place, Portland OR 97211 or click [here](#), on the Paypal button on our website.

Thank you for considering us,

*David and Komi*

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St. Kizito School's New Classrooms