

ghana rural integrated development GRID newsletter

April 10, 2008

Dear GRID Support Team:

April is already here and it is time to get in touch with all of you who support us in many ways. Tempus fugit! Time does seem to fly for those of us who are older and for many who are younger. We become involved in so many things. Isn't it exciting to be involved with the extension of God's Kingdom here on earth, in both spiritual and physical ways. Thank you for your help. Again, thinking about "how time flies", I wonder, would it seem to go so fast for us if we lived in Northern Ghana? Would it seem to go fast if we were a young girl who could not go to school because of lack of funds and each day would be spent working out in the fields? Would the days seem to go fast if we were hungry from lack of food? How about if we were old and sick and needed medication or a doctor or needed to be hospitalized-all of which in many cases are not available? What if we were a young expectant mother with serious complications in a place where there was no help? I'm sure you will agree that many people in our world, because of their grim circumstances, do not feel that "time flies".

I would encourage our supporters to continue to work with us to help to change the lives of many of these people. You already have had a part in bringing hope to many and we continually work with our program for wells and clean water, with our Agricultural and Aquaculture programs, the ongoing building of churches, clinics and schools and much more.

I was speaking with Brenda not too long ago, and she was updating me about our scholarship program. In 2003 six students were sponsored and the numbers have steadily risen. In 2007, twenty-four students were able to take advantage of the acceptance they had gained to various programs as follows: Senior High - 10,

University - 7; Community Health - 3; Polytechnic - 2; Nursing - 1, Apprentice program - 1, There are an equal number of boys and girls. Another aspect of our scholarship program is that many of the sponsored students applied for summer jobs with our sister Board in Ghana. In 2007, three of the students that were previously assisted through school and university requested that the government allow them to complete their 1 year "National Service" program with NEA. These are the next generation of leaders who have captured the vision of sustainable development for Northern Ghana and are making their contributions already.

She told me "Rita's story". Rita Doni is a young woman from Tesselima. One day she came to the Carpenter project with her parents (subsistence farmers) to say that she had been accepted into a Business Administration program at the Methodist University of Ghana. Brenda said that she was the only girl they knew of from that village that had ever qualified for a university program. Rita had \$100.00 in her hand that she had earned from cropping an acre of beans. She asked if NEA would be willing to help financially so she could take advantage of this opportunity. Today, as a graduate, she personally requested that the Ghanaian Government allow her to complete her year of National Service at our project site in Carpenter. She now assists our Project Manager, Noah, in the Accounts Department and it is hoped that when Rita completes the year of National Service, she will stay on as a full-time staff member. We are pleased with what she has accomplished and Rita serves as an example to other young girls in the area so that they will not lose hope but look at possibilities that may be available to them as well.

Some of you have asked how our involvement with the Body Shop works. Several years ago, The Body Shop requested that NEA coordinate with rural women's groups to procure the shea butter which is used in their products. This work is facilitated through our Tamale office. In 2007, 11 women's groups, with a total of 448 members, processed 252,000 metric tonnes of shea butter for this purpose. The Body Shop pays more per kilo than world market prices. Through this enterprise the women earned about \$550,000.

In keeping with the Fair Trade policies of the Body Shop, an additional \$240,000 was put back in their communities in development projects such as schools, clinics, wells and more. It means so much to the women as they can make sure their children are sent to school. Also, the women are held in high esteem for the good they bring, not just to themselves, but to ALL in these 11 villages. The Body Shop pays NEA for the

coordination work, as well as transporting the shea butter to the port. This is one of the ways in which NEA is earning income to support other development projects. It is a matter of thankfulness to God on our part as this kind of help leads to self-sustainability.

Health Training Sessions have been held which included HIV/AIDS awareness. 18 people participated.

Something new! Last September a new dimension was added to the work as six pigs were brought in to start a piggery. Pork is a favored meat by one of the tribes but in the villages they are not well kept. They are allowed to roam freely which contaminates water sources and spreads disease. It was important to set up a model piggery, making sure that the pigs get adequate vet care and are enclosed. It will be a teaching point for the local pig farmers and a visible example that well kept pigs improve the quality of health and provide a higher income. At this point in time our pigs have increased to 28 in number so it seems as if we are off to a good start.

March 6th - 8th was a busy but fruitful time for Rev. Murray Stovell who works with our mission to update and promote the work, especially in the Ontario area and Western Canada. It was a "first time" for GRID to be represented in the Toronto Missionfest. This is a time where 4 or 5 hundred missions each have a display location. Murray and his wife Karin, with some Saturday help from our Board Treasurer, Jacques LaPointe, had opportunity to explain the work of GRID/NEA and have a follow up list for the future. The dates were the same as "the BIG SNOW", however, those that were able to attend seemed very serious and interested.

Rev. Jonathan Steeper, Senior Pastor at Highfield Baptist Church in Moncton, NB is now at our Carpenter site working with Director David, giving leadership and training to Pastors and Lay Pastors. Please be in prayer for Jonathan's health and safe travel as he helps to disciple these leaders and renew their spirits as they go back to their various village groups and churches.

When my husband and I were married, one of our wedding gifts was a wooden plaque which said "Little is much when God is in it"! I think about it now because some time ago a couple from the Toronto area felt God had a mission for them to carry out. They felt led to build a Junior High School for the many, many children who live in and around the village of Carpenter. They give much of their time and effort to this-getting others

together to help them. One of the things they did was to present a Benefit Show. The Lord blessed the gifts of their time, effort and finances and what started small, mushroomed. To date, over \$17,500.00 is ready to be used in the building of this school - any surplus will be used for school supplies. On May 3rd a team of 10 (everyone paying their own way) will leave from Toronto to begin the work on the school. They will return on June 22nd. Please pray for them.

Prayer changes things.

- ❖ I would ask you to pray for our Grid Chairman, Doug who has been working under difficulty, with a shoulder injury sustained from a fall the day before Christmas.
- ❖ Pray for our Board Members and workers, in Ghana and in Canada and the US.
- ❖ Please pray especially for good health for Brenda's parents.
- ❖ Remember the Mensah's three daughters, all in university in Canada and the US, and doing very well.
- ❖ A lady by the name of Marney Curran once wrote a song for David and Brenda called "Faithful Servant" - a fitting title. Please pray for Director David and Brenda as they continue year after year demonstrating the care and love of God for the people of Northern Ghana.

With Elizabeth's permission, I want to close with this story.

Of the three Mensah girls, Elizabeth tends to be a "worrier"-something she has struggled with from a very early age. Her mother, to help her, found a small picture of a sparrow. She put Matthew 10:29-31 on the back of the picture. "Aren't two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet, not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all numbered. So, don't be afraid, you are worth more than many sparrows." Her mother told her to keep it with her to remind her when she is worried or afraid, of just how special she is to the Lord. When Elizabeth would phone with a particular worry, her mother would remind her of 'sparrow'. Just recently, Elizabeth had a problem with some advanced economics course-she didn't do well in it. It threw her into a tailspin-she thought she might lose her scholarship or worse and worry

loomed large, as it is prone to do. She kept working away at it and was due to write the second mid-term on a Monday morning which had her in a real stew. The day before, a good friend of the Mensahs was in Washington on business and arranged to go to church with her and then go out for lunch. After lunch, Elizabeth drove the friend back to the hotel. She asked Elizabeth to wait a minute as she wanted her to meet a work colleague. While Elizabeth was waiting outside of the hotel a little sparrow landed right at her feet and then started to hop all around her. Elizabeth immediately thought "I wonder how Mom and Dad are doing?" The little sparrow hopped over to her car, went behind it and under the bumper. For some reason, Elizabeth followed. She bent down and looked under the bumper. The little sparrow was standing right beside her university card (the one that allows her into the buildings, libraries, etc. that she needs for exams, et.) The sparrow looked up at her again and then flew away. She had no idea how the card got there-she certainly didn't know she had lost it. When her parents heard the story they were thrilled that God did this special thing for her, to remind her again, that His eye was upon her. She passed the exam, but more important than that, she gathered a very special treasure from the One who watches even the sparrows.

Again, on behalf of Chairman Doug and our Boards, I want to thank all, who help in any way. I have always liked the story of the widow's mite. Mark 12:41-44. Many give from the abundance that God has blessed them with and we truly appreciate those gifts. We are often blessed by pennies from young children's piggy banks (the widow's mite). Whatever our circumstance, together, we can make a caring imprint upon a very needy world for our Lord.

Ella J. Porter

GRID Public Relations.

"He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" – Romans 8:32

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