



# Newsletter of the Friends of Ghana

# The Talking Drum

Volume 15, Number 1

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## RPCV Cheryl Anderson Serving as Ghana USAID Director

Submitted by Ken Autrey

**26** years after completing her service as a Peace Corps teacher in Ghana, Cheryl Anderson returned as USAID/Ghana mission country director. Last August, she was sworn in by Earl Gast, Acting Assistant USAID Administrator for Africa. According to Gast, "Cheryl has the experience, training and skill to do great things in Ghana. Under her leadership, the mission will flourish."

Previously, she served from 2004 to 2009 as Deputy Director and then Director of the USAID mission in Kenya. Anderson notes, "My past USAID work has provided both fantastic opportunities and serious challenges. I was evacuated from Kinshasa in 1991 following a major military mutiny.

"I worked with early HIV voluntary counseling and testing in Uganda in the early 90s and then did post-genocide conflict resolution and reconstruction in Rwanda in 1994. Later, I worked on USAID's Tibet program and on Southern Sudan development just before the peace agreement between north and south. All of this has led me to my dream job in Ghana."

She lives in Accra with her husband Maina Kiai, a Kenyan who works on social justice film documentaries. She has two daughters, 14 and 12, who attend the Lincoln Community School.

Anderson grew up in South Salem, New York, which is on the Connecticut border some fifty miles north of Manhattan. She studied International Relations, Economics, and French at Colgate University. "When I was a senior," she recalls, "Peace Corps was the only option that really interested me. I had a choice among three possible countries, and I said I wanted to go wherever they could send me earliest. That was Ghana."

She has positive memories of training at Koforidua. "Looking back," she says, "I think I appreciate it much more now than I did at the time. The cross-cultural and language instruction were excellent." She made good friends during training and has since stayed in touch with many of them. "Our group has been circulating a hilarious photo of everyone dressed as tacky tourists -- I laugh to think back about how amusing our Ghanaian trainers must have found us."

She became a math teacher at Archbishop Porter Girls' Secondary School in Takoradi. Later, she was also assigned some

French classes, which enabled her to use her language background. She says, "I was recently reunited with the teacher who left the school after my first year and gave me the opportunity to teach French."

Her teaching of math posed some challenges. She recalls, "My students were all girls, and occasionally some of them would say that girls can't do math. I took this as a challenge, and we had fun with it. I hope I made a difference."



Cheryl Anderson as a PCV at Archbishop Porter Girls' Secondary School in Takoradi in the early eighties.

Economically, the early eighties were tough in Ghana. "Even now," she says, "older Ghanaians show an appreciation for our contingent's ability to cope during hard times. But for me it was all new and different anyway. I wouldn't trade those years for anything. I got far more out of the experience than I gave."

Anderson has few regrets but thinks if she had to do it over again, she'd find a way to take on a community project in a nearby village while working on an isolated suburban school campus. "I loved my school community," she says, "but it was atypical, and I would like to have experienced life in a Ghanaian village."

Like many volunteers in that era, Anderson will remember December 31, 1981, the day Jerry Rawlings led a coup to overthrow the government of Dr. Hilla Liman. "To celebrate the New Year," she says, "a number of us had traveled to Busua Beach, where we had cramped, mosquito-filled hut accommodations and had to be resourceful about food and beverages. Because of the coup we stayed put for a few days and had a good excuse to spend more time at the beach."

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# Message from FOG President Frank Yates

Greetings to fellow Friends of Ghana members.

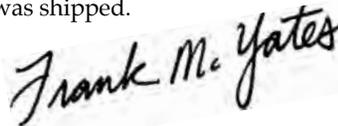
As I am writing this letter, the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics have just begun. I was intrigued to see that an alpine skier from Ghana was participating in the Games. Kwame Nkrumah-Acheampong will be participating in the Men's Giant Slalom and Men's Slalom events. He was born in Great Britain, and attended the University of Cape Coast where he majored in Tourism. He previously represented Ghana at the West African Student games in tennis in July, 2009. His nickname is Snow Leopard. (Information was taken from the official Vancouver Olympics website <http://www.vancouver2010.com>.)

Coming in about a year is the first event marking the 50th Anniversary of Peace Corps. If you would like to lead the Friends of Ghana efforts to commemorate the occasion, or if you have ideas on how we should recognize service groups such as Ghana I and Peace Corps service in Ghana over the past 50 years, please let me know. NPCA has been holding webinars to train groups on how to celebrate the 50th Anniversary, and may hold more as the time approaches.

The Friends of Ghana group on the Connected Peace Corps site (<http://www.peacecorpsconnect.org/>) now has 72 members. A recent post is a request for photos from Ghana from the early days for inclusion in the 2011 International Calendar produced by the RPCVs of Wisconsin. The deadline for submission is February 28.

To join the Friends of Ghana group on the Connected Peace Corps site, click on the blue link "Join Friends of Ghana" on the right side above the array of Members photos. If you haven't yet joined, you can show brief information about yourself in your profile, post text messages, photos, videos, blogs, and comments to other members. As more of our members join this site, we can provide lists by year of service to facilitate the organization of reunions.

I was contacted by Jennifer Brown, the Peace Corps Country Desk Officer for Ghana, regarding a request for assistance. Queen Anne's County High School in Centreville, MD collected school supplies as part of their service curriculum and wanted to send the supplies to students in Ghana. They packed up two 20-pound boxes, and were able to find local support to ship one box. They contacted Congressman Kratovil's office which then contacted the Peace Corps. Using the information I received from Jennifer, I called Cathy Terry at Queen Anne's County High School and found out that the cost to ship one 20-pound box to the school near Accra was \$117.85. I told her that we would find a way to get the box to Ghana. I emailed Jennifer with the information and asked her if the Peace Corps could send the box via diplomatic pouch. Jennifer agreed to contact the Country Director in Ghana to see if he would approve a one-time use of the pouch. Since I haven't heard back from Jennifer in two weeks, I am assuming that the box was shipped.



## Friends of Ghana Privacy Policy

Submitted by President Frank Yates

Annually, the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA) provides Friends of Ghana (FoGh) access to the NPCA Database for the purpose of sharing the names and contact information of FoGh members. This exchange of data is essential for maintaining a complete, up-to-date database. The information shared include, but is not limited to: full name; country of service; dates of service; home mailing address; email address; phone number; and spouse/partner name. This information is not sold or transferred to any third party by FoGh and has been and will be used strictly for communication purposes with our members.

FoGh will use the shared information received from NPCA and our members for 1) Recruitment and retention of members to FoGh and NPCA; 2) Helping Ghana Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) to organize reunions of their Peace Corps groups; and 3) Assisting requestors to find Ghana RPCVs by sharing the requestor contact information with the Ghana RPCV (allowing the Ghana

RPCV to decide whether to make contact with the requestor).

FoGh may be asked to provide the information in our database to NPCA. The use, by NPCA, of the information contained in our database will be governed by the same policy as FoGh. Members of FoGh have the opportunity to decline to have their data shared with NPCA. If you do not wish to have your data shared with NPCA, please email Ron Yamamoto at [rkyamamoto@aol.com](mailto:rkyamamoto@aol.com), or write Ron at 742 Arce Street, Watsonville, CA 95076 to opt out. ★

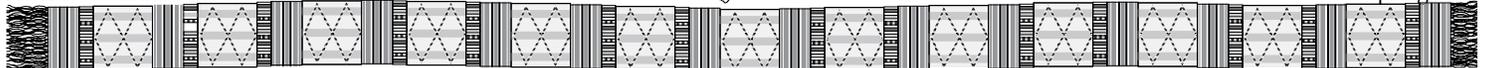
## Friends of Ghana Online Newsletter

Submitted by Ken Autrey

Increasingly, we hope to rely on the online version of our newsletter to stay in touch with Friends of Ghana members. Newsletters will continue to be posted on our website: <http://www.friendsofghana.org>.

Our hope is that as many members as possible will agree to forego the printed newsletter in favor of the online version. There are several advantages of a web-based publication over a printed and mailed newsletter. It saves money that could better be spent

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supporting projects in Ghana, it provides more possibilities for photos and other graphics, it has the advantage of immediacy, and it is less cumbersome to produce and distribute. We will continue mailing newsletters to those who prefer this format. **But if you are willing instead to receive an e-mailed notice with a newsletter link, please e-mail Ron Yamamoto ([rkymamoto@aol.com](mailto:rkymamoto@aol.com)) if you haven't already done so, and tell him to add you to that list.** ★

## FOG Treasurer's Report: 1/1/09 - 12/31/09

Submitted by Debby Prigal, Treasurer

<b>Beginning Balance on 1/1/09</b>		<b>\$5,190.07</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Membership Dues	\$942.50	
	<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>\$942.50</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>		
NPCA Affiliation Fee	(\$100.00)	
Four Newsletters	(\$417.59)	
Donation to Kayayo Project in Ghana	(\$400.00)	
	<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$917.59)</b>
<b>Closing Balance as of 12/31/09</b>		<b>\$5,214.98</b>

**Anderson:** (Cont. from Page 1, Column 2)

Not long thereafter, her parents paid her a visit. Anderson credits her parents for nurturing her early interest in public service, but she gained new appreciation for their tenacity when they flew over in 1982. The political situation was unstable, so she asked them to meet her in Lome instead of Accra. She planned a cushy trip, with accommodations at the Hotel du Golfe.

"But," she says, "My father reminded me recently that we were in touch only by letters and an occasional patched in call through ham radio. They took a chance on Air Afrique, an airline they had never heard of. On the flight from Abidjan, he had to take a child on his lap to fit everyone in the plane.

"They had only a six-week old letter telling them to meet me in Lome instead of Accra, so they were never so relieved as when they saw me on the airport roof waving as they got off the plane! I am now about the age they were then, and am not sure I could go through all that with such trust in my child."

Now back in Ghana as USAID Director in a more stable era, she manages programs in good governance, agricultural practices and food security, health care, and basic education. New initiatives in areas such as malaria and HIV/AIDS prevention have boosted Ghana's foreign assistance budget from \$80 million in 2008 to \$115 million in fiscal year 2009. She works with a staff of 40 to manage this budget and coordinate a variety of programs.

She was pleased when President Obama chose Ghana as his first sub-Saharan African country to visit. This highlighted the important partnership between the two countries. "One great thing about my job," she says, "is the goodwill towards Ghana from the U.S. and the strong relationship between our two countries."

Anderson credits her Peace Corps background for toughing her up, opening her eyes to the developing world, and motivating her to forge a career with USAID. She says, "Peace Corps is really Friends of Ghana Newsletter

appreciated here. It is amazing how many people remember being taught by Peace Corps volunteers. This background gives me credibility in my current job."



A recent photo showing Anderson serving as USAID Director for Ghana

She advises current and future volunteers to keep in touch with Ghanaian friends, colleagues and students, perhaps via Facebook or email. She urges them to appreciate the Peace Corps staff, "which does a miraculous job with meager resources." She also advises taking advantage of language learning opportunities, keeping in touch with other volunteers after leaving Ghana, and above all, addressing problems by taking an active role in solving them.

Anderson would like to see former Volunteers consider working with USAID. "I gave it two years to start, then five, and now I'm up to 20," she says. "It's a great way to continue the service that attracted us to the Peace Corps originally." ★

## A Return to Tarsaw, Ghana

Submitted by Susan Caster

In October I visited Tarsaw, Ghana where 30 years ago I was a Peace Corps Volunteer. In many ways it was as if I had never left, as I greeted people I worked with all those years ago. They were as welcoming as ever, and I still have much to learn from their wisdom. Like then, we woke with the sun and walked to the bore hole to fetch water. Fields of corn, millet, and yams were ready for harvest, and everywhere groundnuts were being harvested. We all plucked nuts from the vines and pitched in to crack the shells as someone always had a head pan full and ready to process.

Yet, there is change too in this Muslim village. There is a mosque and a school now. The mosque even has a solar panel to generate light at night. The school has 500 children. It is located at the edge of the next village. Unfortunately there are not enough teachers to cover all the classes, but I hear that Ghana is considering bonuses for teachers who will work in rural area like this. Unlike 30 years ago, cell phones and motorcycles are now common. One enterprising family purchased a generator that will charge cell phones for a small fee. They sell gas for the motorcycles as well.

A new wife arrived the first evening I was in Tarsaw. There was drumming and dancing late into the night bringing back many fond memories. Sadly, the man who carved drums has died, and the only traditional drums left are broken, so the drumming was improvised. Some traditions, however, are being encouraged. The

**Tarsaw:** (Cont. from Page 3, Column 2)

blacksmith was nationally recognized and supported with a new workshop. And he is training several young men to carry on the tradition. I met him in his old workshop under the tree working on a rifle.

I was touched when my friend Hamina brought all of the women in her compound (young wives I had never meet) to sit with me one evening to offer sympathy in the loss of my husband (Babs Abubakari). They gave me their coins and made a special meal given to friends. Actually all the food was delicious. I ate tuo zaafi daily with different soups. The women still have such patience to allow me to help with food preparation – stirring the millet over the fire to make tuo zaafi, beating and grinding shea nuts to make oil, and gathering leaves for soup. Just thinking about the smell of koose (bean cakes) or yams being deep-fried makes me hungry.

Most people in Tarsaw are farmers. I asked Isahaku, a friend who is a farmer, about the use of chemical and fertilizers on the farms. And before I could say anything about the organic movement in the U.S., he showed me the bicycle he won for using Nim leaves on one field instead of spraying. The practice is not widespread, but it's hopeful that innovative farmers are looking for alternatives. Amazingly the demonstration compound we built when I was a PCV is still there. At the moment it's in a bit of disrepair, but there are plans for an agricultural worker to move in soon. I walked with another farmer, Zacharia, the five miles to his farm. He cut sugar cane for us to eat and showed me the acres of corn that he needs to harvest. It was great to see the water level in the river was high. A new dam project has converted former bush into gardens. I never thought I would see bananas and plantain growing in the upper region.

I learned of challenges as well. The building for the daycare center made out of mud bricks was destroyed by the rains last

season, so there is now no daycare. We will use money from the Sissala Fund that was created in memory of my late husband to fund the cost of building a new daycare center made out of cement so it will last. The chief will form a committee to plan and carry out this building project as soon as the harvest is over and the dry season starts.



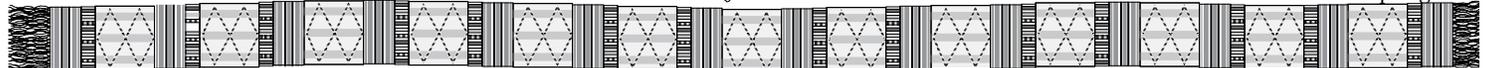
*The farmer Zacharia sits atop a plentiful groundnut harvest*

The women of one section of the village came to explain that the bore hole for their section dries up during the harmattan (dry season). They then have to walk several miles to fetch water. The bore hole drilling developers can drill two feet deeper and then they should have water year round. The Sissala Fund will also fund the extension of this bore hole.

Now I'm back in Atlanta, and there are no chickens keeping me awake at night scrambling on the zinc roof, no goats sticking their head into my room, no smoky fire to cook on, no bucket baths or lumpy kapok mattresses on the floor. But oh how I miss the compound full of children laughing and the sound of corn being pounded into flour! I miss holding the new babies and the nights under the stars listening to local stories complete with songs everyone joins in on. I miss the community of people. I have the greatest admiration for the grace and strength of the Sissala people. I hope to visit again soon. ★



*Scenes of Tarsaw life captured during Susan Caster's recent visit*



# Blog Entries by New Ghana PCVs - Part II

Submitted by Ken Autrey

The previous Talking Drum contained blog excerpts from several current PCVs in Ghana. Here is Part II of that series. <http://www.peacecorpsjournals.com> contains links to volunteer blogs around the world, including nearly 100 from Ghana. In accord with Peace Corps policy, each blog states that the writer's views do not reflect official positions of the U.S. Government or the Peace Corps.

These volunteers were in the summer 2009 training group, which consisted of 63 volunteers in 7 sectors: Small Enterprise Development, Environment, Health/Water Sanitation, Math Education, Science Education, Information Technology Education, and Visual Arts Education. After staging in Philadelphia, the group flew from JFK Airport to Accra, arriving on June 4. Training took place at Kukurantumi in the Volta Region.

The blog descriptions and quotes below provide a sample of impressions from the first six months of this group's Peace Corps service. Each passage in italics is excerpted from a longer blog entry.

## Guillermo in Ghana

<http://guillermoinghana.blogspot.com/>



Guillermo, whose parents are Uruguayan, grew up in Miami and attended the University of Florida. He is a math and science teacher at a junior high school near Tamale. His blog includes an ongoing list of books he has read in Ghana.

**June 4, on arrival in Ghana:** *We took the tro-tro's (small busses) to the PC office where we got fresh coconuts and pineapple. The pineapple was amazing. I wonder where the nearest Taco Bell is.*

*Afterwards we took a tour of the city. It's amazing. The things people sell on their heads here are incredible...I've been fighting off sleep all day. We had no sleep on the plane and we've been doing forms and tours all day. Every time they give me more than a 10-minute break I pass out in my chair.*

**August 10, visiting PCV Matt during Vision Quest:** *Matt lives a 90 second walk from school. We left his house and entered the chanting of a crowd of students in unison. The sounds came from up the trail, out the doors and windows of a class room. He told us they were all in a class for the worship portion of the morning. They stomped their feet and sang traditional African songs. As we got closer we passed 2 goats and a chicken shuffling her chicks along. Their cheeps chimed along with the singing. Ladies at a small market in front of the school called Matt to greet him and very small children shyly smiled and squeaked "obruneeee".*

**June 21, at homestay:** *This morning I slept in really late (7:30 am) which reminds me, holy wow this country starts early. The people wake up with the roosters and by 4 a.m. I can hear my homestay mom up and about the house. Its strange, I'm adapting very well to this schedule. I'm asleep by 10 p.m. every night, and up at 5:30 with no problem at all. I think it's easier to wake up crazy early here because your body slowly hears the world waking up around you.*

In the thick of training, Guillermo tells about having shirts made, attending the 4th of July celebration, and going on a trip with other trainees to Boti Falls. He gets sick with a fever that is determined not to be malaria and begins to get more comfortable with teaching.

**July 12, having attended the Obama speech the day before:** *I seriously looked like a 13 year old girl at a Jonas Brothers concert. Jumping up and down; he had to tell my section to not push the barricade (or each other). He shook the hand of someone in front of me and I touched his sleeve as he passed. Michelle came next and I shook her hand.... So freaking cool. They both said goodbye, got into Air Force One and we watched them take off. Unbelievable. I went from expecting us to be overlooked, to VIP 50 ft and then arms length away from the most powerful man in the world.*

**August 4:** *So I was in my tree writing some business thoughts down when a small boy came off the dirt path, obviously towards me. When I looked again, he was at the base of the tree, staring up at me not saying a word. He reached to climb up, but couldn't reach. He spoke little English, and I little Dagbani, so we used mostly gestures to understand that I'd pull him up..In reality he weighed about the same as a gallon of milk .He climbed up and we sat together, not understanding each other for about an hour and a half. I asked him to write his name for me, so I wouldn't forget.*

**September 10, after swearing in and moving to his site:** *My town is not the typical "Arms wide open, roll the red carpet out for the white-man savior" scene that seems to happen so often to Peace Corps Volunteers. (In Ghana, anyways). Many of my friends have told me about the (almost absurdly) huge welcoming they've gotten and it was kind of depressing at first. The people here are polite, but not necessarily what I'd call overtly surprised or appreciative. It's more like "Oh cool, another white dude. 'Sup white dude. I'm gonna get back to my yams now." Even my trip to the Chief's palace was a let down. It took me the whole week of site visit, and almost 3 weeks at site to meet him.*

**November 1, on teaching and life in his town (with lots of photos):** *I heard from many people but didn't really understand it until I felt it: teaching, especially here, is an emotional rollercoaster. Bad days you're really down, considering why you even waste your time, but the days when the kids get it and it clicks, man it's euphoric. It's funny because when the kids start their answer you never know if it's going to be mind-blowingly wrong, or surprisingly spot-on.*

## Julie's Ghana Adventure

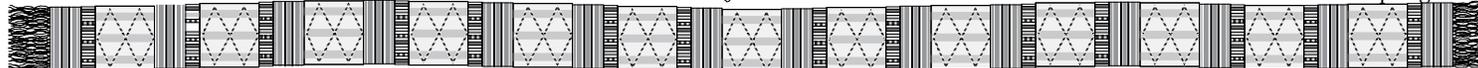
<http://juliebordua.blogspot.com/>



Julie Bordua

Julie is working in Health and Water Sanitation Education and is assigned to a guinea worm eradication project . She is living in Voguu in the house previously occupied by Alicia Sully, the filmmaker who was profiled in the previous Talking Drum newsletter. Julie's blog is well illustrated with photos of training, her town and other volunteers in her group.

**June 24:** *I will be in the Northern Region, in a village called Voguu. It has a population of about 1600 and has no electricity in the whole town. I am learning the language Dagbani. There are four of us learning that language and I will have quite a few close neighbors. The other trainees that will be close to me are really great and I am guessing the volunteers who are already there are great too. I will be doing a lot of work with guinea worm and HIV/AIDS, so I am very excited about that. I will have*



## **Blogs:** (Cont. from Page 5, Column 2)

*my own house, which will be a cement house with a zinc roof. It obviously has no electricity, but has a bucket flush toilet and a bathing room to take bucket baths (which I really like, by the way).*

**July 11, on the Obama speech:** They welcomed the presidents with drummers and dancers. President Atta Mills gave a short opening speech that we could not really hear, and then President Obama gave about an 8 minute speech in which he gave multiple shout outs to Peace Corps. Of course we went crazy everytime he mentioned us.

**August 2, upon arrival at her site:** First I'll tell you about my community. It is fairly small, about 1600 people, almost all farmers. Everyone was very nice and laid back. They were all happy to greet me, but also willing to give me space and let me just hang out at my house a lot. My village is absolutely beautiful, with a lot of open space and farms everywhere. They literally farm almost every foot of land that is not covered by a house or building.

Subsequent entries tell about getting to know her neighbors, including the Chief. She practicing Dagbani in the markets, and generally settles in. She explains her struggles with a faulty stove from Tamale and the pleasures of acquiring furniture. There is a full report, with photos, of the festival marking the end of Ramadan.

**October 12:** I finally started doing actual work. I started my census of the community. So, I've been going house to house asking how many people live there, what their most common health problems are, if they have a toilet, if they have mosquito nets, where they get their water and if they filter, and if they know about family planning. I'm going to use this information to find out where to focus my work. So far, it seems they need everything, so I'm still not sure exactly where I'll start, but there certainly won't be a shortage of projects.

### **My 27 Months in Ghana**

<http://chrisinghana.wordpress.com/>



Chris is from Cleveland and recently graduated from the University of Akron, with a B.S.M.P.E. (Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Polymer Engineering), and a Minor in Applied Mathematics. His assignment is to teach secondary school math in Bekwai.

**July 26:** It's Sunday, and I've been at my site now for 3 days, during which I have been overwhelmed with things to do. I spent the first day just

brainstorming ways I was going to make this place look like it was lived in, and how I was going to make my room functional for all of the things that I needed. After a day of planning, I rigged up some clotheslines and made a long list of little things that I was going to need to buy in Bekwai: Cups, buckets, clothespin, garbage cans, a laundry basket, all kinds of soap, silverware, a mirror, some basic Tupperware, basic food, etc. I will be leaving here <Bekwai> on the 28th, and will be stopping by in Kumasi to use our PC sub-office with free internet, but must keep moving because I have a 3 hour drive back to Kukurantumi to complete my last 2 weeks of training. On August 13 I will be swearing in as a volunteer, and the following day or so, we will all leave for site, but I think I will travel through Cape Coast, to see the beach and take a day off (or 2), and then around the 16th I will be back at site to start preparing for the new term that begins in September.

My school semester apparently doesn't begin until Sept 15, but I guess the first week of school doesn't involve having any classes, but

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rather the students clean the entire facility. All of the teachers and anyone associated with the school is nowhere to be found, and I probably won't be able to plan a single thing until the first day of classes. I can't tell you how frustrating it is to just sit around for another 3 weeks without any real objective, but I'm dealing with it. I basically am learning what not to cook, and how not to do things, everything here involves doing something wrong before you learn how to do it right.

**September 7:** Today I went to Bekwai to teach 'computer'. I showed Jacob a bunch of basics; we mostly focused on emails....the concept of, how to, email safety, etc. By the end of the hour, I had the owner of the café, a pharmacist technician from Kokofu sitting and taking notes. I believe that Jacob is the only person in my entire 2 villages with an email account, it is still difficult to grasp that fact.

### **I am Ghana (and So Can You)**

<http://boyeyey.blogspot.com/>

Manish's first entry was June 1 during staging. He is teaching science at Tsiamie Senior High School near the coast in the Volta Region.

### **June 28, on his homestay "parents" in Old Tafo, Eastern Region:**

Rosemond Afrah.. Two-of-a-kind.. The other one is named "Amita Padhiar" (my real mom!). My host mom worries just as much as my real mom! She needs to know where I am going, when I am going, for what reason I am going, and when I am going to come back (and if she doesn't like the time, she lets me know).. And a lot of this communication is usually through body gestures (because she does not speak a word of English!...My host Dad is interesting.. He is a farmer (have not visited his farm, but hope to soon). He usually is playing cards outside the house. A quiet kind of person. But seems to be very knowledgeable and does speak good English.

In late August, Manish reports on the swearing-in ceremony attended by ambassador, followed by skits, dancing, drumming, and celebration. He reports that his host family gave him 2 Ghanaian fabric shirts when he returned from his site visit and speaks highly of the relationship they built in just a few weeks. He says, "It was very hard to say good-bye to them when I was finally leaving for my site after swearing-in.

**August 22:** Currently, my Headmaster's family is cooking for me and I go eat there. As much as I would love to have my food cooked for me, I am ready to start cooking a few meals at least for myself (I can add the flavors I want rather than the tomato base that I get everytime :)). I will keep you update on my food situation. Just a couple kms from me is actually another volunteer (Derek). He is an environment volunteer and my new forced best friend.. We are the only people next to each other, so ENJOY! I hope to visit him soon once I buy a bike

**September 25:** Right in front of my house--a funeral. Now I've explained about funerals being a big party before. Loud music and dancing all through the night. And let's not forget random gunshots at dawn (right outside my window!) to honor the deceased. The deceased was an uncle of the boy who was helping me clean and get acquainted with the town (and it was right in front of my house), so I went to some of the events. I can't handle the body being propped up so I skipped the whole burial part. BUT, I did end up going to one of the events that involved DANCING the "Ak-ba-ja" (the Ewe version of Chicken Dance). I did a few rounds. All the people were blown away by my rhythm ;). It was a sight to see. It was fun

for sure though. But I had to call it a night at 10:30 PM, which is super late for me (sadly). The loud music outside my room continued till 5 AM.

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**Blogs:** Page 7, Column 2

Spring 2010



# Get Your Ghana Fix at Ghanafest on Saturday, July 31, 2010

Submitted by Debby Prigal

**G**hanafest is the largest Ghanaian celebration in the Diaspora and is held in Chicago the last Saturday in July; this year it is the 31st. Last year approximately 15,000 people attended and .....  
"The Washington Park was transformed into a crowded African village, depicting large numbers of people of diverse races wearing Ghanaian paraphernalia, and assortment of Ghanaian food at the food court! African Arts and artifacts were not in short supply! ... Attendance was mainly Ghanaians from across the States in the USA, Canada, Europe and Ghana. Majority of non-Ghanaians were African-Americans, a few Hispanics and whites who are mainly former Peace Corps members who served in Ghana."

More information is at: <http://ghananationalcouncil.org/ghanafest.htm>

Friends of Ghana is not an official sponsor of Ghanafest but would like to encourage RPCVs to attend. Thus, FOG has arranged for convenient, reasonably priced housing at International House at the University of Chicago, a 15 minute bus ride from Ghanafest. Guest rooms are \$80/night and have a queen bed and with bathrooms down the hall.

RPCVs can make their reservations directly with I-House at [http://ihouse.uchicago.edu/residency/residency\\_short.shtml](http://ihouse.uchicago.edu/residency/residency_short.shtml) or by calling (773) 753-2270.

FOG is not planning any activities, although there might be some group meals if enough people are interested. If you have any questions, please contact Debby Prigal ('81 to '83) at [dprigal@aol.com](mailto:dprigal@aol.com). Even if you do not stay in I-House consider going to Ghanafest. It would be a great way to get a Ghana fix! ★

## Peace Corps Ghana Seeks Information from Former PCVs

Submitted by Susan Caster

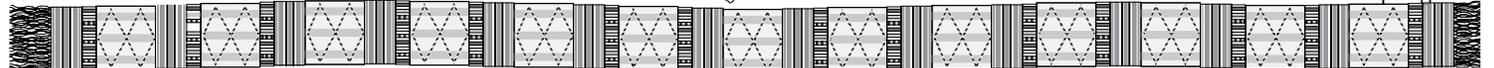
**O**n a recent trip to Ghana I visited Peace Corps Ghana Programming and Training Officer, Robert Moler. His enthusiasm for Peace Corps and excitement about the upcoming 50th celebration is contagious. They need the help of Ghana RPCVs. Peace Corps Ghana is putting together media materials in preparation of the 50th anniversary celebration of PC Ghana.

Rob says, "We envision putting together a 'milestones' fact sheet for '50 years of peace and friendship building' and collecting testimony through the years of PCVs who served in Ghana. This information will be used on our web, in press releases, radio/television sound bytes, and for other dissemination. We also want this information to piece together our history for posterity. Any assistance you may provide will be very valuable."

Please take a moment to describe your PC training and to share the programs that existed in Ghana when you were a PCV. Write about your work or secondary project. Share your story — it is the PC Ghana story. Please submit information to Robert Moler, [RMoler@gh.peacecorps.gov](mailto:RMoler@gh.peacecorps.gov). ★

**Blogs:** (Cont. from Page 6, Column 2)

In the same entry, Manish reports on his first day of teaching science at Tsiame Senior High School. He introduced himself to the third-year students, had them make nametags, and drew a map of the U.S. to show where he is from. He explained his Indian background and explained the importance of biology in society. ★



# Help Us Find New FOG Members!

(Pass this form on to any Ghana RPCVs you may know.)

Yes! Sign me up in the Friends of Ghana and the National Peace Corps Association

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_

Current Employer \_\_\_\_\_

Current Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Country(ies) of Service \_\_\_\_\_ Dates \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer  Staff \_\_\_\_\_  
Assignment(s)

I only wish to join Friends of Ghana at this time.

## Membership:

- Regular: \$50 (\$35 for NPCA, \$15 for FOG)
- Add \$10 for overseas mail
- Special Donation to FOG \$ \_\_\_\_\_ NPCA \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (thank you!)

**Newsletter Delivery Preference:**  Regular Mail  Email  
**Email Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

## I want to help Friends of Ghana (please mark all that apply)

- Newsletter  Membership  Projects
- Fund Raising  Special Events  Big Mailings

## Please make check payable to NPCA and mail to:

1900 L Street, N.W., Suite 404  
Washington, DC 20036

*NPCA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Membership dues and contributions may be tax deductible. Consult your tax advisor.*

## For FOG membership only, enclose a check for \$15 Payable to Friends of Ghana and mail to:

Debby Prigal, Treasurer  
1625 Q St. NW, #207  
Washington, DC 20009

  
**The Talking Drum**  
Newsletter of the Friends of Ghana  
c/o Susan Caster  
310 Bloomfield Ct.  
Roswell, GA 30075

