

Mission committed to improving health care

Local doctor leads group to Ghana

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AFF WRITER

Two years ago, Dr. Edem Agamah of Springfield helped establish a health clinic in Agbozume, Ghana. More than a year ago, the clinic suspended operations due to a lack of



Agamah

tuberculosis, diarrhea and malnutri-

tion are common. committed workers. But the need for a medical treatment facility still exists.

Hypertension, diabetes and unimmunized children are big concerns, and problems with worm infestations, fungal skin infections, malaria,

tion are common.

"We are not giving up, since we know it's not easy to do what we want to accomplish," said Agamah, a former resident of Agbozume. He is now an American citizen and has practiced since July 1995 at the Central Illinois Hematology Oncology Center, 319 E. Madison St.

"It's an act of faith, and we're just trusting God to bring the right people to be part of our team."

Agamah, founder of the not-for-profit medical missions organization

International Health and Development Network, will travel with medical personnel and other professionals to Ghana July 18 to jump-start the health clinic.

The group also plans to set up a new Health and Development Institute, sponsor a four-day health fair and distribute medical supplies to hospitals.

The group hopes to recruit local people in Ghana to continue the ministries after their mission ends Aug. 14.

"It is not an effort to go to Africa and give a handout to people," said Agamah.

"It is not a safari trip to Africa to see the wild animals. It's an effort to make a difference, long-standing, in people's lives."

The team going to Ghana, which includes people from Illinois, Ohio and Tennessee, prepared by taking a course Agamah taught every two

See **GHANA** on page 14

GHANA

From page 13

months for 12 months.

They learned they could be more effective if they helped people develop their own abilities to solve their problems.

Typically, Ghanaians revere Americans and American medicine.

"They have to come to the point that they realize they are no different from the people in America. They have the same God-given abilities," said Agamah.

The Health and Development Institute will be designed to provide the tools for self-sufficiency. It will consist of three main schools — the School of Training of Community Health and Development Workers, Computer Training and Data Processing School and the Christian Leadership Training Program.

Nancy and Tim Rice will help with

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the schools.

Tim Rice, a systems manager for the state legislative information system, will set up a training lab with 25 to 30 donated personal computers.

Nancy Rice, a registered nurse at Memorial Medical Center, will be among health-care professionals teaching in the community health and development school.

"I'm going to be doing the importance of immunization in children, nutrition in children, sanitation, just as simple as washing their hands after they go to the restroom," said Nancy Rice.

"If they are infected with these bacteria, it's just so easily passed."

Carolyn Holmes, a registered nurse and education coordinator at Memo-

rial Medical Center, will be among nurses teaching in Ghana.

"My major focus is going to be to set up a certified nursing assistant clinic and to provide training to the nursing professionals there," said Holmes.

"Another dimension to my trip will be focused on violence prevention.

"As with any trip, I just hope to observe the culture and come back understanding a bit more about the people in that country."

The idea isn't to change the Ghanaian culture, said Tim Rice.

"We want to help them see some of the things we have learned that would be beneficial to them," said Tim Rice.

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