



Horizons Children's Home

"Forward Ever, Backward Never"

Issue #2

July, 2001



**Sandema, Builsa District,
Upper East Region, Ghana**

In Ghana:

Horizons Children's Home
Box 59, Bolgatanga, UER
Ghana, West Africa

In Canada:

24 Marblemount Crescent
Toronto, ON
M1T 2H4, Canada

July, 2001

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the Horizons Children's Project! Our program focuses on providing education, housing and care for abandoned children in Sandema, a rural town in Ghana.

Since our last update in February, we are glad to report that all of the children are happy and healthy. The boys have achieved many successes since leaving the streets only 15 months ago. They work hard in school, take joint responsibility for household chores, and participate actively in their after-school classes. Most importantly, they have developed a real sense of cohesion as a group. During one of their family meetings, the boys shared ideas for a household motto. After a lively discussion, they agreed upon: "One Family, One Aim". Truly, this motto captures the spirit of our small program.

In the next few pages, we have included some details on recent developments at the home, as well as some photos that capture daily life. Next month, I will be returning to Sandema to meet with the local Program Coordinator, Simon Akoba, and our volunteer Board of Advisors. Our plan is to extend the Horizons family by setting up a second home. We hope to give 14 more children the opportunity to attend school and participate in a safe and supportive home life.

As always, we thank our donors in the United States and Canada for their generous support. The sparkling smiles of the children in this issue express our appreciation more poignantly than words ever could. Happy reading!

Sincerely,

Heather Menezes

Cover Picture

Front row (left to right): Victor, Simon, Kasimu

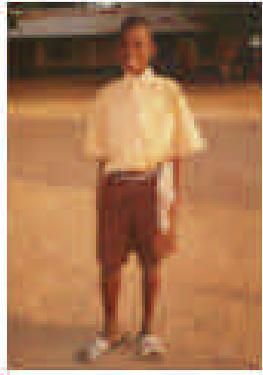
Middle row: Yaw, Francis, Prosper, Moses

Back row: Roland, Danzumah, Daniel, Isaac,

Kofi, Jacob

Absent: Sunday, Paul

Newsflash



New Addition

We are very proud to announce that Paul Akanwarilami has joined the Horizons family. Paul had been struggling on the streets for some time, and was selected by our local Board of Advisors in Sandema following a needs assessment. He recently started Grade 1 at Ayieta Primary. Left: A beaming Paul poses for a photo in his brand new school uniform.

What's Cooking?

After months of preparing meals in a tiny open air corridor, Simon and the children recently built a temporary kitchen adjacent to the home. The makeshift structure is made of mud bricks, sticks and straw 'zena mat' coverings. It helps block the wind and rain from extinguishing their cooking fire. Right is a photo of the galloping gourmets in action. (l to r: Yaw, Prosper, Isaac, Danzumah, Kasimu, and Paul)



Get Well Soon

In July 2000, Moses, the youngest family member, underwent surgery for an umbilical hernia. This year, he required a second operation to fully restore his health. With encouragement from his brothers, he is well on his way to a full recovery. Left: Moses is pictured with Simon, the hospital nurse, and Roland by his side

Learning in Action

Tricks of the Trade

After much anticipation, Kofi, Roland and Sunday have finally begun their trade programs at the Youth Leadership Training Institute in Sandema. The two year program, sponsored by the National Youth Council of Ghana, is designed to equip youths with employable skills. Roland and Sunday are aspiring masons, while Kofi is training to be a carpenter.



Top right: Roland checks the plumb of the wall prior to laying the next course of bricks.

Middle right: Kofi (front centre) is being taught to measure and mark the length of wood to be cut.



Below: Sunday demonstrates the use of his spirit level under the supervision of his teacher.



On the Teaching Front

Horizons welcomes Kwame Azakuma, a local teacher who is providing home tuitions for our children in English and Math. Paul Abalansa, the children's former tutor, recently left Sandema to begin a university degree program. Paul was instrumental in helping the boys in their transition to formal education, and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

A Glimpse of Daily Life



Left: Everyone lends a helping hand to pick leaves from vegetables grown in the garden. The leaves are the main ingredient in a hearty local soup. There is no shortage of 'hams' in the group when it comes to picture-posing!

Below (left): Roland and Jacob return from the market with some household goods. The market is a 10-minute walk from the Home, and all the boys take turns running market errands.



Above right: Prosper uses bottle caps to practise his addition and subtraction facts following his after-school class. Bottle caps are a very popular learning material in rural Ghana, where textbooks are very hard to come by!

The children make the most of their free time by playing hopscotch and other games. Right: Yaw smiles for a photo and tries not to lose his balance!



Madam Magdalena, who prepares meals for the children, poses for a picture surrounded by her 'cooking utensils'. In the background is maize that is planted and harvested by the children.



Simon heads off into town. As the Program Coordinator, he is always on the go. Among other things, he has to travel frequently to Bolgatanga where the bank and post office are located.



Above: The younger boys show off their homemade toys and bird cages. The innovative cars are made out of tin can remnants and various 'found materials'. The cages hang on the front veranda and the chirping birds provide cheerful background music at the Home!

Childspeak

13-year-old Isaac joined the Horizons family last August. After his father died, Isaac's mother left Sandema to start a new life in the south of Ghana. Isaac was left behind and eventually found his way to our home. Below is the unedited text of a letter he wrote in June

Dear Heather,

I am very happy to write you this letter. How are you in Canada and your family in Canada and your work. I hope by the grace of God every thing is going on well in Canada first I want to thank you for your care for us in horizons childrens home.

We appreciate what you have done and still doing we want you to continue to help us, we always pray for you and for the people who are giving money to help us. Mr. Simon, Mr. P.P. and Mr. Maxwell and Madam Janet work of us every especially Mr. Simon. He makes sure that, every body goes to school He also makes sure that everybody washes his uniform on Saturday and look neat always. we eat well and they provide us with what we want we will not let you down. the almighty God guide and protect you in your life and work. Greetings to our family and friends.

Your son,

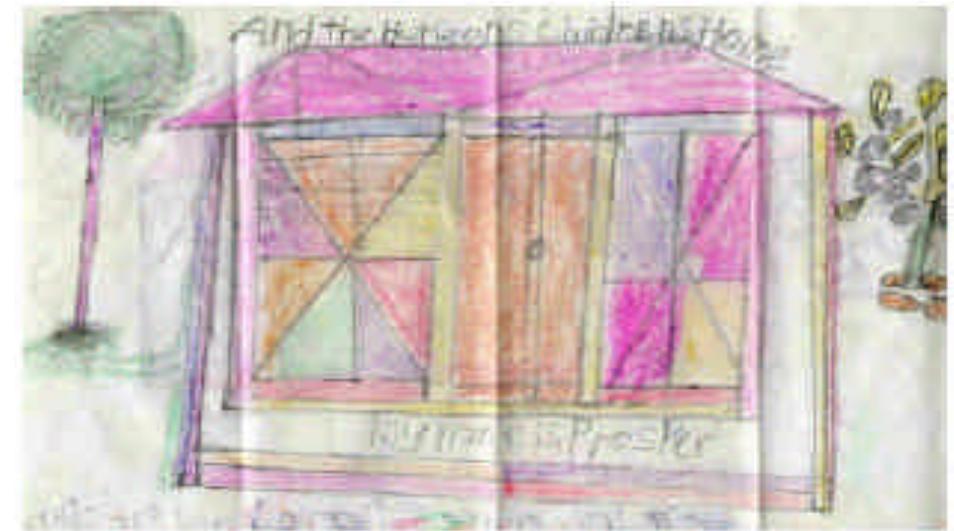
Isaac Kazi

Although our project is non-denominational, religion is an essential and deeply-rooted part of life in Ghana. Religious references are embedded in people's everyday vocabulary and conversations. Maxwell, Janet, and P.P. are all members of the Horizons volunteer Board of Advisors in Sandema. They meet regularly to discuss the program and guide its developments, and will be featured in our next newsletter.

Celebrating Success

Before Horizons became a formal program, I used to meet the children everyday on the veranda of a store in the centre of town. I can still vividly recall the first time I brought a box of crayons and scrap paper to our morning meeting. The children's eyes lit up at the sight of so many shades and colours. Their initial sense of wonder gave way to excitement and enthusiasm as they set about creating their own designs and pictures.

A few minutes into their first 'art class', I noticed that 9-year old Prosper was still staring at his blank page. He was holding his crayon delicately, and kept gazing around to see if anyone was watching him. He was visibly nervous. Every time he mustered up the courage to press the crayon to the page, he would suddenly become self-conscious, look around anxiously and lift the crayon away. This went on for several minutes, until Prosper finally made a tiny line with a red crayon at the corner of his paper. He smiled proudly, admired his work, and drew another one. As you can tell, it didn't take long for a budding artist to emerge!



We gratefully acknowledge the efforts of the Stanley Francis Foundation in obtaining approval for us to operate as a project under their organization. Donations towards our project can be made c/o the Stanley Francis Foundation, 22 Rustywood Drive, North York, ON, M3A 1R8 and marked for the "Sandema Horizons Children's Project". Receipts will be issued for tax purposes.