



# GHANA 2016

Yale Alumni Service Corps, Association of Yale Alumni, P.O. Box 209010, New Haven, CT 06520-9010

## Eti Sen?

This is how you ask “How are you?” in Twi. Use it to impress your student, business client, fellow construction worker, or new friend!

We hope you are all excited for our upcoming trip to Ghana. In this newsletter, we provide contact information for your project leaders. In late June we will be mailing out t-shirts, tote bags, tour books, and a participant directory so you can put faces to some of the people you are working with!

Project planning is now under way. If you have not heard from your project leaders they will be contacting you shortly to begin planning the various projects you are involved in.

This newsletter also contains information on our projects, reminders as to things you need to be doing, and some additional information on keeping yourself healthy and logistics.

Trudie Agbozo, Bob and Lisa Unsworth

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## Contact information

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# Update on Travel and Logistics



**Remember: YASC does not arrange travel to and from Ghana. You must book your own flights!**

- Ghana allows visitors to apply for visas 90 days in advance of travel. **Now is the time to get your application in.** You can do this in person in New York, or submit via mail. You must first fill out the application on the Ghana web site before applying.

<https://ghanaconsulateneويورك.org/gcn/VisaApplication.aspx>

See Newsletter #1 for details, and the email Trudie sent earlier. NOTE THAT THE ABOVE REFERENCED FORM SHOULD BE FILLED OUT ON-LINE BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR PAPERWORK TO THE CONSULATE.

- While Ghana allows applications for visas on entry, the line can be long and the process uncertain, so please obtain a visa in advance. We will not be able to hold our buses to wait for folks stuck in the Visa line!
- If you are busy and like the assurance of having a professional's help, you can pay for a service to help facilitate your application. Several volunteers have successfully used the firm "CIBT Visas" in New York. The cost varies depending on how quickly you need your application processed. Go to: <http://cibtvisas.com>
- **Now is the time to talk to your doctor about immunizations and anti-malarial pills.** Many travel medicine departments get busy as the summer travel season heats-up, so call now to get an appointment.
- **REMEMBER: YOU NEED TO HAVE A YELLOW FEVER VACINE AND YOU NEED TO BRING THE "YELLOW CARD" WITH YOU.** As for other important documents (passport, airline tickets), be sure to make a copy and carry it separately.
- Again, see Newsletter #1 for details on immunizations.
- We know many of you plan to bring supplies, we appreciate it – only do so if you are able to fit it in your baggage or if you are willing to bear the expense of the extra box or bag. Our budget does not allow us to reimburse volunteers for any expenses.
- PLEASE: do not bring used computer equipment unless you first check with Bob Unsworth or Trudie. Ghana has a huge problem disposing of all the used computers sent from the US and Europe. These "donations" have created a waste disposal nightmare for the country.

# Staying Healthy While in Ghana



Dr. Fred Cantor, long-time and frequent YASC trip participant, offers the following advice for staying healthy in Ghana. Please note – the vast majority of volunteers will have no medical problems if they prepare for the trip and practice common-sense overseas travel behavior. Discuss these suggestions when meeting with your doctor.

**Gastroenteritis:** Here are some guidelines for a healthy gut in Ghana

- Avoid uncooked vegetables (salad) and fruits. Fruits that have a skin that you can peel are generally OK.
- Use bottled water for drinking, brushing your teeth and rinsing your toothbrush. Avoid ice cubes and keep your mouth closed in the shower!
- Use hand sanitizer and wash hands frequently.
- #1 medication to bring is Pepto-Bismol (or generic). If you develop symptoms, take 2 pills, 3–4 times daily for at least a day or two after symptoms stop. You can add Imodium for diarrhea. Remember – Pepto-Bismol reduces diarrhea but is also an antibacterial.
- Some participants take Pepto-Bismol prophylactically 1/2 or 1 pill daily. This seems to help reduce symptoms.
- #2 medication is an antibiotic to take if a fever develops or if the Pepto-Bismol doesn't work. Find out what your doctor recommends and get a prescription filled. Some antibiotics that have been useful are: ciprofloxacin, azithromycin, doxycycline.

**Shoes:** There may be parasites in the ground such as hookworm that enter through the skin. The ground may contain dog or other animal fecal material. We recommend avoiding open sandals or flip-flops. Closed shoes are better. Do not wade into streams.

**Mosquitos:** Transmit malaria and other diseases. Even though it is hot, long sleeves, long pants and socks provide some safety. You can purchase clothing impregnated with insect deterrent. You can treat your clothing with permethrine but follow directions carefully. There are many repellants to apply to our skin. The most effective contain DEET. Medication for anti-malarial prophylaxis is recommended by the CDC. Mosquito borne diseases are best managed by avoiding exposure through use of DEET and wearing sensible clothing.

**Immunizations:** Talk to your doctor and check the CDC website. Strongly advised– routine tetanus update , Hepatitis A & B (usually given as 3 does spaced apart).

**Typhoid.** Recommended by CDC for those going to a rural area or eating street food.

## Tips on avoiding mosquito bites

Lisa and Bob have participated in three YASC trips to Ghana. The weather in August has been warm and humid but bearable. Evening dinners at the Coconut Grove are often associated with lovely cool breezes. Bob typically wore loose pants or shorts, and T-Shirts to his projects during the day (construction). He found a sweatshirt useful in the evening. Lisa wore simple dresses, capris and short-sleeved shirts during the day and often wore jeans and a light cardigan at night. We took malaria pills and were vigilant about using bug spray with DEET in the mornings and in the evenings before dinner. Sun burning is a real risk, despite the appearance that the sky is overcast. We followed the true-tested guidance: we apply sun block first, wait a short period (five minutes), and then applied DEET. We drank plenty of water (especially when on construction or athletics). We used hand sanitizer often, avoiding picking up germs or leaving the ones we brought with us in the community.

# Money, Power, Water, Cell Coverage

## Money...

You will not need much cash on the service portion of the trip. There will be a market night at the hotel where you will have the opportunity to purchase crafts and other goods from local vendors. You may wish to leave tips at the hotel, have a beer at the bar, or run into a need for cab fare.

- Ghana's currency is called the Cedi, pronounced "Seedy"
- The exchange rate to US Dollars is approximately 4:1
- To convert Cedis to US Dollars, simply divide by 4
- You can exchange money at the airport. There is both a money exchange window and an ATM. Past participants found this to be the most convenient place to change money.
- We may have a limited exchange facility at the hotel.
- While US Dollars are more common in Accra than in the past, they are generally not used on the Cape Coast.

IT IS GENERALLY RECOMMENDED YOU NOT USE YOUR CREDIT CARDS IN GHANA. IF YOU DO PLAN TO USE A CREDIT CARD FOR HOTEL OR OTHER MAJOR PURCHASES, CHECK AHEAD WITH YOUR PROVIDER.

For those returning to Ghana from past trips, you will note the significant devaluation in the Cedi in the past two years. This devaluation has been very hard on Ghanaians, since many of the goods they consume are imported. It also means you may find yourself with a fat stack of Cedis when you convert!

## Tax Deductibility

Did you know that your trip costs, including travel expenses and supplies you pay for, may be tax deductible? Keep good records, and as always, talk to your tax advisor.

See: <https://www.irs.gov/uac/newsroom/tips-for-taxpayers-who-travel-for-charity-work>

## Water...

- Do not drink the tap water in Ghana!
- We will provide you with bottled water on-site and at the hotel.
- We don't recommend drinking the commonly available bags of water (see picture), ironically called "pure water". These bags are typically filled with tap water.



## Cell Phones...

- If you are tied to your phone, we have good news: cell phones work at both the hotel and in Yamoransa. We have successfully used text features, calling features, and even facetime on our iPhones. The hotel has wireless Internet, albeit intermittent.
- Your US cell phone will work in Ghana: however, set a plan with your provider in advance or you may pay dearly for roaming charges. Some plan (Sprint) now have free text and roaming in Ghana. Check with your provider.
- Some past trip participants have purchased an inexpensive phone and used it at the airport.

Did you know: 85 percent of adults in Ghana own a cell phone!

## Power....

- Voltage is 220–240 Volts (The US and Canada use 110–120 Volts)
- Your computer and cell phone charger will work at this voltage... check the label on the plug.
- However, you will see a few different type of power outlets in Ghana
- 3–pin outlets are either Type G (United Kingdom) or Type D (India)
- The most common ones are the Type G 3–pin outlet, as pictured



Did you know: Ghana has experienced terrible reliability with their electric grid. Power outages are common. Commonly blamed on not enough generation capacity, the government is working on building more power plants. This situation has made it very hard for businesses to operate. and led

## Next Orientation Call

Orientation this year is being done over the course of three conference calls, using a new tool called “Shindig”.

Our third and final orientation call is scheduled for is scheduled for **Wednesday, June 8th @7:00pm EDT** Please allow 90 minutes for this call.

The agenda will focus on Cultural Competence; a discussion on what not to wear say and more. Key topics include; customs and social expectations, gift giving, managing friendships during and after the trip, respecting other volunteers (a united front while in the community), saving face, and taking photos of people.

Please check your inbox for the Shindig invitation from João C. Aleixo [joao.aleixo@yale.edu](mailto:joao.aleixo@yale.edu)

## Who Are We?

Members of this year’s YASC group to Ghana range in age from 10 to 80. The most senior graduate is Yale Class of ‘58; the most recent Yale Class of ‘14!

# Project Leaders

**Athletics:** Bob Unsworth ([Robert@unsworth.us](mailto:Robert@unsworth.us))

Sports, games, and clinics – with primary and middle school children.

**Business Consulting:** Lisa Unsworth ([lunsworth@arn.com](mailto:lunsworth@arn.com))

Work with micro-business owners on business strategy and opportunities

**Construction:** Henry Chan ([c.henry.chan@gmail.com](mailto:c.henry.chan@gmail.com))

Project work will focus on light construction and finish work on the ICTC

**Education:** Linda Keller and Julia Norcross ([jnorcross89@gmail.com](mailto:jnorcross89@gmail.com);  
[marmot@ecentral.com](mailto:marmot@ecentral.com))

Volunteers will be teaching classes in the primary and middle school.

**Education-Reading and Library:** Judy Crawford ([heyjude54@comcast.net](mailto:heyjude54@comcast.net))

This group will focus on the development of the library and fostering a Love of reading among primary and middle schoolers.

**Extended Arts:** Andrea Werboff ([awerboff@gmail.com](mailto:awerboff@gmail.com))

Volunteers will lead art projects (including performing and creative arts) in the primary and middle school.

**Eye Clinic:** Mari Ann Keithhan ([makeithahn@aol.com](mailto:makeithahn@aol.com))

Basic eye exams and administering of eye glasses.

**Public Health :** Fred Cantor ([fred5.cant@gmail.com](mailto:fred5.cant@gmail.com))

The focus of this project will be on screening and health education.

## Special Projects.

The following projects will be staffed by YASC and other volunteers. At this time we are not looking for additional volunteers for these Projects.

**Helping Babies Breathe:** David Bergman and Steve Keithahn

At UCC School of Nursing and Midwifery. Tactics to ensure the respiratory health of newborns. This project is fully staffed.

**Gardens for Ghana.** Alrie Middlebrook. An ongoing project featuring the development of Small gardens and planting of trees in Yamoransa, as well as encouragement of the Yamoransa Garden Club.



Student in Yamoransa



**DON'T FORGET: JOIN THE "SHINDIG" ON SUNDAY, JUNE 5, AT 10 AM EASTERN!!**