

A Mission of Hope

From December 26, 2006 until January 10, 2007, twenty-four volunteers comprising of Rotarians and their families and friends travelled to Ghana, Africa, at their own expense, on their own time, to rebuild a school. This mission was the second for RELAY - an incredible project initiated by Michael and Shelly Duben, who last year, restored the primary school. Inspired by their commitment and buoyed by their vision, over the past year, they, together with their team, secured donations to restore the Junior and Nursery schools. Club members Barb Porter and Deb Harshaw joined Michael and Shelly and the rest of the team.



Some of their accomplishments during this experience of a lifetime include:

- provided electricity along with light fixtures and ceiling fans in all 3 schools
- laid new floors in all J.S.S. classrooms
- repaired verandas of J.S.S.
- painted interior and exterior of J.S.S.
- repaired doors and shutters in J.S.S.
- painted nursery school interior and exterior
- removed concrete "honeycomb" windows in nursery school and replaced with new wooden shutters
- touched up paint on primary school (painted and renovated in Jan. 2006 on previous project)
- constructed beach volleyball court
- brought potable water to school compound
- constructed 10 flush toilets
- provided over 1500 curriculum textbooks
- provided teaching aids for all grade levels
- provided 350 new library books
- provided sporting equipment such as soccer balls, volleyballs, volleyball net system, Frisbees, etc.
- provided 2 laptop computers and a projector, along with training on their uses
- conducted activities with the children from each grade level (nursery school to Grade 9). These activities included arts and crafts, games, letter writing, Frisbee golf, skipping, toothbrushing, and much more, depending on the age of the students.
- took Polaroid photo of every student and gave them to the students along with a frame that they decorated in the activity session (most children at the school have never had a photo of themselves)
- levelled the playground area with heavy equipment to remove rocks
- provided \$5500 wholesale value in medications and pharmaceuticals to the Anomabo Health Centre
- provided a generator to the Anomabo Health Centre

- provided 2 large duffel bags full of needles, syringes, feeding tubes, and specialized equipment to the Anomabo Health Centre



Some of the finishing touches had to be done following the team's departure, and they are awaiting final photos and confirmation from the contractor. "We had some funds left over, so we decided to contribute \$2000US to have top soil brought to the school yard so that grass could be planted and which hopefully will lead to less erosion of the school grounds," Shelly explains.



Team member Arnie Charlton from the Rotary Club of Amherstburg could not say enough about the power of this experience and his optimism about the future of this community.

"The people of Anomabo care, but they don't have the money or the resources to tackle all the major infrastructure problems they have in front of them. There are people that we met that were the pillars of the community and I know with their help and groups like the RELAY team we can make a difference."

Recognizing that there is still a great deal of opportunity to 'Make a Difference' in Ghana, the Dubens have had communication with contacts in Ghana regarding future projects in Anomabo. Further information is pending about the Anglican School, the water system and the health centre in Anomabo.

Shelly (Efua) & Michael Duben

