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# Operation Ghana

CUC KIDS HELPING KIDS IN NEED

## Every Child is Our Child Program Helps AIDS Orphans

By Ian Baker

AIDS orphans have nowhere near everything that the children of the United States all have and enjoy, basic things like food and water and some very important people that take care of us, feed us, give us a place to live and let us have so much fun. These people are our parents. About 14 million children in the world have lost both or one of their parents to AIDS and have become AIDS orphans.

AIDS orphans are at a much higher risk of getting the virus than kids who aren't AIDS orphans. Children whose parents were killed by AIDS have a loss of family stability and may not get an education because there is no one there to pay for them to go to school.

The children of Ghana that do go to school begin at 6 and end at 18. They go through 6 years of primary school, 3 years of junior secondary school and 3 years of senior secondary school. The families that take in the AIDS orphans do not have enough money to send the children to school.

The Unitarian Universalist United Nations Office has developed the Every Child is Our Child program to help send AIDS orphans in Ghana to school. We are creating this newsletter to tell you about the children and the program and most importantly to ask for help.

## Why Education?

By Justin Cochran

One of the most effective ways to fight poverty and the spread of HIV/AIDS is to increase access to education,

especially for girls, and give the local community an ownership of issues and of solutions. Since girls in the 15-24 age group account for approximately one-third of all births every year, it is imperative that they are taught at a young age how to prevent the spread of this disease. Many children attend primary school, however,

most do not continue on to secondary school. In order to have a long-lasting effect on these children as well as future generations, educating them is vital to the communities and country of Ghana.



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# Why Do They Need Our Help?

Thomas Baclawski

Compared to us Ghana is a very poor country. They need our help. The chart on page 3 shares some facts about the people in Ghana.

If you look at the literacy rate it shows that 67.1% can read. In the U.S.A. just about all people can read. These kids need education, and our help too.

Ghana is rich in natural resources, but is very poor in money. Some people live on less than a dollar a day. When Ghana got its independence it was one of the richest countries in Africa, but then it got poor.

In Ghana different families live in the same houses. This is because they don't have enough room for everyone. During hot and dry days they would sleep on the roof. If it was rainy, they would sleep inside.

## A Conversation with Andrew Kornhaber

by Ian Baker

**Q: What are the kids like in Ghana?**

A: The kids in Ghana are very similar to the children here in the United States. They like to go to school, they like to play games and they love to meet new people. All the boys over there love to play soccer, as do some of the girls. Many of the girls also play a game called Ampee, which is a clapping rhythm game where you have to respond to each other's claps and kicks. They also like to sing songs and dance.



**Q: What do they do on a daily basis?**

A: Well on a daily basis the children attend school, do their schoolwork, and after they are done they help their families. Some of the children help by selling goods at the market (many of them sell bags of water), others help by carrying food and helping prepare meals. The children who live on the nearby farms do farm chores, such as clearing grass, tending to the chickens, and picking fruit. They all also watch the younger children to make sure they are okay.

**Q: How many kids there actually have an education?**

A: According to UNICEF, the Manya Krobo region has two thousand children who have been orphaned by AIDS. The Ghana AIDS commission pays for 1,000 children to attend school. The Every Child program currently sends 86 children to school. This leaves 900 children waiting to go to school. Children who have healthy parents regularly attend school. Education is very important in Ghana because school is where they learn English and the

whole community emphasizes the need for the children to be educated.

**Q: How many families have enough money to send a child to school?**

A: That exact information is not really available, because record keeping is difficult in Ghana. What we can say is that every family certainly wants to send their children to school and they often do all that they can to make sure their children get an education.

**Q: Which of the kids that you met had the most powerful story and what was it like?**

A: The most powerful story we know just happened recently. In Bedford-Stuyvesant, a very poor district of Brooklyn, New York, a group of young students learned about the Every Child program from their teacher. The teacher was emphasizing how important education is for all children all over the world. The students really believed in their teacher and the Every Child program and on their own, without being asked, the students raised \$300 so the children in Ghana could go to school. In another story in Ghana, a young girl walked several miles to meet with the school's principal. When she arrived at his office she started to cry because she wanted to go to school so badly. The principal recommended her for the program and she is now happily in school due to the Every Child program.

**Q: How many orphans have the Queen Mothers helped after their parents died?**

A. The Queen Mothers' goal is to help all the orphans. They do not directly take care of all the orphans themselves because they first try to place the children with extended family or respected community members. The Queen Mothers then help those families

to ensure the children are well taken care of. They also bring many of the children together in after-school programs and feed them.

## The History and Mission of the UU UN Office

By Jaclyn Wecht

Hi I'm Jaclyn Wecht and I'm here to tell you about the UU United Nations office (UUUNO). The UUUNO is a membership organization of individuals, congregations, and institutions in the United States and Canada. People who work in that spectacular place are people like you and me.

People work as volunteers, community members, and even several energetic interns each semester. With its own board, budget, and programs, the UUUNO speaks, acts and bears witness on behalf of Unitarian Universalists at the United Nations and within the

governments of Canada and the US.

One of the major purposes of the UU office is to educate UUs about the structure, function, and actions of the United Nations. The members there go to (Non Governmental Organization) NGO conferences and attend Dept. of Public Information (DPI) briefings and report back to the office.

## The Queen Mothers

By Jaryn Stewart

The Queen Mothers are traditional women leaders in Ghana, Africa. They help give AIDS orphans an education to help them live and succeed, help find them secure and healthy homes, and match these orphans with responsible teenaged mentors. And they do all these wonderful things voluntarily without getting paid for it!

The Queen Mothers have done such a great job that they lowered Ghana's HIV infection rate from 18% to 7% through educational programs. Along with local leaders, they have taken in more than 400 parentless

children. In some cases, they have also educated the children themselves. They educate the rural population on the hazards of high risk life styles and develop income generating activities for young girls. The Queen Mothers are very dedicated to education, especially for girls.

**FACT: Almost 14 million children have lost one or both parents to AIDS**

You might think, that the Queen Mothers should feed children instead of giving them the privilege of having an education?" Well, here is the answer. The answer is like the old saying, "Give a man a fish and you have fed him for today. Teach a man to fish, and you have fed him for a lifetime." The Queen Mothers incorporate this old saying by teaching kids to learn things so they can live on their own. By learning new things these AIDS orphans can live on their own, find jobs and unlike their parents, survive AIDS and fulfill their dreams. With your donations, the Queen Mothers can continue to save these children's lives.

## Ghana Facts and Figures

**Population:** 20,467,747

**Ethnic Groups:** black African 98.5% (major tribes—Akan 44%, Moshi-Dagomba 16%, Ewe 13%, Ga 8%, Yoruba 1%), European and other 15% (1998)

**Age structure:**

**0–14 years:** 38.9%

**15–64 years:** 57.5%

**65 years and over:** 3.6%

**Population growth rate:** 1.45%

**Birth rate:** 53.02 births/1,000 population

**Infant mortality rate:** 103.22 deaths/1,000 live births

**Death rate:** 20.17 deaths/1,000 population

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 56.53 years

**male:** 55.66 years

**female:** 57.43 years

**Total fertility rate:** 3.32 children born/woman

**Religion:** indigenous beliefs 21%, Muslim 16%, Christian 63%

**Languages:** English (official), African languages (including Akan, Moshi-Dagomba, Ewe, and Ga)

**Literacy:** 67.1%

All figures are 2003 estimates unless otherwise indicated.

Source: Adapted from CIA World Factbook, 2003.

## Our Covenant

By Jaclyn Wecht

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

*The inherent worth and dignity of every person,*

*Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations,*

*Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations,*

*A free and responsible search for truth and understanding,*

*The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large,*

*The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all,*

*Respect for the interdependent web of all existence in which we are a part.*

## Faith in Action

By Isabelle Carson

We as Unitarians feel that it's important to be of service to the outside world. We feel that everyone deserves the same rights and to be treated equally, but that's not always the case. Every chance that we get to help out people, we take, because we know that not everyone is as fortunate as us.

Whenever you are thinking you have it bad, or something just isn't fair, remember all those children and families out there that have it SO much worse! Everyone should be thankful for what they have! We are so lucky for what we have that whenever we see worse conditions, we just have to donate!

A great example of this would be our project in Ghana, where AIDS orphans are unable to go to public school. And because we feel everyone deserves an education, we are trying our hardest to help and hope you do, too!

## Meet Our Class

**Denis Padron** (Paramus, NJ) is a future Rock-n-Roll Hall of Famer

**Ian Baker** (Maywood, NJ) is a star hockey player who makes the Ice House his second home.

**Isabelle Carson** (Ringwood, NJ) is a horse crazy, animal lover

**Jaclyn Wecht** (Palisades, NY) is athletic, loves Shakespearian acting and is a totally unique character.

**Jaryn Stewart** (Fort Lee, NJ) Little Miss America 2006, Future Oscar Winner, Avid Build- A- Bear Collector

**Justin Cochran** Star wrestler (Paramus, NJ)

**Max Calabro** (Airmont, NY) Major Mets fan and manga maniac

**Thomas Baclawski** (Teaneck, NJ) is a star soccer player, always prepared to play a four-legged animal when needed.

## How Can I Help?

We hope you will be able to help us send the children of Ghana to school. The cost of tuition for one year is \$80.00. In 2006 Every Child is Our Child enrolled 80 children in school, but today there are over 900 additional children in Many Krobo district of Eastern Ghana who still need your help.

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$5.00 Suggested minimum donation
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$20.00 I can give more
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$80.00 I will help send a child to school for one year
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other I can help with this amount
- \_\_\_\_\_ My company will match my donation!!!

Please make checks payable to the **Every Child is Our Child program**. Contributions are tax deductible for US citizens. To receive a tax deduction, Canadian citizens should make checks payable to the **Canadian Unitarian Council**. Please mail your contributions to **Every Child is Our Child**, c/o RE Office, Central Unitarian Church, 156 Forest Ave, Paramus, NJ 07652.