

Friends of Ahotokurom

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Ahotokurom, also referred to as Padre Pio Rehabilitation Centre, was set up 1983 near Cape Coast in Ghana as a centre of Christian hospitality for the disabled and disadvantaged. Friends of Ahotokurom support their work to provide health care, social care and education, encouraging personal growth and independence.



Grow it Yourself!

It has been a busy and exciting year with many new ventures and an awful lot of fun! The Ghanaian support for Ahotokurom continues to amaze everyone and it has shown that the centre operates as it does because of the kindness and compassion of the local people.



Many ongoing sustainability and farming projects continue to be at the forefront of life on the compound. The team has been working extremely hard to make sure that the farm is consistently producing fresh vegetables and fruit, getting the most of the compound's resources.

The centre aims to be as self-sufficient as possible, and this year they have been investing a lot of their time and energy into growing more of their own food. They have harvested their first crop of cassava and have cleared enough land to plant corn, garden eggs (a local aubergine variety), tomatoes and chilli peppers. Earlier in the year they also bought some mango trees and have planted those on the compound. Joe, Mr. Davis and the team must be commended for their hard work. Let's just hope that the local sheep will respect their crops and will learn to be good neighbours!



In fact, sustainability has become a bit of a buzzword at the centre – these days it seems like every project is focused on it! They are currently working on an expansion

plan to look at irrigation. As you may know, it rains heavily in the summer months, but rarely in the winter, so irrigation is essential for year round crops. By building some small water towers the compound will always have running water, even when the water is off. Next year, they are hoping to start a solar project and then maybe look at biogas to produce compost and cooking gas.

New income generating projects!

Ahoto recognises that its future survival depends on being able to generate some of the funds required to run the centre. They cannot always depend on charitable donations, especially those from overseas. As a result they are currently investigating a couple of projects to generate income for themselves. One is to operate a 'hostel' for trainee nurses at the Leprosarium and the Mental Hospital. There is a chronic shortage of accommodation – so if they had a hostel and rented out rooms they could generate some of their own income. The detailed vision is currently being worked up, but in the meantime they have started work to clear some land (owned by Ahoto) and pictured you can see Fr Doug blessing the soil and digging the first turf!



Training local staff

St. Elizabeth's special needs centre has taken in many new pupils this year and the centre's only wish is that they could take on more, but there is simply not the capacity or facilities. This year, four of the workers took part in a training course run by the Department of Social Welfare. The aim is to increase the skills of the team. The focus was child protection but also covered creative arts, hygiene, HIV/AIDS and legal matters in terms of work with children. There is a desperate shortage of special needs teachers in Ghana so the centre would love to recruit overseas volunteers who could come and share their skills with the team - please contact us if you are qualified and might be able to volunteer!

All the children supported by Holy Cross, Catford are progressing well and in our next edition we will do a special feature on some of the progress.

15 Scholarships

The Rainham scholarship scheme was started as a Millennium project in the year 2000 with the vision to support young people in gaining vocational qualifications so that they could get into the world of work, support themselves and their families to live better lives. Through the generosity of parishioners in Rainham, there are now over 60 qualified people in regular full-time employment able to support their families.

It is wonderful to see so many people now running their own businesses or

employed as cooks, nurses, secretaries, seamstresses, plumbers, electricians and motor mechanics! Many of those helped were orphans, or disabled, had suffered leprosy themselves or were the offspring of people with leprosy. It's good to see a number of these come back to Ahoto to say thank you and make occasional donations of a sack of rice or some surplus product from their farm to support the work of the centre.



There are currently 15 scholars being supported in some way through the scheme. No new scholars have been taken on in this 2015/16 academic year because the available funds are all fully committed. All students know that they are being supported through the generosity of benefactors who support Ahoto, so in the school holidays they come to the centre to do voluntary work using their skills as appropriate - helping the older people or on the farm, assisting with cooking, sewing etc. and generally reducing the overhead costs of running Ahoto.

Outreach

Outreach support is a vital element to the work of Ahotokurom. The centre's available space and resources can only help so many people and it is important to support those who need help through outreach care. This includes the provision of Endorphin Release Therapy and physio treatments to those who need it in the locality. Sr. Eleanor and Auntie Bea run the clinic and this is available to the local community on Fridays.

The new Chiefs

On the 31st of October, Trudy Kilcullen (Chair) and Fr Doug Bull (Treasurer) were honoured as development chiefs for Ahotokurom and Enyindakurom having supported the centre for 25 years! Through Friends of Ahotokurom so much has been achieved! In a speech on the day, they accepted this great honour on behalf of YOU - all the Friends of Ahotokurom who have given so much to care for disabled and disadvantaged brothers and sisters in Ghana.



The "thank you" therefore goes to all the Friends - all can take a share in this great honour!

Wishing you all blessed and happy Christmas - on behalf of all at Ahotokurom - Medaase!