



International Health Care Volunteers

Newsletter, Winter 2016

2015 Ghana Medical Mission

14th Annual Ghana Medical Mission!

IHCV's fourteenth medical mission to Ghana, West Africa, took 36 volunteers to La General Hospital in Accra, Central Regional Hospital in Cape Coast, and KNUST University Hospital in Kumasi. Working with our Ghanaian health professional colleagues, IHCV volunteers cared for 944 patients, performing 92 surgical procedures over 10 working days.

IHCV prides itself on its focus for educational exchange between Ghanaian and IHCV medical students and residents. During the 2015 mission, IHCV volunteers attended and presented at grand rounds and conferences for continuing medical education on topics including heart failure, molar pregnancy, pediatric resuscitation simulations, pediatric fluid replacement, and hypoglycemia of the newborn. Approximately 26 hours of CME were provided and 229 individuals touched by our outreach encounters, which included Senior Center Community outreach program, municipal and community BP screenings and Kumasi and Cape Coast Orphanages.

IHCV continues to cultivate its clinical and academic relationships in Ghana to maintain its cervical cancer, colon cancer, and HIV screening programs.

With every passing year, IHCV volunteers continue to gain more knowledge and skills from our Ghanaian colleagues and patients that will impact their lives and medical practice in the US. We look forward to returning in 2016.

About IHCV

International Healthcare Volunteers began in 2001 after Dr. James Aikins lost a family member to postpartum hemorrhage in Ghana. Frustrated with the thought of losing someone to a condition which is very treatable in the US, Dr. Aikins and his wife, Dr. Charletta Ayers established IHCV with the mission of providing healthcare to women in underserved areas and providing continuing medical education to healthcare professionals in these areas. The first mission occurred in 2002. IHCV has done a

medical mission every year since its inception. Over the last 14 years, IHCV has expanded its scope to include women, men, and children.

Since our debut mission, IHCV volunteers have cared for nearly 11,400 patients. In addition to medical care, IHCV engages in medical education, attending and presenting at conferences and grand rounds during missions, offering continuing medical education credits for health providers. Educational exchange continues to be the crux of IHCV's sustainability. We look forward to medical missions for years to come.

Board of Directors

Charletta Ayers, MD
Chairperson

James Mensah, MA
Vice Chairman

James Aikins, MD
Medical Director

Ricardo Caraballo, MD
Deputy Medical Director

Adam Holzberg, DO
Secretary

George Hayford
Treasurer

Victor Essien, JD

Bill Mason

Patricia Mason

Joanne Mazzealli MD

Felicity Polley, MA

G. Kwame Polley, DSc, Eng

Michelle Salvatore, MD

2015 Mission Volunteers

ACCRA TEAM

Margaret Lee, MD
Charity Wip, MD
Naa Adole Allotey
Karen Kilsdonk
Nancy Mayer, RN
Effiat Jabeen

Ewurama Quansah
Araba Quansah, MD

CAPE COAST TEAM

Charletta Ayers, MD
Elizabeth Araba Aikins
Ifeoma Anidi, MD
Melissa Barney, MD
Gita Byraiah
Krysta Contino, MD
Arnell Midley, MD
Sharita Nagaraj, MD
Louis Pappa, MD
Shaija Patel, MD
Aisha Rahaman
Tim Steele-Dadzie
Lily Steele-Dadzie
Carina Tagni, MD
Brynn Winiarski
Stacy Carr, RN
Talia LeKawana

Michael LeKawana, MD
Kira Przybylko, MD
Sarah Reese, CRNA

KUMASI TEAM

James Aikins, MD
James Aikins, Jr.
Nii Daako Darko, DO
Renee Volny Darko, DO
Jennifer Frimpong, MD
Chelsey Forry, MD
Navroop Singh, MD
Elena Ghandim



IHCV Social Media Mania!



Medical Mission Volunteer Reflections

This year, IHCV launched a social media campaign to bring awareness to our efforts and to help recruit more volunteers for future missions. Using the hashtag, #IHCV2015, we were able to engage almost 300 social media goers on Facebook and Twitter. We are hopeful that many who see our work will want to join our efforts in Ghana. Here are just a few of our posts!



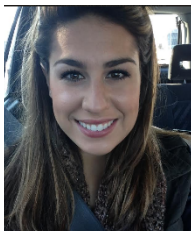
Medical Mission Volunteer Reflections

I couldn't have asked for a better experience on my first medical mission trip. Ghana is a beautiful country with wonderful culture and delicious food. The warmth and welcoming nature of the team eased any qualms I had about picking up and spending two weeks in a country I knew little about. I was eager to get to work after hearing about the health care needs of the patients!

We worked primarily at Cape Coast District Hospital, on the picturesque south coast of Ghana. There were so many patients with a variety of serious health concerns. What impressed me most was the dedication and care that the nurses had for the patients. They were incredibly enthusiastic to learn from us and help patients. The experience through IHCV was eye opening in many ways. Practicing medicine in a resource poor setting can be immensely challenging. From managing OR schedules around when the electricity goes out, to using suture more efficiently, it made me realize how much we can take for granted when supplies and resources are readily available. The immense gratitude of patients for the health care we provided is something I will never forget.

Because of my experience through IHCV in Ghana, my decision to become an obstetrician/gynecologist was finalized. I am excited to start my career and continue working in global health as a physician. This experience gave me a unique perspective on health care and I know I will be a better physician because of it. I hope I can return to Ghana through IHCV in the future!

Elena Ghanaim, Junior Volunteer



The highlight of my summer was volunteering with IHCV on their annual mission to Ghana, Africa. I met amazing doctors who volunteer their time and effort, learned about the culture, and of course, witnessed fascinating medical cases. From the very beginning I felt welcomed and had so much fun.

My role as a volunteer was to keep track of patients and help to distribute the medicine to those who could not afford their prescriptions. The doctors worked hard to see as many patients at the clinic as they could. It was great to be a part of the fast paced environment and to feel as though I assisted the doctors in their great work. What I loved most about the doctors who were in Kumasi with me was their desire to teach me as much as they could.

The residents would often take time to explain to me why they were prescribing certain medications or referring

patients for further tests. Dr. Volny would often come retrieve the residents and me whenever there was a case that she saw as a unique learning opportunity. A few of the particularly interesting cases I witnessed were an infant with Trisomy 13, a severe burn victim, and surgery on a woman with a severe case of endometriosis.

The Ghanaian doctors were inspiring and generous to teach us as much as they could. They taught us about the common challenges that they and their patients faced, and how they adapted to face these challenges.

There was a great exchange of knowledge between the American volunteers and Ghanaian doctors and nurses. One doctor taught us all about their protocol for treating infectious diseases, another told us about his hard work to get the resources for and open a neonatal intensive-care unit in Ghana. It was personally motivating to see how much these doctors did for their communities.

My trip to Ghana was an experience I will never forget. I am grateful to have seen first-hand a part of the world that is so different from what I have always known.

Volunteering with IHCV has sparked an interest in Global Health, and I hope to go back to Ghana, perhaps as a medical student, to learn more and make a positive impact.

Araba Aikins, Junior Volunteer



You never really understand the beauty of a mountaintop, the pain of poverty or the joy of service until you've made the journey to see, smell and experience them. (Anonymous) Now I have.

This past summer I traveled to Ghana with my brother, parents, and about 35 other volunteers for a two-week mission trip to Cape Coast. I had the pleasure of working with my mom, Dr. Ayers, in Cape Coast while my brother and dad were in Kumasi. I have been to Ghana numerous times, but never as a volunteer. When my mom told me this year I could go as a volunteer, I thought nothing of it. I had been in the country so many times, this time wouldn't be any different.

Arriving in Ghana on Sunday, a day after everyone else, a friend and I quickly passed through the airport and were kindly escorted by the Sierra Leone embassy to our hotel (that was quite an exciting way to start the trip). I unpacked and headed over to the hospital to meet the team. It wasn't what I expected. I had never been inside a hospital in Ghana. It is not like the hospitals we have at

home. The hospitals are undeveloped and do not have updated technology. It did not seem to be well supplied. There was no ER, and I had not seen any Ghanaian doctors around. I headed into the clinic and began working with the internal medicine doctors.

Over the next two weeks, those four doctors not only taught me so much about medicine, but about showing people that you care and the true meaning of being a doctor. This experience persuaded me to become a doctor. The lines were out the door to see these four doctors. People came from all over Cape Coast, mostly on foot and their problems ranged from mild foot pain to pericarditis to high blood pressure which was a main problem of most of the patients because of all their high salt intake. I saw something new every day in the clinic. It was very exciting and intriguing.

My favorite aspect of the whole trip had to be overlooking my dad's surgery because the whole week I'd been hearing how great Dr. Aikins is. Watching my dad operate was quite fun. He's a great teacher. I hope one day that I can scrub in with him. Being in the OR was just great, seeing how eager all the Ghanaian nurses were to learn how we did things back home. Not only did the nurses learn, but people from all over the hospital wanted to sit in on our clinic, check-ups, and surgeries. Our mission team also had our great nurse, Stacy, our only OR nurse in Cape Coast.

Overall, this trip to Ghana was eye-opening and a life changing experience for me because I got to see first-hand what my parents do every day and the miracles and gifts they give to people who never would have thought they would receive in their lives. Everyone on the team changed someone's life while we were there, and that is a blessing. I made so many lifetime friends while I was there. It has changed my life in so many ways. It taught me to be grateful for the things that I have in my life and that I can learn something new every day from different people. I'm so looking forward to when I will travel back to Ghana in 2017!

I've been a part of IHCV for as long as I can remember. I love being a part of the organization and the good work that it does. Outside of the mission, I participate in my school's robotics team and band program. After being involved with the program for so long I was excited to participate in this year's mission.

The 2015 mission was the second time that I have participated in the trip as a junior volunteer. While on the trip I was stationed with my dad as he travelled between all of the different sites, so I was able to get a glimpse of how all of them worked and the people and cultures of the different parts of the country. When we first arrived in Ghana, I was first sent to the site in Kumasi at the KNUST hospital. I enjoyed the week that I spent there. One of the things that I found fun was going with the resident physicians to get the patient histories. It was interesting to see cases where people developed conditions that would have been easily treated had we been in the US. I was amazed at the difference that we were making in people's lives.

A case that I found particularly interesting was a baby that had been born with a rare chromosomal defect. The resident physicians were astounded by this rare case because the baby had lived much longer than other victims of this defect. I also volunteered at the Cape Coast site where I spent most of my time helping where needed or observing surgeries. I remember, while in Cape Coast, the entire team went to visit a local orphanage. We were able to interact with the kids and give them items that were needed at the orphanage. It wasn't all just work though.

I was able to spend two weeks with an amazing group of people. While on the trip I had a lot of fun while helping a lot of people. I enjoyed the mission trip and I learned a lot about how IHCV was making a difference in people's lives. It was eye-opening to visit these underserved areas and see people that desperately needed our help. This trip has made me more grateful of what I have and more eager to use it to help where I can. I hope to continue to be a member of this organization because it has made me more conscious of how I could do more for other people in my everyday life.

James Aikins, III., Junior Volunteer





Annual IHCV Fundraiser

Gala &
Dinner Dance

Save the Date
Saturday, April 30, 2016

Crowne Plaza
Cherry Hill, NJ



SAVE THE DATE: 2016 Ghana Mission dates are September 2-17.
Deadline for applications is April 1, 2016.

Our medical missions are made possible entirely by the work of our volunteers and supporters of our fundraising campaigns and gala. We thank you for your generosity and hope to have your continued support in years to come!

Want to volunteer with IHCV?



Apply online at

www.ihcv.org