



Children in Ghana were overcome with toys donated from churches and schools in Huntington. Photo courtesy Rev. Stephen Kwakye

HUNTINGTON

Missionary Brings Local Donations To Ghana

By Tara Ennis

Rev. Stephen Kwakye thought he would have time to rest during his recent visit to Ghana in West Africa. Not a chance. His three weeks in Ghana, from June 14 to July 5, were spent sharing donated goods with the less fortunate — many of the items came from the Huntington area.

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.

The Huntington Baptist Church has held clothing drives and made offerings during Mass. ELMI was also helped by the First Presbyterian Church, and Harborfields and South Huntington schools including Pulaski Road School, Stimpson Middle School, St. Anthony's

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High School and Thomas J. Lahey Elementary School.

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

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

He 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," said Kwakye.

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.