



Back to School

by David and Brenda Mensah

It has been a pleasure for us to spend several months in North America this year, reconnecting with many of you and sharing some of our stories of hope.

As our summer draws to an end, everywhere we see signs that it is "back-to-school" time. And so we should celebrate this time, as education is a valuable -- even essential -- part of any young person's life.

Sadly, in Northern Ghana not every child is able to attend school. For the very poor, school fees and uniform costs are barriers to children's access to

education. Girls are most often the ones who lose out, as they can be kept at home to fetch water, find firewood, or perform other household chores.

For those who are able to attend school, sometimes their school building is unsuitable for learning. They may even encounter teachers who, struggling to make ends meet, use the students for labour on farms.

GRID and NEA believe that education is crucial to long-term, sustainable development. The next generation must be equipped to meet the challenges of the future. We therefore integrate education into our programs in several ways.

First, with the help of generous donors, we construct simple school buildings where learning can take place.

Second, we provide scholarships for young people to attend either secondary or post-secondary education. Frequently these young scholars return to us,



contributing some form of service back to our work.

And finally, we extend practical, hands-on training and education to women and men as part of our ongoing programs. We try to equip these people to manage and expand activities well into the future.

In this newsletter, our desire is to show you the breadth of education's impact in our programming. Thank you for your continued support of these important activities. You are making a difference for the next generation of Ghanaians.

GRID (Ghana Rural Integrated Development) and NEA (Northern Empowerment Association) are partner organizations working to alleviate poverty in Northern Ghana. Motivated by Christ's love, our mission is to assist poor communities to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner. You can learn more at grid-nea.org.

2012–2013 NEA Scholars

With your help, NEA has been able to provide scholarships for young people from very poor families. Scholarships range from \$500 to \$2000 for a year, depending on program costs.

In the upcoming academic year, we will be able to help 23 girls and 33 boys pursue their academic goals. We are delighted to see these young people entering a range of programs:

- 18 boys and 11 girls will attend secondary school;
- 3 boys and 2 girls will attend polytechnic school;
- 12 boys and 10 girls will attend university in programs such as medicine, dentistry, nursing, education, business, development, journalism, and mathematics.

Thank you for your support, which has enabled us to provide this type of assistance to young people.



Timothy, Julie, and Kwame are all attending secondary school this year, thanks to scholarships they have received from NEA.

Changing Women's Lives

Many of you are already aware that our women's co-op program is usually NEA's entry point into a new community. We identify the very poorest women in a community (often widows) and equip them with seeds and training to start a peanut farm. Each woman spends three years receiving active support through a co-op group with a leader. Partway through the program she receives a goat and training in small animal husbandry.

At the end of three years she graduates from the program and pays back the seeds she was given at the start. She also gives the first female kid from her goat to another woman.

She is now a self-sufficient farmer, and is very often considering other supplemental businesses that she can set up.

We are happy to share with you the news that, thanks to your continued support, NEA has now reached all of the very poorest women in 50 villages in our project area, and has returned to 28 villages to extend the program to every woman living there. One day we hope to be able to give you the news that every single woman in the project area has had the opportunity to become self-sufficient.

One of the things that makes this program special is that the training that we invest in these women changes their lives dramatically. Many of them will not

have had formal education, and their self-esteem blossoms as they participate in regular training. Some of these women have become leaders of their co-op groups, training others to become self-sufficient. It is a joy to watch them regain their dignity and to realize that they have an important contribution to make to their families and communities.

One of NEA's former scholarship recipients, Hannah, is coordinating this important program for NEA. Hannah pursued a degree in international development, and has returned to NEA to equip other women in the project area. What a wonderful way to see this gift used!



Hannah (kneeling) is a former NEA scholarship recipient who works closely with the women's co-op leaders pictured here.

Our Growing Aquaculture Program

Several years ago NEA started an aquaculture program, despite cautions that fish farming was impossible in Northern Ghana. By God's grace, this program has been successful, and is increasing protein in people's diets.

We have been blessed with skilled personnel in this program. We are especially thrilled this year that one of NEA's very own scholarship recipients, Soale Gbedease, has returned to Carpenter and has assumed management of this important program. Soale graduated with a B.Sc. in Nutrition and has completed training as an Aquaculture Technician. We're proud of his accomplishments, and pleased to have him join our team.



NEA operates a fish hatchery at the Carpenter project centre. This hatchery supplies fish for NEA's commercial fish operation, as well as for community fish ponds in the area.



In large tanks on the project site, NEA raises fish to sell. Most buyers for these fish are located in wealthier communities further south. Income earned from this venture is put back into NEA's development activities in the project area. NEA also uses the water from the tanks to irrigate and fertilize gardens planted nearby.



Seven communities in the project area have fish ponds. We have given them stock fish from NEA's hatchery, and provided them with training in fish pond management. Harvest day, pictured at left, is exciting as they bring in about 9,000 lbs. of fish. They can harvest a pond about three times each year.

Our dream is to one day have a fish pond for each village in the project area -- a total of 50 ponds providing families with a sustainable source of good food.

A Note from Brenda

This fall David and I saw our youngest daughter start medical school. It seems that we have spent many years as parents concerned and praying about our children's education, and it is a blessing to watch them pursue their academic dreams.

Like us, the parents in our project communities are really concerned about their children's education. In fact, education is one of their top priorities when they are asked to list the needs that they have. It is so sad that many of these parents have been heartbroken to realize that they cannot afford to send all of their children to school.

I can't imagine how distressed I would be to know that we couldn't send one or more of our children to school. That's why it gives me such joy to meet the young people who are helped with scholarships. I know that because of these scholarships, more parents are able to see their children in school.

I also love hearing from women who, thanks to their peanut farms, are able to proudly tell me that this year, they can afford to send all of their children to school. Their joy is indescribable.

Thank you, dear friends, for continuing to pray for and give to the work that is happening in Ghana. Your generosity has brought smiles to so many faces -- including my own. May God bless you richly for what you have shared with these brothers and sisters in Northern Ghana.

Brenda Mensah, Program Coordinator

Training Pastors

by David Mensah

We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. (Col. 1:28)

Education in the church ministry has not been left out. Through our holistic ministry many women, men and youth commit their lives to Christ each year. The churches are growing rapidly, which has created an exciting problem. There is the need to disciple these new believers so that they may know Christ properly and the power of his resurrection.

Five women and seventy-three men have been carefully selected and are going through pastoral training so that they in turn can disciple the new believers who come to faith each year. These pastors are "tentmakers;" they have their own farms but are eager to learn from the Word of God how to help new believers both physically and spiritually.

In April this year, these pastors participated in a study entitled *The Characteristics of Good and Bad Shepherds*. They also participate in training in how to set up small businesses, such as raising small ruminants, pigs and poultry.

These seventy-eight pastors are Christ's link to the communities in which they serve. Pray for them as these studies are ongoing each year.



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