

roots



QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE SEEDS PROGRAM

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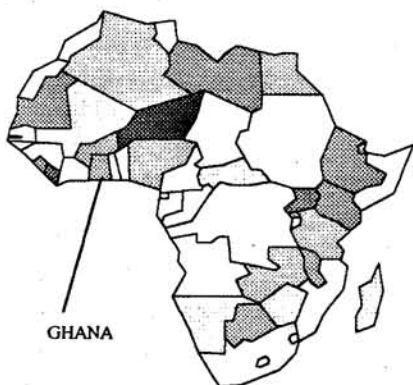
Dear Friends:

Welcome to the first issue of *roots*, newsletter of the SEEDS Program. Thank you for the books, supplies, and money. These donations have helped us help our Ghanaian friends establish eight "starter libraries" in rural schools and communities throughout the country.

This year, we have expanded our activities to include micro-economic development, teacher training and Ghana-to-U.S. cultural exchange initiatives.

Let us hear your comments, questions and suggestions. We need and appreciate your continued support. Donations of quality literature, vegetable and fruit seeds, knitting supplies and money are still needed.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Wright
Editor



Beginnings... 1992

In early 1992, five teachers who shared interests in global learning, multicultural education and Africa began meeting regularly to plan a trip to Ghana, West Africa. During the planning process, the group met with Robert Levin, of the U.S.-based Kopeyia Ghana School Fund, who encouraged them to include Kopeyia Village and its newly established primary school in their itinerary. The group agreed to do so.

In July, four of the teachers: Barbara Edwards, Althea Treadwell, Malvice Jefferson and Jacqueline Wright traveled to Ghana. Their two week stay in Kopeyia, which is in the Volta Region, was especially rewarding. They taught classes, tutored individual students and participated in discussions and teacher training sessions. The teachers were very impressed by Kopeyia students' enthusiasm for learning and respect for their teachers. They also visited several other schools in the Volta Region.

Their opportunity to participate in and learn about rural education was enhanced by informal meetings and discussions with parents, teachers and administrators. In these sessions, the teachers sensed a sincerity of commitment from virtually all of the Ghanaians. This was exemplified in concerned adults like: Christian Aheto, master drummer and parents association member, Gladys Okyere, educator and cultural worker, Geoffrey Gle, public relations officer for the Ghana Institute of Linguistics Literacy and Bible Translations, Nicholas Kumi, parents association member, Fred O.K. Mensah, teacher-administrator, Philip Agbodra, teacher-administrator, and Imahkus Vienna Robinson, educational administrator. One of the lessons learned from these meetings was that rural schools needed books, especially reference books and enrichment materials.

Planting SEEDS...1993-94

After the trip, Jacqueline corresponded with most of her new acquaintances. As a result of her experiences and the eloquent urgings of many of these Ghanaians, she sought to develop a means by which students and others could also share in the benefits of cross-cultural exchange. During the winter and

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spring of 1993, she conceptualized a school-based initiative that would facilitate communication between students and teachers in U.S. schools and their counterparts in other countries. It was her vision that this undertaking would help "to plant seeds of interest, understanding, and cooperation within our children and ourselves". In the summer of 1993, Jacqueline and her husband, E. Anthony Mackall, completed a preliminary project design. Now in its second year, the project is called *SEEDS: Food for Learning*. It blends standard academic, interdisciplinary and cooperative learning activities with enriching non-academic projects. The initial undertaking put students and teachers at Jacqueline's "home" school - Community Intermediate School (CIS) 229 in the Bronx, New York - in contact with students and teachers at Ghana's Avenorpedo Junior Secondary School. The U.S. students were in grades 5 - 8 and the Ghanaian students were in upper primary and junior secondary classes. Specifically, the program presented Ghanaian thematic materials to CIS 229 students through their standard subject areas (English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies). Student and teacher collaborations integrated grammar with letter writing, poetry and journalism; and cooperative learning with math problem solving, science, geography and cultural studies. This work was reinforced by student "club" activities which included pen pal correspondence, selecting books for the "starter libraries", video greetings, and yearbook & photography productions.

In a separate collaborative effort, Jacqueline and Malvice Jefferson co-founded *Books Across Ghana*, a project to establish "mini-libraries" in rural villages. The two solicited an assortment of books and teaching aids for the project and identified four sites to receive the library collections: Avenorpedo Junior Secondary and Ve-Koloenu Primary Schools in the Volta Region and the Nkwatia Kwahu and Bepong Kwahu communities in the Eastern Region. Malvice and Jacqueline departed New York on July 19, 1993 with their thirteen carton cargo. This second trip was also extremely successful.

Evolving from her work on *Books Across Ghana* and enthused by their second trip to Ghana, Jacqueline initiated the second *SEEDS* effort, the *Start-A-Library Project*, in February 1994. Shortly thereafter, she began another book drive and donors contributed a generous supply of new and used books, periodicals and teaching aids. On July 16, 1994, Jacqueline embarked on her third trip to Ghana. She traveled with her daughter Abena, a second grader at P.S. 199 Manhattan and Bonnie Carr, a School District 9 colleague. They spent seven weeks in Ghana. The trio traveled extensively, meeting people and making friends throughout the country. They added new volumes to some previously established libraries, and set up four new "starter libraries" at Akotobinsin Methodist Primary and University Practice Secondary Schools in the Central Region, Christ International School in the Brong Ahafo Region, and Peters Educational Center in the Ashanti Region.

New SEEDS... 1995

During the summer of 1995, *SEEDS* will establish four more "starter libraries" in Ghana. 1995 is further distinguished by the diversity of several new *SEEDS* initiatives.

In January, *SEEDS* and *Africa Seed*, a New York-based entity directed by Gloria Holmes, co-funded a micro-economic development project initiated by the Anufo Women's Literacy & Development Committee. The women are cultivating a groundnut (peanut) farm in Anufo Village, in Ghana's Northern Region. Proceeds from the farm will support the women's literacy program.

In March, *SEEDS* in collaboration with *Carol Jones*, a New Jersey educator, co-sponsored a *science teacher training workshop at Aquinas Secondary School in Accra, Ghana*. The workshop was developed by Ms. Evelyn Gaisie, director of the science department at the school. The financial assistance enables fifteen Ghanaian science teachers to attend the workshop.

A commitment to *people-to-people contact and cultural exchange has motivated SEEDS to sponsor a visit by Ms. Gladys Okyere to the U.S. in Fall 1995*. Gladys is a wonderful dancer and a storehouse of Ghanaian cultural information. She is knowledgeable of the dances, music and languages of the many peoples that comprise Ghana. If you are an educator or member of a church group, fraternity/sorority, student association, museum group, arts or cultural center, contact us to arrange an "Exchange with Gladys".

SEEDS is assisting in telecommunications initiatives. CIS 229 students and teachers are on the internet with school-to-school projects in Canada and Holland. Activities include pen and "key" pal correspondence using electronic mail (E-mail). *SEEDS* also has limited E-mail correspondence with Ghana.

**GHANA
REGIONS &
CAPITALS**

