

ANNUAL REPORT 2012



"To Whom Much is Given, Much is Expected!"

CONTENTS

6 – A WORD FROM THE BOARD
CHAIRPERSON, Dr. Margaret Sackey

8 – A LETTER FROM THE
PRESIDENT, James Kofi Annan

10 – 2012 HIGHLIGHTS

12 – ORGANIZATIONAL
STRUCTURE

BOARD OF ADVISORS:
Page 12

SENIOR STAFF:
Page 13

CH USA BOARD:
Page 14

VOLUNTEERS:
Page 15

16 – FEATURE STORIES

CHALLENGING HEIGHTS SCHOOL
ANNIVERSARY
Page 16

AUSTRALIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER VISITS
REHABILITATION SHELTER
Page 18

KWAKU’S STORY
Page 19

22 – COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

CHALLENGING HEIGHTS SCHOOL
Page 22

EVENING SCHOOL PROGRAM
Page 23

REMEDIAL SCHOOL TO RESTORE HOPE
Page 24

SPORTS PROGRAM
Page 25

CHILD TRAFFICKING SURVIVORS SUPPORT
NETWORK PROJECT
Page 28

ANTI-SLAVERY FISHING PROJECT
Page 29

CHALLENGING HEIGHTS HOVDE HOUSE
Page 30

CHILDREN LABOR IN FISHING PROJECT
Page 34

WOMEN’S HUMAN RIGHTS PROJECT
Page 35

CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE
RESEARCH
Page 36

39 – FEATURES FROM
VOLUNTEERS

YEAR-LONG VOLUNTEER
Page 39

SHORT-TERM VOLUNTEER
Page 40

GROUP VOLUNTEER
Page 41

42 – FINANCIAL PARTNERS

DONORS AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS
Page 42

43 – CONTACT DETAILS



A Word from the Board Chairperson

Dr. Margaret Sackey

Challenging Heights has come a long way since starting in 2003. From supporting a few child rights clubs, the organization has expanded to provide a variety of programming. Programs in 2012 included community and school based activities aimed at promoting education and child rights, as well as a thorough rehabilitation process for child survivors of trafficking.

I was happy to attend the Grand Durbar of the five year anniversary for Challenging Heights School in October. It was a privilege to see the students perform a variety of songs, dances, and exercises, as well as to hear encouraging speeches from top students. I was also pleased to see a large number of traditional authorities and parents in attendance, recognizing the importance of supporting their children's schooling.



I would like to give a special thank you to all of the Challenging Heights staff who sacrifice every day in the interest of protecting children, as well as to all of the local and international partners who make this work possible.

As Challenging Heights continues to expand and improve the types of programming offered, the communities served will surely benefit as the rights of children to education, health, and freedom from labor are recognized and realized. I urge all supporters of child rights to follow and support the work of Challenging Heights as they inspire and mentor students to become the leaders in their communities and country.

Sincerely,

Dr. Margaret Sackey



A Letter from the President

James Kofi Annan



The year 2012 saw Challenging Heights continue to strive for a secured, protected and dignified future for children and youth through promoting their rights, education and health. I have had the great opportunity to be invited to teach a class in October entitled “*Culture and Sustainable Development in Africa: The Case of Ghana*” at Grinnell University in Iowa, USA, which continued to spread awareness on the issues of Child Labour and Child Trafficking as well as the visibility and the legitimacy of Challenging Heights as a major actor in this fight. Challenging Heights was also honoured with two international awards, the *African Student Organization of the Stockton College of New Jersey Award* in April and the *GUBA award* in November. One of the highlights of my travels during the year was meeting Bill Clinton, who was interested to hear about our work. We’re hoping that this connection will continue.

In 2012 we also solidified a relationship with the network Family for Every Child, which has given us greater international exposure, put us directly within efforts to strengthen national and international child protection frameworks, and gave us the opportunity to participate in several research projects on child protection and parental care.

We are more than ever engaged in our rehabilitation program, with the shelter celebrating its first year of existence in September. For survivors of child trafficking, to fully recover takes a lot of time. I believe in our lifetime we will be able to end the menace of child trafficking and ensure that no more children need to go through this pain.

To me, education is the only known way of making a greater change. This is especially the case in our part of the world where such opportunities are so few and the information about them limited. Education, therefore, grants the individual the very opportunity to be enlightened and to have knowledge about those few available opportunities. It is well documented that when a nation makes a serious commitment and investment in education, the benefits are tremendous.

Admittedly there are a few individuals who have made it without higher education. But we are not talking about tertiary education here. We are talking about basic education. We are talking about high school education. We are talking about providing the opportunity for our children to complete, at least, a good basic education. This will empower such a child to live an informed life in this confusing world.

I stand by my belief for the need for education, in the efficacy of education, as the only potent tool in changing our world – it must be kept sacred!

That is why it is with an immense pride that we celebrated in September the fifth year of existence of the Challenging Heights School and its improvement with the opening of a brand new ICT center for our pupils and a project for a library to be built in the next year. On behalf of all the 1,640 boys and girls we supported in 2012, on behalf of all the 240 women whose livelihoods have been improved, on behalf of all the 60 staff members of Challenging Heights, and on behalf of all of our community members, I say thank you to all of you our supporters, and well-wishers. You have continued to believe in us, and you have continued to support us. We have reached a critical stage in our work. A stage where your friendship and support is needed most.

And this is the stage: We need to work to retain our staff in order to ensure programs consistency, and to grow into being a self-sustaining organization. Losing our staff to better-paying organizations is not in our growing interest. We also need to work toward mitigating the impact the global economic situation is having on our funding and our children. But I have faith in you, and I count on your continued solidarity and support. Once again, thank you so much for your faith in Challenging Heights. Sincerely,

James Kofi Annan



2012 Highlights

- CH provided support to 1640 children, 704 girls and 936 boys
- 32 communities in 6 districts benefited from programming
- 111 children went through the shelter program
- 6 new Child Rights Clubs were started
- 12 new Community Child Protection Committees were started
- 240 mothers received financial support
- 200 young adults received tutoring and mentoring
- A bus transporting 25 trafficked children was stopped by a CCPC
- Boarding house construction was finished
- ICT Center opened and computer classes started
- Construction started on a school library
- CH School and the sports program celebrated their fifth year anniversaries
- Challenging Heights Hovde House celebrated its first full year of operation
- CH was featured in the Financial Times newspaper of London
- CH undertook research for the first time

Challenges

- Challenging Heights lost donors due to geographical shifting
- Staff continued to face threats
- Communication amongst staff was a challenge with offices in Winneba and Accra



Organizational Structure

Board of Advisors



DR. MARGARET SACKEY
CHAIRPERSON, CHILD PROTECTION



JEFFREY BOYD
TREASURER, NGO MANAGEMENT



NAFI CHINERY
NGO CAPACITY BUILDING



JOYCE ODAME
CHILDREN'S RIGHTS



GEORGE ESSEL
FINANCE, AUDITS



ESTHER SANKAH KWOFIE
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST, HUMAN RIGHTS



JAMES KOFI ANNAN
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT

Senior Staff



JAMES KOFI ANNAN
FOUNDER AND PRESIDENT



DAVID KOFI AWUSI
PROGRAMS MANAGER



JESSICA FIELDING
COORDINATING DIRECTOR



SAMUEL ASARE
HEAD OF SCHOOLS



LINDA OSABUTEY
SHELTER MANAGER



JOSIAH OFORI ACQUAH
FINANCE MANAGER



CYNTHIA ANNAN
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGER

CH USA Board of Directors



MAI NGUYEN
FINANCIAL DIRECTOR



AMY BRINKLEY
COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR



Volunteers

- Hallel Abramowitz-Silverman

Sarah Aman

Elana Axler

Maya Barnett

Jonah Baskin

Lydia Benkert

Katherine Blumenstein

Neil Blumofe

Lea Boehlke

Sophia Braun

Charlotte Buckley

Stephanie Cantor

Josh Chamberlain

Matthew Chapman

Menachem Creditor

Scott Cressy

George Davis

Janaan Decker

Alex Doubek

Lauren Epstein

Nolan Farrell

Rob Fish

Michael Friedman

Timothy Gerson

Beth Green

Jonathan Gross

Shoshana Gruber

Amanda Haupt

Eric Heiberg

Kelsey Hoey

Elizabeth Horne

Elisha Jacobs

David Jaffe
- Martin Johnson

David Kaiman

Rosa Kalish

Arianna Kaufman

Katherine Key

Cheryl Kiken

Moshe Kinshuck

Naomi Kirschner

Adam Klein

Deborah Klein

Jason Klein

Jacob Kleinberg

Adina Konikoff

Bernard Koomson

Brianne Labute

Dena Lehmann

Eliyahu Lehmann

Susan Leider

Jennifer Lenchner

David Lerner

Alison Levine

Wai Lin

Laure Lueken

Nina Mandel

Hannah Marcovitch

Sarah Morbitzer

Adam Morrisey

Hillary Nolting

Brigitte Onyschuk

Michael Oskin

Katelyn Osmun

Daniela Portal

Rachel Profeta
- Tom Reddington

Michael Rothbaum

Lydia Ruddick-Schulman

Kelly Ryan

Carolyn Sandler

Christopher Schieber

David Schuck

Miriyam Scott

Adam Shore

Jacqueline Shore

Michael Shrager

Hayley Siegel

Marielle Smith

Eric Solomon

Ilana Spitz

Lauren Starobin

Noah Stein

Allison Stephens

Morgan Talbert

Elliott Tepperman

Stan Tinter

Joseph Verschaeve

Juliet Warren

Fiona Waters

Avraham Wechsler

Cheryl Weiner

Amy Weiss

Shana Werber

Emily Wiest

Sunnie Yao

Heather Zion

Naomi Zucker

Feature Stories

Challenging Heights School Anniversary

In October 2012, the Challenging Heights School celebrated its five year anniversary with a weeklong series of exciting events. The actual anniversary was in September, but due to an injunction on noisemaking in Winneba during that month, the actual celebration was postponed until October. There was a lot of noise to be made!



The week started with a parade through the town of Winneba, about a four mile round trip walk. Students and teachers prepared signs with slogans such as: *Education is my life, We want peace in the December 7th elections, The best place for the child is the classroom and Children's rights are human rights!* Two students from class four led the parade, carrying a large Challenging Heights banner. They led marchers who included students from class three and up, CH staff, parents, and other well-wishers. There were many tired marchers and sore feet by the time the group reached the school. However, that did not hinder a spontaneous dance party from erupting upon entering the school yard!

One day of the celebration was all about sports. Boys' and girls' teams played football (soccer) matches in the school yard. The best viewing area was definitely the second floor of the Machaan Learning Center, which was packed with student spectators. The girls' match was an exciting game played against the Presbyterian School girls' team, which the CH girls won one to zero. The second most anticipated match was the CH teachers against the CH sports program team, refereed by CH's very own Senior James! Despite a hard fought performance, the teachers lost to the CH team one to nil. Before and after the football matches, other students played ampe, a traditional game, and jump rope. It was a grand day of skill and exercise!



The final day of the anniversary celebration saw a Grand Durbar (festival) unfold in the Challenging Heights School yard. Students engaged visitors, staff, and fellow students with a variety of performances and there were many speeches on the importance of education and other issues directly facing the school, students, and Winneba community. Special guests included the Honourable Mike Allen Hammah, the Member of Parliament (MP) for the Effutu Constituency and the Minister of Lands and Natural Resources; Honourable Nii Ephraim, the Municipal Chief Executive (MCE) of the Effutu Municipality; Dr. Emmanuel Anim, Dean of Admissions, Pentecost University; Dr. Margaret Sackey, CH Board Chairperson and Lecturer, Ghana Institute of Local Government; and Joyce Odame, CH Board Member and Child Protection Specialist, International Needs. Choreographed Azonto dancers got the audience on their feet.

Cultural drumming and dancing and traditional skits entertained, as well. The CH cadet group inspired the audience with their discipline and the chief of police invited them to attend a graduation of police recruits. Music was also provided by the choir and a brass band. Later, Kindergarten students impressed the crowd with poems in English and older students recited poems they had written or difficult famous works.



All in all, the day and the week were a success in highlighting the importance of education and the dedicated, hard work of the students, teachers, and staff at the Challenging Heights School. *To Whom Much is Given, Much is Expected!!*

Australian High Commissioner Visits Rehabilitation Center

On the 18th of July 2012 the Australian High Commissioner to Ghana travelled to Challenging Heights’ newly opened rehabilitation shelter. His Excellency High Commissioner William Williams inspected the purpose built facility, as well as learnt more about Challenging Heights’ work through speaking to staff and children.

High Commissioner Williams was impressed by the design of the shelter, which put the needs of rehabilitating vulnerable children first. Challenging Heights president, James Kofi Annan, led the High Commissioner on a tour of the various sections of the facility, including the counselling office, classrooms, mess hall, dormitory, sick bay, recreational areas and farm.

The High Commissioner was interested to learn about the culturally sensitive practices at the rehabilitation shelter. On reaching a dormitory, James pointed out the single cloth that the children slept on. The High Commissioner remarked on the absence of pillows. James explained that pillows were not provided, as it would accustom the children to better conditions than they would experience when reintegrated with their families. James pointed out that the homes the children would return to would rarely have pillows and if they did, they would most likely have to give it to a senior member of the household. High Commissioner Williams was impressed at the foresight shown by the approach taken at the shelter and the facility’s focus on reintegration and cultural appropriateness from the outset of the rehabilitation process.

The High Commissioner was moved by James’ personnel narrative of survival and asserted that great learning and inspiration can come from exposure to such personnel narratives. The High Commissioner’s visit was a product of the partnership developed between Challenging heights and the Australian government, which has seen the organization play host to a number of Australian Youth Ambassadors for Development.



Kwaku’s Story

Kwaku was nine years old when he was trafficked with his little sister to Lake Volta. They spent one year in forced labor, a year Kwaku say’s was, “The most bad nightmare ever.”

Kwaku was forced to wake up around 4am to help clean the house and fetch water for his master and his master’s children. The buckets were so heavy and he had to walk very far with them. Though he fetched the water, he did not get any to drink nor bath. He had to bathe in the lake which was the same place where he got his drinking water and the same place many people use as a toilet. After his house chores, he was sent to fish with either the master or the master’s son. The master’s son was his number one tormentor. He beat him up almost every day. If Kwaku seemed tired, said he was hungry or didn’t work hard enough and fast enough he was beaten.

Kwaku worked until 7pm. If they arrive earlier than 7pm, he would be forced to go to work in the farm. He would search for firewood and carrying it to the house, making multiple trips with heavy loads. By 7pm Kwaku would have worked a strenuous 15 hour day and he was just 9 years old.

His sister was also made to work on the lake. Girls are not usually forced to fish but Ama was. Even when she did not have the strength to drag a big net nor paddle, they would force her and beat her up with the paddle and with their hands.

Kwaku was very happy to see the rescue team come to their aid and his horrible year on Lake Volta come to an end.

Kwaku’s life drastically improved when he reached the Challenging Heights shelter. The schooling and counselling he received improved both his behaviour and academics. He quickly started to receive awards for good behaviour every week and was even promoted to the next level in class even though he had never been to school. Shelter Manager Linda says that, “Kwaku is a very intelligent boy that when given the opportunity, will go far in life.”

When Kwaku is not busy learning he loves to play football and draw. He really likes drawing pictures of buildings and wants to become a building contractor so he can support his family and help them get out of poverty.

Kwaku says his poverty was the cause of his trafficking. His mother owed the trafficker an amount of GHC200 and could not pay so he and the sister were forced by their mother to work for this trafficker to repay their mothers debt.

Kwaku shares his excitement for the help Challenging Heights gave him and says, “Now I am in school and with my family and my teacher says I am one of the smartest kids in class. I get to walk home with my sister and play with friends after school. It makes me happy.”





Community Programs

Challenging Heights School

Challenging Heights School is located in Sankor, Winneba and serves a unique population; children who are survivors of trafficking and children who are at-risk of being engaged in child labor, being trafficked and/or losing parental care.

Since the school’s inception in September 2007, there has been a continuous increase in the number of children enrolled and served by CH programming. The school started with a population of 11 on the day of its commencement and at the beginning of the 2012-2013 school year, 746 boys and girls were enrolled.

In November 2012, we commemorated our 5 year anniversary under the theme: “To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Expected”. Over 50 boys and girls enacted child protection and education centered poetry, choreography, drama and cultural dance performances.



Over 2,000 pupils, parents and community members were reached and educated through the week’s celebration and advocacy program.

We continued to collaborate with parents throughout the year. We organized eight Parents-Teacher Association meetings over the course of the year. Throughout these meetings parents gave feedback and input into school policies and overall operations.

There was on-going school staff capacity development. Over eight in-service training and personal development programs were organized. These trainings focused on effective teaching and learning, classroom management techniques and lesson plan preparations and delivery.

Currently, the school is funded by donors through our Child Sponsorship Program, some ongoing funding from CH founder and president, James Kofi Annan, and from subsidized school fees collected from parents.

Challenging Heights School placed in 1st in the overall district level inter-schools ball games competition in November 2012.

Evening School Program

The Evening School Program remains one of our oldest programs which started in 2003 but received the first donor funding in 2006 from Global Fund for Children (GFC) in the USA. In 2006 the program supported 30 beneficiaries and within six years after the funding, there has been an increase in the children supported to 200 in 2012.

In 2012, the 120 boys and 80 girls received direct support and assistance from the program which included education support such as books, uniform, school back, footwear and communication and development training.

Over the last six years, we have seen significant improvement in the reading, writing and speaking skills of the beneficiaries of the program. Through the seminar, cultural training and drama for development activities under this funding, several children have been assisted to discover and are actively developing their talents and potentials.

CH believes that children can be strong forces for societal turnaround in achieving the MDGs provided they are equipped with the skills and encouraged to take action. This was stressed throughout the seminar training and it has begun yielding positive results. For instance, young children in the program have begun social action and activism by peer and family education on health and child protection issues.



Remedial School to Restore Hope

The Remedial School to Restore Hope Program started in 2010 and is currently in the third year of implementation. In the third year, the program is providing support for 205 young men and woman between the ages of 15 years to 24 years. Over the past two years, the program has directly supported 448 young people in the Effutu Municipality of Ghana. The program runs under three modules namely the academic, entrepreneurial and leadership development modules.

The academic module provides instruction guided by the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC) High School Curriculum to beneficiaries so that they have the opportunity to successfully re-write exams which they were unable to pass the first time. After passing these exams, students can move on to the tertiary levels and achieve their life dreams and aspirations.



The entrepreneurial module involved business skills training, career guidance and counseling and training in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The aim is to equip these young people with practical and job oriented skills as well as enhancing their capacity to start an income-generating ventures or businesses. In 2012, over 42% of the beneficiaries had gained new employment while 15% have moved onto better job opportunities and 2% started their own businesses.

The leadership development module aimed at creating young leaders by developing or clarifying their own life goals and visions and then supporting them to make efforts to develop them, as well as actively participate in community development initiatives. In October 2012, we organized a massive Youth Empowerment Conference (YEC) that reached 315 young people from 21 communities in the Effutu Municipality. It aimed at building or developing young leaders and social changemakers in several communities.

Currently, over 75% of the 205 beneficiaries have identified their life goals and visions. The remaining 25% have begun critical analysis to be able to develop their goals as well. When young people have successfully defined their life goals and visions, it will impact on choosing the right program of study at the tertiary level as well as provide overall direction for their life.

This program was funded by EMPower, USA

Sports Program

Challenging Heights Sport Program was five years in 2012. Over the past five years, the program has succeeded in developing the talent and potential of children and young people who may have fallen victim to child labor and child trafficking in Ghana. Secondly, the program has served as a social mobilization tool for educating over 25 communities on universal education, child labor and child trafficking, global peace and health. Finally, the program has been a strategy CH uses to facilitate the social healing and social reintegration process of children rescued from slavery.

For instance, so far, the program has 110 young people categorized into various divisions. Additionally, 30 survivors of trafficking have been successfully integrated into the sports program within the same period.

Currently, the sports program has been registered with the Effutu Municipal Sports Secretariat. This gives the team the opportunity to participate in various district level sports events and ceremonies.

For instance, in recent sports gala played among 15 teams in the municipality, CH sports team placed 1st in the first round and 4th in the overall team. CH sports team was rewarded with a set of football jerseys for placing 4th.





Child Trafficking Survivors Support Network Project

The Child Trafficking Survivors Support Network started in 2009 with an initial direct support to 25 children across four communities. Over the past three years the program is now supporting 100 boys and girls in 10 deprived communities of Winneba.

In 2012, the program provided direct support to 45 boys and girls who escaped slavery from the fishing industry of Ghana and domestic servitude.

Thirteen families of the 45 boys and girls received seed capital to expand their business. We have recorded that these families have developed their business successfully and are now able to support their own children in school.

For instance, a family who received seed capital of \$200 has been able to grow this capital into generating an average monthly savings of \$50 apart from what the entire family feed on. Currently, the family has moved their child from the state-owned school to a private-owned school where quality of education is high, which they can now afford due to their increased income and total standard of living.

This program was funded by American Jewish World Service (AJWS).



Anti-Slavery Fishing Project

The Anti-Slavery Fishing Project started in 2004 but received formal funding in 2009.

Since 2009, over 200 boys and girls ranging from 4 to 17 years have been rescued or liberated from slavery in fishing from Lake Volta, the largest man-made lake in the world which has turned into a “slavery home” for thousands of children in Ghana and West Africa.

Through our holistic approach of a community child protection system, sensitization and awareness programs, investigative rescues, rehabilitation, family reunion and social reintegration and family economic capacity development, we have made significant progress in the overall national effort in eliminating worst forms of child labor including child trafficking as per the Ghana’s National Plan of Action to eliminate worst forms of child labor by 2015.

CH organized 52 sensitization events (communities, schools, markets and faith-based) in 40 communities in three districts across two regions of Ghana. Throughout the sensitization events, it is estimated that 15,000 men, women and children were reached. These sensitization programs resulted in CH identifying 56 victims of slavery and debt bondage of which 37 were rescued and enrolled on a rehabilitation program at Challenging Heights Hovde House.



In 2012, 60 boys and girls who had successfully completed their rehabilitation process were reunited with their families and later enrolled into schools and vocational training programs.

A total of 33 families received a sum of \$10,600 seed capital to develop their small businesses. It was recorded that each family that received the seed capital has seen at least 10% increment in the income levels and general standard of living in the period under review.

We continued to build the capacity of our existing 12 CCPCs (community child protection committees) in 12 communities where this program actively operates. The CCPCs are both prevention and protection strategies for eliminating child labor and child trafficking in their own communities.

In the period under review, one training program and 120 follow-up and technical capacity building meetings were organized each for the CCPCs. The new knowledge and expertise received by the CCPCs led to the group stopping a bus that was transporting 25 trafficking children from the Central Region of Ghana to Lake Volta. It is also estimated that least 30 children have voluntarily been liberated from slavery through the 12 CCPCs within the communities.

This program was funded by Free the Slaves, USA.

Challenging Heights Hovde House

Challenging Heights Hovde House (CHHH) was one year old in October 2012. In 2012, 111 children received rehabilitation care. CHHH received five cases referred from Social Welfare Department and the Domestic Violence and Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of Ghana Police and Municipality Magistrate Court and other credible civil society organizations. Some of the cases referred were international child trafficking. Linda Osabutey, who holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Social Work and Sociology, took over from Dority Nortey in June 2012 as the Shelter Manager. CHHH has 21 staff working in various capacities: child care attendance, cooks, teachers, security officers and gardener.

The House’s rehabilitation program has been strategically designed into distinct stages: Stage I: Shelter Entry Protocols; which involves the Director of the Department of Social Welfare assessing the children and certifying them to proceed with going through the rehabilitation process. This is legal requirement with which we comply. Stage II: Rebuilding. This stage involves the children receiving medical care, psychosocial counseling, literacy and numeracy improvements and child rights education among others. All with the aim of preparing the children to be healthy and to be able to successfully reintegrate in their home communities and school. Stage III: Shelter Exit Protocols; this is where the Director of Department of Social Welfares comes back again to assess the children’s psychological, emotional, social and educational readiness for family reunion and reintegration. The Director then signs their exit before they are finally reunited with their families. This is also a legal requirement that we comply.

Challenging Heights Hovde House is funded by Hovde Foundation/Sunwest, USA.





Children Labor in Fishing Project



The Child Labor in Fishing Project directly withdrew or protected 40 children (20 boys and 20 girls) who have lost or are at-risk of losing parental care and support. The aim of the project is to create communities where there are strong systems and structures in place to protect children from losing parental care. Also, children will be happy and going to school while their families are economically capable in providing full support for their own children.

All the 40 boys and girls identified received psychosocial counseling, educational and vocational training support. The families of the children were linked to a micro-loan program which enabled them to access small loans to expand their businesses in order to build the family financial base to be able to support their children and the entire family.

The project also included child protection training for the families of the 40 children. The aims was to help change the negative attitudes towards children, equipping the families with the skills in proper parenting and child protection to ensure that they will keep their children together without voluntarily releasing them to various life-threatening activities or exploitation.

There is a reorientation of families towards child care and protection as well as high knowledge of child rights among children themselves such that these children themselves are fully aware of their rights hence making it very difficult for them to leave home into various labor or sexually exploitative activities.

This project was funded by EveryChild UK.

Women’s Human Right Project

The Women’s Human Rights Project seeks to reduce child trafficking and violations of women’s rights in the project communities using sports and cultural performances in 40 farming and fishing communities in the Effutu municipality.

In 2012, 80 young people between the ages of 14 and 25 years were trained. For instance, 45 young women between the ages of 15 and 18 were selected from 15 communities in the Effutu Municipality trained over eight weeks in sports (soccer, handball and volley ball). Another 35 young women were trained in cultural dance, poetry recital and choreography for 16 weeks.

Through the project, two community sensitization durbars were organized in two communities which attracted participants from 10 different communities in the Effutu Municipality. This program educated over 500 women and men on the issues of violence against children and sexual reproductive rights.

We organized nine girls’ sports programs. Three (3) of these were sports matches played between three schools in the Effutu Municipality. These schools were Gyahadze M/A Primary School, Presbyterian Primary and Challenging Heights School. A total of 35 girls between the ages of 12 and 17 years old served as the core players. An average of 150 people; pupils, teachers and community members; participated in each of the nine sports programs. It is estimated that this activity reached 1,350 people on violence against women and general protection of women and girls.



The project will train 180 young women to use sports, local poetry and drama to promote women’s rights in 40 communities in Effutu and Senya districts of the Central region of Ghana.

In May 2012, our Programs Manager, David Kofi Awusi participated in the GFC’s Knowledge Exchange Program organized in Dakar, Senegal. This contributed to enhancing his capacity in an international context at the same time, it provided a platform to share learning of our work and the work of other grantee partners of GFC.

In October 2012, GFC selected Challenging Heights as a grantee partner to develop a news publicity in Financial Times as part of the papers Seasonal Appeal which GFC won for 2012. This is both a fundraising tool for GFC as well as an organizational visibility opportunity for CH.



Children without Parental Care Research

Challenging Heights undertook research for the first time in 2012. With funding from Every Child, a consultant was hired to conduct a research project under the guidance of CH on children living without adequate parental care. A study team of eight investigators and two field monitors conducted interviews with 260 children in four districts who met at least one of the sampling criteria indicating they were living without adequate parental care. These criteria included: a child not in school; a child in school, but without food security; a child in school who engages in child labour; and a child in school without a home.

District government officials were also interviewed on relevant topics related to children without parental care and focus groups with parents whose children lacked parental care were conducted. Key findings on the causes of children not receiving adequate parental care include lack of involvement of fathers in providing parental care; large family sizes; lack of awareness amongst parents on the importance of education; lack of awareness about poverty prevention programs from the government or non-governmental organizations; and the situation of poverty in the study areas. Contact CH or check the website for access to the full report.



Features from Volunteers

Year-Long Volunteer

In 2011-2012, I had the privilege of spending a year in Winneba volunteering with Challenging Heights. For a passionate abolitionist, the entire experience was a dream come true. A dream made up of many moments that broke, confirmed, changed, and inspired me.

Doing justice became very real to me during my time at CH. We were all wrestling with issues of injustice - not in a case study or a news article, but in the lives of our neighbors, brothers, friends, and mothers. Watching the team and benefiting from their years of experience and thoughtful approach to countless challenges was invaluable and continues to shape my approach to life months after leaving Ghana.

Sarah Joy Morbitzer



Short-Term Volunteer

My experience at Challenging Heights and within the greater Winneba community cannot be characterized by a simple anecdote. Ghana has shaped the way I define my priorities, how I perceive my community and it will forever be a country close to my heart. I opened myself up to an experience at CH and what I received in return was love and generosity. As I look through photos that re-ignite beautiful memories, I cannot forget all of the truly inspirational people with whom I shared my time. Too often the moment was brief and we exchanged a few simple words of Fante before heading our separate ways.

Other relationships afforded me a very personal connection with Ghanaian life and a glimpse of what's not immediately apparent coming from a different culture. I feel so fortunate to have made the friends that I did and learn about the incredible work that CH is doing for the community. The passion of working to educate and protect children grows from deep within the hearts of every member of CH because Mr. James Annan's commitment spreads infectious. All of my love goes to Winneba and the individuals working tirelessly to create a bright future for its youth.

Adam Shore



Group Volunteer

"My two-month experience in Ghana is defined by the time I spent at Challenging Heights. Every story I tell revolves around the children and staff at the Challenging Heights school and shelter. My group felt incredibly privileged to be able to work with such a dedicated staff and loving children. We came to Ghana with the purpose to serve, but we certainly left having learned much more about ourselves, love and faith, and the interconnectedness of humanity. Challenging Heights was very accommodating to our needs and welcomed any new ideas. Working with the children in their studies or in play was definitely the highlight of my trip. I am forever grateful for the life-changing time I had at Challenging Heights."

Allison Stephens



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Parents of children at the Challenging Heights School

Rotary Club



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**“TOGETHER, YOU AND I CAN END
SLAVERY
IN OUR LIFE-TIME.”**

JAMES KOFI ANNAN