NOV 2018

GRID UPDATE

NEWS FROM NORTHERN GHANA

MISSION STATEMENT

Motivated by Christ's love, our mission is to assist poor communities to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner.

Our mission statement is always there in our newsletters. It's a simple statement. While we may not have it engraved on plaques in our offices, it certainly is engraved on our hearts. We find that each community we stretch our hands out to, challenges us to find new ways to define it.

I came across a family treasure this week, it was my great-grand-father's sermon entitled *"The Open Door and the Untrodden Path"* and was preached on January 6, 1901 – the first Sunday of the 20th century.

In it, he did what I suspect many of us do around this time of year… he looked back and he looked ahead.

As we scan over 2018, we are amazed and thankful for all that has taken place.

- Health professionals equipped for emergency deliveries
- Four new churches established
- Pastors and lay-leaders received additional training
- More students enrolled in higher education
- Wells have been drilled; fish ponds have been dug
- 2,000,000 fish fingerlings supplied to community ponds
- Sanitation facilities, junior high school, adolescent centre, teacher's quarters constructed in various villages
- 200 + villages impacted through members of Northern Ghana Christian Chiefs' Assocation which is committed to *'do justice, love, mercy and walk humbly with God'*

As we weigh these activities against our mission statement, we are encouraged and feel we've kept on track.

On a more personal level, our family has faced several life-threatening health issues in this past year, but always within the close radius of well-equipped, expertly-staffed hospitals. In addition, we have not had to think about how we would pay for the medical care received because of health insurance. These episodes have certainly reminded us of how blessed we are and have spurred us on as we look through what my great-grandfather referred to as *"the open doors of opportunity and responsibility"*, particularly as we prepare for the sod-turning of the Leyaata Hospital in Carpenter.

As the *"untrodden path"* of 2019 unfolds, it is our prayer that God will use GRID, NEA and you, our treasured partners, **to keep on being motivated by Christ's love**, focused on the opportunities before us, and looking for creative ways to have an even greater impact in even more lives.

Dr. David and Brenda Mensah

Thank You!

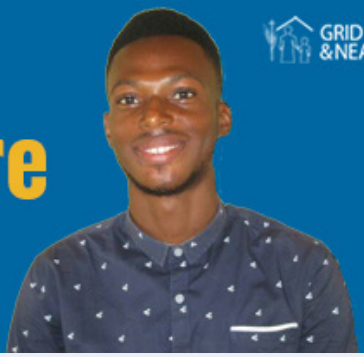
For the last 10 years, you have enabled the health teams to provide quality health care to thousands of people annually. Pictured here with Abraham and Dr. Jennifer is a young high school graduate named Hannah. She was one of the patients seen by the team last year and was diagnosed with fibrous dysplasia of the jaw: a terribly disfiguring illness.

Apart from the severe pain and the difficulty in eating that she suffered, she would have also suffered socially. She would have dreaded going to school or to any public function. Last year she was 'triaged' by nurse Leslie, consulted with Dr. Jo and given a referral letter to the hospital that could provide the surgery needed.

With subsistence farmers earning about $1 a day, you can imagine how she and her family felt when they heard that the cost of the procedure was about $800. BUT, part of the Health Team Budget, which you gave to, has a little line titled "Referrals" - some extra funds on hand for people like Hannah to receive the life-changing treatment that is beyond their reach. This week, Hannah came back to say thanks to the team – and thank you to you, whose generosity made it possible for her. Hannah is our 2018 representative of so many who have received care and come back to express their gratitude, since we don't have enough room to include all their smiling faces.

#5ForTheirFuture

#GIVING TUESDAY



I remember being in a village at Christmas vacation time when a little girl named Felicia came home from school and was anxious to recite her ABC's and tell us all the new words she had learned in English. She was so pleased with her accomplishment. There was what I refer to as the '*spark*' of love for learning in her eyes.

My emotions were mixed. I felt so happy seeing her, and yet so sad, because I'd just been chatting with another student who had shown me his English book. There were eighteen units for the whole year and they had just completed unit two.

How would they catch up? What kind of a chance did students have in these rural schools where they were often pulled out of class to help on the teacher's farms? What kind of a chance would Felicia have?

Together with our daughters, Elizabeth, Deborah and Carole, we organized a blitz of classes throughout the holiday period. It wasn't much, but we gave what we could.

Years passed. Felicia completed primary school, finished Junior High School and gained admission to High School. Her parents couldn't afford to pay for her fees and I can see her face again when she brought the admission slip to us. With a pleading look in those same eyes, she simply said

"Please, give me a chance."

We received a phone call from Felicia in September .....a wonderful phone call. Through the help of a Canadian family, who set up a scholarship in memory of their late father, Felicia was sponsored through secondary school. Her phone call was to tell us that she had passed all her subjects well. Felicia is now preparing for university and hoping to study nursing and be part of the Leyaata Hospital. While we may not know what the full impact will be on Felicia's life, what we do know is that:

- Children of educated mothers are more likely to be vaccinated and less likely to be malnourished.
- One additional year of schooling increases a girl's future earnings by 10-20%.
- Each year that a girl stays in school increases the likelihood that her babies will survive.
- Each year of education reduces the likelihood that a girl will marry as a child.
- If all women in Sub-Saharan Africa completed primary education, maternal mortality would fall by 70%.
- When all of a country's children receive secondary education, the risk of war is cut in half.

This is the inspiration behind our **#5ForTheirFuture** campaign. Together, we can provide a brighter future for girls and boys in Northern Ghana!

Visit ***bit.ly/2pLMGme*** to donate, or you can mail a cheque to GRID and indicate it's for the **#5ForTheirFuture** campaign.

Brenda Mensah (GRID Program Coordinator)

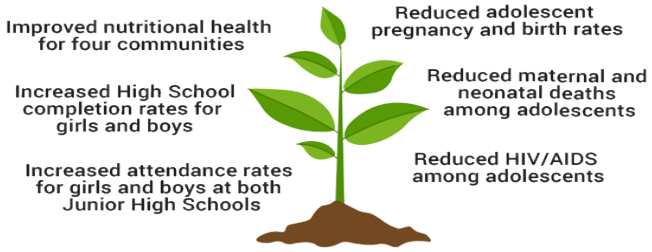
G R O W I N G A F U T U R E

In our March 2018 Newsletter, we mentioned the launch of this project to particularly address the needs of adolescents of the area. Poverty is a root cause of so many of the barriers that adolescents face.

Through the help of our friends from Stronger Together, we have begun "Growing A Future" in four communities.

Two new fish-ponds (dams) were constructed prior to the 2018 rainy season and the amount of water that they collected in their first year was impressive. Fencing of the garden areas, which will allow each adolescent a ¼ acre garden, has also commenced. Training modules are in place for fish-pond management teams *(3 men and 3 women from each community)* and for the adolescents *(15 girls and 15 boys from each community)* on topics such as gardening, marketing and saving.

Once this project is fully operational, we expect:



If our expectations prove correct, we hope to replicate the project in many more towns and villages.

Why We **CARE**, Why We **GIVE**

"We don't need or want anything." This was the statement that the Adams and Curran families said one day as they discussed Christmas gifts. Their children were older and as with many families, finding a Christmas gift was quite an ordeal. Instead of buying things that most likely wouldn't be used by the receiver, they decided to encourage family and friends to donate to their favourite charities. The Currans and Adams chose GRID.

Marney Curran was a classmate of Dr. David Mensah at the Ontario Bible College. She knew the beginnings and mission of GRID and NEA, and that's the reason why their family has supported GRID.

In 2008, Gary and Marney celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. They wanted to commemorate their anniversary in a way that it could benefit others. While watching Oprah Winfrey's show about her building a school in South Africa, Gary blurted ***"We could do that!"***

The Curran family are musically talented. It was no surprise that they put on a musical show, *A Broadway Revue: A Benefit to Ghana* to raise funds for building the school. The project's theme was **Educate the children. Change the future.** Gary, Marney, Trevor and Stefanie (their children) and together with some friends came to Carpenter, Ghana to build the school.

After seeing the holistic and self-sustaining projects and programs that NEA have in Ghana, the Curran family decided to do another Broadway Revue. As advocates of education, the proceeds of the show went towards training Ghanaian healthcare workers.

Ruth and Ron Adams (Marney's parents) were also creative in finding ways to support GRID. Ron was an amazing pianist and following his 75th birthday, he bought a digital piano. A man with a generous heart, he would always ask ***"I wonder who would enjoy this?"*** An idea of creating CDs for the family started which turned out to be a great fundraising avenue for the Adams family in supporting GRID. For the five years that Ron was playing his digital piano, he produced six CDs and raised $10K which was matched by CIDA (Canada International Development Agency).

When Sharon, their daughter passed away last November, they asked family and friends to make a donation to GRID in lieu of flowers.

Ruth is very passionate about the Leyaata Hospital Project. When Dr. David Mensah's sister passed away, she wrote a letter to him to which she received a response that broke her heart. ***"If we had a hospital, my sister wouldn't have died."***

"That's my focus. That hospital needs to be built if it's the last thing I am able to do." Ruth said. During Christmas, instead of giving her friends some little material gift which they might never use, she donates in their names. The response she received was *"What a great idea! Who needs more stuff?"*

As a matter of fact, Ruth has given us a wonderful idea! We will be offering postcards for those who are interested in giving a gift that gives back this Christmas. You can contact Ochelle Baller at 647.408.1631 or email her at oballer@grid-nea.org.

The Currans and Adams are just two of the families who love to give and care for the Ghanaian families and communities. Thank you to all the families who passionately and earnestly provide for our Ghanaian friends' needs!

Broadway dazzle for school project

• PHOTOGRAPHY BY BILL ROBERTS •

The cast performs songs from White Christmas during the School for Carpenter Ghana Benefit Concert at Newmarket Theatre Thursday. The concert raised funds for building supplies for a school to be constructed in June in Carpenter, a village in the West Africa nation of Ghana by Marney and Gary Curran. Call the Currans at 905-895-6057 for more information.

Stefanie Curran performs All That Jazz from the Broadway show Chicago.

Newspaper article from the first Broadway Revue: A Benefit to Ghana.

Ruth Adams, Gary & Marney Curran

Leyaata Hospital Postcard: A gift that gives back!

ACTS OF CREATIVE GIVING

BEANIES SAVING BABIES

Many of our supporters are great knitters and for years have been producing beautiful beanies. These beanies have been saving babies. It encourages mothers to visit the clinic and register so they can be given proper care before, during and after birth.

Ladies at Glad Tidings Church in Burlington (left) and Talbot Creek Community Church in Brechin (right) meet to knit and pray.

THE GIVING GARDEN

The girls of Grandpa's Garden were inspired by Selena's story and wanted to do something for the girls in Ghana. For the remainder of the season, customers were able to get veggies with any amount they would like to donate. They posted Selena's story on their veggie stall and shared GRID's and NEA's work in Ghana to each customer that came to visit them.

Grandpa's Garden facebook post announcing their fundraising initiative of "No Price! Just Donate!"

SURPRISE! IT'S BEEN MATCHED!

When Ochelle left Triovest to join GRID, they gave her a farewell party. But the biggest surprise was the fundraising that the entire office did. On the day of the party, they presented to her the collected monies of over five hundred dollars which the company had matched.

Most companies have an employee matching program. You can talk to your charity committee members or the Human Resources department to find out if your employer has a matching gift program.

Your donation this year can be doubled, tripled or even quadrupled. It means you will be able to help more children, men, women and families meet their needs.

BREAKING PIGGY BANKS

"A dollar can save someone's life." Ladies at Douglas Crossing Retirement Community were inspired by this remark from Ochelle Baller, GRID's Partner Development Lead during an information session in October. Some of the ladies went up to their rooms and came back with their piggy banks and handed it to her. They counted quarters, loonies and toonies. Every dollar and quarter counts!

Ochelle Baller receiving the piggy banks from June Pettigrew and Ann Radley of Douglas Crossing.

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Due to the Canada Post Strike, we ask that you make donations electronically if possible at **grid-nea.org/donate.** Thank you!

GRID & NEA

www.grid-nea.org

GRID CANADA
PO Box 398
Milton, ON L9T 4Y9
T: 289.429.1099
F: 905.878.4597
E: grid@grid-nea.org

GRID USA
3204 Kristen Ct.
Bloomington, IN 47401
T: 812.339.7499
E: kbayless@grid-nea.org

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 communties to meet their basic needs in a sustainable manner.