



GHANA COMMUNITY SERVICE TRIP INFORMATION



Introduction:

In 1957, Ghana became the first sub-Saharan country in colonial Africa to gain its independence. It was formed from the merger of the British colony of the Gold Coast and the Togoland trust territory. Today the Republic of Ghana is a constitutional democracy consisting of ten (10) administrative regions, with its capital city, Accra, located in the Greater Accra region.

Ghana has no iconic natural calling card like Victoria Falls or Kilimanjaro, but one look at a map reveals a geographic blessing: hundreds of kilometers of coast shared by beautiful beaches, like those at Busua & Dixcove, ruined European forts, such as Cape Coast Castle, the poignant reminders of the country's importance as a way station for African slaves, and the battered shacks of lively fishing villages. Accra is the commercial and cultural motor of the country, while Kumasi is the traditional home of the Ashanti, and is famous for its crafts. In the Volta region to the east, where the geography was given a facelift by the Akosombo dam, you can still find substantial swathes of forest crawling up mountains along the Togo border. And finally the North, which offers opportunities for wildlife viewing up close and personal, stretches across the horizon like an overcooked pancake to the Burkina Faso frontier.

Compared to other countries in the region, Ghana is stable and prosperous, but this valuation is in part founded on hopes for the future. Dr John Kufuor, leader of the well-established New Patriotic Party (NPP] was reelected in 2004. Kufuor and the NPP inherited some tough economic and political challenges, but after almost 16 years in power, the party's slogan, 'So Far So Good', is perhaps an uncannily accurate reflection of the

confidence they and the country hold. Ghana's economy continues to grow and attract investment, and the outlook is brighter than in many other parts of Africa. That being said, in 2005 the per-capita income was an estimated US \$2500 and Ghana was classified by the UN as a low-income, food-deficit country. The majority of very poor people live in rural areas. The bulk of the country's labor force is employed in agriculture, which accounts for 37% of its GDP and 35% of its export earnings. It is no wonder then that the country is often labeled "Africa for beginners."



Where You Will Stay:

Guesthouse of the L & A MEMORIAL ACADEMY

L&A Memorial Academy is a privately funded Educational Institution in Accra, Ghana that provides Nursery, Pre-School, and Junior Secondary School (JSS) education. L&A invites all supporters, individuals, groups and students from all over the world to visit and share in the culture, diversity, and beauty of Ghana. The Aryiku families, the principal benefactors of L&A, have offered their rarely used home in Accra as a guesthouse to accommodate this initiative. It is safe, clean and beautiful, and you will enjoy a great family environment.

The staff has helped to prepare and will host our community service project.

The bedrooms have bunk beds, are treated with mosquito nets, and share a common bathroom and two toilets. There is hot water for bathing and ceiling fans in all the rooms. Each floor of the house has a common living

room with TV and radio, a veranda with chairs to sit to take in the sea breeze, a kitchen with refrigerator and microwave, and a dining area. There is a phone and the floor has wireless Internet access.

Bed Linens are available at the guest house. Guests are encouraged to bring their own towels and soaps in case of unforeseen allergies.

The guesthouse will provide breakfast, lunch and dinner. Meals will include fish, beef, goat, and chicken, but can cater to a vegetarian diet. Depending on the day's schedule, not all meals will be taken at the guesthouse.

The guesthouse and the neighborhood are safe. Valuables are very safe and can be locked in guests' rooms since they are the only ones with access. Guests can walk around the neighborhood without fear or harassment from beggars.

Guesthouse Address:

26 Nii Mampong Okai Street,
Dansomaa Accra, Ghana,

Telephone: 021-323969

L&A Memorial Academy Website:

<http://l-amemorialacademy.org/>



Practical Information:

Money:

The unit of currency is the cedi (C). There are C1000, C2000, C5000, C10,000 and C20,000 notes, as well as C100, C200, C250 and C500 coins. Although we have been informed that the best currency to bring is US dollars, we suggest that students bring cedi with them to Ghana in addition to US dollars. Although there are foreign-exchange (forex) bureaus dotted throughout Accra and most major towns, they don't generally change traveler's checks. Most Barclays and Standard Chartered Banks throughout the country have ATMs, however travel both in and out of the city is something of a challenge, so students should not count on being able to "stop off" at the ATM. If students wish to bring credit cards, Visa and MasterCard are generally the only ones accepted. However small restaurants, shops, and the marketplace do not commonly accept credit cards. They should be seen as a precautionary rather than primary source of currency. We suggest students bring no more than \$200 in USD for the few meals not included, snacks/beverages and for souvenir shopping.

Language:

Although the official language is English, expect to hear people speaking in Twi (Akan). "Akwaaba" meaning "Welcome", accompanied by a big smile, is the customary greeting.

Dress:

Be prepared for the humidity and dress in lightweight, natural fabrics. Being a West African coastal city, Accra has a tropical climate which is between 21 and 31 degrees centigrade all year round. Humidity is high. Caps, hats, bandanas, and sunglasses are suggested because of the sun and heat.

In addition, students should take into account that we will encounter mosquitoes. Tank tops, short-shorts, and flimsy flip-flops are not recommended.

One moderate/casual dress outfit for an evening event is suggested. We encourage students not to over-pack. Comfortable, casual, breathable, modest clothing is recommended. There will not be many opportunities to return to the guesthouse throughout the day to change, so outfit changes during the day are not practical. Evening dress change is more probable. Students should take this into account when packing.

Comfortable footwear is critical. Flip-flops are not recommended. We will be doing a considerable amount of walking, and not all streets are paved. Well-worn athletic sandals, sneakers, etc. are better suited.

Students are encouraged to “devalue” themselves with regard to valuables such as jewelry and expensive clothing and accessories.

Cell Phones:

The telephone system is relatively reliable, but most people use mobile phones. There are several GSM cell phone operations that have roaming agreements with most international networks. The main networks are MTN, GT, Vodafone, Onetouch, Tigo and Kasapa. Telephone service is available at the guesthouse.

The international dialling code for Ghana is ‘233’. When dialling from Ghana to another country dial ‘00’ before the dialling code of the destination country. The area code for Accra is ‘021’.

Time Zone

The time zone is GMT, which is 5 hours ahead of New York.

Internet Service:

Internet is available in the guesthouse. Students will have time at the end of each day to check email, blog, etc.

Things to Take Along:

There are big supermarkets in Accra where students can get all the western items needed. However, it is suggested that students take along the following:

Towels / washcloths

Comb / brush

Shower cap / hair products (shampoo, conditioner, etc)

Toiletries (soaps, lotions, toothbrush, toothpaste, cotton balls, swabs, and alcohol "preps," etc.)

Slippers / bath robe

Basic medicines (aspirins, Tylenol, Tums, Pepto-Bismol tablets, small first aid kit, sun screen lotion, insect repellent, hydrocortisone cream, antibacterial ointment)

Inexpensive camera

Keep personal items to a minimum.

Important Information:

Consulate Contact Information:

Consulate Address:

19 East 47th Street, NY, NY 10017; Between Madison and 5th Avenue.

Consulate Phone #: 212-832-1300

Consulate Website: www.ghanaconsulatenewyork.org

Hospital Information:

Trust Hospital, Osu

Telephone: +233-0302-761974 -6

Fax: +233-0302-777790

Postal Address: P.O. Box M 149, Ministries Accra GHANA

Website: <http://www.thetrusthospital.com/>

Email Address: info@thetrusthospital.com

Location: 35 Cantonments Road, (Oxford Street), Osu RE Accra.

Lister Hospital

Telephone: +233 302 812 325 / +233 302 812 326 / +233 244 313 883
24 hours a day

Fax: +233 302 812 397

Address: LISTER HOSPITAL AND FERTILITY CENTRE

P. O. Box CT966, Cantonments, Accra, Ghana

Email: info@listerhospital.com.gh

Website: <http://www.listerhospital.com.gh/index.php>

Medical Facilities and Health Information:

Medical facilities in Ghana are limited, particularly outside Accra, the capital. Students should carry adequate supplies of any needed prescription medicines, along with copies of their prescriptions, the generic name of the drugs, and a supply of preferred over-the-counter medications.

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) hotline for international travelers at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747) or via the CDC website:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>.

As mentioned in forms previously sent to you:

1. We are fortunate to have contact with Dr. Benjamin Dodoo, a doctor of tropical medicine and a parent of SHS graduates. You can contact him at his office (914) 968-1711 or on his cell 914-262-0475. He is from Ghana and has extensive experience and knowledge on the subject.

2. **Required vaccination:** yellow fever. It is recommended that you take the shot 10 days prior to travel. Please note that if you have taken the yellow fever vaccination within the last 10 years, you do not need to take it again. Make sure you have proof of the vaccination (yellow card) with your passport to go through Customs.

3. Recommended vaccinations. See Chart below. (from CDC)

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/ghana.htm>

Vaccination or Disease	Recommendations or Requirements for Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
Routine	Recommended if you are not up-to-date with routine shots, such as measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.
Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG)	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in countries with an intermediate or high level of hepatitis A virus infection (see map) where exposure might occur through food or water. Cases of travel-related hepatitis A can also occur in travelers to developing countries with "standard" tourist itineraries, accommodations, and food consumption behaviors.
Hepatitis B	Recommended for all unvaccinated persons traveling to or working in countries with intermediate to high levels of endemic HBV transmission (see map), especially those who might be exposed to blood or body fluids, have sexual contact with the local population, or be exposed through medical treatment (e.g., for an accident).
Typhoid	Recommended for all unvaccinated people traveling to or working in West Africa, especially if staying with friends or relatives or visiting smaller cities, villages, or rural areas where exposure might occur through food or water.
Polio	Recommended for adult travelers who have received a primary series with either inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) or oral polio vaccine (OPV). They should receive another dose of IPV before departure. For adults, available data do not indicate the need for more than a single lifetime booster dose with IPV.
Yellow Fever	Requirements: Required upon arrival for all travelers ≥ 9 months of age. Recommendations: <i>Recommended</i> for all travelers ≥ 9 months of age. Vaccination should be given 10 days before travel and at 10-year intervals if there is on-going risk. Find an authorized U.S. yellow fever vaccination clinic.
Meningococcal (meningitis)	Recommended if you plan to visit countries that experience epidemics of meningococcal disease during December through June (see map).
Rabies	Recommended for travelers spending a lot of time outdoors, especially in rural areas, involved in activities such as bicycling, camping, or hiking. Also recommended for travelers with significant occupational risks (such as veterinarians), for long-term travelers and expatriates living in areas with a significant risk of exposure, and for travelers involved in any activities that might bring them into direct contact with bats, carnivores, and other mammals. Children are considered at higher risk because they tend to play with animals, may receive more severe bites, or may not report bites.

4. Discuss with your medical doctor your best option for taking malaria medication. You should begin taking malaria medication as soon as required (depending on the one you choose). Dr. Dodoo recommended malarone, which you should take (one per day) 7 days before departure; throughout the trip; and 4 days after returning.

5. Dr. Dodoo has graciously offered to provide the yellow fever shot at \$150; the meningitis vaccine at cost (approx. \$120), the Hepatitis A; as well as Hepatitis B (for those that choose to take it) along with the prescription for malarone or larium. Please call him and arrange for an appt. and of course, mention that you're from the Scarsdale HS Ghana trip.

6. You can also call the International Travel Service at Westchester Medical Service at Valhalla at 914-493-8866 to arrange for an appt. for the vaccinations.

7. You can also call your own physician or look up other local travel clinics at the CDC website.

Here's another option:

Goldberg, David , MD
Scarsdale Medical Group
259 Heathcote Rd
Scarsdale, NY 10583

Phone: (914) 723-8100

Fax: (914) 206-4604

E-Mail: goldbergid@aol.com

Hours Available: Monday-Friday, 8 am - 5 pm; Saturday 8 am - noon, by appointment.

Description: Complete pre-travel immunizations and consultations; post-travel consultations

8. PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CALL ASAP TO MAKE APPOINTMENTS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU CHOOSE TO TAKE THE HEPATITIS B VACCINATION (IT REQUIRES 4 - 6 WEEKS).

Medical Insurance:

You should not assume your health insurance will be valid when your child travels overseas. It's very important to find out BEFORE the trip. Ask your insurance company two questions:

- Does my policy apply when my child is out of the US?
- Will it cover emergencies like a trip to a foreign hospital or an evacuation?

In many places, doctors and hospitals still expect payment in cash at the time of service. Your regular U.S. health insurance may not cover doctors' and hospital visits in other countries. If your policy isn't valid overseas, it's a very good idea to take out another one, created especially for this trip.