

# Friends of Ahotokurom

Edition 28 December 2013

Registered Charity-DMJ 232421

## Medical Team visits Ahotokurom

Third year medical students from Keele University (led by Sister Clarisse), visited Ahoto earlier this year. They stayed for 3 weeks helping and working in Ahoto and in local clinics and hospitals.



The Keele Group ready to go

They were called "Doctors in Training". This constantly reminded them of their professional obligations. One of them wrote: *"Being given the opportunity to spend time in a rural district hospital opened my eyes to the enormity of skills required by the Ghanaian doctors. The lack of resources and personnel alongside the vast number of patients created a very challenging and busy working environment. Despite these conditions, the doctors were incredibly enthusiastic for us to learn and enabled us to observe a caesarean as well as indirect hernia surgery. I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to see these procedures and have learnt a great deal from the experience."*

This Ghanaian experience has allowed them to experience the incredible warmth, friendliness and generosity of the people in Ghana. It also gave them a good insight into the challenges faced when delivering healthcare in a developing country.

Their experiences working at Ahoto enabled them to witness the progress that has been made in overcoming the stigma of leprosy and disability within communities.



The Keele Group enjoying a dance after a hard days work

## Cookery lessons in Jamie's Room

Hayley, Jonny (Friends committee members) and David visited Ahotokurom for the second time in April this year.

They visited St Elizabeth's Special School several times during their stay, and had a great time singing and playing with the children. They were offered a cookery lesson with the children, which they couldn't resist!



The Meal - Ready to eat

The teachers and teaching assistants taught the children to make jollof rice with fried chicken, a traditional Ghanaian dish. The

rice dish is quite an art, and takes hours to make from start to finish. A spicy tomato sauce is made using ingredients sourced from local markets, or grown in the village itself. Rice is then added, along with vegetable oil, and slow cooked over a fire for a couple of hours.

Keeping the fire burning is quite a challenge, as it needs to be fanned constantly to maintain a high temperature. Jonny was handed an apron and put to work on this job, much to everyone's amusement!

He was also shown how to grind tomatoes and onions on a traditional grinding stone. This method is very tough and takes a lot of practice to perfect - it involves rolling a large, heavy stone back and forth across a flat stone, until the ingredients have formed a fine paste. In the Ghanaian heat and sitting next to a fire, it proved to be quite an exhausting task - and after half an hour or so, a teaching assistant stopped him and poured the contents into a blender, before laughing and saying: "We usually use this these days!"

They were shown how to coat the chicken in a mixture of spices, flour and oil, before frying until crisp. They winced when the cayenne pepper went in - the kids certainly like their chicken spicy! All took turns fanning the fire and checking the food until it was ready to eat.

The children were fantastic throughout, and gave us a big 'Thank you' when the food was served.

See our superb new  
website

[www.ahoto.org](http://www.ahoto.org)

or for more information contact  
[tkilcullen@live.co.uk](mailto:tkilcullen@live.co.uk)

To make a donation please send a cheque (payable to DMJ Friends of Ahotokurom) to:  
The Treasurer, Holy Cross Parish, 208 Sangley Road, Catford, London SE6 2JS



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## Catford Walks for Ahotokurom

Catford Parish has agreed to adopt the "Assessment Unit" at St Elizabeth's Special School. Here the most severely disabled children are cared for and assessed. The Holy Cross church in Catford has pledged to raise the substantial sum of £4,000 each and every year to see the children through the school. This will enable Ahoto to employ some trained and qualified staff to support the teaching assistants. The stories of two of the children, Michael and Jennifer are described below. The stories of other children will be in future issues.

The parish held a sponsored walk in the summer and persuaded Sisters Clarisse and Sheila to take part.



A few of the many walkers - who can you recognise?

The next fund raising event will be the

## HOLY X FACTOR

**Watch out Simon Cowell!** The parish have already raised £3,000 towards this year's target - Well done Holy Cross!!

## Michael's Story

Michael is now seven years old. He was born prematurely and soon after birth suffered a stroke resulting in paralysis on one side of his body. When he arrived at the Assessment Unit he was completely unable to move, sit or hold himself up.



Michael

Following intensive therapy he has gained some muscle control and can now sit up with support. He can hold objects and is also able to take a few small steps with support.

Michael has also learnt to respond to people and has a beaming smile!

**His goal for this term – to sign or speak 'good morning'.**

*WE would like to say a big 'THANK YOU' to each one of our supporters. Everybody's contribution is significant.*

## Jennifer's Story

Jennifer started school in September 2012. She appeared to be a healthy baby; however she contracted very bad malaria and appears to have suffered some brain damage.

Jennifer is a placid happy child. Her father is a fisherman and works long hard hours at sea. Her mother then sells the fish to support the family. So as busy working people they struggle to



Jennifer

provide the full-time care needed and as a result Jennifer lives with her grandmother.

When she started school she could neither eat nor swallow properly and her body was very stiff and weak. In the last year she has made some progress and can now drink from a cup with assistance and eat solids with support of a carer.

Now she can sit upright with support but has limited mobility and is unable to walk.

**Her goal for this term - to sit by herself.**

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