

FATHER TONY'S
GHANA SCHOOL PROJECT
NEWSLETTER



Volume I, Issue 1

March 17th, 2008

Welcome to the first Fiagbedu Ghana School Project newsletter! I have just returned from an unforgettable 9-day journey in mid-January to Africa (my very first) and would like to share with you some of the highlights and the things I found.

The trip involved 5 Americans (4 from MA and 1 from Iowa) and all but one had never been to Africa. Mr. Russ Wilson, principal of Blessed Sacrament RC elementary school in Walpole, MA, was the leader of the group since he had been to Dzodze in the Lake Volta region twice before. Five years ago, Fr. Tony, an SMA (Society of African Missionaries) had given a talk at Blessed Sacrament where a student asked how he could help and that started a long term relationship between Blessed Sacrament Walpole and Dzodze.

In late 2006, the villagers had only a 60 year old elementary school that was falling apart. They asked Father Tony to help them build a new one. Independently, I asked Fr. Tony if he had any projects with which I could help. His face lit up with a giant smile and that is how he and I got started on the Fiagbedu School. Fiagbedu is one of the 7 villages that comprise the town of Dzodze.

The Friday we left Boston, there were several storms up and down the East Coast; our Delta plane never left the terminal gate. After 2 hours, they told the folks for Ghana to deplane and talk to the gate agent. We were switched to an Alitalia flight and flew to Milan, Italy! We got there at 8am and left at 2pm for Ghana (via a quick stop in Nigeria). Fr. Tony met us with a 10-person van at the Accra, Ghana airport at 10pm on a Saturday night. You can easily guess that we only had the clothes we were carrying (which most of us were wearing!) since our luggage was still on Delta, somewhere! We got to Father Tony's house in Dzodze at 2:30am on Sunday morning, making it nearly 33 hrs to go from Boston (via Italy) to Dzodze.

We got up for the 9:30am Mass and started to see a little of our home for 9 days! The men drove 4 hrs back to the airport on Monday and, fortunately by then, our luggage had arrived. By Monday night we were in the village once again, only this time we had clothes to start school the next morning.

Russ Wilson and gang dropped me off at 8:30am to meet the Mr. Robert, the Fiagbedu headmaster, and the staff and students. It was my introduction to the sorry state of the current school and my first chance to see the next site. Over the next 4 days, I made a lot of new friends with Mr. Robert and the other teachers. He and I visited every classroom on a daily basis to meet with the faculty and the children. I gave them holy cards one day, souvenirs of America (each got a Lincoln penny), and prizes later in the week after a competitive quiz. The idea was that each teacher wrote 10 questions on the blackboard in whatever subject was



Dad with Mr. Robert, Headmaster of
Fiagbedu Roman Catholic Primary School





being taught. I had about 10-15 prizes, such as Webkins, die-cast airplanes, and other things for the best paper in each class. These were distributed at a school assembly on Thursday morning.

Friday came and there was a giant town celebration of two villages. In the afternoon, about 75 dancers and musicians combined with various performances by the school children. There were probably 500-600 students and their parents in the school area to watch. The tribal leaders from each village were on the review stand, as were the 4 of us Americans. There was a two-hour program of songs, skits, and speeches and I was installed as a tribal leader for the day. What an unforgettable experience!

~Charlie Bures



Above shows the community gathering to work on the school; notice they don't have any shoes yet they are walking on rocks and other debris.



The remaining photos show paid workers digging foundation trenches. This is all done by hand, no backhoes or anything.



The final picture to the bottom left shows the progress made so far. The school's foundation and walls have been built. This photo shows how long the school building is. The building itself contains 6 classrooms all in a row. Remaining work includes framing in doors and windows as well as building the roofs. The estimated cost for this is about \$25,000, for which we are raising the funds.



GHANA SCHOOL PROJECT FUNDRAISING

As of today's date, you have helped us to raise \$2,505 towards the Fiagbedu Roman Catholic School building in Ghana. This is amazing! It is 10% of our goal, which is \$25,000. Thank you so much for your help and generosity. A lot of big checks have come in, which is very encouraging.

In addition, My Father informs us that his workplace, Nokia, will fund matching donations. This is ironic because a friend (Tim B.) just mentioned to me to seek matching donations. I didn't have to do any work! My Father and I are hoping that Nokia will match every donation and not just ones from employees.

OTHER GHANA NEWS

This is the year of dreams come true. My Dad wanted an article on the Ghana School Project to be printed in the local news, The Wellesley Townsman. Doubting it possible, I emailed the editor through a website. Seventeen days later there was an almost full page article on the Ghana School Project in the Wellesley Townsman! The article featured 5 black & white photos of construction and the ceremony installing Dad as tribal leader for a day. It was amazing. Dad was touted for using his Christian values to get something tangible accomplished and I was quoted about how it seemed like a good Father-Son project. Unfortunately the article was not published online, so I can't share it. However I am sure my Father is quickly becoming a local celebrity in his hometown due to this article as well as other events he has been hosting.

One thing my Father has been stressing is that this project is not just about building a school building, but to spread awareness about life in

Ghana and help a community uplift itself. Even after the school is built, there is the problem of getting books and other teaching aids. These children can barely afford the \$1/year fee to attend school so no one has any books. There is separate plan to build a library and populate it with books the community can borrow. All these plans are designed to improve the status of living in Ghana through education and participation of the next generation.

Love from the...



Father Tony Fevlo



To donate to the Ghana School Project:

Make check to: [SMA Fathers – ADF](#)

Mail to: [Jim Bures](#)

[58 Spencer Road – 16K](#)

[Boxborough, MA 01719](#)

Mark in Memo: [Father Tony's Project](#)

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