

Ghana Update #3

The previous update failed to include the cost accounting for purchases. You will find that at the end of this message.

Monday 24th There was no water flowing to the Baby House all day today. There was only one bucket left at bedtime. I asked how they will bathe the little ones in the morning; only a shrug of the shoulders came as answer.

Tuesday 25th The seven little ones got what we would call a spit bath or sponge bath. The dirty diapers were mounding up in a basin with a dribble of water poured on them. The children's dirty clothes were heaped in another basin with no water in which to soak. I 'borrowed' some water from the housemothers for the older children (2-10 year olds), enough to get the wash soaking properly.

Finally, the water started flowing (from the city pipes to the Beacon House pipes), but not to the Baby House faucet (not enough pressure as it is slightly uphill). They are the last ones to get water, but are the ones with the greatest need for water because of the soiled diapers and clothing.

I watched the older kid area faucet flow long enough for them to fill a number of large bowls and buckets, then turned off their faucet, saying it was the baby house's turn to get water. There was some grumbling, but I stood firm and started filling buckets for the babies and toddlers. The water pressure was so weak that it took up to 5 minutes to fill a bucket. Even so, it was enough to wash the dirty diapers and clothes.

By mid-afternoon, the water pressure was sufficient that we could fill the two small storage tanks. I don't know the capacity of the tanks, but it is sufficient for about 48 hours of normal use (bathing the 7 littles, baby house mothers, diapers, and clothing). If it must go longer, as described above, drastic cutbacks of usage must be made.

The baby house mothers do not waste the water and in fact double use much of the water ... such as rinse water for clothes becomes wash water for the next batch of clothes. Wash water for clothes becomes soaking water for the dirty diapers. These are the same type procedures we were using during the 7 year drought in California in the 80's.

A photo-op presented itself tonight at dinner. The children were all smiles when they spotted a hard boiled egg on their plates Yummmm!!

Wednesday 26th The water is not flowing from the city today. Isaac (the keeper of the BH water key) assures me that IF it flows, I may re-fill top off the tanks. The housemothers tell me the water often flows only twice in one week and even then, the baby house gets last crack at it. Can you guess that one of my campaigns while here is to advocate for the baby house to get their fair share of the water. Also I will look into the cost of one additional tank for storage.

Our dinner dish tonight had so much vegetable, fish, and chicken in it, the pieces were even recognizable. More ooohs and aaaahs from the children.

Thursday 27th Another day without water to the baby house and I am a little crabby!! The other two zones got minimal, but sufficient water. I have warned them that the baby house gets first crack tomorrow ... IF the water is flowing in the pipes from the city. One of the baby house storage tanks is empty and the other one has only 12 inches in the bottom.

In the meantime, I am having a great time with the kids. One of my duties this year is to do some developmental assessment of the children, starting with the toddlers and three year olds. There was

immediate need for data on a new girl. At first glance, she appeared to be very forlorn, withdrawn, and non-verbal. She warmed up to me, though, and I am convinced there is a lot in that little head that she is very stingy sharing; I am guessing there has been some trauma and/or deprivation in her short history prior to coming to BH. I will try to spend a little time with her each day. These children are well cared for and loved, but have little or no one-on-one time.

I spend a little time in the mid to late afternoon with the oldest girl here. She attends public school now and is struggling. We are working with reading, writing, and math at about the second grade level. If she were in the US, she would be getting some additional help from a learning specialist.

I look forward to another Saturday shopping in the Medina market. It is great to see a need and right away put into motion the filling of that need. The staff knows that money does not grow on my tree and that I must follow a process. First I must determine if the need is real. Second I ask if there is no other way to satisfy the need. Third, is the item available at the Medina market (as opposed to a western type market) and if so for how much? Fourth, I consult the spreadsheet that I am keeping of donations and expenditures to see if the item will fit. Fifth ... make a decision. Sixth, IF I get this far, make the purchase. On my list for this week are a few small items needed for the assessment process that I could not scrounge here at BH. The items will do double duty in that they will be used for assessment, but also for other uses. The baby house now has a water filter system, but needs a bucket, scoop, and small storage container to service the filter system; I will get those. An additional outdoor water storage tank is still under consideration at the second level ... is there no other way of providing enough water? At the moment, it looks pretty bleak.

Romana is working on contact with Nurse Bertilda, the facilitator for the sponsorship of the three boys up north. Bertilda is currently attending midwifery school and can take phone calls only on the weekends. Hopefully she will be able to visit the three boys this weekend even though it is quite a drive for her. Things move rather slowing here; it is hard for me not to show the considerable impatience that I feel.

Another dinner (supper) loaded with veggies ... this is soooo American! What is not American is the bones in the chicken and fish. That is soooo Ghanaian, so get used to it Grandma Judy!

After dinner, I went to the bookcase in the volunteer room that says 'Do NOT take these books from the room', to look for something to use for 'H', the older girl. I chose a series of beginning readers which are definitely aimed at younger children, but we will have to make do as they are what she needs in order to learn the different vowel and consonant sounds. She does know some of the sounds and some words, but it is really spotty. I also chose 'Charlotte's Web' to read to her. These books will live in my room while we are using them ... the privileges of age.

While sitting in one of the new chairs outside the baby house, in the cooling breeze, I was looking over the selection of books when 'H' walked up. I showed her the books and suggested that perhaps after going over the highlighted sound, I would read a book to her, then she could read it to me. She thought that would be good. She also spotted 'Charlotte's Web'; she had seen the movie, but didn't remember the plot or the ending. I read the first chapter to her right then. We talked about how she might have to share me with my water duties after school since that seems to be the time we are able to get water when available. She agreed we could read while tending the water, leaving the math project (using base ten blocks) for days there is no water so that we can work in my room, away from the reaching hands of the toddlers.

I should send this out tonight so that you all can either pray for rain (water pressure through the pipes) or do a rain dance, but I am too tired and I know there have been many children in the big house who have prayed for water along with their prayers for families and to come to American. So ... good night for now.

Friday 28th Thanks for all the rain dances and prayers ... those of you who read my mind. We did indeed get water today, however not quite enough. I have realized loud and clear that part of the water problem is in the staff dynamics, so I am putting on hold the thought of purchasing another storage tank. We shall see what happens as this saga unfolds.

Late this afternoon, some of the children and I looked through the two photo albums I brought. Most of them remember Granddaughter Rachel, and the daughter of one of house mothers even remembers my three Ghanaian grandchildren. What fun we had!

9pm ... 'H' just left my room after a very productive math session. I am beginning to see the light come on and her confidence improving.

As promised at the beginning of this message, here is the accounting of donated moneys spent last weekend.

10 Ghc	\$6.84	Large bowl for water storage/bathing
18 Ghc	\$12.32	Stainless steel bucket for water fetching and storage (will last for years)
80 Ghc	\$54.79	Large, but carry-able propane cylinder and regulator
24 Ghc	\$16.44	2 large buckets of onions
9 Ghc	\$6.16	Pile of carrots and cabbages
24 Ghc	\$16.44	3 flats of eggs
90 Ghc	\$61.64	30 kilos of frozen fish (enough for 4 weeks)
50 Ghc	\$34.25	2 water filter systems (making 5 in the kitchen & one in the baby house)

My brother sent me the link for a program to reduce the bite size of my photos, but I cannot connect with Microsoft. I will continue to try so that I don't continue to clog the Internet.

Hmmmm ... no Internet reception tonight; hopefully tomorrow I can send this.

Hope all is well with you and yours.

Peace and Joy,
Grandma Judy Griffin