



Horizons Children's Home

"Forward Ever, Backward Never"

Issue #3

June, 2002



**Sandema, Builsa District,
Upper East Region, Ghana**

In Ghana:

Horizons Children's Home
Box 59, Bolgatanga, UER
Ghana, West Africa

In Canada:

24 Marblemount Crescent
Toronto, ON
M1T 2H4 , Canada

June, 2002

Dearest Friends,

Warm greetings from the Sandema Horizons Children's Project! Established in August 2000, our program provides education and housing to orphaned and/or abandoned children in a rural town in northern Ghana.

The past months have been full of activity at our small home in Sandema. In August 2001, I returned to Ghana for a wonderful visit with the children. They are all growing up so fast! It was inspiring to see how well they are doing in school and how actively they participate in family life. I had a chance to meet their teachers, who spoke positively about the boys and their academic work. Some are doing better than others, but they are all trying their best.

The main purpose of my trip was to assist our local Program Coordinator (Simon Akoba) and our Advisory Board (see page 5) in expanding the program. This entailed moving to a larger home, which can accommodate more than double the number of children as our previous house (up to 30 boys).

This issue features photos of our newest additions, some details about the 'big move', and some pictures that depict daily life at the home. There is also a write-up about members of our local volunteer Advisory Board, whose dedication and commitment have been invaluable to our project.

As always, we extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you in the USA and Canada who have contributed so generously to Horizons. Your support is helping us to change the world...one person at a time. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Heather Menezes

Our Growing Family

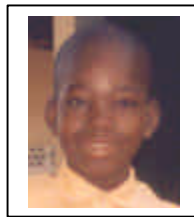
The Horizons family is growing rapidly! Since our last newsletter, we have welcomed 8 new children into our program. Two of the new additions are a brother and sister (Nana and Akosua). Their single mother suffered a stroke some time ago which left her severely disabled. She asked for our help in caring for Nana and Akosua. After visiting their home, we agreed to take Nana into our program and provide for Akosua's education, living and medical costs. (Because our small home cannot accommodate mixed groupings, Akosua continues to live with her mother.)

The ultimate goal of our program is to help children become independent and self-sufficient through education. We always encourage the children to dream big dreams for themselves. Below is a sample of our newest family members aspirations:

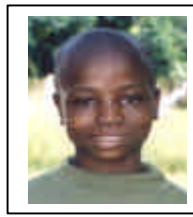
"I want to be a..."



Sunday, Age 8
Priest



Peter, Age 9
Police Officer



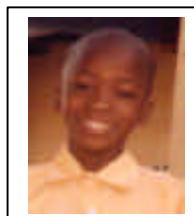
Nana, Age 11
Mechanic



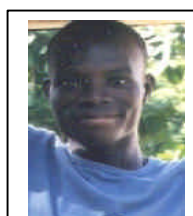
Akosua, Age 8
Doctor



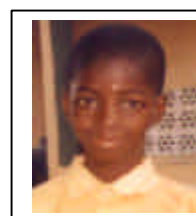
Emmanuel, Age 12
Teacher



Awudu, Age 11
Pilot



Joseph, Age 13
Pilot



Monday, Age 10
Carpenter

An Educational Adventure



In August, 2001, Simon organized a day excursion for the children. The boys (along with chaperones from the Advisory Board) loaded into a local transport truck and travelled together to a large town near Sandema (Bolgatanga). For many of the children, it was their first time venturing beyond their home villages. They learned about the technical side of broadcasting during a tour of the local radio station. They then made their way to a famous crocodile pond (in Paga) for an 'up close and personal' viewing of these revered animals. The final stop was the site of an historic slave market, the holding point for slaves before they were sent to North America. P.P. (a teacher and member of our Advisory Board) made the day trip an educational and fun-filled journey! **Top left:** Yaw, Danladi and Sunday pose with a croc. **Top right:** The children look on while their tour guides demonstrate how a large rock was used for drumming entertainment by the slaves at the market. **Bottom left:** An employee of the local radio station shows the children how signals are transmitted to various communities. **Bottom right:** P.P. (far right) explains more about the crocodile pond to the children.



A Glimpse...



Family meetings are a forum for storytelling, discussions and reflection on the day's events. We believe the meetings teach the children to express themselves and help strengthen their sense of family unity. Left: Simon leads a lively meeting to prepare the children for their new home.

A simple gift of a Lego set brought endless hours of entertainment to the children. The boys were divided into two groups and tasked with working as a team to build an interesting structure. Everyone got in on the architectural designs!



One of the challenges of moving into a new home - anywhere in the world - is the yardwork! On their summer break, the boys were happy to take charge of weeding the overgrown garden and clearing the yard. Left: The children are experts in the use of the local gardening tool: the cutlass.



...of Daily Life

During their summer break, the children packed up their old house and moved to the new home. The little boys were tasked with carrying small goods, while the older boys operated a pushcart to transport larger household items (mattresses, tables, etc.). Though the sun was strong and the numerous trips back and forth tiring, there was a palpable sense of hope and excitement in the air.



Top right: Roland, Jacob, Victor and Joseph demonstrate their pushcart manoeuvres. The pushcart is now used for carrying large food quantities from the market to the house.

Middle right: Simon poses with 'Peace' and 'Hope', two stray dogs adopted by the children. The boys are responsible for feeding and caring for the animals.



Bottom right: The hen coop and the poultry inside are another responsibility of the children. The hens provide the house with a steady supply of eggs.



The Horizons Advisory Board

The Horizons Advisory Board is a very special group of people. When the children were living on the streets, we used to meet every morning on the veranda of a local storefront in Sandema. These caring community members offered the boys encouragement during their most difficult times.

Shortly after the children enrolled in school and moved into their first house, Simon, Maxwell, and I decided to create an Advisory Board. We wanted a dynamic network of community members who could: 1) provide us with advice to help us develop our program and 2) act as role models and examples of community leadership for the children.

The Board members come from different professional backgrounds. They have met faithfully four times a year since our project began. They advise the Coordinator (Simon) on various matters, visit with the children, and graciously volunteer their time whenever it is needed. We are so proud and grateful to have them as part of the Horizons family!

Current Members of the Horizons Advisory Board

David Afoko - Primary School Teacher, Ayieta Primary

Maxwell Akandem-Social Worker, Community-Based Rehab. Pgm., Presby AGRIC

Godwin Amobil - Secondary School Teacher, Sandema Secondary School

P.P. Apaabey Baba - Director, National Council for Civic Education

Janet Apenkrum - Credit Officer, Freedom from Hunger Program, Builsa Bank

Pascal Ayaric - Accountant, Bolga Works Dept.

Left to Right: Maxwell, Godwin, David, Simon, and P.P. pose for a picture during a day excursion with the children. (Absent: Janet and Pascal)



Acknowledgements

On behalf of the children in Sandema, we would like to thank all of our donors for their generous support!



The Stanley Francis Foundation is a registered Canadian charity which supports educational initiatives in developing countries. Donations towards our project can be made c/o the Stanley Francis Foundation, 22 Rustywood Drive, North York, ON, M3A 1R8 and marked for the "Sandema Horizons Children's Project". Receipts will be issued for tax purposes.