

Ghana Update #1

The adventures begin: This afternoon (**Tuesday 18th**) three of the older children (8-10) were assigned to take buckets full of corn to the 'ground mill' ... what we used to call a miller ... to have the grain ground into flour for banku. I went along to take photos. The 'ground man' was not there and we were not far from the A & C market, so we left the grain and went shopping for two essentials ... bottled water (so I would have bottles to fill with Beacon House filtered water and put in the fridge) and tissues for doing my dishes (Purel and tissues make dishwashing easy in Africa).

On the way back from the market to the miller, 'J' took a tumble into a drainage ditch ... ouch!! We cleaned her hands with Purel and left the rest dirty. Since I wanted to get her quickly into a 'shower' (bucket shower), we found a taxi to take us and our flour back to BH.

Just this morning, a volunteer asked me how we showered here; she knew the actual showers did not have water flowing to them. After describing how I take a bucket shower, she asked if the children do likewise. My response was that I did not know, but thought it was also by using a bucket. I now know this is true. Two of the younger girls and I helped 'J' shower and I bandaged her scrapped knee. It will bleed for a couple of days, so of course, she must keep it covered ... house rules.

Upon returning to BH, I realized I had opened a can of worms. While at the store, the children spotted little 8 ounce size bottles of water and I bought them to drink on the way back. A few minutes after arriving at BH, some of the other children swarmed on me asking for the small bottles. Also, one of the baby house mothers tried to take one away from one of the children to use for mixing formula. I managed to get the bottle returned to the child with the promise to buy some small water bottles for formula. However, letting the children have the bottles is not allowed, I now know, so I later had to collect them and put them in the kitchen for general use. I must learn and relearn the BH rules to avoid making faux faux!

Mama Laadi, from the north, was here when I arrive and we shared the guest room for 24 hours. It was good to see her and talk briefly about my coming up to the north and what I hope to accomplish. Now ... Tuesday evening ... I can move my large duffels and packer box into the room and unpack and reorganize. There is a dresser in the room and it is much better than duffel diving for things.

New rules about water: It is turned on for an hour late afternoon each day M-F and none on the weekend, so I must rush out right now and draw water for my bucket bath tonight and borrow a second bucket on Friday to store enough water for three bucket showers. On Saturday, I will purchase another stainless steel bucket, so that I have two ... one for use and one for storage.

Wednesday Jan. 19th: The power has been off all day and even though it is on, it is taking several attempts to send one short message. I am learning to copy the message before hitting the Send button. Saves retyping. With the Internet not behaving, I will spend my time tonight continuing to type Ghana Update #1 into Word.

The children keep asking about Granddaughter Rachel, who came with me last year. They do not understand why she is not here this time. Rachel do you feel needed/wanted/adored???? I really miss having her here. There is nobody with whom I can bounce my multious alternatives or overthink each situation!! (Last year Rachel noticed those characteristics about me.)

Some of the children have gone home to their American families, a couple of older children have been placed in schools here in Ghana, and sadly one little, very sick baby died over the summer. I was so looking forward to seeing her and hoping she had improved. Most of the children remembered me and surprisingly, I am remembering most of their names. There are a few new children so I am working on learning those new names.

Some business attended to: I spent some time (short, but productive) with Romana (Beacon House Director) and got some questions answered regarding specific disposition of the goods I brought. Bernard exchanged all my US dollars and got 1.46 exchange rate ... very good ... our (mine and the donated funds) money will go farther. He has my cell phone trying to get it coded so that I can use it with a Ghanaian simm card.

The lead and assistant cooks and I conferred regarding food that I have committed to purchase. They asked that I slightly alter my original shopping list to adjust to recent donations from local folks/merchants/growers. We will be getting four weeks worth of fish this Saturday instead of chicken (they have chicken in the freezer).

Rachel, they still/again come to me for the video in the evening. The ladies don't know how to work it. Luka does it when we are not here. I will ask Romana if I may teach the ladies how or if she would prefer Luka to continue doing it. It is too hard on my knees to get down on the floor (my trifocals don't line up right if I try to just bend over).

Wooooops ... the power went off again sending me scrambling by brail for my flashlight. I must remember to carry it with me after dark. The things I must relearn!!!

Some time in the next few weeks, Bernard (Romana's right hand man and legal/paper shuffler) will take me with him when he drives out to the new land parcel. On the way he will drop me off at the bead 'factory'. My grandchildren and I had a fine time stringing these beads, so I will bring home another load of them, to again use as fund raisers.

During my brief trip to the north, I plan to visit with the three boys we are wanting to sponsor and with Lamisi, the teenager attending the school for the deaf. Romana explained that school here is year round. There are three terms per year: Jan-May, May-August, Sept-Dec. ... approximately. We (through donations) have funds to sponsor the three boys until August. Romana is reluctant to start sponsorship without good reason to believe the sponsorship will continue. I told her that I could not guarantee continued sponsorship, but would be sending/bringing home photos, stories, and video clips of the boys in hopes there might be enough interest to do so. The price tag for the boys and their blind grandmother is \$82 US dollars per month to provide food, shelter, and school costs for all of them.

Thursday morning 20th: Fraught with technical difficulties, but finally have a photo of the toddlers to send. They have all grown, especially the two who were infants last year. 'E' has changed so much I don't even recognize her. 'A' still has beautiful dimples, 'I' and 'G' still compete over everything, 'I' still has a runny nose most of the time (perhaps a future of allergy treatments in store), and 'N' still looks soooo serious.

Tomorrow Bernard will take me to the bead factory. I will shop 'til I drop!!!

A big thanks to all who have provided the funds to shop for food and other necessities for Beacon House. The next update will have an accounting of monies spent on Saturday afternoon at the Medina Market (local, open air market used by the locals). I'm sure Saturday will prove to be another adventure!!

Peace and Joy to all until next update.

Grandma Judy Griffin