

Newsletter: February 2007

Dear friends, students, faculty, and family,

Greetings from Ghana! We are approaching two months in Akatsi, Ghana, and it has been an exciting and fruitful time. We are daily working at the Human Factor Leadership Academy where we are teaching, mentoring, and developing friendships with the children. The number of children who come to our center ranges from 60 on some days to over 100 on others.

We were blessed with a week long visit from our close friend and partner, Jason Jenkins. He came and shared his insight and stories with the children at the center, and impacted numerous teachers and students through two leadership seminars, at which he was our guest speaker.



Jason, us, and the teachers after the leadership seminar

This past week two teachers came and expressed their desire to bring their classes to our Human Factor Leadership Academy library, to read books, view educational films, and learn computer skills during school hours. We were able, in one week, to help eight



Schoolchildren coming to study at the HFLA

classes from four different grades gain knowledge from the resources available at the academy. Currently our books, videos, and computers are limited but 15,000 books and 24 desktop computers are on the way. The books vary from preschool to graduate school levels and cover all subjects necessary for each student's interests and needs. As Professor Senyo Adjibolosoo says,

“There is a book there for every child.” But, the reason the books are not yet in the children's hands is because they are stuck at the harbor's loading dock. A letter has been submitted to the Ministry of Youth, Manpower and Employment requesting tax exemption to clear the shipment. We have contacted the people involved and sadly discovered the letters and documents were “lost.” Luckily we were able to submit copies and are continuing forth on our process to get the letters signed. Word came yesterday saying that the letters and documents have been signed and have been passed onto the

Ministry of Finance, which is the last stop before the process is finalized. Hopefully within the next couple of weeks we will be able to access our books, tax free.

As far as our studies go, we are hitting the books hard and taking in more knowledge than we had ever imagined possible! Our experience in the small village can be compared to a lab that trains us in the area of economic development. In this lab we get to witness international development issues and situations firsthand. We are lucky to have such an atmosphere surrounding us because the information gained here exceeds any knowledge we would have been presented with inside the four walls of



a classroom. Nightly debriefing sessions and daily devotions are allowing us to grasp further concepts and focus our hearts on the development of this program. We have managed to grow into a strong team that not only works together but also confides within each other through difficult times and unexpected hardships. We truly feel as though God's hand is guiding us throughout this whole process and ask for continued prayers.

On a different note, and with all honesty, the food has been quite an experience. Fried plantains, beans, rice, mackerel stew, and canned sardines are essential staples of our diet! We also enjoy the local dishes such as *akple*, which is ground corn and cassava dough rolled into a ball and eaten with *peppe* and fried *tilapia* (hot peppers and fish), and *kenke* and ochre stew, which is a Ghanaian vegetable platter served with fish. We especially like these meals because they are both traditionally eaten with fingers! Our house is finally becoming home to us as well as the giant lizards, cockroaches, and mice that live among us. We are living in a decent sized place that is part of a gated compound. Our neighbors are very giving and helpful. The town is fairly small so we are already well known, considering we are the only Americans. There is one main road that is paved, the rest are dirt paths. We fetch our water from a well and blackouts are common. But, overall we are enjoying our new experiences and are thankful that God has provided us with the opportunity to spend four months here.

Sincerely your friends,

