

The School Population: post pandemic shutdowns

Dear Friends,

The Akrampa Kitchen is running so smoothly!!! Hurray!!! Hallelujah to the Lord!!!

When I look back into the past years and see how far the Lord has brought us, sometimes my eyes fill with tears of gladness, that our toil has not failed; that the Lord has been so faithful and continues to motivate us to move on.

I remember the first day I set foot there, wondering what I could do in that place. A community, then so close to town (to civilization), yet so removed from modern culture. A community who used to drink from a fungus filled stagnant pool which so moved Pastor Jimmy (1996) that he declared with all conviction: 'Ben, I am going to ask the church (FLC) to provide funds to bring clean drinking water to these people.'

Pastor Jimmy and the church made it happen in 1997, and fresh water has continued to flow, creating huge changes in the health of the people. Water-borne diseases are now a thing of the past. Praise God! We could ascribe this saying from the prophet, "*The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*" **Isaiah 9:2 KJV.**

The *light* continues to shine on our mission: from the origins of our Akrampa school, through all of its major milestones: completion of all of the classrooms, fresh flowing water in 1997 and again in 2010 when major repairs were needed, the beginning of the breakfast program (2008), the government choosing to build a Junior High School on our compound, and most recently our new Akrampa Kitchen!

In my letter last month (February) I noted that "the population of our school was nearing the mark of 300 pupils ... with new students being admitted each day ... and increasing since the reopening of all schools in January after the Covid-19 shutdowns ..."

At the time that I am writing *this* letter to you the Akrampa School population is still increasing.

March 2021: Current school population: TOTAL: 438 (including teachers)

BOYS = 208 GIRLS = 210 TEACHERS - 20

As part of our Breakfast Program, *all* students who come to our school receive a meal and we also feed our teachers. The teachers, in fact, play a huge roll in the preparation of the meal.

For some time now our goal has been to maintain the ability to feed our students 3 meals each, per week. That means on average we are faced with providing 1,314 meals per week.

438 people multiplied by 3 meals each per week = 1,314 meals per week.

438 people multiplied by 12 meals each per month = 5,256 meals per month.

Because the *light* continues to shine, because of the availability of a meal three times a week, the school population is still growing. The numbers above only indicate where we are at right now! In a recent letter I indicated that Akrampa is the **only** school in the community that has continued to provide meals to the pupils.

The little children, in the lower primary classes of Kindergarten through 3rd Grade are the most vulnerable because they look so frail and hungry most of the time when they arrive at school. In class the teacher struggles to get their attention because they are hungry and restless. Most of their families can only provide one main meal a day, and that happens (after school) in the late afternoon when the parents have returned from the farm or selling at the market. Since they realized that the school is providing meals, it goes without saying that some parents send the children to school so they can get some food to eat before the home meal.

This makes it all the more critical that we are able to continue to serve the breakfast to all of the children - a meal that is of high quality in nutrition and also a portion size to fit their growing little bodies.

Dear Friends, I am using this medium to make a *passionate appeal* for continued support to maintain the **number of meals at three times a week**. WE cannot do this without your help! We have been very blessed to have a few donors that have continued to give very generously, and faithfully, over the years, but we need everyone's support. If you would pray, and talk with your family to decide if you could give just a little more than your normal donation, and give the extra to the "Ghana Breakfast Program" it would mean so much to all of our kids.

Classes are going on in earnest in the new Akrampa Kitchen building, proof that the building is serving its dual purpose: cooking of the meals for the children and a place for teaching and learning of the Home Arts subject. It's so exciting to see the joy in the faces of the children (through their masks), that they have a facility that provides them the opportunity to learn and gain hands on experience with the subject.

The Dedication of the Akrampa Kitchen took place on February 3, 2021. The delegation from the local Episcopal Church that was present, to witness the dedication of the building, was so impressed by it that they went back with great joy and gratitude for the provision of this facility. They were asked to help in maintaining the facility by assisting the school to do so.

Thank you -- Pastor Ben