

# IHDN News

JUNE 2013

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Message from the President

Dear friends,

When you receive this newsletter, we will be in Ghana on the 23rd mission trip with an 11-member team. We are pleased to provide an update to you and others on our activities.

We thank the Lord for another successful mission trip to Ghana in the winter of 2013. On April 5 we hosted our second fundraiser in Springfield. Over \$55,000 was raised to help pay for a new generator and complete the inpatient building. Clinical activities at the IHDN mission hospital continue to increase each day. We have had delays in the payment of National Health Insurance bills. Our abilities to pay bills and staff salaries on time were stretched. Despite this, we continue to touch many lives in ways we cannot imagine. We thank God for using us to bless others.

We also thank you for being part of this journey, for your support and encouragement. We thank the Ghanaian team for their dedication, hard work, sacrifice, and allowing themselves to be used to care for the poor under very challenging conditions.

We wish you an enjoyable summer. May God bless you.

### Fundraiser held in support of inpatient ward and backup generator purchase

We hosted our second annual fundraiser on April 5, 2013 in Springfield in support of the inpatient ward and the purchase of a generator. The main speaker was Mr. James Rousey, who challenged us to think of the poor, especially outside the US. We received support and donations from several people. We are pleased to announce that we raised over **\$55,318** in cash. These funds were used to purchase a new generator for the IHDN Mission Hospital (see picture). The rest was used to buy building materials for the inpatient ward. We thank all those who volunteered their time and resources to support this event. We also thank all those who donated in support of the on going work of IHDN.

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### HEALTH STATISTICS

#### GHANA

Neonatal mortality Rate : 28  
(per 1000)

No of under 5 mortality from  
Malaria :10,000

Maternal Mortality  
(per 1000) :350

#### USA

Total expenditure on health  
as a percentage

of GDP :17.9 %

No of under 5 deaths all  
causes :32,000

Source: World Health Organization

[www.who.int/en](http://www.who.int/en)

### **. The 22nd Medical & Surgical Mission trip to Ghana in the winter was another success**

We undertook the 22nd mission trip to Ghana from Jan 24 to Feb 5, 2013. The team was made up of the following volunteers:

Dr. Bulent Cetindag—Surgeon, SIU School of Medicine, (SIU SOM)

Mr. Tony Grasc—Physician Assistant, Cardiothoracic Surgery SIU SOM

Ms. Hannah Craig—Final Year Medical Student SIU SOM, now a medical doctor.

Dr. Edem Agamah of Central Illinois Hematology and Oncology Center (CIHOC) & IHDN

The team attended to 1,079 patients at the outpatient clinic. There were twice as many women as men. Malaria was the commonest diagnosis but there were several patients who needed surgical operations. Dr. Bulent Cetindag, who was assisted by Mr. Tony Grasc, Hannah Craig, and Selina, an operating room nurse from the Police Hospital, performed 33 surgical operations on 26 patients. Most of these patients had hernias and hydrocele. Mr. Kofi Bediako, nurse anesthetist, also of the Police Hospital, provided anesthesia for us.

Breast cancer was the commonest cancer seen. Some of the women mistook their breast lumps for boils. They applied herbs and other sorts of local medicines to the tumor with no relief. When they presented, their disease had already spread so we offered comfort care. We performed breast biopsies on four other patients, who were then referred to Dr. Zakaria at the police hospital for completion of surgery and followup chemotherapy and hormonal treatment.

This experience reinforced the need for us to develop a comprehensive women's health program at the IHDN Mission Hospital. This will include caring for women during pregnancy and delivery. We will also increase our cancer care initiatives in the community. We will focus on raising awareness, early detection, and treatment of breast and cervical cancers in women, and prostate cancer in men.

Ms. Craig, who was a final-year student at the SIU School of Medicine at the time of the trip, acquired much experience in the outpatient clinics and operating room during this trip. She has completed medical school and now pursuing her surgery residency in Chicago. We thank all who supported this trip.

### **FUTURE MISSION TRIPS TO GHANA IN 2014**

January 30– Feb 13, 2014 (4th year medical school electives extended to Feb 27, 2014)

Late July/Early August—2014

## Are We There Yet?

### Ms. Alikem Miriam Agamah, Springfield High School Class of 2013

To most people, summer is a time to go on family vacations, to relax and soak up the sun. However, for my family, it is a time to start packing boxes and organizing for another mission trip to Ghana. Although I have had mixed feelings about going to Ghana each summer, this year I am looking forward to going again.

Growing up, my friends and I would discuss our plans for the summer. One of my friends would talk about her family vacationing in Hawaii, and another about going to Wisconsin Dells or Florida. When my turn would come, I would say, "I'm going to Ghana again." Soon it became predictable that every summer I would be going on a mission trip to Ghana.

I celebrated my first birthday on our first mission trip to Ghana in April 1996. Since that time, I have been to Ghana 16 times, and am getting ready for the 17th trip on July 11. That is *a lot* of packing suitcases, driving to O'Hare, waiting to catch the next flight in London, arriving in Accra, and traveling to Agbozume, all over a 24-hour period.

Every trip to Ghana is different, with some better than others. I have learned a lot about living with different people for two weeks. I've learned how people's attitudes toward change really affect others around them. The way people choose to adapt to living out of their comfort zones can really make or break the trip as a whole.

I have also learned a lot from the people I interact with in the villages we visit. The people of Ghana are full of joy and are so thankful for the little things in life. Even though many of the people are extremely poor, they don't act like it. Every single time I go and interact with them, I am constantly humbled. I am reminded that people are suffering and struggling to get food on the table every day for their families. Going to Ghana has been a maturing experience for me. All my complaints are trivial compared to what people go through on a daily basis. While I'm worrying about finding the perfect pair of shoes to match an outfit, someone else is trying to mend the only pair of shoes that they have to wear daily. My trips to Ghana have really taught me the meaning of being selfless. Seeing the poverty with my own eyes and the Ghanaians' deep faith in God has strengthened my own faith in Christ. This has made me realize that I am so privileged to be brought up in the US, filled with opportunities, for which I am very thankful to God each day.

I have not lived a normal kid's life, but I don't mind. Yes, I would love to go to an exotic island or one of the Seven Wonders of the World each summer, but my family and I do not see that as a priority right now. Instead, we will continue to take the time we have to try and reach out to someone and change a person's life. The hospital that my parents built is now providing medical care to over 60,000 people. As I go to Wheaton College, I will forever remember how much of an impact our summer trips have made on people, and I will use my experience to challenge others to do likewise. Knowing that I have had a direct impact on helping someone is so empowering, and it makes me want to reach out to more people. There are many times when the time and effort my family and I sacrifice do not seem worth it. Yet, when we see lives being saved in front of us, we know that a little sweat is so worthwhile. At times I think that my family and I have reached our goal, but then I realize that there is still so much that we can do, and we are not there yet.

One day I would love to travel the world and experience other cultures, but that can wait. Saving lives cannot. There is still a lot of work to be done, but who knows, maybe one day my family and I will be able to take a three-month long vacation to Bora Bora..

## **IHDN sponsors the 23rd Medical & Surgical Mission trip to Ghana**

We will be sponsoring our 23rd mission team to Ghana from July 11 to 25. The team members and projects are:

- |     |                      |  |
|-----|----------------------|--|
| 1.  | Dr. Edem Agamah      | Team leader  |
| 2.  | Mrs. June Agamah     | Logistics  |
| 3.  | Ms. Alikem Agamah    | Student—Clinic   |
| 4.  | Dr. James Wade       | Oncologist from Decatur—Clinics, Breast Cancer lecture |
| 5.  | Mrs. Susan Wade      | Artist—Interior Design & Decor, signage and pictures   |
| 6.  | Mr. Richard Coffee   | Computer Networking                                    |
| 7.  | Mrs. Mona Sue Coffee | Accounting Software—Peachtree and SAGE 50              |
| 8.  | Mrs. Nancy Holmes    | Nursing services, Oncology nursing training            |
| 9.  | Mr. David Esparaz    | Medical Student—Clinic                                 |
| 10. | Mr. Krishna Patel    | Medical Student—Clinic                                 |
| 11. | Ms. Kristin Davidson | Pre-Med Student—Clinic                                 |

The main goal of this trip is to commission part of the inpatient ward currently under construction on July 20. We will also provide medical and surgical to patients. Dr. S.M Zakariah and his surgical team from the Police Hospital, Accra will be assisting us during the trip.

### **Commissioning of inpatient wards.**

Work on the 40-bed unit is almost complete to the point where the rooms can be used to admit patients. This building will be commissioned on July 20, 2013. There will be a community celebration and Health Fair with screening of blood pressure. We thank all who supported this project.

### **IHDN team to provide Breast Cancer update at the Police Hospital, Accra**

On July 17 the IHDN medical team will be hosted by Dr. Zakaria and his team at the Police Hospital Accra. Dr. James Wade will be providing an update on breast cancer to the doctors and nurses. Recall that Dr. Zakaria is our Ghanaian volunteer surgeon. He has a full-time job at the Police Hospital in Accra, but comes to help our poor patients at Weta on his vacation, just like the team from the US. We also assist him in the care of his cancer patients at the Police hospital. We thank him and his team. We pray that we will be able to recruit more Ghanaian doctors to help us at Weta.

## **Working Together for the Kingdom of God**

**By Kim Dunnington & June Agamah**

### **An Answer to Prayers**

In the summer of 2011, Kim and I got a chance to fulfill one of our many dreams. This one was to work together in the kingdom of God, in Ghana. We've known each other for over 16 years. Kim was trained as a Critical Care Nurse and I did my Master's in Public Health. However, we both chose to be stay-at-home moms during the early lives of our children. We volunteered many times together in our children's schools, at church, in the Springfield community etc. Kim had gone on several mission trips before and had faithfully volunteered to drive many of the volunteers from Springfield to O'Hare and back. So we were both thrilled when Kim planned to go on her first mission trip to Ghana July 13-28, 2011.

This was IHDN's 18th mission trip to Ghana, and like most of the mission trips to Ghana, one never knows what to expect. Kim had many questions and many of those questions went unanswered. But as usual, God always

This was IHDN's 18th mission trip to Ghana, and like most of the mission trips to Ghana, one never knows what to expect. Kim had many questions and many of those questions went unanswered. But as usual, God always show up in many different ways.

### **Kim's Reflections on the Journey**

From the time I met June and the Agamah family 16 years ago, I have had a desire to accompany them to Ghana on a Mission trip. The timing was right in July, as I wanted to share the experience with our son Spencer, before he leaves for college. Having recently taken my board exam to renew my license in Nursing, I felt ready to get involved with the nursing staff at the hospital, teaching ,and assisting in whatever ways needed.

It was pure joy to be able to share this experience with Spencer! We each had our own goals and expectations and were able to feel positive about our contributions. But as a mother, there were so many moments of pride in watching Spencer observe life lived in such a different way than he has always been used to. He maintained a spirit of curiosity and observation as we set about our adventures each day. I enjoyed watching him with the many young men who accompanied us on our journeys each day, and hope he had as much impact on them as they did on him.

Life in Ghana is simple, even if living there is often difficult and complex. We enjoyed attending church, and the worship was joyful, heartfelt, and emotional. Walking is the most frequent mode of transportation, unless driving the distance to the hospital, so you are forced to slow down. There are designated days to attend the local market, so life revolves around selling and purchasing food and other essentials on those days. Despite many homes having nothing but dirt floors and no indoor plumbing, the pride they have in their homes is evident as we heard the sounds of sweeping the dirt outside as we passed by on our morning walk. Obtaining an adequate water supply in their homes is a priority and often water is carried long distances if there is no plumbing. We saw everything imaginable being carried on their heads, including fruit drinks in plastic bags, what would have filled an entire salad bar, and what appeared to be a 6 ft. bench!

Many of the nurses I taught and worked with are newer and are continuing their training. However, the two nurses who are turned to in times of need each had 35 years of experience. I tried and couldn't even imagine what nursing must have been like for them when they started! That kind of experience lends calm to any stressful situation, no matter what training you have had. We introduced the Christian Nurses' Association and provided numerous resources and are hopeful that they will choose to spend time on a regular basis to encourage one another in their faith walks. We also talked a lot about continuing education and the necessity to be lifelong learners. We made many of the donated textbooks available in the ward where the nurses might be able to use them when they have questions or slow times when they could be reading.

Being in Ghana was a wonderful experience—one I would like to repeat! In fact, it would have been easy to just stay permanently once I settled in and identified areas where I thought I could be of help. But Dr. Agamah reminded me that my family might not appreciate it if he didn't bring me home. As God calls and circumstances permit, my desire is to go again in an attempt to be of service to them and to Him. I'm so grateful for the opportunity I had to be there myself and especially to share the experience with my son!

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ministry of Jesus Christ as  
an example.*

[www.ihdn.org](http://www.ihdn.org)

### **What can you do to help to IHDN?**

We are often asked the question “What can I do to help you?” This question usually comes from friends and colleagues who value our mission and want to help. Here are several ways in which you can help:

1. Pray, pray, and pray for IHDN. Pray that we will remain faithful to the call to serve Him to the best of our abilities. Pray for His blessings to be upon us and provide all our needs.
2. Develop a dynamic interest and follow our work. Ask questions, give us feedback, tell the IHDN story to your family and friends, and invite them to join us in helping the poor in Ghana.
3. Donate your time. Use your skills, expertise, and knowledge to help bless our efforts both in the U.S. and in Ghana.
4. Donate appreciated stocks, mutual funds, or bonds to IHDN. This helps IHDN, and you also get a tax deduction for the full value at the time of donation (not the value at purchase) to the extent you are eligible to deduct charitable gifts.
5. Donate items of value—things that you can use in the U.S. and can also be used in Ghana.
6. Donate money to help with immediate needs.

We continue to receive some of these blessings. We are thankful to all who share themselves and their resources with us.