

Students Make Difference In Ghana

By Tara Ennis

Students at Half Hollow Hills High School West gave Rev. Stephen Kwakye much needed support for his missionary efforts in Ghana, West Africa. For the past two years, an African American organization at the school has held various fundraisers for Kwakye's ministry, the Eternal Life Ministries International Inc. (ELMI). This year, the organization held shoe and sneaker drives, and bake sales.

Their contributions added greatly to Kwakye's shipment of supplies to Ghana. This is Kwakye's fifth shipment since 1999.

Kwakye was born in Ghana where he lived a life of poverty — he did not have his first pair of shoes until the age of 12. Though he wanted to study to become an engineer, few Ghana children attend college. The Bible became his companion.

In 1983, he founded the Eternal Life Ministries International, a Christian not-for-profit organization. To better serve his homeland, Kwakye brought his missionary efforts to America in 1996. He now lives in Huntington Station — ELMI is based out of his home.

"People are very sympathetic to this kind of situation," said Kwakye. "They'd do anything in their power to help you."

The town of Huntington became his greater supporter. Along with High School West, numerous town churches and school districts helped Kwakye give boxes of supplies — clothing, food, school supplies, toys, and books — to Ghana residents. He would travel to Ghana to pick up the packages and distribute them personally to certain regions of the country.

The supplies are desperately needed. Kwakye said that more than half of the population is illiterate — those affected most are women. "There is not much emphasis on education,"



Rev. Stephen Kwakye of the Eternal Life Ministries International Inc. has received plenty of supplies from Half Hollow Hills High School West students to give to Ghana, West Africa, residents. He is seen here at the Volte School of the Deaf, which he adopted. Photo courtesy Rev. Stephen Kwakye

said Kwakye. Most schools are without walls and have no textbooks or furniture. In some regions, students have to carry tables from their homes to have a place to sit at school.

Kwakye is making every attempt to change these conditions. Last year he adopted the Volte School of the Deaf — Ghana's only such school. He is trying to raise funds to build a kitchen. "If you see where the food is cooked in that school, you'll cry," said Kwakye.

His most ambitious project is to rebuild the Kasowa community — a main area that is supported by his missionary efforts — and its surrounding villages. In addition to the problems of illiteracy and improper schooling, Kasowa is without adequate medical care and sanitation. The nearest clinic is 17 miles away and the nearest hospital is 20 miles away. There are two pay toilets, but many residents cannot afford the fee.

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