

Behind the Scenes at Africa Education Partnership



AEP NEWSLETTER

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Gusau Trip July 22- August 7



Science lab, St. Michael's College

On July 22, three members of the AEP board, a southern Connecticut teacher, and two members of St. Paul's Church, Akron, Ohio, boarded a plane for Abuja, Nigeria. They traveled with eight members of FaithCare and Trinity Church, Tariffville, bound for the Kateri medical clinic. After almost 24 hours of travel, the team arrived safely, spending the first night in the capital city.

After a day of setting up the clinic, the team prepared for the crowds arriving for medical care on Monday. While four of the six joined the clinic crew on Monday, Don Ghostlaw and Elaine Chagnon traveled with Bishop John to the U.S. Embassy to meet with a representative to help ensure Bishop John's visa for his next visit in the spring of 2012.

On Wednesday, the team of six split from the others and traveled to Kaduna to visit St. Michaels' College, considered to be a model secondary school. We spent time touring and talking with teachers. The excellent dialogue left us excited to get to Gusau. Traveling north took about four hours, with numerous roadblocks de-

signed to slow traffic, after tension from the recent presidential elections resulted in violence. Finally, we arrived in Gusau.



Makeshift roadblock

What a joy to enter Bishop's compound! We were warmly greeted, allowed to freshen up, and given a meal. Three of bishop's six children were at home, so meeting them along with his wife, Helen, was very special.



Grace, Helen, Bishop, Paul, and Peace

Our next few days were filled with meetings. We were able to spend time at Christ Cathedral church and primary school with teachers, parents, and students as we gathered information and shared ideas regarding the new school construction, before meeting with the building committee. The welcome by all was both overwhelming and humbling.

Winter 2011



Angela DiMezza and a young friend

The conversations were fruitful with all parties joining the dialogue. Parents and teachers alike shared their passion for a quality education for the children. Their combined vision for Grace International School includes a state-of-the-art science and technology building. They also requested athletic fields and dormitories for both staff and students which requires significantly more space than the plot we own. By happy coincidence, a large adjacent parcel was for sale. Bishop John had already places a 50% down payment of \$30,000 on the property, and we all agreed that we needed to find a way to raise the additional \$30,000.

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

Philippians 4:6

Summer Trip, cont'd

Our visit to the construction site was a highlight of the trip. It was amazing to see an actual building under construction! We were also able to see the adjacent tract of land, approximately 400 feet square, that more than quadruples the size of the school property!. It was being leased to farmers during the growing season, but Bishop explained that the balance of the purchase price was due at the beginning of December. Another \$10,000 was needed to put a roof on the existing building. The thought of raising that amount in just three and one half months was a bit overwhelming, to say the least, but after discussion and prayer, we pledged to Bishop John that the money would get to Gusau.



View of adjacent property



View of classroom block 1

Since property boundaries are often marked with cinder blocks, the idea of selling virtual cinder blocks seemed to be a viable option to get the fundraising started- $400 \times 400 = 1600$ blocks; 1600 blocks \times \$25 each gives us \$40,000-simple! We tearfully ended our stay in Gusau with the \$40,000 figure in the forefront and fleshed out the fundraising campaign on the plane ride home. Each of the members approached their

respective churches, wrote to newspapers, spread the word, and prayed. While the figure seemed totally out of reach, we took comfort in the chain of events that initially provided the land and the down payment.



Don Ghostlaw with the building committee

Since our return, pledges for virtual cinder blocks have continued to come in- from everywhere!

The AEP board met on Monday, November 28 and is pleased to report that over \$36,000 has been raised, enabling the Grace International building committee to pay the balance on the land! Praise God! Truly, God's hand has been on this project the entire time.

There is no earthly way that this large sum of money could have been raised in so short a period. **We are truly grateful and wish to express out gratitude and thanks to all who have supported this project. We still have much to do, however, and ask that you consider continued support as we roof building 1 and begin the science and technology building. Children are waiting!**

Wishing you the blessings of the season,

The AEP Board



Helen and the ladies dressed in Gusau Women's Guild outfits, given as gifts

FINANCIALS TO DATE

Total collected during 2011 to date:

\$11,710

Total amount collected for virtual brick campaign:

\$36,200

Total amount sent to Nigeria for school construction (2011):

\$16,000 (excluding land)

Expenses for Bishop John, publications, website, and supplies:

\$3704.93

Total raised since 2009:

\$ 91,973

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Visit our website at:

www.africaep.org

Please write checks to:

Africa Education Partnership
c/o St Peter's Church

"You are my God, and I will give you thanks; you are my God, and I will exalt you. Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; his love endures forever."

Psalm 118:28-29

Gusau 2011 Team

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