*You must be 21 years of age and speak fluent English in order to participate.

OrphanAid Africa Volunteer Program, Ghana

Please note: We are currently accepting all applications for volunteers who wish to participate before Oct 1st, 2009. After Oct 1st our volunteer program will become a “Training of Trainers” program, where volunteers with special skills will have the opportunity to actively participate in training our local staff.

To allow for this change we are seeking long-term volunteers with special skills in the following fields: IT, healthcare (nurses, doctors and midwives), and teachers and trainers for children with mental disabilities.

OrphanAid Africa welcomes volunteers at the OrphanAid Africa Community School in order to help improve the conditions and provide much needed stimulus for the children.

Contents:
- Volunteer work positions
- The volunteer site
- Costs & participation fees
- Start dates
- How to apply
- Volunteer testimonials
- Frequently asked questions
- Application Form

What is the Volunteer Program?
Our volunteer program selects and places motivated individuals to help out in a community school, where we need help. We are looking for enthusiastic individuals with a sincere inspiration to help those in need in Ghana, especially children. The volunteers that come to work in Ghana for OrphanAid Africa help in a range of ways. Mainly the volunteers provide relief for the overworked Ghanaian staff at the OA community school and give much needed attention and love to the children. We encourage the volunteers who come to plan activities, teach, and play with the children. Occasionally there may also be work available in health care, women’s center, working with disabled children, farm work, etc.

Note: You should be in reasonably good health due to the extreme heat and conditions and facilities in Ghana. Please be resourceful because you will not have the same access to materials that you may be accustomed to, especially in the schools. Ability to plan and be self-motivated is important, as you often won’t have direct supervision. It is also important to be flexible and patient, as it may take longer than you expect to accomplish just about anything.

Volunteer Work Positions
Some specific duties may include:

Teachers: (the school has kids age 3 to 16 as well as special children)
- Assisting the teachers in the school
- Preparing activities for the children
- There is a small library, which is an excellent resource for planning lessons. You can select books for story telling, rhymes and art
- Helping the teacher with any input that you feel that they need

Doctors or nurses:
- Assist the nurse in his duties
- Record keeping
- Helping in emergency situations when children go to the hospital
- Taking care of the infirmary

Farmers:
- Farm record keeping
- Assist the Farm Manager in supervision
- Help with harvesting, planting or sowing, watering, pruning, etc
- Help with the garden, production of vegetables for the home and restaurant and also in the landscaping of the Eco-lodge
- Give input on new technologies, provided that it takes permaculture, our system of farming, into consideration
- Tree planting

Other:
- Administration
- IT assistance
- Local fundraising & communication
- Consulting and managerial support
The Volunteer Site

OrphanAid Africa & the Ayenyah Community - In the village of Ayenyah, Ghana, OrphanAid Africa has established several foster families and a community center to provide support for orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The structures are built in local materials and the site operates on ecological principles. OA was honored to be the recipient of the Natura Award for Ecology in 2005 for the ecological aspects of the project, including it’s use of solar and wind energy, and the use of local materials to construct the buildings.

The Ayenyah Community Center - Thanks to OA, the local residents benefit from the OA Community Center, including a school with the capacity to educate all the children from the surrounding area, a cultural resource and adult education centre, as well as a health clinic. In addition, OA runs a guesthouse on site that welcomes volunteers and visitors.

The Location - The site is located on a 21-acre plot of land in Ayenyah village, about 50 kilometers North East of Accra and near the predominantly rural community of Dodowa, the capital town of the Dangme West District of Ghana. Ayenyah is also about 20 kilometers from Agornenya, the epicenter of the Aids epidemic in Ghana. A component of the activities carried out by OA seek to address some of the socio-economic problems of the Ayenyah community.

Participation Fees

Volunteers pay for: their flight ticket, vaccinations, health insurance, travel visa and program fees.

The Volunteer Fees cover: administration cost, pre-departure assistance, airport pick up and drop off, accommodation in Agomeda (a small town 3 miles from the OA Community), continental breakfast, local dishes for breakfast and lunch, orientation upon arrival, assistance in Ghana and the volunteer work placement.

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<tr>
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<th>Placement Fee *one time</th>
<th>Program Fee *monthly</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euro (£)</td>
<td>500 £</td>
<td>300 £</td>
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<tr>
<td>Payment method</td>
<td>Paid to OA volunteer bank account or Paypal account prior to arrival</td>
<td>Paid directly in Ghana upon arrival</td>
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Placement Fee

The Placement Fee must be paid in advance in order to reserve your space. If you do not pay this fee, we are unable to hold your place.

This fee covers your placement and funds the administration costs of the volunteer program. Coordinating the volunteer program is a cost on the organization and therefore we must ask volunteers to give a donation to help us cover the salaries, materials, and other expenses necessary to facilitate the program.

There are 2 ways to pay the Placement Fee:

- Credit card/debit card/Paypal account to the OA Volunteer Program Paypal account.
- Bank transfer to the volunteer program bank account in France.

Please keep in mind that OA needs to receive the full payment, arrange with your bank that HSBC will receive the full amount, taking into consideration the commission your bank may charge.

Program Fee

The Program Fee: should be paid to the volunteer coordinator in Ghana.

Please, keep in mind that you should pay the TOTAL amount in € or cedis to the Volunteer Coordinator in Ghana the first day.

Program Fee should be paid in cash and € or cedis (the local currency) directly to the volunteer coordinator upon arrival. This fee covers your accommodation, food, airport pick up and drop off, and miscellaneous costs on site.

OrphanAid Africa Volunteer Program
volunteer@oafrica.org - www.oafrica.org
We are supportive of volunteers who decide to do some fundraising in order to pay for their trip. We can provide you with a fundraising letter and dossier about our activities in Ghana in order to facilitate fundraising in your local community. Many volunteers solicit support from local companies, family members, friends and co-workers.

Please note: Euros and Dollars can be changed in the arrivals hall at the airport and we advise that you do this upon arrival (at least 50 € / $75).

We understand that some volunteers only have a few weeks free from their jobs, and we would like for everyone to be able to join us in Ghana. Your volunteer period can last as long or short as you like, however you will be charged on a monthly basis. For example, if you stay for just 2 or 3 weeks we must require you to pay the entire month fee.

Volunteers share a room and bathroom with other volunteers. Volunteers are responsible for doing their own personal clothes washing and room cleaning.

Start Dates
Volunteers are picked up at the airport on the 1st and 15th of each month. If you cannot get a flight for those days, please, let us know. We can be flexible.

We must approve the availability of the session and your placement and acceptance into the program after receiving your application. Please do not purchase a flight without receiving an acceptance letter with your approved period of work.

How do I apply?
(Please note all volunteers must be at least 21 years old and speak English)

1. Fill out the application form at the end of this document, and send it back to volunteer@oafrica.org.

2. Wait for an acceptance letter and program invoice inviting you to participate in our program and detailing the fees that you should make, as well as your deadline for reserving your place.

3. Pay your placement fee to reserve your space. You can do this by bank transfer or credit/debit card the volunteer paypal account.

4. When we’ve verified that we have received your payment (bank transfers may take few days), we will confirm your placement by email.

5. After making your payment and reserving your place...
   - Purchase or reserve your plane ticket
   - Get the required vaccinations (yellow fever is obligatory)
   - Obtain travel medical insurance (ask which hospital can you attend in Ghana)
   - Apply for a tourist visa for Ghana (check with the Ghanaian embassy in your country)
   - Obtain a background police check to prove that you have no criminal history and are suitable to work with children
   - Send us by email: the signed by laws, a copy of your travel medical insurance, your flight details, and your background police check.

6. We will send you information regarding your airport pickup.

We sincerely appreciate your interest in our organization and hope that you will join us in our endeavors. Your time in Ghana will not only be beneficial for the children but also an amazing learning experience for you!
Testimonials from OA volunteers

“The kids, the kids, the kids. They were all so loving, and curious, and willing to learn. Just being around them always made my heart open completely. A lot of them left a permanent impression on me and there are just too many stories to relay.”
Ericka Wicks, Canada

“It is truly difficult for me to verbalise the extent to which my stay with OrphanAid Africa in Ghana has impacted my life. There is no doubt that I have received so much more than I have given. Ghanaians are wonderful, generous and extremely kindhearted people, and being in their presence made me freer and happier. OrphanAid Africa is an organisation that is improving the lives and well-being of orphaned children everyday and I am honoured to have been able to be a part of it.”
Rachel Simon, USA

“I’ve never worked with kids from such different backgrounds as me. It was hard to find common grounds with them, but it happened. We ended up having a great time.”
Peter Drinan, USA

“I came to share my abilities and skills and to be of good use to children and I believe I accomplished that. Only time and distance will help me understand how the experience of being here in Ghana will affect me personally.”
Ernestine Valee, Canada

“People are very nice and helpful. The kids in the orphanage and in the school are refreshment for life. They have nothing to give except their love and you don’t want anything else. Life is not easy, but the hospitality of those people proves that we can make it easy if we want.”
Ako Isabelle, France

“I needed nearly 2 weeks to adjust to the heat, the food and the culture. But after this time, you feel more and more at home and I enjoyed the time there very much. The people are very friendly. The kids are grateful to have you here. And travelling in Ghana made me stronger because it is not easy like in Germany.”
Kathleen Schrock, Germany

"I have had such an amazing time at OA and in Ghana. My sincere thanks for welcoming me into your family and community so warmly. I have been inspired by you and the staff for how you work for the children and for the perspective you have on change in the OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) policies and community. I’ve truly enjoyed my project - it combined my human rights background and my desire to do policy work. I am now approaching school motivated and excited to continue learning about this type of "change" work. Thank you so much for this opportunity. You know how badly I wish I was staying and this is thanks to how nice everyone has treated me, even as a short-term visitor. I have a new love for Ghana." Allison, USA

"I can’t express to you what an amazing experience it had playing, reading, eating, sporting, praying and being with the children. I will never forget Christmas Eve night in the church parking lot, learning to play ampe, teaching secret handshakes and the first time one of the kids called me momma and asked for a hug. The kids and OA have given me so much more, enriched my Ghanaian experience so much more, than I could ever hope to teach or give in return. The friends that I have made and the memories that we have created will be imprinted on my heart forever. It simply can’t express the amazing spirit it have found in all of OA’s kids. I hope that I can apply the valuable life lessons I have learned in the USA. The smallest, most seemingly insignificant detail can change someone’s life forever. OA has changed my life forever. I will desperately miss all of you my brothers and sisters (I don’t have any real blood siblings of my own …) Thank you for opening your hearts and your home to me. I will cherish my memories of you.”
Rachel Kaufman, USA

Volunteer Blogs!

World travelers and OA volunteers Ryan Flahive and Denise Powell share their experiences with you at:
http://oursenscophile.blogspot.com/
They were with OA from May 15 - June 15, 2008 in Ghana!

A blog from French volunteers Anne-Laure Meilland and Pierre-Antoine Rigout who were in Ghana from January to April 2006...
http://unpittour.blogspot.fr
(The blog is in French - to read their blog click on 2006 Ghana on the left side)
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Where am I going to stay?
You are going to be placed in Agomeda, an hour and a half from Accra. Is a small town 3 miles from the OA Community. The rooms, bathroom and kitchen are shared with other volunteers. It is a compound house in the middle of a typical African town, where some OA staff also stays.
You will receive a continental breakfast at the guesthouse restaurant and local food for lunch and dinner, with the option to purchase western style meals from the guesthouse restaurant (this last option is not included in the volunteer fees and cost around 5 € per meal).

Is a visa necessary?
YES, a visa is necessary:
- Contact the nearest Ghana embassy in your country of residence.
- Request a tourist visa.
- The cost will vary depending on country of residence and length of stay.
  For example a month visa from Spain is 50 €.
Please, take into account that when you come to Ghana, at the airport they are not going to give you stamp in your passport for more than 60 days.

In order to process the visa the embassy may ask you for the following:
- Filled out visa application form
- A valid passport
- 4 Passport sized photos
- Yellow fever vaccinations
- Plane ticket reservation
- 2 Ghanaian references, which we will provide.

Please be sure to apply for your visa well ahead of time as it may take up a couple of days for the embassy to process your visa.

It is recommended that you make photocopies of all your important documents (i.e. passport, plane ticket, vaccination card, insurance card, etc.) and bring them to Ghana with you.

Do I need vaccinations?
Yes. Contact your nearest vaccination center and meet with a doctor in your country. They will tell you about the vaccinations that are required and recommended for traveling to Ghana.

Yellow fever vaccine is obligatory as well as the malaria treatment (pills), even though no malaria prophylaxis is 100 % efficient. It is not worth taking if you are going for over three months but you should ask you doctor for a large stock of melofloquine (brand name Lariam) or Malarone anyway. Melofloquine (Lariam) is not recommended for people who suffer from anxiety or depression. Melofloquine and malarone are is the only recommended anti-malaria drug in our area. No resistance has been reported. If you do get malaria, it is no trouble because we treat malaria very fast, but melofloquine is the most efficient anti-malaria drug and not available in Ghana.

Take any medicine with you that you may need for illnesses that you are susceptible to. We recommend a tetanus booster and a typhoid jab, meningitis and maybe hepatitis A if you don't come from a Mediterranean country.

Why do I need to obtain a background police check and how do I do it?
Requiring volunteers to provide a background police check allows OA to identify candidates who may be unsuitable to work with children or other vulnerable members of society.
Go to your local police department in your country of residence to obtain the police check.

What about money?
Master card and traveler cheques are very difficult to use as they can only be used in one bank in Accra.
Visa card can be used at cash machines and exchange bureaus are all around.
Western Union is available almost everywhere in the country.
There are also “bureaus de change” throughout the city.
The best is to travel around with cash, cedis (the local currency).
It’s very important that you change money at the airport upon arrival for your first days (at least 50 €). There are no banks close to the village where you will stay and you will need some money for transportation or food/dinks.

Don’t forget to bring the fee that you have to pay to the Program, in euros, or equivalent in cedis. For exchange rates please see www.xe.com/ucc/

What can I bring as gifts for the kids?
Gifts for the kids can include, and are not limited to, books in English (for children), dictionaries, shoes, sports equipment (footballs, handballs, volleyballs,…), colored pencils, calculators, pencil, sharpeners, watercolor paints, kindergarten material, coloring books, rulers, watches, paints, second hand clothes for warm weather, toys, any educative toy or therapeutic toys/material (for children with disabilities).
Please be aware that our policy is to share the gifts among the children so as not to encourage any rivalry. Please be aware that individual gift to individual kids, during you stay on when you leave are not allowed for the same reason. Other useful items to donate to the children are baby formula, powdered milk, pampers, spinach seeds, multivitamins, vitamin a/c, calcium, iron, oral mouth gel, thermometers and antibiotics.

What should I bring for myself?
Medicines:
- Malaria pills
- First aid kit
- Antihistamine for itches (Benadryl cream or tablets)
- Diarrhea medicine
- Strong iron supplement in drops (in case that you get malaria)
- Multivitamin tablets
- Treatment for cystitis or Candida if you are prone to them
- Painkiller
- Any personal medication

Others:
- Mosquito net
- Repellent (you should put on you everyday)
- High factor sun cream
- Hand sanitizer (to clean without water)
- Torch / flashlight
- Penknife
- 2 Sheets (for a single bed, and also pillow case)
- Towels
- Bathing suit
- Personal toiletries: soap, shampoo, deodorant, contact lens solution
- Clothes for tropical weather. In line with local Ghanaian culture, tops must not be short as mid-drift must be covered. Also all skirts / trousers should be knee length or lower (just for the girls).

It is always useful to know your blood type.
Water purifiers are not necessary, as bottled water is available.
For women, TAMPAX may be hard to find (you can find them only in Accra).

Will I have access to Internet and telephone?
Yes. There are Internet cafes and communication centers all over the country.
The price for an hour of Internet is between 0.6 - 1 GH cedis (1 € = 1.23 GH cedis), depending on the area.
On the street you will see people sitting with a small table and a phone, you can use to call abroad, it's cheaper.

Can I use my mobile phone in Ghana?
YES. If your mobile is decoded, you can buy a local chip, which will cost you about 3 GH cedis and add some credit.

Can my friends and family send me mail during my stay in Ghana?
YES. You can receive letters, but you have to know that it may take anywhere from a few weeks to a month or more for a letter or package to arrive. The address is: P O Box 6., Agomeda-Shai, Eastern Region, Ghana.
Please, take into account that for the packages, you may need to go and collect them in Tema (almost 2 hours form the place), and also you will be asked to pay at the post office.
We do however recommend communicating by email with friends and family while in Ghana. It is the easiest and most practical way to receive information. They can also send a mail to you under our volunteer account: volunteer@oafrica.org

I can’t go but would like to be a virtual volunteer and help . . .
We welcome virtual volunteers who can do lots of very valuable fundraising work on the Internet or provide skills such as helping with translations, IT assistance, graphic design, etc. We are also frequently looking for volunteers to help us at benefit events or in our European/USA fundraising offices. You can also help us out by telling your friends and family about us and ask them to become a member of our organization and make a monthly contribution! See our donations section for details. If you are interested, please contact us.

Have a question we haven’t answered?
Send us an email at volunteer@oafrica.org and we will get back to you as soon as possible with your answer.