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PAMBE GHANA

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Bilingual Education in Ghana

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AUTUMN 2016

New Year - New Start

As La'Angum Learning Center's first graduating class moves on to the challenges of UNITY junior high school in Langbinsi, our teachers and 259 students have arrived at La'Angum with a renewed commitment to learning. PAMBE Ghana's mother/tongue based, child-centered learning model is literally breaking ground to bring literacy to these underserved communities.

The remarkable achievements of the paradigm-shifting La'Angum Learning Center, accomplished in such a short period of time, can mask the fact that significant economic and educational challenges remain.

La'Angum Learning Center has now become a bedrock institution relied upon by these communities to provide education, certain health services, as well as water and nutrition to its students, teachers, and, to some extent, the community.

The PAMBE Ghana Board of Directors has worked diligently to raise funds, oversee the budget, and to use the funds as efficiently and transparently as possible. Our organization has extremely low overhead, due in large part to the significant time and skills offered by the committed Board and other volunteers. The question remains: how do we ensure that this remarkable institution achieves the stability to give it the best chance of remaining a community anchor for generations? The answer is simple: we need your help. Please consider helping us address PAMBE Ghana's most pressing needs:

- **raising** operating funds to fund higher teacher salaries (compensation now falls significantly below GES levels).
- **allocating** an increased portion of the annual budget to a permanent teacher training fund, and providing teacher training
- **funding** a reserve for maintenance and unexpected capital costs
- **discovering**, securing and maintaining a stable water source
- **funding** a permanent endowment through the Dorothe Schneebeli Fund

It takes a village-but there is no community better equipped than ours to find a solution to these challenges. Together we built a thriving school community on a barren, rocky, red earth hilltop. Together we can ensure that the doors opened through literacy facilitated by La'Angum Learning Center remain open for years to come.



Supporter Spotlight:

Meet Ann Reed Milburn, Award-Winning Educator.

La'angum Learning Center lacks resources to educate every child in the local villages, with the unfortunate result that in many families, just one or two children have had the opportunity to gain literacy. When the recent graduates reflected on their La'Angum education and future plans and dreams, a great number expressed their hopes to become educators themselves, so that they could return to their home villages and teach their younger siblings to read.

It can hardly be a coincidence that the poignant picture of a younger child at home watching with longing as an older sibling walked to school is a vivid memory of Ann Reed Milburn, a former teacher and faithful PAMBE Ghana supporter who, together with her husband, Paul, has provided numerous, significant challenge grants, which financed the campus infrastructure.

Ann's early years were spent in Apache, Oklahoma, in a log home without electricity or a clock. Her mother, who did not have a chance to complete her education as she was needed at her family's farm, was determined that Ann and her younger sister receive an education. Undeterred by the absence of an official timepiece, Ann's mother would wake them with the sun, saying "it is getting light in the East, you girls need to get up." In her first school years, after a simple breakfast of biscuits and eggs (the leftovers wrapped for lunch), Ann walked three miles to and from a two-room school house, only to find her younger sister waiting impatiently for her at their home's gate, insistent on receiving her own lessons from Ann immediately after school. In her family's little home on a creek, Ann first experienced the excitement of helping an eager learner.



Ann Milburn, left, receives a U.S. Dept. of Education Award

Once her sister was old enough to join her, the girls shared a horse for the journey to school, Ann's little sister riding in the back. The sisters spent their free time climbing trees, riding horses, and playing with paper dolls created out of old magazines. In the evening, the family often gathered together to sing.

As they grew, Ann's younger sister excelled scholastically, and was the first to attend college, on merit scholarships. Married at 18, Ann now followed her sister, and was accepted at Oklahoma College for Women in Chickasha, Oklahoma (now the University of Sciences and Arts of Oklahoma), graduated in four years, and accepted a job teaching first grade at the newly minted Sheridan Road Elementary School located in Lawton, Oklahoma, at the Fort Sill army base.

After two years in Lawton, Ann moved to Snyder, Oklahoma to teach reading. Determined to obtain an advanced degree, she enrolled in Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Carpooling with four others, she drove sixty miles each way for night, weekend and summer classes, and earned a master's degree in education with a specialty in reading.

Ann taught more than 20 years in Snyder, mentored by a Superintendent who believed in professional development, and recommended Ann for significant advanced training. During this time, Ann began to hone her skills as a reading specialist within the national "Chapter I" program designed for use in districts serving high percentages of disadvantaged children. In May 1988, Ann's Chapter I program at Snyder Public Schools received the U.S. Department of Education National Exemplary Award, and the Snyder Board of Education similarly recognized Ann for guiding its Chapter I program to such heights. Asked to sum up her teaching career in one word, Ann chose "thrilling."

Ann credits her decision to pursue an early education degree and her subsequent career as a successful, award-winning teacher to her experiences as a young school girl, the encouragement of her parents, and the example of her sister's drive and academic excellence. Likewise invaluable was the mentorship and support of her superintendent at Snyder Public Schools, DeDe Graham.

We are honored that Paul and Ann Reed Milburn support PAMBE Ghana's La'Angum Learning Center.

Celebrating a Milestone Achievement

With regard to child-rearing, many parents can relate to the saying: 'while the days are long, the years are short.' The La'Angum Learning Center community is no different – it's hard to believe that the members of La'angum's inaugural primary class, their bright faces of 2008 still familiar to the memory of teachers, graduated on July 27 and have moved on to junior high school. The graduates began attending Unity school in September 2016. Special accommodation was made so that all 25 students could attend the same junior high school. PAMBE Ghana hopes to follow them and track their challenges and success.

Help us prepare for our next graduating class by giving today to ensure they can move forward to next school. Give securely online at <http://pambeghana.org>.



Celebrations are important to Ghanaian culture, whether rooted in traditional practices or held to honor rites of passage. La'angum Learning Center kicked off its celebration of the first graduating class by holding a week of arts activities, including music and dancing, mask making, drumming, drama, and painting. Three artists from Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso - visual artist Abass Zoungrana, drummer Valentin Boro and performer/choreographer Eric



Kabore - spent an intensive week at the school in May 2016, working with the children during the day, then closing each day by adorning classroom walls with permanent murals celebrating school life. To see more of the creative output, please go to

the website <http://pambeghana.org>.

Emergency Repairs to La'Angum School's Water Collection System.

UNCIEF Ghana reported in August 2016 that "the hours women and girls spend every day collecting water is a colossal waste of their valuable time." Further, "Collection of water can also affect the health of the whole family, and particularly of children. When water is transported and stored, it increases the risk that it is fecally contaminated. This in turn increases the risk of diarrheal disease... Less than two in every five Ghanaians is drinking safe water, and one in every six households does not have a basic water supply within a 30-minute round trip." http://www.unicef.org/ghana/media_10548.html

Immediate, costly unbudgeted repairs were necessary if the tanks were to be in use prior to the 2016 rainy season

This lack of access to water is compounded in rural northern Ghana, where our students live with their families. An important part of PAMBE Ghana's work has been to improve access to water by building rain collection systems through a series of gutters, intended to function during the late Spring rainy season and by building large tanks to store that water for use in the dry season. During the 2015 school year, the water ran out early, leaving many thirsty students. An investigation revealed that the tanks were severely degraded, and leaching water into the ground; the guttering also needed repair. Immediate, costly unbudgeted repairs were necessary if the tanks were to be in use prior to the 2016 rainy season, then only weeks away.

We are grateful to report that \$15,000 in needed funds were raised and the repairs made; the rainy season has come and gone; and the tanks are full. Many thanks to our generous friends for helping PAMBE Ghana meet this unexpected financial challenge:

Genevieve Jostock
Jane Wheeler
Bill and Suzanne Parker
Karen and Joe Leonard
Helen Taylor
Hope H2O Foundation
Patti and Charles Yonka

School or Mini-Health Clinic? Sometimes, both.

La'angum Learning Center is a school — but sometimes it functions as a mini-health clinic. Last summer Alice learned that Hepatitis B infections had surfaced in several folks close to the school, threatening the students, parents and teachers. We mobilized a team of health care workers in coordination with the Gambaga Health Center to have the students, parents and teachers tested, and either vaccinated, if not positive for Hep B, or treated for the disease, if necessary.



The generous healthcare workers conducted the testing of both students and any family members who accompanied them free of charge, gave the children lessons on proper hand washing, and presented a 10-gallon water container and soap to the school. All in all, nine students tested positive and are being treated. Staff and family members were also either vaccinated or treated to stem the outbreak. The cost of this initial batch of vaccines and treatment -- approximately \$4,000 -- was not included in PAMBE Ghana's annual budget, as the outbreak was unexpected. But given this serious threat to the health and productivity of our school community, we chose to move forward immediately, and will continue to conduct a Hepatitis B program for the La'Angum Learning Center, in conjunction with the Gambaga Health Center, which will

discount its services.

If you would like to support this ongoing community-wide screening, provide students, teachers and family members with preventive vaccinations, and treat those already infected, please use the enclosed envelope, or click on the donate button at www.pambeghana.org. Thank you!

Our Loss, Boston's Gain!

Rachel Apple was raised in the experience of "fellowship through service." When her path crossed that of PAMBE Ghana Board member Judy Federa at a fundraising gala in Oklahoma City, Rachel thought building the La'Angum Learning Center "sounded like important work and it was the right time in my life." Rachel jumped right in as a volunteer in the Global Market, bringing along a number of talented friends. Rachel quickly became an unmissable (huge smile, sparkling dark eyes, boundless energy, and beautiful tattoos) and invaluable (bartender, photographer extraordinaire, and fearless recruiter of talent) PAMBE Ghana volunteer, then Board member, over the course of three years.

Rachel grew up in Edmond, Oklahoma and attended the Kansas City Art Institute before finishing her BFA at the University of Oklahoma with a major in photography, complemented by a double minor in ceramics and art history.

While devoting time to PAMBE Ghana, Rachel began working at Oklahoma City's Elemental Coffee, quickly achieving the role of Chief Roaster. She and husband Drew have moved to Boston, where Rachel is the coffee educator at George Howell Coffee. "I host classes, cuppings, education, palate trainings, brew method classes – all sorts of things."

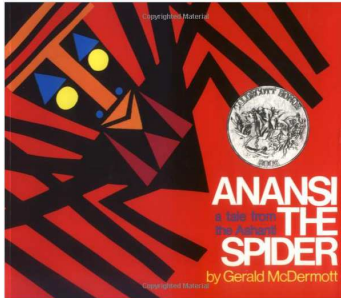
The move to Boston is planned to be permanent (hope you know how lucky you are, Boston). While Rachel cannot now assist PAMBE Ghana on a regular basis, her contributions have made a significant and lasting impact. Rachel says PAMBE Ghana left its mark on her, too: "I'm grateful. I learned a lot, I got the chance to help, I got to know some wonderful people, and the experience has set me up to contribute somewhere in depth in the future." Thank you Rachel – we wish you well!



Rachel (l) with sister, Rylee, at the PAMBE Ghana Fest

Help New Readers Put Down Roots: Grow the Hardcover Lending Library

Reading at home is a proven way to improve skills and foster a love of reading. Facilitating access to books will help bring the magic of reading to La'angum Learning Center students – and their siblings – many of whom cannot attend school due to size and staffing limitations. However, the vast majority of our students have no books at home, and no access to books outside of the school grounds. The solution: build a lending library so students may check out books and read at home; the books will ship to Ghana in December 2016.

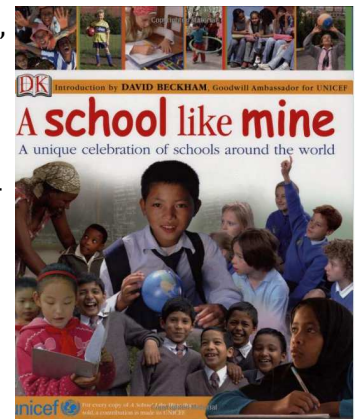


Help us nurture the love of reading in La'Angum students and their siblings. Please search your bookshelves for any gently used hardcover books you are willing to part with to become part of the inaugural hardcover lending library. Also gratefully accepted are cash donations toward books, or book bags, bookstores, Amazon or similar gift cards, and new books. We also need help sorting, categorizing and marking the books so that teachers can keep track of which books are out on loan.

Please contact Board member Heather Hintz at hlhb03@gmail.com with any questions, or to schedule a donation pick up or volunteer session. Guidelines and suggestions:

Hardcover only (given harsh climate and difficult living conditions)

- Picture books and early readers of all types
- *I Spy* or similar books
- Classic chapter books such as *Charlotte's Web*
- Books by UNICEF Publications, such as *Children Just Like Me* by Susan Elizabeth Copsey and Barnabas Kindersley DK Publishing (1995), 79 pages, grades 2-6, or *A School Like Mine: A Unique Celebration of Schools Around the World* DK Publishing (2007), 80 pages, grades 3 and up
- Culturally relevant books such as those featuring *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott or other traditional tales from Sub-Saharan Africa



Schedule Alice

Do you have friends, family or colleagues who would be inspired by the challenges and triumphs of La'angum Learning Center and its students in remote northern Ghana? Contact us to schedule a personal visit with Alice Iddi-Gubbels, PAMBE Ghana's Executive Director, before the schedule is filled. Alice will be glad to meet with your group during her time in Oklahoma City **November 3 - December 4**. Please contact Board member Judy Federa at jafedera@gmail.com to find out more, or to schedule a visit.



Save the Date - It's Global Market Time!

Mark your calendars for **November 5**. Don't miss the gala party celebrating the grand opening of the 2016 PAMBE Ghana Global Market, a seasonal fair trade shop featuring a wide selection of folk art from around the world, all purchased directly from artisans or from certified members of the Fair Trade Federation. Come early to browse the best selection for your holiday shopping while enjoying wine and other beverages and an assortment of delicious snacks, and catch up on developments in the field by chatting with Executive Director Alice Iddi-Gubbels.

The Market will be open from November 3-December 24, Tuesdays - Saturdays from 12 - 6 pm (Thursdays until 7 pm). All proceeds from the Global Market benefit PAMBE Ghana's La'Angum Learning Center. The Global Market is located at 6516 N. Olie in Oklahoma City (just northeast of the corner of NW 63rd and Western).



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



Welcome, Benita!

Beloved long time La'Angum teacher Mary Azure has added baby Benita, seen here with Alice, to her family.

INSIDE THIS NEWSLETTER

- **Hardcover Lending Library to launch**
- **Supporters rescue water system**
- **Hepatitis B vaccination and treatment program aids students, teachers and families**

IMPORTANT DATES

Global Market Grand Opening

November 5 from 4-7 p.m.

DETAILS INSIDE