

# IHDN News

DECEMBER 2008

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

If you are a reader of this newsletter, you have most likely prayed for or supported IHDN directly or indirectly. You may also have gone on a Ghana mission trip, or know someone who did.

It is with great gratitude that I write in this edition of the newsletter. I would like to specifically thank you for your involvement with IHDN. As a result of your support, we were able to commission the outpatient building of the IHDN Mission Hospital in Ghana on June 14, 2008. When fully built, this hospital will provide comprehensive medical care to a catchment area of 120,000 people in southeastern Ghana.

We thank Almighty God for helping us accomplish the first phase of this project. We thank Him for providing the material and human resources throughout the planning and development of the Hospital. Our faith has been strengthened and our lives have been blessed by this experience. In this edition of the newsletter, you will find articles and updates from team members and information on upcoming trips in 2009.

As we come to the end of another year, we pause to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. We also look ahead to the future for more opportunities to serve Him. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.

God bless you and your family

Sincerely,

***Dr. Edem S. Agamah***

***President, IHDN***

### **IHDN Mission Hospital now has full-time doctor**

The IHDN Mission hospital, which was opened in June 2008, initially staffed by volunteer missionary doctors and part-time Ghanaian doctors, now has a full-time Ghanaian doctor. He is Dr. Isaac Barnor. Dr. Barnor completed his medical education at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana in 2006. He was the best student in Surgery. He completed a 2-year rotating internship in Internal Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, and Obstetrics & Gynecology. He is married to Veronica and they just welcomed their first child this month. Please join us in welcoming Dr. Barnor to the IHDN Mission Hospital.

### **HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX**

#### **Life Expectancy**

Angola	42 yrs
Cameroon	50 yrs
Ghana	60 yrs
Senegal	63 yrs
Mauritius	73 yrs

#### **Access to improved water %**

Angola	53
Cameroon	66
Ghana	75
Senegal	76
Mauritius	100

Source: World Bank, 2008

## Questions of the Future?

By Ben Henkle, Masters in Public Health Student, University of Iowa

I sat quietly reading in the cool, dark hospital room, pondering my future and my mom's future. The plasmapheresis machine hummed in the background; another bout with death was soon to be behind us. My mom was responding to treatment against all odds. I walked Dr. Agamah, short in stature, cheery in demeanor. I had heard stories about him and his work in Ghana from my mom. We shook hands. He inquired how I was, and the conversation inevitably turned toward my future. He enthusiastically encouraged me to continue to consider medicine and was on his way. A seed had been planted. Could good come from this bad situation?

A year later, college graduation had come and gone, and I was working at a pharmaceutical company. Questions about my future still loomed: was this really what I wanted to do with my life? I began to look at graduate schools and decided on public health, due to its flexibility and broad applicability, melding medicine and bench research. As I explored various programs, I remembered Dr. Agamah and his mission work in Ghana. I e-mailed him inquiring about future trips, and soon I became part of the 2008 IHDN medical mission team. It was a decision that would profoundly affect my life motivation, goals, and mission.

When leaving for Ghana, I knew little about what to expect. A multitude of questions flooded my mind: Was I prepared? Would I know enough to be helpful? Would I like being immersed in a totally different culture? I had never been somewhere so foreign. These worries were soon laid to rest. From the moment we arrived, I knew this was something that I wanted to be involved in for the rest of my life.

It is amazing to see the work that Dr. Agamah and IHDN have done, and the positive impact it has made on his childhood community. At the commissioning ceremony, the magnitude of what IHDN was doing was made truly visible. As hundreds of people, local chiefs, and government officials arrived, you could see how important this hospital was to the region. It is more than just a place to receive medical care; it is a symbol of a better future, jobs, and opportunity.

While in Ghana my principal responsibilities were to interview patients through an interpreter. I collected primary complaint information and medical histories, and then presented the information and a possible diagnosis to the doctors. It was an intimidating task at first, but as the days passed I enjoyed it more and more. The wealth of knowledge bestowed upon me through the patient interviews and interactions with the doctors was greater than anything I could have imagined. It gave me a deeper insight into the patient-doctor relationship, and the immense challenges that physicians face all the time.

Work was not without play. Crashing waves at Denu beach, bartering in the markets, crossing the border to Togo, and attending passionate church services were just a few of the other things we got to do. As we met people, one of the most striking things I noticed was the happiness and optimism they radiated despite having so little in comparison to people in the U.S. It was refreshing to be in a place where value was placed on relationships, conversation, and community, rather than the pervasive materialism seen in the United States.

Ghana solidified my decision to quit my job and pursue a degree in public health. My first week back at work was my longest week ever. Ghana had made me realize how unhappy I was with what I was doing and gave me new purpose. I think about Ghana and my experience everyday. It has profoundly affected the way I approach life, school, and my future. I plan to go back to Ghana in the summer of 2009 to help in the hospital and conduct a research as part of my public health program.

## **Wash U students going to Ghana for Electives in February 2009**

**By Syki Duong, Final year Medical Student, Washington Univ School of Medicine, St. Louis, MO**

In February 2009, Dr. Agamah will accompany three medical students who are in their fourth year at Washington University School of Medicine to Ghana, where they will participate in a medical mission trip at the IHDN Hospital. The students are James Wade, who will be entering residency training in surgery next year with an interest in cardiothoracic surgery; Samir Shah, who is going into radiology; and Syki Duong, who will be training in internal medicine with an interest in infectious disease.

The students will spend 4 weeks in Ghana, seeing patients daily and presenting them to Dr. Agamah or the new full-time attending physician, and formulating differential diagnoses and treatment plans on each patient. The group will also be able to assist in basic surgical procedures in the new hospital operating room. Additionally, the team will hold at least one rural outreach clinic in a remote area of Ghana. The students will keep a daily log of patients and write a research report on commonly encountered medical conditions in Ghana. There will also be nightly tutorial sessions aimed at further educating the students and opening up health care issues for discussion.

This service trip is designed for the students to participate firsthand in free health-care delivery and treatment to a resource-limited population with little or no access to medical care. The trip will also be a valuable learning experience for the students, training them to provide diagnoses and treatment in an international setting with limited resources. The trip will also allow them to gain knowledge about tropical medicine and diseases, such as malaria, that are infrequently encountered in the U.S.

Funding for the trip will be provided by the Forum for International Health and Tropical Medicine at Washington University.

## **A Trip to Remember**

**By Sarah Agamah, Senior, Springfield High School, Springfield, IL**

This past summer I went on my twelfth mission trip to Ghana. For many reasons, this trip to Ghana was one of the most memorable I have ever been on. I was able to be a part of a great team that accomplished many things to the glory of God. The opening of the IHDN Mission Hospital was one of the highlights of the trip, and was an experience I will never forget. I met so many wonderful people, and formed new friendships. Most importantly, I learned how important it is to trust God during times of great difficulty.

I was really excited about going to Ghana this year. My two good friends, Sarah Blythe and Anne Wichterman, were able to go with me. We had talked about going on a mission trip to Ghana since our freshman year. It was so great to be able to share my experiences in Ghana with them. The most exciting part of the trip for me was the opening of the mission hospital. The opening ceremony coincided with my seventeenth birthday. It was my biggest birthday celebration so far. There were over 2,000 people who joined us in celebrating the opening of the hospital. I felt blessed on my birthday to be part of the mission team that provided much-needed health care for the people of Weta, Agbozume, and surrounding villages. During the health fair that followed, I helped interview patients and facilitated their consultations with the doctors, and assisted in the clinic.

Throughout the trip, the team members really gelled, and we were able to accomplish much in a short time. The team saw hundreds of patients, performed surgeries and ultrasounds, provided dental care, taught high school students English, shared our musical talents in schools and churches, and brought hope to Ghanaians. We had some truly amazing experiences.

Like anything in life, our time in Ghana didn't go without challenges. Our faith was really tested when one of the team members became extremely ill on the last day of the trip. I questioned God a lot during this time; but in the end, He revealed himself and provided a miracle to save that team member's life. This trip was a life-changing experience for me. I learned to be more thankful for the life that I have been so blessed with.

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### **IHDN Mission Hospital opens in Ghana**

IHDN Mission Hospital in Ghana was opened on June 14, 2008. The hospital is housed in a three-story, 20,000 square foot building. The first floor has six patient examination rooms, pharmacy, laboratory, radiology department (yet to be opened) operating room, emergency room, and treatment room. The second floor has offices for doctors and nurses; conference room; computer science laboratory; community outreach offices; IHDN administrative offices; and two apartments for short-term volunteers. The third floor will be used for offices and an FM Radio station. Expenditures so far on the hospital building and road construction have exceeded \$700,000.

Ghana's Deputy Minister for Health, Mr. Abraham Dwumah Odoom, commissioned the building on behalf of the Minister of Health, Major (Rtd.) Courage Quashigah. The ceremony was witnessed by over 2,000 people including the volunteers from the U.S. We thank the Lord for making this possible. We thank all of you for your support. Outstanding projects needed to complete the present phase of work on the building and hospital compound include: (1) fencing of the compound; (2) installation of gutters to collect rainwater; (3) completion of solar backup power generation; (4) completion of road construction; (5) construction of water ponds and canals to reclaim the surrounding land; (6) construction of water reservoir to provide water for the village of Weta; and (7) establishing a radio station, including building a radio tower. The hospital also needs supplemental funds of \$4,000-6,000, each month. We pray for guidance and the resources to help accomplish these projects.

For more information contact 2177-787-6530 or E-mail [ihdn@aol.com](mailto:ihdn@aol.com).

We review in this edition some of the major activities of the year 2008

### January

We shipped a container with medical supplies to Ghana.

### February

We Sponsored a mission trip to Ghana. Members of the team and their projects were:

Dr. Edem Agamah: Team leader, medical clinics

Mr. Ted Harvey: English language classes & Marriage & Family Life workshop,

Mrs. Louise Harvey: Computer science and InDesign software

Mr. David Broughton: Road construction and training in use and maintenance of backhoe and Bobcat

### March

Presented IHDN's work at "Ghana @ 51" celebrations and participated in fundraiser with Ghana Association of Central Illinois. Over \$5,000 was raised in support of IHDN.

### April–May

Training and preparation of mission volunteers to Ghana.

IHDN featured in cover article in *SO* (Springfield's Own) magazine

### June–July

Mission trip to Ghana. Mission report and Auction—About \$3000 raised in support of IHDN

The team composition and various activities undertaken were:

#### Medical team working in the IHDN Mission Hospital

Dr. Edem Agamah	Team leader, medical clinics, teaching of students
Dr. Keith Wichterman	Surgery clinics, breast cancer workshop, teaching
Dr. Lisa Wichterman	Ultrasound, clinics, teaching, breast cancer workshop
Dr. Raymond Lee	Ultrasound, clinics, teaching,
Dr. Robert Burriss	Dental clinic, teaching, school dental health promotion
Dr. Michael Ashigbi	Breast cancer workshop
Ms. Seni Sesi	Consultant pharmacist
Mr. Garry Thompson	Establishing medical laboratory
Ms. Vivienne Dawkins	Nurse, medical clinic
Ms. Christine Lawson	Nurse, medical clinic
Mrs. Joyce Lewis	Dental hygienist
Ms. Susie Lobb	Surgical nurse
Ms. Christie Minick	Operating room technician
Mr. Zachary Radwine	Student in medical clinics
Ms. Taylor Manning	Student in medical clinics
Mr. Benjamin Henkle	Student in medical clinics
Ms. Laura Henkle	Student in medical clinics
Ms. Meredith Havey	Student in medical clinics

Mr. Christian Wichterman	Student in medical laboratory
Ms. Alison Guetzko	Student in dental clinic
Ms. Akpene Agamah	Student in medical clinic
Ms. Anne Wichterman	Student in medical clinic
Ms. Sarah Blythe	Student in medical clinic
Ms. Aseye Agamah	Student in medical clinic
Ms. Alikem Agamah	Student in medical clinic
Mr. Ryan Lee	Student in medical clinic

**Nonmedical team**

Mrs. June Agamah	Logistics, organizing & general support for mission team
Mrs. Sarah Seiple	Logistics, organizing & general support for mission team
Mr. Stephen Seiple	High school English, Christian leadership, preaching
Dr. Emmanuel Attiogbe	Christian leadership
Mrs. Janet Attiogbe	Christian leadership
Mr. Dennis Albanese	Network installation, architectural & Construction support
Mr. Kenneth Porter	Computer scientist, software development
Mr. Richard Falzone	Videographer
Ms. Casey Lee	Student, Videographer

**August—September**

Promotion of IHDN in community. Visit to First Lutheran Church in Decatur, IL

**October—Present**

Recruitment and training of volunteers for future trips. Procurement of supplies and equipment of shipment to Ghana

**Two Ghana Mission Trips planned for 2009**

Dr. Edem Agamah will lead two mission trips to Ghana in 2009. The first trip will be from February 7 to March 5, and the second from June 24 to July 7. In February he will offer an electives course in Tropical Medicine & International Health to final year medical students from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. The students are: Mr. Jamie Wade, Mr. Samir Shah, and Ms. Syki Duong.

On Jan 29, 2009, Mr. Kenneth Porter, who was in Ghana in June 2008, will return to complete the work he started on the Electronic Medical records.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Agamah at 217-525-2500 or [ihdn@aol.com](mailto:ihdn@aol.com)





Front View of Hospital



Cross-section of the crowd on June 14



June Mission team



Chief & Feb Mission Team



Zach, Laura, Ben & Meredith



Dr. Wichterman operates in Ghana



Dr. Burris & Kids with toothbrush



Dr. Barnor, sitting left, & IHDN Hospital Staff