

Herald of Hope

Volume 8 | Number 6 | June 2020

COVID-19 Scare at Hope Christian Hospital



The Andrea Browning Building of Hope Christian Hospital

COVID-19 is yet another pointer to the fact that, though the human species is a special creation with dominance over all creations of the Creator of the Universe, man must exercise this dominance with due regard for the elements of creation. The SAR Cov-2 virus, the virus responsible for the current COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder to us that human beings are not invincible. It also reminds us that our actions or inactions can spell doom for the whole of humanity. There are other recent pointers of man's vulnerability including HIV/AIDS, SARS, MERS, H1N1, multi-drug resistant TB, and antimicrobial resistance, an issue of immense public health concern. Unfortunately, and very worrisomely, COVID-19 has come to add to the cocktail of public health emergencies among many others that may be incubating and unknown

to man. But there is one thing that I know for sure. God is good! And He will care for His own. Amen!

Upon the declaration by the WHO on 3rd January, 2020, announcing COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern, and subsequently, a pandemic on 11th March, 2020, there has been a call for global solidarity in fighting the disease. Even countries with well-developed health systems have had their challenges in dealing with the disease. So have many developing countries including Ghana. This makes going to work as a healthcare worker quite scary. This fear is due to the fact that the healthcare system in developing countries is not the best. If COVID-19 was killing citizens of developed countries with all these sophisticated gadgets then what would become of us, Africans, with scarce resources?



VILLAGE OF HOPE

Rescuing. Repairing. Preparing. Propelling.

USA

P. O. Box 670394
Dallas, TX 75367
Tel: 682-302-1939

GHANA

P. O. Box GP 18169
Accra, Ghana
Tel: 233-24-431-3404
Tel: 233-20-201-2229

Email: info@thevillageofhope.com

Website: thevohgroup.org

Facebook: [villageofhope](https://www.facebook.com/villageofhope)

Twitter: [villageofhopegh](https://twitter.com/villageofhopegh)

Instagram: [villageofhopegh](https://www.instagram.com/villageofhopegh)

LOCAL OVERSIGHT

The Elders of
Vertical Centre Church of Christ,
Community Six, Tema, Ghana.

SUPPORT

VOH-Ghana,
A 501(c)(3) Non-profit.

MINISTRIES

Hope Children's Village
Hope Training Institute
Hope Christian Academy
Hope Christian Hospital
Church of Christ School
Hope College
Agriculture
Church of Christ at Village of Hope
Campus Church of Christ - Ayawaso
Evangelism
Church Planting and Strengthening

COVID or Not COVID – A Taste of Anxiety

This was the question that re-echoed in the hospital on the 3rd of April, 2020 when we received a woman from the capital city, Accra (the epicenter of the pandemic in Ghana). She was coughing and had high body temperature and shortness of breath. Per the case definition of COVID-19 in Ghana at the time, she was a perfect fit for the disease that is causing so much havoc in countries, great and small. Having been rushed into the Emergency Department without prior notice, the staff in the department were exposed to this woman as they cared for her wearing only masks, scrubs, and gloves. We had not received any coverall PPEs from the government by then so one can imagine the conditions under which this patient was received and cared for.

When we noticed there was an extensive inflammation in her right thigh, we hoped that was the cause of the high temperature; but what could be the cause of the breathlessness? Perhaps, since she was obese, she could be having a pulmonary embolism - a blood clot in her lung vessels which had traveled from her calf veins due to deep vein thrombosis. As we managed her with poor results, we were wondering if it could still be COVID -19 since recent studies have named clotting disorders as pathologic findings at autopsy.

At this time, all staff who were initially around her were worried. Meanwhile, the district (county) team responsible for testing had delayed in coming and this even heightened the fear. As the patient got worse, the staff became more worried. But the testing team were not going to come till the next morning. This was a heart-pounding moment for the staff. Having received briefing on her situation and the possibilities, they were counseled to go into isolation till the results came. Fortunately, they were off-shift for the next three days. Subsequent staff were asked to be more cautious in handling her since she was a suspected case.

Her samples were taken in the morning of the next day. Her condition was not any better. At this point referral to the tertiary hospital in the capital city, Accra, was the next step. However, the department handling suspected COVID cases at the tertiary hospital had been closed temporarily for fumigation and so our patient could not be transferred immediately. The prognosis had been poor from the time she reported and so her family was counseled and told about possible adverse outcomes.

Before the results could come in, the patient passed on. The fear among the entire staff of the hospital was palpable. The results would not be ready till the next day. The family who had been with her were also worried and wanted to know the outcome of the test, too. Everybody was anxious to know the results, and the death toll from around the world fueled the panic. If the results came out negative, that would be good news and both staff and family would be happy. However, if they came out positive, it would mean that over fifteen people among the family and staff would have been primarily exposed. That would mean a shortage of staff and a possible closure of the emergency unit and other units of the hospital.

An early call from the District Disease Control Officer on the morning of April 6, two days after the death of the patient, kicked my heart out of my chest. He told me in the call that he had sent an SMS to my phone about the results of the test conducted on the patient.

Hurriedly going to my messages, I read this: "Suspected COVID-19 specimen for [name of patient] submitted on 04/04/2020 tested NEGATIVE for SARS-COV-2 virus." It was the best news I had received in a long while and it was clear from that message that COVID anxiety is a real issue in our setting. The information was relayed to both staff and family and obviously, it was a big relief for the entire Hospital and the community. The importance of following protocols have been retold to all staff; and enough protection, in the form of PPEs, has been provided.

Increasing Cases in Ghana

At the time of writing this article, Ghana had recorded close to 6,000 cases, a situation that is worrying and is putting a lot of fear among the populace, especially healthcare professionals. Fortunately, or unfortunately, our cases are mainly asymptomatic. The good news is that the death rate is lower than anticipated. Having trained all staff in preventive measures and in infection prevention and control practices, we are now confident and ready to handle any suspected or even confirmed cases. Because of the high rate of asymptomatic cases in Ghana (about 92.7% of all confirmed cases) it is now a national policy to wear face masks in public places in these times of war against this tiny particle – the virus. On all Village of Hope campuses, children, staff and visitors follow strict hand hygiene protocols. Visitors to patients are highly regulated and restricted to one visitor at a time per patient with strict hand hygiene and face mask practices.



A member of staff of Hope Christian Hospital washes his hands before entering the hospital.

Gratitude

The Village of Hope Group, Mr. Fred Asare and family, the Village of Hope Church of Christ, individuals from the Fetteh community, and the Regional Health Directorate of the Central Region have donated generously towards the fight against COVID-19 and we are grateful. Having all the accoutrements for facing this war gives all of us at Hope Christian Hospital the confidence to join in the fight and do our best to bring down the enemy, SARS-COV-2 Virus. We are also thankful for your good thoughts and prayers for us. We pray for you all always and it is our fervent hope that God will let this pass over each of us.

Stay safe and God bless you. 🙏

- By Dr. Alex Peasah-Koduah

Hope Christian Academy Is Down but Not Out

On Sunday; March 15, 2020, the President of the Republic of Ghana – His Excellency Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo – declared that all schools in the country be closed indefinitely effective Monday; March 16, 2020 following the rise in cases of the COVID-19 pandemic. 10 weeks have passed and we keep seeing an increase in cases nationally and worldwide.

Following this directive, the Academy was closed down at a critical time when the school had not completely received all school fees from parents. Hope Christian Academy, a once very busy and vibrant school with 503 pupils, has been reduced to a quiet compound with no signs of contented children roaming the corridors and playing cheerfully on the grounds of the campus.

After a careful analysis of the financial situation of Hope Christian Academy, the Board of Directors with the Village of Hope Management decided to suspend the existing employment appointments for all 56 staff of the Academy (administration, teaching, ancillary, culinary and transport) for three months – April to June. This decision, though challenging, was accepted by all staff concerned with the hopes that within a short time, pupils would return to school and activities would resume from where we left off.

However, as Village of Hope is a caring human-centered organization, we are going to put in every effort to raise funds to provide a form of sustenance for our staff and their nearly 150 immediate dependents throughout this crisis. For nearly all of them, their main source of income was their monthly salaries at the Academy. We will be eternally grateful to anyone who would care enough to read this story and donate towards this cause.

Earlier in May, after carefully assessing the stock of meal items that were available in the kitchen stores, staff members were called to come over for some stuff. Each person received the following:

- Rice 5kg
- Maize 10kg
- Sugar 2kg
- Protein (chicken/gizzard/sausage) 500g
- Corn Dough 5kg



Some staff of Hope Christian Academy receiving food items that were available in the kitchen stores

In the midst of this pandemic, we have been blessed in many ways by donors who keep supporting the capital projects of the Village of Hope. At the Academy all the 18 classrooms and offices, library and computer laboratory have been repainted. Wooden ceiling panels that had decayed over the years in the Tilton Education Building have been replaced with plastic T & J panels. New classroom furniture for some of the classrooms have been delivered. There is a lot we could not have achieved without the generous support of well-meaning individuals and groups who constantly think about the growth and development of Village of Hope and its ministries. We have achieved great strides and are thankful to God for many people who, over the years, have contributed to the mission of the Village of Hope.



Newly installed plastic T & J panels



Newly painted window battens



New classroom furniture for some of the classrooms

Special thanks go to Heartbeat for Hope for their involvement in getting our old facilities at Hope Christian Academy into pristine condition. We are looking forward to having our pupils back in school at the Academy to continue nurturing them in wisdom, in stature and in favor with God and man.



Heartbeat for Hope February 2020 group

Our prayers go out to families, friends and loved ones of every single person reading this newsletter. May God Almighty continue to keep us all safe as we wait patiently on Him to completely eradicate the COVID-19 pandemic. God bless you all. [@](#)

- By Araba Saakoa Adjei

Life Amidst COVID-19

Greetings from Ghana and from all of us at Village of Hope. By the grace of God, we are all doing well but admittedly, life has been hard, uneasy and uncertain in the midst of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that is ravaging the world. We would like to give you an update on how life has been over the past couple of months in Ghana, as a whole, and at the Village of Hope in particular.

Coronavirus in Ghana

Ghana's first case of coronavirus was recorded on March 12, 2020. Since then, the government has imposed measures aimed at stopping the virus from spreading in the country. These measures have increasingly restricted movements and normal life in the country. There has been a ban on social gatherings including all public religious services, funerals, conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. [Private burials attended by not more than 25 people are allowed]. All are to observe social distancing as well as wear masks that cover the mouth and nose when in public. For almost all public places, one will not be allowed entry without the wearing of a mask. One cannot also board public transport such as taxis and buses without wearing a mask. The washing of hands with soap under running water is highly recommended as well as the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers.

In an address to the nation on March 15, 2020, the President of Ghana announced the closure of all schools in the country (from pre-K through university); effective the next day – March 16, 2020. Students were asked to go home and stay at home indefinitely. As such, no one knows when schools will reopen in Ghana. Two weeks afterwards, there was a lockdown of Accra, Tema, Kumasi and Kasoa. Accra, the capital city, is the largest city in Ghana; and Kumasi is the second largest city. Tema is the largest and busiest harbor/port city in Ghana. Kasoa is the biggest city in the Central Region of Ghana and only about 30 minutes' drive from the main campus of Village of Hope in Fetteh. The lockdown effectively locked the entire country because Accra and Kumasi are not only the largest cities but are also the busiest commercial and administrative centers of the nation. Once those cities were under lockdown, the rest of the country was in reality also under lockdown. For us in the Fetteh environs of the Central Region, Kasoa is like our "capital city" for shopping and economic activities and so even though we were technically not under any lockdown, our movement was equally restricted, having nowhere else to go. The lockdown lasted for three weeks.

Life was really difficult for many people during the lockdown. For most, it was a matter of physical and economic survival. About eighty percent (80%) of the population, especially those in the urban areas, live on their daily income. They wake up in the morning, go to town to work and hustle for enough money to be able to buy food for their families for the next day; and repeat that cycle day after day. They have no savings and so cannot buy food and other provisions to last them for even a week. They have no refrigeration and so cannot

store perishable foodstuffs for a while. The lockdown really hurt those people – who are also in the majority. The government's attempts to distribute both cooked and uncooked food during the lockdown was a disaster. Firstly, it did not cover many of the economically poor people. Secondly, the people rushed and struggled for the food, completely disregarding the social distancing protocols. In fact, it was feared that the distribution of the food did more harm than good in terms of the spread of the coronavirus. There was a lot of criticism about how the food was being distributed. Well, after three weeks, the lockdown was discontinued and now the government is increasing education about the virus and enforcing social distancing rules (which are extremely difficult to enforce in our characteristically crowded markets), the washing of hands with soap under running water, the use of hand sanitizers, and the wearing of face masks.

In spite of all these, the number of confirmed cases of coronavirus keeps rising. As of May 20, 2020, Ghana had recorded a total of 6,269 confirmed cases; 1,898 recoveries; and 31 deaths. Considering the fact that our first case was recorded some two and a half months ago, the numbers are on the low side compared to Europe and the Americas. We are praying to God that this virus will pass over quickly without a high number of cases because our healthcare system in Ghana is completely incapable of handling a large number of cases. We just don't have the facilities, equipment and personnel to handle a large outbreak.

At the Village of Hope

At the Village of Hope, once schools were closed down, all our students attending Hope Christian Academy, Church of Christ School and Hope College left for home. Some of the children from the orphanage who attend high school and college in different parts of the country returned home to the Fetteh campus of Village of Hope. Some chose to stay in their rented apartments near their colleges and others went to live with their relatives. Once those who wanted to return home arrived at Fetteh, we locked up the campus – no one went out and no one came in.



Blocked entry ways to various areas on the Fetteh campus

Only the hospital is still open to the public. We had to quickly build a fence around the hospital to prevent people who visit the hospital from strolling/straying to other parts of the campus, as has been happening in the past. The street teenagers under training at the vocational training

center at the Ayawaso campus also stayed on their campus with their dormitory supervisors and teachers/trainers who live on campus. The staff who do not live on campus were asked to stay away because taking public transport to and from work every day endangered their lives. Furthermore, during the lockdown, they could not even get out of their neighborhoods.



Hospital area has been fenced off from the rest of the campus.

Worship services and Bible studies are held by the various families/households on campus in their own homes. The children do come out to walk about the campus but we are limiting their playing together and preventing them from gathering in large numbers – not just to prevent the spread of COVID-19, as we know none of them has that, but – to teach them to obey and respect authority and the Government's directive banning large social gatherings.



Devotional meetings continue in the children's homes

Hard Times

Since the outbreak of the coronavirus, none of the children or staff or anyone we know of has had COVID-19; and for this, we are extremely grateful to God. Our greatest challenge has been in the area of the upkeep of the children and the payment of salaries for staff.

Local donations to Village of Hope have taken a big hit. Village of Hope receives a lot of foodstuffs and other material and cash donations locally to support the care of the children. Most people visit and make their donations. Since the coronavirus pandemic, however, the number of visits and visitors have now come down to almost zero and so have the donations these visitors bring. The children and house parents are currently surviving on the foodstuffs, toiletries, etc. we had in storage before the coronavirus pandemic but this is dwindling very fast as the high school and college children have returned home to join those in elementary school. While consumption of the items in storage have increased, donations to replenish our stock have reduced drastically. Donations from the United States have also taken a nose dive. This

is understandable owing to how hard the US economy has been hit by the pandemic with many losing their jobs. The combined effect of the significant reduction in both local and American donations is that hard times are upon us at the Village of Hope.

School Staff Hardest Hit

Since the closure of schools in Ghana, we have not been able to pay the salaries of the staff of the three schools – the Church of Christ School, Hope Christian Academy and Hope College. In Ghana, the fees of most private schools are spread over an academic term or semester. Many parents pay the fees of their children towards the end of the term or semester. When schools were closed by the Government, about forty percent (40%) of school fees were still outstanding. Efforts to retrieve those monies have proved futile as many parents are waiting for schools to reopen before they pay their arrears in school fees. The effect has been that we have not been able to pay the salaries of our teachers. The employment contracts of all the staff of the three schools – teachers, kitchen staff, school bus drivers, administrators, etc. – have been suspended. The Boards of the schools decided to give these school workers a stipend so they can at least put food on the table for their families during these difficult times but we do not have the funds to do so. These teachers and staff who have sacrificed so much to provide Christian education to children are now in desperate need. Unfortunately, Ghana has no system where unemployment benefits are paid to people by the state or government. As such, the staff who are out of jobs now have no support from the state and so are in real hardships.



Empty compound at Hope College

Help in Times of Need

In spite of our current difficulties and hardships, we are trusting the LORD to intervene and take care of His children. In fact, the LORD came to our rescue on the last day of April 2020 with a timely gift from the 151st Street church of Christ in Olathe, Kansas without which we couldn't have made it in the month of May 2020. (See article on Page 7). We know that times are hard for everyone but please if you can be of help, kindly help us to overcome our current hardships.

We pray daily for you – our sponsors, donors, supporters and partners in this work of ministry. Please continue to remember us in your prayers. [📞](#)

OPERATIONS AT CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHOOL LAPSE INTO SILENCE

The usual euphoria that characterizes a normal school day in Church of Christ School is no longer in sight. There is quintessential silence in every part of the school compound, an atmosphere that resembles a typical vacation period. What has caused this unimaginable turn of events in our operations as a learning institution?

Hmmm! The terror of the COVID-19 global pandemic has paid an uninvited visit to our country Ghana; and with its enormous strength, is shaking the very foundation of our fragile health sector. The dread of the novel coronavirus caused the President of the Republic of Ghana to close down both public and private schools across the country. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our operation as a private institution cannot be overemphasized.

The virus has succeeded in segregating mankind who are gregarious in nature. The bond of unity and friendship of humanity has been sacrificed on the altar of COVID-19. Aren't you sympathetic enough, Coronavirus, to leave our world as young children keep asking when are they going back to school to meet and share love again with friends and teachers? "Why should you, Mr. COVID-19, rob us of the ecstasy of interacting with one another at school?" the children keep asking. Kindly leave our world before you are branded as a monstrous terrorist of our time.

The closure of schools as a measure to control the spread of the coronavirus pandemic has worsened the financial woes of Church of Christ School. Operational income is derived from school fees and daily canteen fees. This internally-generated fund is not forthcoming due to the absence of pupils in school. This has resulted in a very serious financial challenge when it comes to payment of salaries of permanent employees of the school during this crisis period.

Another serious challenge revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic is the technological deprivation of parents/guardians of our pupils. The school decided to use appropriate communication channels to connect to learners at all levels using parents/guardians as points of contact. Unfortunately, the majority of parents/guardians of our pupils are not conversant with the Internet and social media apps such as Facebook and WhatsApp. Teachers' preparedness to connect with their learners via technology could therefore not materialize due to the huge technological gap between the teachers and the parent/guardians.

The shared prayer of Board members, Management, staff and pupils is that God should guide the world to arrest and subdue the coronavirus (COVID-19) in every country for normalcy to be restored in our lives and various sectors of work. [1](#)

- By Richmond Twum



Empty compound and classroom at the Church of Christ School


YAHWEH YIREH: OUR GOD PROVIDED AT THE LAST MINUTE

In Genesis chapter 22, we read of Abraham's obedience to God to sacrifice his son Isaac. Just at the point when Abraham was about to slaughter his son, God intervened and provided a ram for the sacrifice. That story gave the world a phrase that is well-known to this day, "Yahweh Yireh" meaning, "The LORD will provide." This phrase has inspired confidence in the providence of God throughout generations of believers. The God who provided for Abraham many centuries ago has done it again, this time, for his children at the Village of Hope.

Owing to COVID-19, donations to Village of Hope – both locally and internationally – have dwindled. We depend solely on donations to care for the 206 children under our care in the children's homes and the street teenagers at the vocational training center; and so, with decreased donations, life has become tough at the Village of Hope. We also depend on donations to pay the house parents and the staff of the orphanage and the street ministry. In the month of April 2020, we did not receive enough support to meet our monthly budget and so there was no way we could fully provide for the needs of the children for the month of May, 2020. However, on the last day of April, just at the last minute, out of nowhere, God provided!!!

The Elders of the 151st Street church of Christ in Olathe, Kansas sent us a gift that has made it possible to ensure that the basic needs of all the children will be catered for. The gift of the 151st Street church came as an answer to our prayers. Just as God sent an angel to provide for Abraham, so has He sent His angels at 151st Street church of Christ in Olathe, Kansas to provide for His children. Indeed, even to this day, "Yahweh Yireh!!!"

Please join us in offering a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Almighty God for His loving kindness and for His provision for His children. And when you pray, please remember to say a prayer for the saints at 151st Street church of Christ and for all the donors, sponsors of children and supporters of this ministry whose faithful sacrificial giving continues to sustain the work of God at the Village of Hope.

"Thank you, God, for caring for your children; and thank you for providing for our every need. Thank you for working in the hearts of your children and causing them to give so generously to support your work here at the Village of Hope. We receive every gift with grateful hearts in full acknowledgment of your kindness and providence; and as stewards to faithfully administer your provisions to the glory of your name. Thank you, LORD, for everything. We thank you through Christ our Lord, amen!" 



One month's supply for only one of the seven children's homes at the Village of Hope. The picture excludes chicken, beef, fish, eggs and vegetables given to each home each month.



VILLAGE OF HOPE

Rescuing. Repairing. Preparing. Propelling.

P. O. Box 670394
Dallas, TX 75367

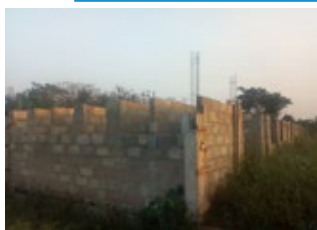
VISION OF HOPE - 2020: TOWARDS OPERATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

"The one who climbs a good tree is the one who deserves to be pushed." (Ghanaian Proverb)
We are working hard to be operationally self-sufficient. Please push us up to reach that goal.



I. HOPE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE (ORPHANAGE) Renovation of first 5 Children's Homes/ Cottages

	\$
1. George & Mary Chisholm House	10,000
2. Douglas & Margaret Boateng House	10,000
3. Traverse City Church of Christ House	10,000
4. Prestoncrest Church of Christ House A	10,000
5. Prestoncrest Church of Christ House B	10,000
Sub-Total	50,000



	\$
1. Completion of Construction of Nursery Building	50,000
2. Renovation of Primary and Junior High School Buildings	12,000
3. Furniture for Classrooms	8,000
Sub-Total	70,000



	\$
1. Completion of Construction of New Boys' Dormitory	32,000
2. Renovation of Josiah & Bonita Tilton Education Building	20,000
3. Furniture for Classrooms	8,000
Sub-Total	60,000



	\$
1. Oxygen for Wards	14,000
2. Lead Door for X-Ray Room	4,000
3. Roofing & Terrazzo Floor of Walkways	20,000
4. Completion of Remodeling of 3 Barnett Houses	20,000
5. Fencing-off of Hospital Facilities	12,000
Sub-Total	70,000

GRAND TOTAL: \$250,000.00