

Herald of Hope

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A PLEA FOR A WALL FOR VILLAGE OF HOPE AWAYASO CAMPUS



Beatrice, a child of Village of Hope and trainee of Hope Training Institute, stands at the current main entrance of the Ayawaso Campus of Village of Hope where Hope Training Institute is located.

Exactly a year ago, in the July 2020 edition of Herald of Hope, we joyfully announced that one of the oldest cases in the High Court of Ghana had been ruled in favor of Village of Hope. The case started in 1989, three months after Jerry Reynolds, an American missionary to Ghana; and Emmanuel Alfred Asante and Christian Nsoah – two Ghanaian evangelists of the churches of Christ – purchased land at Ayawaso for the purpose of establishing an orphanage in Ghana for the churches of Christ. An attempt at an out-of-court settlement failed because the plaintiffs were not interested. The case, therefore, had to proceed in the courts and, after 31 years, the verdict was pronounced in favor of Village of Hope.

During all those years that the case was in court, there was a limit to what could be done with and on the land at Ayawaso. Meanwhile, a new eight-lane highway was constructed by the government, reducing the size of the land by approximately six acres. Today, the land at Ayawaso is an 8.14-acre

quadrilateral on which a handful of permanent buildings have been built for the use of the street-connected youth that we serve. The area of unused land far exceeds the used land and, while this leaves room for expansion at the Ayawaso campus, it also creates a problem that the staff and trainees have to deal with nearly weekly.

There is an unfortunate phenomenon in parts of Ghana, especially areas close to the capital, where individuals can show up at odd hours on unprotected and unused land to erect semi-permanent structures for private business or for shelter. The Village of Hope campus at Ayawaso has not been spared from the effects of that kind of encroachment. Often, the activities of these people happen in the dead of night and it has been a huge struggle for the staff of Hope Training Institute, who live and work on the Ayawaso campus, to keep up with the increasing number of encroachers. Often, not a week passes by that staff are not compelled to confront a difficult,



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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

albeit wrong, individual about removing whatever structure they have attempted to place on the land belonging to Village of Hope.

The process of dealing with illegal settlers is extremely cumbersome and, often, the police simply advice land owners to fence off their entire land to avoid the disturbances caused by these criminals. The rate of encroachment has increased in the past few months because of the difficulties of life in the capital city and, at this point, it has become obvious that if we truly want to protect our children, then we have to protect the land by building a wall around it.

In June, we made the decision to begin constructing a concrete wall around the campus as a matter of urgency. The cost of the entire wall around the 8.14-acre property is \$40,796. As of June 2021, we have borrowed \$13,400 in order to begin the work. Your help is needed to build this wall to protect the children by protecting the land. [🔗](#)



This boundary is to the right of the main entrance (see Page 1), along the Ayawaso Road, and continues northwards to join the Pokuase-Ablekuma Highway (see plan on Page 3).



This is further north of the main entrance, getting closer to the Pokuase-Ablekuma Highway.



Here is the starting point of the south-western boundary along the Pokuase-Ablekuma Highway. The yellow structure belongs to an encroacher. It will have to be removed now that the wall is coming up.



This is further south-west along the Pokuase-Ablekuma Highway. If you look closely you will see flower pots belonging to an encroaching horticulturist.



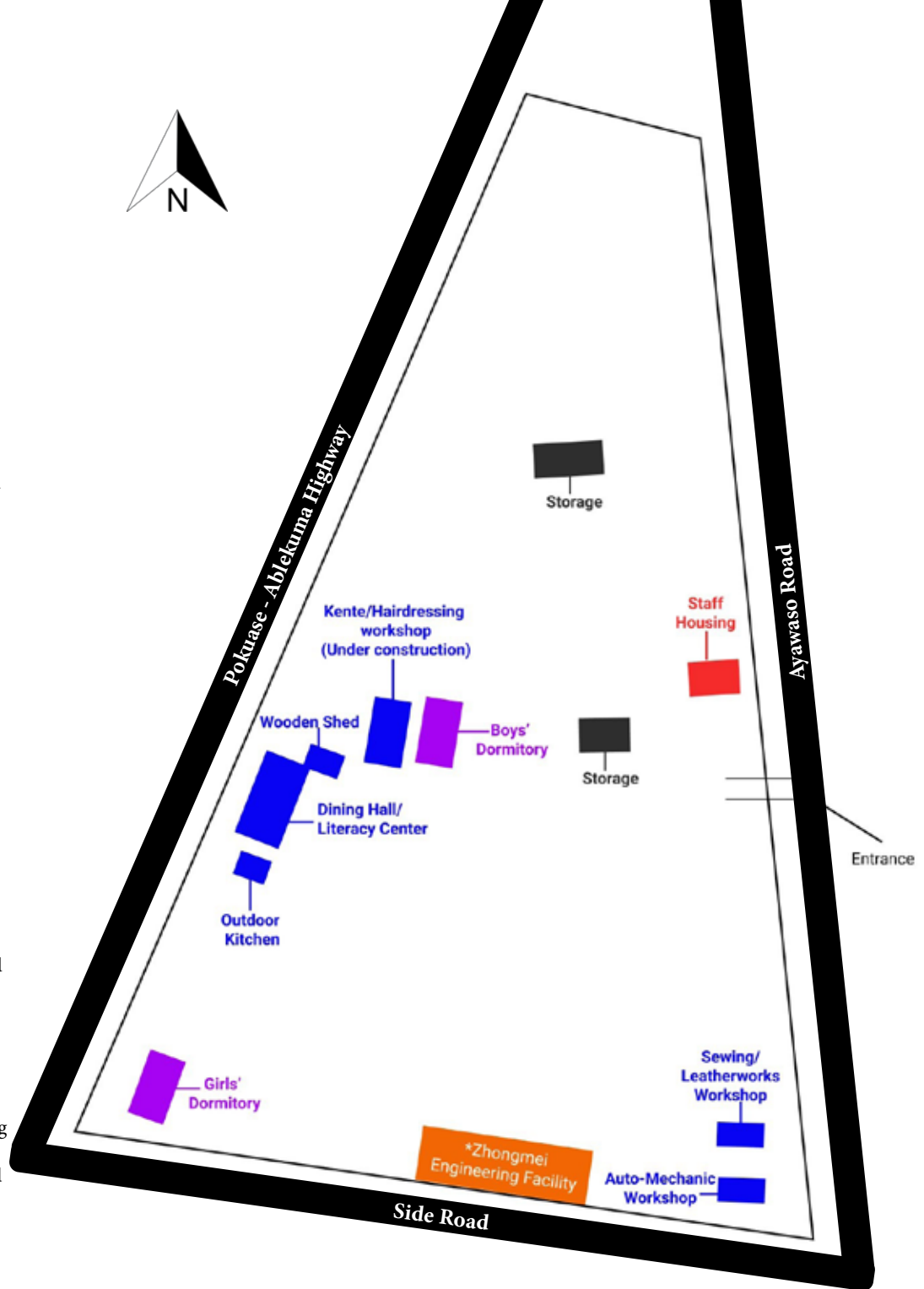
The rest of the south-west boundary on the Pokuase-Ablekuma Highway ends just before the telecoms mast in the background. That is where the girls' dormitory is located.

The plan on the right is of the Village of Hope land at Ayawaso. It provides some perspective on the size of the land relative to its current usage - the very reason why encroachers find it easy to place structures on the many unused areas on campus closest to the boundaries.



1. **Staff Housing:** Armor Bearer's House, where the Housemaster/Auto Mechanic Instructor lives with his family.
2. **Storage:** Buildings used to keep supplies and material donations received.
3. **Boys' Dormitory:** Housing for male trainees, mostly former street boys.
4. **Kente/Hairdressing Workshop:** Building under construction for the use of hairdressing and kente-weaving trainees.
5. **Dining Hall/Literacy Center:** Two-story building with a dining hall and kitchen on the first floor; and classrooms and offices on the second floor.
6. **Girls' Dormitory:** Housing for female trainees, mostly former street girls.
7. **Zhongmei Engineering Facility:** This office building was constructed by the Zhongmei Engineering Company to be used during the construction of an interchange to expand the Pokuase-Ablekuma Highway. The building will be donated to Village of Hope after the road construction project ends.
8. **Auto Mechanic Workshop:** Building used by auto mechanic trainees.
9. **Sewing/Leatherworks Workshop:** Building used by sewing and leatherworks trainees.

Please help us to protect this land and the young lives who call the Ayawaso Campus home. Kindly earmark your check "Ayawaso Wall" and mail it to **Village of Hope, P. O. Box 670394, Dallas, TX 75367**. You may also make your donation online at thevohgroup.org/donate.



View of main entrance
from second floor of the dining hall/literacy center



View of sewing/leatherworks workshop and Zhongmei Engineering Facility
from second floor of dining hall/literacy center

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS WITH A MARCH



The team prepares to leave the Fetteh Campus for the march through Fetteh and Senya Bereku.

As the 25th year of Village of Hope progresses, activities to mark the celebration continue in various forms. On Saturday, June 5, members of the Village of Hope family assembled, as early as 6 o'clock in the morning on the Fetteh campus, with a plan to march from Village of Hope through Fetteh to Senya Bereku. The aim of this was to continue to remind the community that Village of Hope is 25 years old, and have fun doing it.

The day was supposed to be bright and sunny - the very reason why the march was started early enough to avoid the heat of the afternoon sun. The excited team set off with energy, accompanied by a lively brass band. Not long after we left campus, the skies darkened as clouds began to gather quickly. Within minutes, the rains started pouring heavily. Without missing a beat, the brass band continued playing with even more vigor. It was as if the rain only gave all the marchers a boost to keep moving. As residents of Fetteh watched from the safety of their homes, staff and children of Village of Hope danced through the streets all the way to the beach and back to the center of the village.

By this time, the heavy downpour had turned into light showers. After a few minutes' rest, we picked up the pace again and headed towards Senya Bereku, the neighbouring town. The music and dancing continued and the people of Senya Bereku could hear us from afar. At the edge of the town, the team, now beginning to feel tired, turned around and, with the brass band urging us on, made the journey back to the Village of Hope campus to settle down for some refreshments.

In spite of the unexpected rains, it was a wonderful time of fellowship where children and adults alike had fun on a Saturday morning. We look forward to doing it again soon.



Drenched but happy marchers return to the Village of Hope campus.



Some of the participants of the march

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS WITH A SPECIAL REUNION



Staff of Village of Hope with some of the independent children of Village of Hope

The greatest measure of the success of our work together for the children of Ghana is to see people who were once vulnerable, orphaned or abandoned children become responsible adults, living independent and productive lives. Through your donations, many of our children are now grown and educated Christian men and women with their own families. In continuing with the 25th Anniversary celebrations, another event was held on Saturday, June 12, specifically for the independent children of Village of Hope.

The event was held at the Knutsford University campus, chosen for its central location. House parents, social workers and management team members of Village of Hope traveled to Accra to reunite with our adult children for a while, find out more details about their current lives and activities, and discuss the 25th Anniversary program with them.


Eventually, a total of 18 of our independent children joined us at the venue: Felicia Arhin, Isaac Adinkrah, Mary Dampah, Shaibu Osman, Linda Effah, Francis Sosu, Emmanuel Akrong, George Anyaba, Daliei Yaare, Adriana Aidoo, Mildred Agbenowosi, Rita Okrah, Charles Kwakugah, Fortune Bulley, Columbus Tackie, Diana Owusu, Nat Havor and Dawun Taphambah. It was such a great blessing and a pleasure to sing and pray once more with these men and women after so many years. Samuel Osei, the current Managing Director of the children's home, welcomed everyone officially and gave an update on the children's homes and Village of Hope, in general. After this, we had an introduction session which took everyone down memory lane as each of our children called out their home on campus and who their house parents were.

This was followed by a brief discussion of the 25th Anniversary plans for the remainder of the year, led by Araba Adjei, Deputy Group Managing Director in charge of Administration. Fred Asare, Group Managing Director, then spoke to the entire group about "remembering whose we are because" "people will not identify you for who you are

but for whose you are." The purpose of this speech was to inspire our independent children to maintain a sense of belonging to the Village of Hope family and to remember their roots. Fred Asare also encouraged everyone to take part in the anniversary celebrations.

The rest of the time was spent listening to the input, questions, and concerns of our children, as parents would listen to their grown children, and exchange ideas. The major outcome of these discussions was the need for our independent children to have a formal association and use their influence and relationships to help guide and support their younger brothers and sisters at the Village of Hope.

Kwaku Sarkodie, Deputy Group Managing Director in charge of Stakeholder Relations closed the fruitful meeting with a prayer and then individuals were left to continue socializing over refreshments.

We are always thankful to God for protecting our children and bringing them this far in their lives. 



Discussion time

HOPE CHILDREN'S VILLAGE WELCOMES THREE NEW CHILDREN



Margaret

Meet Douglas, Lydia and Margaret. Their story cannot be told without backtracking to their mother's own childhood:

Yaa became an orphan at a very early age and was taken in by her mother's extended family. As a child, she struggled with behavioral issues and this was troubling to her family. She was aggressive and often got into fights with relatives and neighbors. In spite of the fact that she had bouts of depression and bursts of anger, she did not get the care that she needed. Instead of learning about her condition and helping her, Yaa's family neglected and avoided her until she eventually moved away to live on her own.

In situations like this, young women simply get taken advantage of by men, and Yaa's story was no different. Yaa has had three children and is not able to name their fathers. As a single mother of three with mental health issues, Yaa struggled on a daily basis to feed her children. This situation only intensified her desperation and depression, causing the children to be neglected further. With no signs of hope, it seemed that Yaa and her children were headed for doom.



Douglas

All was not lost, however, because Naomi, a petty trader and good Samaritan in Yaa's neighborhood noticed the situation of the family and began to provide food for Yaa and her children. It is important to note that Naomi and her husband were already taking care of six dependents - their two biological children, two nieces, and two orphaned children from their extended family.

Recently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Naomi's husband lost his job and is still unemployed. This immediately reduced the family's income and put a strain on their resources. Naturally, this would mean that Yaa and her three children who were on the periphery of Naomi's household, would also suffer after having come to rely completely on the generosity of this family. As much as Naomi's family had the will, it was a struggle to help Yaa's children and, against this background, Lydia, Douglas and Margaret have now become part of the Village of Hope family.

It is sad to note that of the three children, Lydia, age eight, is the only one who had been able to start school and was in the second grade. Even in her case, after COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, she had not been able to go back to school. Douglas, who is almost five, and Margaret, who is three years old, had never been enrolled in school. Their mother's mental state affected them in many ways. For example, there was no potable water at their residence and it should have been Yaa's responsibility to fetch water for her children's use but she was often unable to do that and so she and the children were always unkempt. Yaa was also unable to supervise the children and left them to manage their own affairs without any regulation or guidance.

The children are here with us now and we are hopeful that they will adjust to this new life and enjoy being children and being shown the love of God. Meanwhile, Yaa's extended family has been advised to take care of their relative's health needs while the children are provided with a safe environment to thrive in. [📞](#)



Lydia

STORIES OF HOPE AT HOPE TRAINING INSTITUTE

The stories of the children that end up with us at the Village of Hope can be very depressing and it is always a blessing to find a family that truly has the interest of their child at heart.

In March this year, after the street outreach event organized for the trainees of Hope Training Institute to give back to those on the streets, a number of follow-up rescues were done. One of such rescued children is 14-year-old Daniel.



Daniel

According to Daniel, he was from Senya Bereku (the town next to Fetteh, where the main Village of Hope campus is located) and had been away from home for about eight months after stealing money from his father and running away to avoid being caught and punished. As we do with each case, our team of social workers followed up with a trip to look for Daniel's family.

It was all tears of joy when Daniel's parents heard that their son had been found. They corroborated Daniel's story and confirmed that he had started stealing from his father quite

frequently and knew he would be beaten on the day he ran away. They hoped Daniel would return and then, slowly, the days turned into weeks and the weeks turned into months. According to Daniel's father, the family made all the necessary efforts to find Daniel. On a few occasions when he heard reports that Daniel had been spotted in Accra, Daniel's father organized the young men in their neighborhood, put them in his van and brought them to the specified area to search for Daniel. Each time, he returned home without his son.

Daniel is interested in leatherworks and his family is grateful that he has a safe place where he can be counselled to deal with the negative habits that he has picked up that led him to the streets in the first place. Now that the rescuing is done, Daniel's family will work with the social workers of Hope Training Institute to help repair, prepare and propel him into a brighter future.

Richmond is another of the children rescued in March from the streets of Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Richmond is a smart boy who simply made bad decisions from a very young age. Coming from a poor and broken home often takes a toll on children and, without guidance and love, the effects can be damaging. It all began when Richmond's

mother, Mary, left her hometown in the Central Region of Ghana, in search of greener pastures in Accra.

Her first stop, with some of her six children in tow, was her mother's "residence" in Kaneshie (a suburb of Accra). After a while, Mary and the children, including Richmond, relocated to a slum in another part of the city still in the hopes of improving their lives. By this time, Richmond was in the fourth grade and had decided he no longer wanted to go to school. Mary disagreed but Richmond insisted and, for a while, he refused to go to school. Every attempt that Mary made to take her son back to school proved futile.


Apparently, Richmond was being influenced by his older sister who had stayed with her grandmother in Kaneshie but had eventually moved onto the streets to fend for herself. Richmond assumed that there was freedom in the life that his sister was living because she went and came as she pleased and, before long, he was spending more time on the streets than at home with his mother and younger siblings. Mary eventually decided that Richmond was not going to change and so she gave up on trying and chose to focus on her younger children instead. As bad as it seems, one cannot put all the blame on Mary who must singlehandedly provide for all her children's needs by operating a hairdressing salon and selling food items from a kiosk in the slum.

It is sad to note that the sister that influenced Richmond negatively is one of those who dropped out of Hope Training Institute a couple of years ago. She is currently still living on the streets after having her second child. She originally started her training in hairdressing to follow in her mother's footsteps, but could not resist the urge to go back to "freedom" on the streets.



Richmond

Now that Richmond is with Hope Training Institute, we are praying that he makes better choices. He has joined the leatherworks class but is being monitored and counseled in the hopes that he may also consider going back to school.

Many more children like Daniel and Richmond come to us every day and we need your prayers and support to continue caring for them. 



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VISION OF HOPE - 2020: TOWARDS OPERATIONAL SELF-SUFFICIENCY

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**

II. CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHOOL (PRE-K THROUGH 9TH GRADE)

1. Renovation of Primary and Junior High School Buildings	12,000
2. Furniture for Classrooms	8,000

Sub-Total **20,000**

GRAND TOTAL: \$70,000.00

