



HIPS - Charity Organisation

Weija, Ghana

Information letter Nr. 12 **November 2007**

Dear Friends and Sponsors,

On September 28th I started my second trip to Ghana this year.

Already on the next day the family Heller, one of the founders of the Swiss CIRCLE HIPS came to visit the kindergarten and school at Weija and get a personal impression of the HIPS project in Ghana.

The family was warmly welcomed with music and dances by the children. After some time of getting to know each other, Mrs. Heller and her two children joined the school classes and expressed their positive impressions about the knowledge and education of the children. With a party for the son of the Heller's - the next day was his birthday – all of the children and teachers expressed their congratulation.



The next day Heller's than continued their trip to South Africa.

During my stay, the 3rd schoolhouse building could be opened up for use, after a record construction time of just 2 month. This building, financed by an undisclosed sponsor from Switzerland, contains 3 new classrooms, a room for the teachers, a small room for school equipment and a little office. It was possible to have also this building painted on its outside by the well known Ghanaian artist Agorsor.



The Company Ballast Nedam has been again very helpful at the construction, the purchase and supervision of the new school building,



so that we were able to get the mentioned additional rooms for the donated money, which were needed urgently for the regular work at Weija for quite some time. Much to the delight of the children they now can have the daily lessons each class of its own in a separate room.

The new kindergarten kids, I reported about their selection in my last letter, have acquainted themselves good and fast to the new surrounding and the now structured course of their day.



Also the HIPS Board could be strengthened by two highly qualified members. Mrs. Gottfried, a managing person of some Montessori schools in Ghana joined our Board. She is experienced as a teacher and a trained person in all matters which are used for the education of young children. She sure will be a great help for the development of our School at its extension to a 9 class primary school.

I am very grateful for her unselfish help.

Also Miss Atta Agyemang – half Ghanaian half German – expressed her interest to help HIPS by adding her knowledge and engagement to the Board. Being a young qualified lawyer she not only knows the languages of Ghana, English and German, but also has the right age to give the needed continuity to the HIPS Board. I am also very thankful, that Miss Atta has joined our managing team.

On October 12th I could take all of the children, the teachers, staff and some of the parents to our regular excursion. I use the possibility on these regular trips to show all of the participants different parts of their own country, since most of them could only very seldom go a trip outside their village.

Thanks to Ballast Nedam we could hire a large bus which took all of us on the trip. As always, the start of the trip could not be overheard by anyone at the village. We had the first stop at Shai Hills Reservation, where a lot of monkeys waited for us and the feeding by the children. It was great fun for everyone. Since most of the children had to leave home already at about 4:30 am to be in time at the starting point, they were hungry and thirsty, so that all of us had a break at that occasion.



Since there has been a lot of rain in that area during the last weeks, we could not continue by bus and had to walk from there on by foot. But like quite often in Ghana, the description of the distance has been rather vague, so, instead of the assumed time, we needed more than double - walking through a burning sun without any shade - before we reached the caverns and mountains. At this area some of the Ghanaian tribes hid, when they were persecuted by the Ashanti, who wanted to sell them as slaves to the white man.

The visit to this area has been a great experience to all of us and brought to the Ghanaians some new knowledge about their own history.

We also met there a group of 6 students - one of them came from Germany, the others from the US – which were on a trip through Ghana. Since they had no special destination, we offered them to join us. Even being more packed in our bus, we took them along, bringing some interesting experience to everybody.

After a walk of more than 1 ½ hour back to the bus, all of us had been very tired and very, very muddy, so we needed some time to convince the bus driver to take us back, by promising, that we would help him to clean the bus, when we reached Weija.

So we could continue our trip to the Volta Dam, which builds the biggest man made lake of the world. There I had hired 2 boats which took us on a ride for about one hour on the lake.





We had to do the trip twice since the boats had not been big enough to take all of us. Those which waited were kept busy with food, drinks and music. On the afternoon we then drove back to Weija, as usual with a lot of music and beating the drums. Even the fittest got tired after that long and interesting day, but we had promised to clean the bus, and so we did, before everybody could go home. We thanked the driver very much, which had been stressed by the noisy group with all the music, drums and finally the dirt, which we brought into his car.

October 15 we had a very special day. The new German Ambassador Dr. Marius Haas and his charming wife visited our project at Weija. He has been reading my article at the virtual commemorative publication, which the German Embassy has been putting into the internet to honour the 50th anniversary of the German-Ghanaian relationship, and expressed his interest to come and see the Weija project in person.



Naturally everybody at Weija was happy and nervous about that visit and presented a picturesque program for the Ambassador. He visited extensively the HIPS compound and all the buildings and expressed his positive impression about all he saw.

So during his speech he promised HIPS, that he would help us by a donation of 7.500 € to give us the possibility to build an additional sanitary building, which will be a great help to cover the needs of the extended amount of now 100 children at HIPS.





All of us at HIPS, and naturally me, thanked him very much for his spontaneous help and the expressed acknowledgement of the achieved at Weija.

A few days before I had to go back home, Dr. Boskamp, a German Doctor from Meschede/ Germany whom I know for a long time, came to Ghana for the 5th time with the Rotary Doctors program. He always helps at the Akwatia hospital, where I met him. I came there with a girl and her mother from our school. He had promised helping us to find a way that she could be examined at the hospital by its eye specialists.

Unfortunately the doctors could only tell her, that one of her eyes will stay blind, but the specialist opened us a contact to another doctor which might be able to at least alleviate some of her problems. After some of the almost usual problems I finally could get into contact to that doctor, and we agreed on a meeting with the girl, when I will be in Ghana the next time.



Fortunately there had been some special action during the last half of the year, which brought additional funds to HIPS:

The primary school at Dorlar/ Germany started an action called “ waffles on wheel “ which brought 676,36 € for HIPS. Also the children made a little booklet, which presents some children of the school, showing themselves or through the dress they wore as one letter of the alphabet. A very nice idea, which I will take to HIPS/ Weija.

The class 6a and 6d of the Archigymnasium at Soest/ Germany had worked during the annual school festivity for HIPS, by selling so called “bible cakes” to various people. This included not only the baking and selling of the cakes but also selling the corresponding receipt with it. By this creative and helpful idea. 120 € could be donated to HIPS

I thank all the children, teachers and parents very much for their engaged help.

Since we all can't avoid getting older, my husband and me asked our friends not to give presents for our special birthdays, but donate to my HIPS project. A party, which no one will forget, brought almost 15.000 € for HIPS. We are very, very grateful for all the small and big donations, which we could collect that day.



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This will be all for this time

The days in Ghana had been very nice again but also stressing as usual with a lot of new impressions.

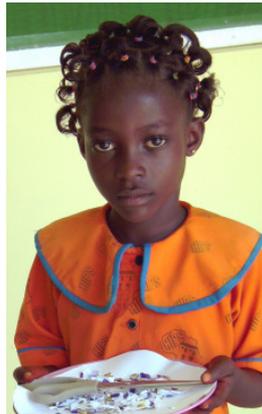
I left all the HIPS Children in good shape. It is always a great experience, when I can recognize the gratitude in their eyes about all HIPS is giving them for their lives.

Middle of February 2008 I will be back to Ghana, this time together with my son and his girlfriend.

I am very happy that the two of them are joining me, not only because of the help they can give to me, but even more so about the interest they show in my project.

To all of you friends and sponsors, I wish a happy rest of the year and thank you hearty for all your help in 2007.

Yours



Brigitte Honsel

Children are the wisdom of a nation