

FRIENDS OF AHOTOKUROM NEWSLETTER

December 2008 Edition 17

Registered Charity DMJ No 232421

St. Clare's

St. Clare's at Ahoto, is the unit that provides a home, help and care mainly for elderly folk, many of whom have had leprosy. They are, of course cured from the disease but many have lost limbs, fingers or toes as a result of leprosy. If you visit St Clare's you will usually find that the men are busy making baskets or brooms, when they are not making palm crosses for Easter. They have been joined recently by Mr. Amarkwah who has had a double amputation and is unable to live in his village. Also Anti Mansa has recently transferred from Enyindakorum. These new people arriving bring another interest to the community at St Clare's. The Community has a strong prayer life and as they receive news from the UK asking for prayer, it is these folk who daily offer their prayers for you.



Thomas

After 22 years living in childcare, Thomas who has learning difficulties has decided he wants a quieter life living with the 'adults'. He has packed his suitcase and made a move to St. Clare's. He is thoroughly enjoying his new home and his presence has reduced the average age of the residents!

St. Josephs

St. Josephs is the Children's Home, providing care for 29 youngsters, some of whom are on short-term placement but others very long term. Some of the children go to weekly boarding school but return at weekends. The end of last term saw 5 children going off to senior vocational training school, leaving a much quieter unit, but for how long?! However, there are still 5 children under the age of 3 who make their share of

noise! Kojo Patrick takes it all in his stride. He is one of the older boys now and in spite of severe disabilities he is growing very tall. He is unable to move without great difficulty but he enjoys watching the children play. Kojo keeps himself mentally active and loves to be in the special unit classroom savouring the atmosphere.

Two of the older boys have been supported into more independent living. Both have full time employment following their vocational training. Matthew is working as a maintenance technician and Patrick is working in the Special Needs Unit.

St. Elizabeth's

This is the education Centre for youngsters with special needs. Its capacity has increased now that the infant school has moved. Kofi Nyarko (himself raised in the children's home) leads the care team and has a reliable group of assistants and trainees. The team continues to provide education and training in a loving, caring and friendly atmosphere.



Rehearsal for the Nativity Play

They are currently busy preparing for their annual Christmas Nativity Play. They can be heard singing 'The Twelve Days of Christmas', 'O Little Town of Bethlehem' and many more songs on a daily basis. We are sure it will be a superb production.

New Faces

The Ahoto team recently welcomed a new DMJ Sister - Sr Henriette, a young woman from Burundi.

She will be at Ahoto for a year and has already impressed everybody with her caring nature and enthusiasm.

Olivia is another new team member. She is Ghanaian and wishes to become a DMJ Sister. Olivia works mostly with very young children.



Sister Henriette

A big thank you is given to Sister Nellie who was at Ahoto for nearly 2 years. She was very popular with all in the Special School, who are missing her dearly.

Profile - Sister Pat

Sister Pat is *the larger-than-life* Co-Director at Ahoto. She doesn't flinch when described as the '*loud one*'. Whilst she is one of the most caring people one could ever meet, she is also clear that the children need guidance and she doesn't hesitate to raise her voice when required! She is well known in the local community and even the adults can remember that fearsome voice!



Sister Pat with the Quads

Sr. Pat hails from Middlesbrough and began a career in social work, specialising in adoption and residential placements. She was a late vocation, joining the DMJ's when she was 24. Her first assignment was in Portsmouth where she worked with Catholic Social Services looking after the very poor in the city.

She has now been in Ghana for 25 years but before this overseas assignment, the Order arranged for specialist training. This involved cleaning chicken styes and chicken

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pens as well as being taught to rear pigs, chickens and goats (Oh, and how to milk the latter!). This was all essential for survival then, because at that time, Ghana was in a near state of famine. Now food is available; the problem is that many people can't afford to buy it.

Sister Pat is jointly in charge (with Sister Monica) of this progressive community, looking after people with special needs, the elderly, sick and those who are disadvantaged.

Ahoto Summer Camp

This year the Sisters came up with the idea of a Summer Camp to keep some of the children occupied during their summer holidays. They co-opted 5 volunteers from Ireland to run this Summer Camp.

Children from Ahoto, along with children from Enyinkurom attended three days a week. They arrived on the bus at 8am full of enthusiasm, which delighted the volunteers! They attended classes in the morning - reading, writing, spelling and conversational English. When all this was done there was plenty of time left for singing and dancing before lunch!

In the afternoon it was sports time, a clear favourite for everyone!! Football was played by the older children and the younger children played lots of fun games.



Summer Camp

Vocational and Secondary Schools

We are filled with hope to see a good number of boys going off to Tema and Sunyani for vocational and secondary schools. They are all working extremely hard and doing very well. We wish them well for the year ahead.



Off to School

The scholarship Fund has enabled Ahoto to send another 11 young people to Dom Bosco and 8 to other educational units.

There are now 25 young people in various stages of their education and apprenticeships - with 75 having passed through the program. Ahoto is very grateful to Rainham Parish for their generosity and faithfulness to their young people.

Visitors

Sister Sheila, (a DMJ Sister and chaplain at St. Christopher's Hospice) and her sister Margaret visited Ahoto earlier this year. Sheila had worked in Ghana previously but in a different community.

They were, of course looked after very well and were not only given plenty of exposure to the various units at Ahoto but were taken to other charitable communities in this region of Ghana too. Ahoto always welcomes visitors but expects them to 'muck in' and help out - not to expect special treatment. Fortunately Ahoto only seems to attract those who are in this mould.

Joseph Oduro

Joseph has lived most of his childhood in childcare. As a child he suffered from Buruli Ulcer and has a prosthetic leg and arm. His parents were unable to support him.

For him, this year has been a mixture of trials and jubilation. For many months he was very ill and was admitted to hospital suffering from a blood disorder. Fortunately following treatment and rest he made a good recovery.

Despite all this he was awarded his

University degree in Sociology and Geology - a wonderful reward for all his efforts, courage and hard work. This is a FIRST for Ahoto - a young man with disabilities has been supported right through school and achieved a place at University - gaining a well deserved degree. Rather than face a life of dependence on others, he is now in a position to contribute to society.

He is off to do his National service and hoping to be posted to an NGO involved with physically challenged people. Joseph is enthusiastic at the prospect of using his experience to help others similarly challenged.



Joseph after his degree ceremony

HAPPY CHRISTMAS
All of the Sisters, staff and residents of Ahoto wish you all a happy Christmas and thank each one of you for your support and for making their lives possible.

Our website is being updated. There are many more stories of activities at Ahoto. Please take the time to look at www.ahoto.org

**To make a donation
Please send cheques/postal orders made payable to 'DMJ Friends of Ahotokurom' The Treasurer
2 Century Road, Rainham, Gillingham, Kent ME8 0BG**

For further information on any of our activities please contact: tkilcullen@live.co.uk