



Newsletter

May 2017



220 People Pack IRCO for Our 2017 Annual Celebration

Great food, music, and people made our Third Annual Yo Ghana! Celebration a big success. We are particularly grateful to Madam Victorine Todo and her crew for the delicious West African food and to Nii Ardey Allotay & Ekome for the pulsing music that, as you can see, made a lot of people get up and dance. Agbey Gedza again took wonderful photographs, the students of Reynolds High School came early and stayed late to set up and clean up, Carrie Kanelis and Wendy del Mar did it all, and Portland State University students Emily Lundberg, Jocelyn Reynolds, and Jullian Schrup encouraged our young presenters.

Our Event Sponsors this year were: Matthew S. Essieh and Family Foundation; Dr. Kofi Agorsah; Stephanie and Mike Badnin; Wendy del Mar; Lilly Glass Akoto; Portland International Church; and Thompson & Bogran, PC.

Second Annual Winneba Conference Set for July 1-2

Yo Ghana! Vice President Dr. Eric Ananga and our Internal Coordinator, Miss Berthy Kpiebaya, are hard at work on our conference, which will feature many more schools



and staff than last year. Collaborators include the IDP Rising Schools Program and TECHAiDE, an organization founded by a Ghanaian that is devoted to improving access to technology access Africa.

The conference will also provide an opportunity for school coordinators to discuss how to improve our programs and for us to recognize our top letters writers. We expect about 150 attendees from over 30 schools.

Yo Ghana! Star Awardees for 2017



Ibrahim Ibrahim started our photography and identity project at Reynolds High School and excels at recognizing and nurturing young leaders.

Gilbert Nipaba Brew is the founder and proprietor of Nipaba Brew School in Sampa. In a nation known for hospitality, he is without equal. His school does an outstanding job of teaching literacy at a young age, and more than 150 of his students are writing fine letters. He has helped several other Sampa-area schools work with us and was one of the stars of our Sharing Our Stories Conference last year in Winneba.



Noah Christopher Kurzenhauser started and directs our Skype program as well as coordinating letters and our social media.

Kamkam Mensah Felix of L & A Academy has probably sent more Yo Ghana! letters than anyone. He has been at it for nearly six years now. He sleeps at his school when he sleeps at all, and this year has stayed after school with dedicated students to participate in our very first Skype program, a pilot project that has gone very well thanks in large part to his dedication!



Debra Tavares, of Reynolds H.S., excels at helping students find their voice. She works more closely with Yo Ghana! than any teacher ever has and collaborates with our first university class.



Abdulai Joseph of ECG Tamale is shown here behind Dominic Fordwour, whose children attend his school, and Karen Lafere, who will soon be volunteering there. Joseph works tirelessly to help other schools in the Northern Region to exchange letters.

Pictures at a Celebration



Some 220 people attended.



Lisa Amani of Reynolds H. S. contrasted life in the U.S. and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where she was born: "We have more than enough to eat, but we often eat alone."



Celine Glavan, The Madeleine School, was a poised reader.



One of the event's most emotional points came when Huong Kim Thi Nguyen of St. Andrew Nativity School read her life story of her grandmother's remarkable life—and was joined by her.



Board member Harriette Vimegnon and celebration sponsor Lilly Glass Akoto.



Event sponsor Portland International Church was well represented!

Other News

Dr. Eric Ananga's Work on Improving Education in Ghana

Yo Ghana! Vice President Dr. Eric Ananga is engaged with two massive educational initiatives. The Transformation of Teaching and Learning project is a federal program “to transform teacher education and learning.” Eric has been supporting the key advisor on Institutional Reform by coordinating the technical team that wrote the national teacher education curriculum framework. He worked extensively on one of the four curriculum pillars (pedagogy) as well as on one of the cross-cutting issues: integrating equity and inclusivity. Dr. Ananga has also coordinated the writing of Ghana’s fifteen-year National Education Strategic Plan—2015 to 2030.



We are delighted that a national leader in educational reform is such a big part of the Yo Ghana! family. Eric is “really grateful to God and all the people I have met . . . for the opportunity to do something in the lives of children.”

Dorcas Mensah at 2017 SKOLL World Forum

Yo Ghana! Board Member Dorcas Mensah spoke in April at the SKOLL World Forum on Social Entrepreneurship at Oxford University on the “Kindness of Strangers.” She explored how people of privilege might approach deep inequalities and prejudices, not only binaries of black and white, rich and poor, male and female, but labels such as “refugee” and “migrant.” “What label have you given someone,” she asks, “that has deprived them of your kindness, your empathy, and your love?” Go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i7bRNEgLIIno>.



Dorcas is currently finishing her graduate degree in African Development at the University of Edinburgh by doing research in Kenya, and she is reviewing our grant program.

Yo Ghana! facilitates letter and other exchanges between schools in Ghana and the Pacific Northwest and offers modest grants to projects initiated by Ghana Schools.

Yo Ghana! is a 501(c)3 public charity recognized by the IRS.
Your contributions are tax deductible.

c/o 4920 NE 35th Place Portland, OR 97211 U.S.A.
503 347-6196 yoghana.org@gmail.com
<http://www.yoghana.org/> <https://www.facebook.com/yoghanaorganization/>