



GYDlines

gender and youth development // APRIL 2011

IT'S RAINING MEN (AND WOMEN AND CHILDREN)!!

Happy April Everyone! Hope you're all just dandy and enjoying the rains..those of you that are actually experiencing the rains, that is. A lot has happened since we put out our last newsletter in November, so we thought we'd be the awesome committee that we are, and share some of these things with you all! How about that! Well, for starters, we had a GYD Meeting just last month, where we discussed a number of important things, including whether or not Liz Levine should be an honorary member...which we all decided was necessary. We also discussed new and improved baking recipes for all the delicious baked goods that you guys have probably been eating at the sub-offices...(did you know that rather than using Blue Band, you can use the margarine that comes in sachets? Granted it has a rather uncanny banana flavor, it stills gets the job done). And, well, of course we also discussed more important things like the Date Auction that we'll be having at this year's All-Vol Conference, the importance of focusing on Women's Groups in Ghana, and not just women and children, and how we need to get rid of the stereotype that GYD is a girls' club, which we are not. We also discussed having monthly themes to help all of you kick-start your brains into thinking about GYD related activities, so brains...START WORKING! (See the handy dandy column on the right for a list of monthly themes.)

We also discussed the **Women in Ghana Book Project**. Hopefully you all remember what this is. We've decided that to make it a bit easier on you all, and to hopefully encourage you to participate, the GYD reps in your region will travel TO YOU for the interview. All now that this requires is for you to step up and tell us about the important woman/women in your community so that we can come and interview her. There are no qualifications for what makes someone worthy of being in this book, we just want to hear stories from inspirational women from all walks of life.

We also want to encourage you all to do activities involving **Men as Partners**. Former volunteers have done this with great success and it's a great way to increase the demographic of men in GYD activities.

Well, that's that! I hope you all enjoy the articles in this month's newsletter. The theme was WORDS and we got lots of great submissions, so a big big thank you to all that submitted. We know that all of you are doing something GYD related, whether you know it or not, and we would love to have more submissions sent in for future issues of GYDlines.

-GYD Committee

OUR MISSION:

CREATE SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO GENDER AND YOUTH EQUALITY ISSUES BY ENCOURAGING DIALOGUE, PROVIDING GYD RESOURCES AND PROMOTING COUNTRY-WIDE LINKAGES

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MONTHLY THEMES!

APRIL: BREAKING STEREOTYPES

MAY: MOTHER'S DAY

JUNE: FATHER'S DAY

JULY: DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

AUGUST: YOUTH COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

SEPTEMBER: FOCUS ON EDUCATION

OCTOBER: ENVIRONMENT - STOP BURNING!

NOVEMBER: NUTRITION

DECEMBER: FAMILY PLANNING

ROMANTIC TRO RIDE WANTED.
WILL PROVIDE THE CHICKENS.

ALL-VOLS 2011

Rihanna, Harry Potter, and Indomie Noodles: My Epic Journey to the National Spelling Bee

-Tany Chung / SED / Volta Region

S-P-E-L-L-I-N-G
B-E-E

It started with one seemingly simple word: CREW. I was sitting in a musty church, quiet except for the nervous twitters of the primary school children overflowing from every pew. It was my village school's first official Spelling Bee ever, and I was the pronouncer. I said it again, more loudly this time. "CREW." A blank stare from my speller was all I got in return. He asked for the definition, and I gave it to him. He stared at the ground. Still nothing. Desperate, I turned to the section of teachers in the back and said it again, an edge of panic creeping into my voice. "CREW?"

Some shook their heads. Some turned to each other and started jabbering in the local Ewe language. I felt defeated. If these kids don't know a simple 4-letter word, I thought, how are they ever going to make it to the next level? The headmaster stood up, walked over to me, and said gently, "Sister Abra, we do not know what you are saying. Please, can you spell it?"

Turns out they knew it. They all knew what "CREW" was. They all knew how to spell it. But they had never, ever heard someone pronounce it the way I did. They also knew how to spell most of the other words I threw at them. It was an enlightening, delightful moment. These kids are smart! They already have a decent word bank. They are misspelling words they know how to spell, because they just don't know that they know it simply due to the pronunciation. And so, my mission became clear. Get my Spelling Club together. Build their word bank. Expose them to listening and understanding American English. Turn them into viable competitors for the regional finals. Piece of cake, right?

I'm no teacher. I struggled for years in corporate America before joining the Peace Corps. So, with typical corporate enthusiasm and ignorance, I plunged headfirst into teaching six bright and eager girls how to spell everything from SQUISH to FROU-FROU with zero regard for how teachers teach in Ghana. Or anywhere else in the world. We learned songs. They loved "Lean On Me" and Rihanna's "Umbrella." We watched *The Little Mermaid* and epi-

sodes of *Glee*. I expressly forbade any of them to speak Ewe during our sessions. We played endless word games, and read aloud excerpts of popular stories like *Ella Enchanted* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. I fancied myself a bit like Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society*. Maybe a splash of Michele Pfeiffer ala *Dangerous Minds*. In hindsight, I definitely should have focused on the more technical aspects of spelling and vocabulary building. But I just wanted them to have fun. I wanted them to become obsessed with reading the way I did at their age. I wanted them to fall in love with words.

We played endless word games, and read aloud excerpts of popular stories like *Ella Enchanted* and *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. I fancied myself a bit like Robin Williams in *Dead Poets Society*.

Despite my delusional shortcomings as a teacher, one of my girls, Esenam Walker, made it to the national finals. She was one of 10 Volta kids to represent her region in Accra. In Accra, my 10 Volta kids were amongst 92 spellers from all over Ghana. The majority of them were from the Greater Accra region. The winner of the national finals was a brilliant girl, Jessica Penu (age 12) from Tema. Jessica will be heading to Washington, D.C. this May to compete in the international Scripps Spelling Bee. Ghana is the only African country represented in this competition.

Will the winner of the Ghana Spelling Bee ever come from outside the Greater Accra region? At Bee Camp -- a period of three days before the finals when the kids (ages 8-14) all go on field trips, eat copious amounts of Indomie and get to know each other -- I saw the Accra kids reading books like *Ender's Game*. Theirs were the parents who called periodically in near-perfect American accents. They were the only ones to question my Ghanaian English, asking me -- in perfect American accents -- why I "spoke funny."

(continued on pg. 3)



Five girls from my Spelling Club. They are holding up a thank-you card for MTN Foundation, who sponsored their road to the regional finals in Ho, V/R. None of them made it past the regional competition, but they say they will never forget the experience.

Here is where we PCVs come in. Regardless of our sectors, we each have the unique ability to help our kids build the basic intellectual foundation that will lead them out of their villages and into the world. We can turn them onto books and bigger ideas. We can improve their accents, their comprehension. We can expose them to their regional capitals, to Accra. And eventually, we can turn some of them into spelling champions.

Now what? Request a Spelling Kit and form your own Spelling Clubs. Host your own school Spelling Bees. Get your kids to read, read, read. You don't have to be a great speller yourself. A basic love of reading to spread around is all you need to make an impact.

Want to be involved with the Ghana Spelling Bee? The 2011-12 Bee Season is kicking off in a few months. We need regional trainers to participate in a training session during July/August, and to coordinate their areas for the regional competition. If you're an interested 1st year PCV, please contact Tanya Chung via phone (0271170133) or email (Tanya.Chung@gmail.com).

I wanted them to fall in love with words.



One of my Volta girls, Esenam Walker, age 9, in the second round of the National Finals. She misspelled GARIBALDI by one letter. She is currently on chapter 7 of *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*, and can't wait to read the next one.



The National Spelling Finals were held on February 5th at the College of Physicians and Surgeons in Accra. Most of the children cried after misspelling their words and had to be taken away from the cameras to a special "Comfort Room" where hugs and snacks were readily available.

REQUEST A SPELLING KIT TODAY!

- ◆ Rules on running a proper Spelling Bee
- ◆ Word Lists
- ◆ Pronunciation Guide
- ◆ Online Dictionary
- ◆ Prefixes and Suffixes
- ◆ Root Words
- ◆ Languages of Origin
- ◆ Book Excerpts
- ◆ Games
- ◆ Song Lyrics

Contact Tanya Chung via phone (0271170133) or email (Tanya.Chung@gmail.com)

HOW TO START A SPELLING CLUB:

1. Request a Spelling Kit.
2. Find kids ages 8-14 who love to read, who are articulate and love to speak in English. Ask teachers and headmasters to help identify these kids.
3. Host a spelling bee.
4. Select your top spellers. The younger the better. Train them regularly using the tools from the Spelling Kit. Pit them against spellers from other schools in the area.
5. Begin exploring ways to sponsor them for their Regional Spelling Bee. If you find sponsorship, begin prepping your kids for the regional finals.

OFFICIAL BEE SEASON

May – September 2011:

Training/Preparations for the regional competitions

October – December 2011:

Regional competitions all over Ghana (detailed schedule TBD)

February 2012:

National Finals in Accra

IT'S SING-A-LONG TIME!

-Becky Pflueger / Edu / Brong Ahafo

Becky Pflueger is a girl. Becky Pflueger has a girls' club at her school. Her girls have taught her the following poem and song respectively, and for a small fee (a beer or two), she will sing these to you...and maybe even incorporate a little jig too. All you have to do is ask.

"Young Woman of Africa"

Young Woman of Africa
 Young Woman of Africa
 Do not exchange your bodies for wealth
 For your bodies are your wealth
 With beauty, dignity and respect
 Do not sit down and open your mouths wide
 For the men of Africa to feed on you
 Get up and work to redo your image as real daughters of Eve
 And do what others doubt
 You look like waste for the men of Africa
 When you follow them for what they have
 They then dump you after sacking your golden nectar
 And leave you as prey to be eaten by hungry vultures
 It is therefore a challenge to you
 Young woman of Africa
 To get up and work
 And let the men know that you are not a rug under their feet

Song:

We are leaders and rulers of the twenty-first century
 Bring science to the Ghanaian youth
 Bring science to the Ghanaian youth
 Innovation, science, technology
 Are the fields we shall conquer
 Innovation, science, technology
 Are the fields we shall conquer
 we shall, we shall, we shall break the myth woowoo
 we shall, we shall, we shall break the myth woowoo
 we shall, we shall, we shall break the myth woowoo
 we youth shall break the myth surrounding science and maths.



Valley of the Dolls...in Ghana

-Dan Bertolino / Wat/San / Volta Region

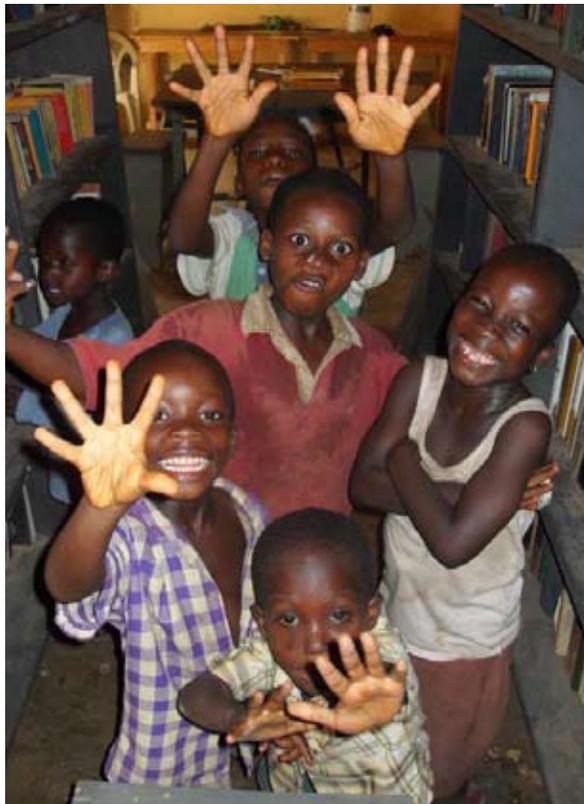
Locked behind a door that hadn't been opened for two years, as a result of a missing key, I found something most surprising. A library filled with books ranging from *Oliver Twist* to *The Valley of Dolls*... my initial thought, after I got over the fact that I was covered in spider webs, was what on earth is this doing in my tiny Ghanaian village? After the shock of finding a library that had equal amounts of books to any one of the Peace Corps offices wore down, I set to work cleaning and discarding. The mildly offensive books of yesteryear were banished, the moldy books of today destroyed, and the those deemed worthy were reapointed their ceremonious positions on the shelves of the Ve-Deme community library.

Once the library was looking rather spiffy I was mildly shocked that it was not immediately filled with children. The same children that would spend their days attempting to 'illegally' enter my house had no interest in sitting with me in a room full of glorious books. I couldn't quite figure out why this was. So, like Winnie the Pooh, I sat there saying think, think, think. Without much thought at all I realized the complicated strings of words in the books that surrounded me appeared to be nothing more than a series of illogical, hard to pronounce, nonsense. So, to entice the children to come explore the wonderful world of literature I painted a lion and elephant on a cabinet and filled it with the few children's books the library had (eventually adding more upon returning from a trip to America). As the kids slowly started to trickle into the library I realized two things. The first was that children can be very easily deceived (it's now my belief that a cartoon animal can get a child to do anything... that's what is so dangerous about that evil mouse cooperation). The second, which is somewhat more important, was that some children's books are simply much better than others for certain tasks.

The Eleventh Hour by Graeme Base was my favorite book as child. Full of mystery and intrigue, I found the story of Horace's eleventh birthday to be enthralling (and, sadly, still do). Unfortunately, with few exceptions, the students of Ve-Deme did not agree. They much preferred P.D. Eastman's simplistic and rather straight forward

Go, Dog. Go!. The reasoning behind this is quite clear to me now. P.D. Eastman paired each of his sentences with a picture that clearly showed what the words meant. To a child that is still learning the English language this allows for a greater degree of independence and leads to higher levels of comprehension. Taking this cue I set out on a campaign of drawing and writing. Word and picture pairs have allowed some students in my community to make great strides in their efforts to improve their English language skills. This small effort has given a boost in their confidence that has worn away much of the anxiety and fraught that had riddled their previous ventures into the world of words. Eventually the pictures are no longer needed and a child develops the courage to sit next to you and read a book wanting, and still often needing, correction.

So if you're interested in starting a literacy campaign, or stumble upon a forgotten library, remember to start small and to have patience. We all have to conquer words like cat and dog before we can take on books like *War and Peace*. And remember to always encourage your children with a pleasant chant of Read, Student. Read!



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A Few Words from the Guys and Gals of the Northern Region

Money Is The Root Of All Evil

Adam Nihad

Robert, Romeo and Radash are the three orphans left behind by Mr. and Mrs. Yeboah. Robert is the eldest son, followed by Radash with Romeo being the youngest. The death of their parents has taught them a great lesson, which is "One must struggle to make ends meet".

These three brothers engaged themselves in hunting. Games gotten from this hunting are sometimes sold for money which they use to cater for their needs.

On one fine morning, the three brothers went into the forest in search of game. As they were moving from one corner of the forest to the other, they became exhausted and decided to have some rest under a big mahogany tree where they enjoyed their little gari and pepper.

Suddenly, an old woman appeared from no-where and beckoned them to come. At first, the three brothers became so frightened and wanted to take to their heels, but she commanded them not to run.

Robert being the eldest of all gathered courage and went to the old woman. "Robert my grandson" said the old woman. Robert became very puzzled as to how she got his name. "You see the large odum tree there, hurry and get your brothers and dig for gold there." The old woman continued. "Robert still became confused and wanted to ask a question. "But granny who" But to his surprise, the old woman was nowhere to be found. He ran quickly to his brothers, shivering and perplexed; he explained every detail to his brothers. The three brothers, however, decided to stick to the old woman's advice. They went home, rejoicing and praising God.

The next fine morning, they made preparations and got their equipment ready for digging. They marched to the forest singing and chanting songs. Sooner than later, they reached the big odum tree, and begun digging. In less than an hour, they had almost finished digging when instructed Romeo to hurry home and get them some food, since they were very tired and hungry. Romeo hurries home while Radash and Robert rest under the tree.

At home, an evil thought runs through the mind of Romeo. He made a plan, which was to poison his brothers and take all the riches. He therefore mashed kenkey and poisoned it. He then hurried back to the forest.

At the forest, the two brothers also thought of killing their younger brother to accumulate all the gold.

In no time, Romeo got to the forest and handed the food over to his brothers. Radash quickly got up and hit him with an ax, which he fell down death. Robert and Radash rejoiced and danced over the death of their brother. They then took the food and begun eating. In a twinkle of an eye, they started vomiting and later died, leaving all behind the riches and wealth, they struggled for.

So they say "Money is the root of all evil". However, with unity and love Robert, Radash and Romeo could have lived happily ever after. So goes the saying "Unity is strength".

No Title

Adam Nihad

Once there lived a poor girl called Akusua of age fifteen, whose parents died in a motor accident, and was taken care of by her rich uncle called Ernest Debra "Alias, Money Swimmer". Mr. Ernest Debra is a professional law practitioner while Miss Araba was a petty trader. They have a daughter by the name Misbel.

Misbel was a sixteen year old girl, schooling at one of the best senior high schools in the town. However, poor Akusua was taken as a house help and being maltreated by Miss Araba and her husband.

Akusua does all the house chores including; scrubbing, mopping, fetching water, washing and cooking which at time is restricted from eating the food she usually cooks. Misbel on the other hand, always lazes and idles at home without helping Akusua and neither taking her studies seriously.

At school, she always follows bad companies and engage immoral acts such as, pilfering, chasing boys, and a host of others.

Teachers who knew her warned her to turn a new leaf but, all their advice fell on deaf ears and even sometimes disrespects them. Her bad character reach her parents but they overlooked at it and instead continues pampering her and pestering Akusua.

While Akusua on the other hand always prays to God to take her away from her troubles. Unlike Misbel, Akusua was loved by everyone especially a wealthy neighbour who is names Aunt Veronica.

Three years after Misbel was enrolled in school, she was preparing to write the final exams, when sad news reached her about the sudden death of her parents. This made her shocked and went unconscious. After one week when her parents were buried, she became seriously ill, and was sent to the hospital. To her outer surprise, the doctor informed her she was pregnant. Misbel became embarrassed and dejected so she

The Magic Pot

Saaka Sulemana

Long, long ago, there lived an old woman who sold the best soup in the market. It was chicken soup. Nobody knew the old woman's name or where she lived. Nobody knew why her soup was always the best in the market or why it was so hot. But most people did not worry about that. They bought the soup because it was delicious and always hot. They ate the soup hungrily.

Every morning, the old woman came to the market square. She carried a big black pot of hot chicken soup on her head. Then she sat down quietly under a tree and began to sell her soup. She never spoke to anyone. The village people quickly gathered around and soon the old woman's soup was finished. Immediately, she picked up her pot and hurried away silently.

Not far from the market square lived a small boy named Kalari. He liked the soup very much and he wanted to know who the old woman was and where she came from. One day when the old woman put her empty pot on her head and quickly left the market square, Kalari followed her.

The old woman walked fast and they went a long, long way. She climbed up a high hill with Kalari following closely behind. Evening came and Kalari was afraid but he went on. At last the woman came to a little hut on the hill and disappeared inside.

In front of the hut stood a very large pot, "How big the pot is", thought Kalari. He went up to the pot and carefully looked inside it. It was empty.

When the woman came out of the hut, Kalari hurriedly hid himself. The woman went up to the large pot and began to sing:

Let's start cooking,
Let's start cooking,
Magic pot, Magic pot
Onions and tomatoes,
Onions and tomatoes,
Chicken soup
Chicken soup.

Very soon steam came out of the pot and the soup was ready. The smell was excellent and Kalari was very hungry after his long walk. When the woman went back into her hut, Kalari went up to the pot. He saw that it was full of hot, thick chicken soup but when he looked under the pot he saw that there was no fire. "I must have some of it, I am so hungry!" Kalari said to himself and put his hand into the pot to take a piece of chicken. But suddenly the old woman came out of her hut and found Kalari with his hand in the pot. "Oh, oh, oh" she cried angrily. "Oh, oh, oh!" Kalari raced down the hill. The old woman chased after him but she could not catch him. Kalari ran and ran until he reached home. He told his parents and everyone in the village about the old woman on the hill and her magic pot. They looked at the hill and saw a cloud there "Yes, we see the steam of the magic pot," they said.

From that day on, the old woman stopped coming to the market with her soup. Nobody went up that hill to see her because they were afraid of her. But now, when people see clouds on the hill, they say "Look! There is the steam of the magic pot."

The Longest Story

Saaka Sulemana

Once upon a time, there lived a Chief who liked to listen to stories but he heard so many stories that sometimes he stopped his storytellers and finished the stories himself.

One day, the Chief sent his servants everywhere to find a good storyteller, "our Chief will give many presents to the man who will tell him the longest story in the world and make him laugh," the servants shouted in the streets.

Many people came to the Chief and told him very long stories. They tried to make him laugh, but nobody could do that. The Chief always said, "That is not the longest story and these is nothing to laugh at".

One morning a boy came to the Chief and said "oh, my chief, I will tell you the longest story in the world and make you laugh." The boy began:

Long, long ago, there lived a man called Ubanbau. He ate so much that he never stopped eating. The King of that country heard about Ubanbau and said "Bring him to me, I want to see how much he can eat. The King called for hundreds of thousands of pots of soup, meat, and fruit. Hundreds of camels carried the pots on their backs. Many people came to see Ubanbau's dinner. Then drummers began to drum, the musicians began to play and the people sung songs.

Ubanbau made a bow to the King and said to the people, "Now look at me! Look at me! Look at me!" Ubanbau began to eat soup. And he ate, and he ate, and he ate, and he ate, and he ate...

"Well, what then?" asked the Chief.

"He ate, and he ate, and what then?"

"this is only the first pot and there were many thousands of pots! Wait a little" And the boy continued:

"... and he ate and ate and ate and ate..." At the end of the day the Chief ordered him to stop until the next morning.

On the next morning, the Chief asked the boy to go on with his story. "Now, what can you tell us about your Ubanbau?" he asked. The boy continued "Ubanbau not

only ate, but drank too, so he drank and then he ate. And he ate and he ate..." The Chief looked at the boy and began to laugh, "Well, my boy, your story is the longest in the world! Have a rest now, stop!" So, the young storyteller stopped his story. He received many presents from the Chief, climbed up on a camel and rode away still telling the story, "... and he ate and he ate, and he ate..."

The Girl Child

Yeboah Abdul Salam

Education is for all
Education widens our knowledge
But the girl child is disrespected
The boy child takes the position of the girl
What a hurt! This has brought to the needy girl child
The deplorable girl, you abide and help train up the boy
You who could educate a whole nation
Presently await the danger of remaining unlettered
All due to the category you found yourself in
What is the destiny of the girl?
Where rests her defense?
Not in her present posture
When all she perceives is hindered
Confined to her scanty world
Is our outlook fair in the world?
Where education now possesses the clue to progression
Parents, Care-takers, and Guardians
Educate your girl child.

Thank you

The Homeless

Yeboah Abdul Salam

The clouds are gathering and it would surely rain
I, the homeless
Where would I slumber
In this world of inaccuracy
Come! Rainbow come! and let me feel assured
Usher me your trail so that I follow
Oh! It is grave to be homeless
Yet the situation had made it so
Why is the world so unkind?
Well! That is what I'm ordained to
Nature! Nature!! Nature!!!
Whilst my colleagues are well harboured
I find nowhere to lay my head
Oh! Why me?
Well that is what I'm destined to

Thank You

GYDistings

Take Your Daughter to Work Day:

Happening in May, this annual event encourages volunteers to take a group of girls to various work places within their communities, to expose girls to a working environment, and to hopefully inspire them. More information will be available in the coming weeks, but applications will be accepted for you all to apply for 40 GHc for this event. Contact Elyse for more details.

All-Vol Date Auction

At the upcoming All-Volunteer conference, GYD will be sponsoring two auctions to raise funds. One will be a normal auction of precious objects left behind by COSing volunteers (or unwanted things donated by you). And the other? A good old-fashioned *Date Auction*.

Huh?

How do we have a date auction here in Ghana?

- For the date auction, you, you and a friend, or you and a group of people think of some crazy, glamorous, fun and/or exciting things to do somewhere in Ghana and then auction yourselves and your fun plans off to all PCVs at all-vols.

The money we raise will be used for several things. One will be to finance a *GYD Small Projects Fund*. So you have this really cool project you want to do, which somehow relates to GYD, but don't have the cash. The SPF will be something to which you can apply for grants of up to 100 Ghc.

So if you'd like to auction yourself off, please send Peggy the following, *as well as* a sexy picture of you self or your group, *BY **THE 1st of APRIL 2011**

- Name / Group Name
- Location of date
- Duration of date
- Accommodation details
- Specifics of date (what you'll be doing)

margaret.r.mayo@gmail.com