

# An Educational Beacon for Africa

## Dr. Martin Cook - Colorado Springs RC

### Project Partners Needed

Dr. Martin L. Cook is a Rotarian from the downtown Colorado Springs Club. Three years ago, he and his wife volunteered to teach at Ashesi University in Ghana ([www.ashesi.edu.gh](http://www.ashesi.edu.gh)). Ashesi is a young university, a little over 20 years in existence. It was founded by Patrick Awuah, an American-educated Ghanaian engineer who, when he went home to Ghana, intended to form a high tech start-up. He quickly discovered that was impossible because of the very poor quality of higher education in Ghana. Instead, he created the kind of university needed to produce “ethical, entrepreneurial leaders” for Africa. Ashesi is now rated the best university in Ghana, and one of the best in all of sub-Saharan Africa. The student body is 50% women, 50% on scholarship, and drawn from twenty-five African countries. 90% of Ashesi graduates live and work in Africa. The university’s mission is to stop “brain drain” and keep the best and brightest in Africa.



Martin is a member of the International Committee in his Rotary Club, and the committee has been in dialogue with the Ashesi Foundation in Seattle ([www.ashesi.org](http://www.ashesi.org)) to see how Rotary might assist the University. The Foundation recommended “bridge scholarships.” This refers to students who are not from extremely impoverished backgrounds (those are supported through the Mastercard Foundation), but who need some supplementation to the resources they have to pay for college. Our committee thought that perhaps other clubs might be interested in adding support to Ashesi to their International service work. Martin would be happy to speak to other Rotary Clubs in the region about Ashesi and its amazing work in improving Africa. He gave a talk at the Colorado Springs Rotary, which can be accessed here:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tXLq4\\_leul](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8tXLq4_leul)

The founder, Patrick Awuah, was awarded the prestigious WISE Prize (World Innovation Summit in Education) in 2017, and his acceptance speech for the award eloquently expresses his vision for higher education in Africa. It can be found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qohml3s1C9g>

Martin would welcome inquiries from fellow Rotarians and would be happy to speak at any clubs that might be interested in considering adding Ashesi University to their service portfolio. He can be reached by phone at (719) 244-8749 or by email at [martinleocook@gmail.com](mailto:martinleocook@gmail.com). In addition, the Ashesi Foundation is crafting a short introduction to Ashesi specifically for Rotarians, to be available sometime this Winter. If you are interested in participating in that event, please let Martin know.