

Nov 6, 2008

Dear Friends,

It was only with your kind help that we were able to successfully complete the 2008 summer project in Damongo. It was great to be back in Ghana and we so enjoyed visiting with old friends, and meeting new ones. Altogether the Tools for Schools Africa team worked with about 350 teachers. That was a few less than we had anticipated, but the invitations to the teachers in the Tuna district got hung up on a desk and did not get delivered. As a result we were short about 40 teachers from that area, but we were still able to send teaching manuals to them.

The three new Canadian teachers on our team found working with Ghanaian teachers to be a life altering experience. It is easy to take for granted the resources we have in Canadian schools, and the level to which our schools are funded.

TFS-A ran four teacher training sessions. Teachers arrived by any means available, by foot, bicycle, motorbike, lorry, bus and trotro. The teachers from Lingbinsi even had to ford the Volta river in a canoe as part of a very long journey. We were so pleased that the logistics worked out so well: the manuals got there and the paper supplies got there at the same time as the teachers! We are so appreciative of our African team: Bishop Philip, Father Laz and Father Charles who made most of the arrangements for food and lodging, Adriana who was the conference organizer and Peter who acted as our registrar. This is a picture of the team when we met to confirm all arrangements just before our first group of teachers arrived.



Tools for Schools Project 2 Team: Adriana (conference organizer), Jean, Laz (our terrific go-to guy) Marilyn P., Marilyn G., Father Charles (our communications man) Doug and Cathy Below: teachers arriving



Teachers signing in at the registration desk with Peter (blue shirt)



The teaching sessions were very well received, and the teachers were like sponges, soaking up everything we had to offer with never a complaint. They were enthusiastic and keen to learn teaching methods that would help them in their classrooms as many have not been able to get any formal teacher training. They were also so pleased with the teaching manuals and teaching resources they were able to take back to their schools. Each teachers left with English, math and science teaching aids. Here are some pictures of the teachers at the TFS-A sessions.



Each teacher was presented with a certificate upon completion of the training. Father Laz is handing them out.



Of course it is difficult to feed up to 120 people at a time, and we thanks the Agatha's and their helpers for the fine food prepared for us and for delegates.

We also were thanked with hand woven and sewn traditional smocks which we wear with pride.

It truly does 'take a village' to put a project like this together. We thank the many fine Canadian individuals, businesses and organizations that helped fund this training project. Although everyone cannot be named, many of the donors are listed at www.givemeaning.com/project/Damongo. As well, we want to acknowledge the hard work and ongoing support of Norm Dueck and Edmonton Rotary South. As well we thank Kathy Knowles who supplied us with books at cost.



This picture of these children in a library is important to us because it shows that the resources delivered a year and a half earlier are well cared for and are being used daily by the students. The school had made one classroom into a library and children over the lunch hour were in the library using the books. One boy showed me his favorite book, Three Billy Goats Gruff, and read to me from it. Awesome!



We continue to move ahead with Project #3 in Damongo which includes:

(1) the extension of the St. Anne's Boarding House with a dorm for another 24 girls. In rural villages, there is no schooling beyond grade 6, so girls must have a safe and affordable place to stay. the building to the left is the existing structure but more space is badly needed as girls are sleeping two to a bed.

(2) the expansion of the scholarship program (we now have twelve girls on full

scholarship, 3 at the junior high and 9 at the high school. We are pleased that another Central Alberta NGO, A Better World, will be partnering with us on this project.

(3) more teacher training in 2010.

Words cannot express our gratitude for your support of this project. There are many good projects out there, but we are very proud of the fact that we all pay our own air travel so that donated funds go directly to the project. If you would like to support our future endeavors, there are options:



Left: Hilton Korley; above Francis Amoah

1. You can purchase fine African art on this site in the near future. Two fine artists from Ghana, Francis Amoah and Hilton Korley are supporting our cause with their art. Like fair trade coffee, these are 'fair trade' paintings, giving the artists a good return for their fine work. In the past Amoah's paintings have been purchased by the United Nations as

part of the Christmas card set they produce. Hilton Korley is one of the finest young African artists today, and does wonderful works of African people.

2. Gift cards: Do you have a hard-to-buy-for person? We offer you a humanitarian option. Our gift cards have beautiful pictures we have taken in Damongo that acknowledge a donation on behalf of the recipient, in any value greater than \$20. How else will you buy a tax deductible gift appropriate for Christmas, birthdays or just about any occasion? For \$200, you can educate a girl for an entire year, with room and board!

3. As well, we have fine T-shirts that you will find most comfortable to wear. Your purchase will help us by spreading the word on Tools for Schools Africa and support the project financially. Each adult shirt is \$20 and youth sizes are \$15. plus shipping and handling.



4. Donations can be made online at www.givemeaning.com/project/Damongo

5. For those of you in the Central Alberta area, we are offering a day to create your own "Travel Journal". Our journals have caught a lot of attention, and we would like to share what we do with any interested parties. The cost is \$60, and the class runs on Jan 17th. Contact us through this site if you would like to register.

Thanks again everyone. You are one of the group of people Margaret Mead talks about in her famous quote:

A small group of thoughtful people could change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Have a wonderful year, and keep in touch with Tools for Schools Africa Foundation!

Marilyn

