

IHDN News

April 1999

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*International
Health and
Development
Network
"Thanks for
making a
difference."*

IHDN IS THREE YEARS OLD!

In March 1996, a group of men and women of faith gathered in Springfield, Illinois to form a new Medical Missions Organization called the International Health and Development Network (IHDN). The purposes of IHDN are to develop a ministry, using the earthly work of Jesus Christ as a model and thereby seek the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of individuals in communities, especially in developing countries by providing humanitarian assistance, education and research on issues of health, family life, conflict resolution and Christian values, emphasizing faith in Jesus Christ as the basis for successful living.



As we celebrate our third year of existence, we have much for which to be thankful. We thank the Almighty Lord for helping establish this organization. We thank all the people He has brought into our lives. Many people have been involved by supporting our short-term missionaries to Ghana and we are very grateful for all of them. We are especially thankful for those who have sacrificed their time either by joining a mission team or praying for our ministry. As we enter our fourth year, we want to recap what has been accomplished.

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

IHDN has been blessed with surplus medical supplies donated by Memorial Medical Center and St. John's Hospital in Springfield. We have been able to make donations to several Ghanaian government hospitals and non-governmental organizations. We have been very careful not to emphasize this aspect of our ministry, however, since our focus is in Christian Community Health Development. But the needs in these institutions are innumerable and we could not look the other way while we work in the community which will eventually rely on these institutions.

We have just shipped two more containers to Ghana with supplies to help develop our project site. Most of the medical supplies have been earmarked for the 37 Military Hospital, Police Hospitals, and the IHDN Family Medical Center. Most of the volunteers who are involved with the ministry of IHDN in Ghana come from these two hospitals. Our donations will help strengthen *their work and encourage them in their Christian witness.*

The issues we will face in the coming years are whether there are ways to improve what we are doing now? How much of our resources should we devote to humanitarian assistance? Where do we draw the line as far as responding to demands?

HEALTH FAIRS

IHDN missions teams have been promoting the concept of Health Fairs in rural Ghana. These fairs are community celebrations of Health in contrast to the existing practice of celebrating death. Funerals are very popular events in most parts of Africa, lasting for several days. Based on the assumption that most people enjoy community gatherings and celebrations, IHDN

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introduced the Health Fairs. The community participates in activities that promote health and increase awareness of common health problems and how to prevent or treat them. IHDN also uses these occasions to provide basic screening and treatment of common diseases.

Two Health Fairs have been held at Agbozume, Ghana. The villagers at Agbozume want more Health Fairs and want us to have week-long Fairs instead of the usual 3-4 days. Some have said the demand may be related to the provision of free medical services. This raises certain issues that we need to address in the days ahead. Can the villagers fully sponsor the Health Fairs just as they organize big funerals? Are we creating a culture of dependency by holding the fairs in the present format? When do we move to another village to celebrate Health?

IHDN FAMILY MEDICAL CENTER

IHDN has established a Family Medical Center at Agbozume. A Ghanaian physician, Dr. Randy Sepenu, began as medical director on November 1, 1998. The goal of the Medical Center is to provide access to quality basic medical care for the villagers. The medical center is also focusing on the following diseases: hypertension, diabetes mellitus, anemia and breast cancer. Over 1,700 patients have been treated since the center was reopened in November 1998. Most of the patients have malaria hypertension, upper respiratory tract infection, diabetes, and anemia.

Plans are in progress to open a laboratory that will do complete blood count and basic microbiology tests, including gram stain and stool examinations for ova and parasites. Erica Tinermann, a laboratory technologist from Memorial Medical Center, will lead the training effort for the laboratory.

The Center is also hoping to recruit a nurse midwife to join the team. This will help us establish a good maternal and child health program. We have acquired a pediatric weighing scale and will be starting a well baby clinic during the later half of the year.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT WORKER (CHDW) TRAINING

The 1998 Missions Team started an educational program to impart basic medical and community health knowledge to the villagers at Agbozume. Twenty students received the initial training. Six students continue to receive training at the IHDN Family Medical Center. They have acquired skills to the level of Nursing Assistant and work at the clinic while we await the recruitment of a nurse. There is a need to help these students make a living after their training. At this time the Family Medical Center is not in a position to offer full-time paid employment to the students after their training is completed. Our strategy is therefore to encourage the students to become owners of their own businesses and then volunteer eight hours a week. When they are able to work elsewhere to make a living, the demands for IHDN financial support will be lessened. Three of the students have expressed a desire to enter into poultry farming and animal rearing and are waiting for investment capital and technical assistance to help them start their farms. Future trainees will be recruited when these students leave to start their own business. Eventually, IHDN expects to have trained a large group of young men and women as CHDW to promote health in the community while they engage in their own livelihood.

DENTAL CARE PROGRAM AT AGBOZUME

During our last mission trip to Ghana, IHDN was privileged to have a volunteer dental team. The need for appropriate dental care was so great that it was felt that ongoing periodic dental services should be provided along side medical care. In February 1999, the dental care program was initiated. The program includes education in oral hygiene and provision of dental services, including extractions. Dental care is currently provided once a month using the resources at the Family Medical Center. Dr. Anthony Agamah, a dentist at the Police Hospital, Accra, is currently leading the development of this project with other Ghanaian dentists.

IHDN has procured a dental set, including a dental chair, which has been shipped to Ghana for the establishment of a dental clinic.

COMPUTER SCIENCE TRAINING PROGRAM

IHDN Started a computer science training program during our 1998 mission trip to Ghana. However, we had to suspend training pending the completion of the computer science laboratory. We will resume full-time training when the 1999 team returns to Ghana in August. Tim Rice and Doug Dockter will be working to develop the curriculum for the training program. We also want to recruit a computer science teacher to continue to the training after the team is gone. The areas of training will include word processing, data management and processing, and desktop publishing. In the future we plan to introduce complex applications like statistical analysis. IHDN needs people with computer skills to volunteer to spend time in Ghana to strengthen the program. We also welcome used computers that are at least first-generation Pentium machines.

1999 IHDN MISSION TEAM

A 14-member mission volunteer team plans to travel to Ghana from August 7 to 26, 1999. The team is currently undergoing intensive training to prepare for the trip. The guide we are studying is "A New Agenda For Medical Missions" by Merrill Ewert, 1993. We have used this tool to prepare for previous trips. One of the main lessons learned so far is that Africans acknowledge health as a function of the community. Family and society play important roles in healing and wholeness. The Western view of health has failed to meet the real needs of the world's poor. The biblical view of health is "shalom" or peace. Shalom is a positive quality that exists when people are in total harmony, total peace with the world. Health is a product of moral and social standards as well as medicine. These studies have had a tremendous impact on the team.

Most of the volunteers are currently raising funds for the trip. The estimated cost per person is about \$2,900. Gifts are fully tax-deductible and are very much welcomed.



CELEBRATION IN SPRINGFIELD

Praise God for helping us with the shipment to Ghana last month. Several people from Springfield volunteered their time and efforts on two separate afternoons. We loaded two truck type trailers (one 40 feet and one 20 feet) with medical and non-medical supplies for shipment to Ghana. The excitement and the fellowship the packing created and the loading of the trucks were testimonies to the Name we bear. The driver, a youth minister, was so touched by our fellowship that he volunteered to return to load the second container on a Saturday! Please pray for the safe arrival and clearing of the goods in Ghana prior to the team's arrival.

We also thank the women from Hope Evangelical Free Church who helped with the pre-shipment packing of supplies and record keeping. May the Lord bless you and your families.

VACANCY ON IHDN-USA BOARD

Dr. Kwesi Dugbatey, IHDN vice president, has decided to step down and give someone else an opportunity to serve on the IHDN-USA Board. IHDN thanks Dr. Dugbatey for his efforts in the development of the organization. We wish him God's blessings in his new endeavors. As a result, a new vacancy exists on the Board. The Board meets twice a year for business. Board members also provide guidance, contribute money and time to help with the organizational development. Please feel free to contact Dr. Agamah if you or someone you know might be interested in serving on the Board.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 12-31-98

Total Revenue	\$45,716
Total Expenses	\$53,823
Deficit	(\$8,017)

MISSIONARY RECRUITMENT

IHDN is currently recruiting missionaries who will be committed to go to Ghana and spend at least three months. Longer periods are also possible. Our ministries encompass many areas that most people would be able to fill. We are open to those who feel called by the Lord to spend time overseas to serve Him. IHDN housing should be completed later this year. IHDN will assist in program and ministry development. Areas of involvement are **Christian Leadership Training, Agriculture, Enterprise Development, Computer Science, Teaching, Science Education, Construction and Engineering, Community Development, Public Health, Social Work, Medicine and Nursing.**

Please contact Dr. Agamah at the IHDN address or phone number on the cover if you are interested or know of someone who might be interested.

