

HALF HOLLOW HILLS

Missionary Shares Gifts With Ghana

By Tara Ennis

With toys, bicycles, clothes and shoes, Rev. Stephen Kwakye has given the less fortunate children of Ghana, West Africa, plenty to smile about. He traveled there on June 14 to distribute donated goods from America – many of the items came from Half Hollow Hills High School West.

In 1983 Kwakye founded the Christian not-for-profit organization Eternal Life Ministries International (ELMI), and in 1996 brought his missionary efforts to the United States. ELMI is based out of his Huntington Station home. Since 1999 he has shipped boxes of clothing, food, school supplies, toys and books to Ghana residents, then arrives in Ghana to pick up and distribute the packages.

An African American student organization at High School West has helped Kwakye for the past two years. The organization has held various fundraisers including shoes and sneakers drives, and bake sales.

For three weeks he distributed the goods to local churches and schools, and was featured in Ghana's largest newspaper the *Daily Graphic*.



Donations from Half Hollow Hills High School West were distributed to less fortunate children in Ghana.
Photo courtesy Rev. Stephen Kwakye

"The gap between the rich and poor is so big," said Kwakye. "It helps temporarily – it brings temporary joy and happiness."

Kwakye hopes that people knowing local efforts have helped the Ghana people and have not been in vain will result in continuing support. "To see something positive and catch on," he said.

He continues to focus on his largest goal – raising money to build a school for kindergarten through 12, as well as a vocational school, on four acres of property he owns in Ghana. "Education is so much of a problem," said Kwakye.

Children often work 12 hours a day along a main roadside, selling goods contained in baskets that rest on their heads. Many are killed while darting through traffic trying to sell the goods, he said. Kwakye wants to get these children out of the street into a vocational school where they can learn a trade. Those interested in helping the project can sponsor different materials needed for the schools such as windows or bricks, or make a financial contribution.

For more information call ELMI at 631-385-1683.