

The New Kindergarten Classroom (Building) 2024

Dear Friends,

This article is a shift from the normal topics about *events* in Akrampa, to *buildings & projects* in Akrampa. Many of you may remember that our last big building project was the Kitchen Complex/Building which began in 2020. The Kitchen Complex/Building was completed, and dedicated to the school/town of Akrampa on February 3, 2021. We haven't undertaken any other new projects until now.

This article is the story about the work that is being done **now** to complete a **New Kindergarten classroom/building** that was started by the **parents and friends** of the Akrampa school.

Why is a new Kindergarten Classroom Building Significant to Akrampa?

Let's start back at the beginning, in 1994:

This was **after** my first stay in Ohio, my first hip surgery, and the first time I had met the congregation of First Lutheran Church. I was heading home to Ghana after staying months with Pastor Jimmy Madsen, and the mission had **not even started yet**. But God was working, and support was beginning to fall into place. Doctor Denis Radefeld with Pastor Dr. Woody Chamberlain and Pastor Jimmy Madsen were talking with me about what we would do if First Lutheran Church decided to engage me as their missionary, and what our mission could become ...

A wonderful woman named Emma Snyder, who was a member of FLC, was one of the first people, if not the very first person, of those who had a conversation with me about what I was going to do when I went back to Ghana to begin the mission. I responded, that among other things, taking care of children was one of the areas of concern for me. I, myself, grew up in an environment such as Akrampa, and remember the challenges I faced while growing up. Immediately, and without any hesitation, Emma began sending twenty dollars **every** month, in the mail, to Ghana. Emma faithfully continued to mail monthly donations to the Akrampa Mission, along with handwritten letters to me and my family, until her death in 2000.

Indeed, Emma's donations, coupled with many others who followed up with support for the education of identified **needy but brilliant** children, actually helped to birth the **vision** to build a school, for the Akrampa Community.

At the time that I returned to Ghana from Ohio, the village of Akrampa did not have any school at all. Our efforts to build the school (as our mission) were painstaking and slow, but also miraculous. Looking back now it's hard to believe how far we have come. What began as nothing is now a fully functioning Kindergarten through 6th Grade block of classrooms that are filled to the brim with students. Also, a 7th-9th Grade Junior High School, and a new Kitchen Classroom Building that is used for the Home Arts Program. Now our 'little' Akrampa School has **grown so much** that we are in need of another Kindergarten Classroom to house all of the small children beginning school. This is significant progress and a blessing from God!

How did this Kindergarten Classroom begin?

Back in 2016, *the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA)* of the Akrampa School felt the need to build a larger place for the growing number of little children being admitted into the school, greatly affecting the space to house the population of the *Kindergarten stage*. Every member of the PTA agreed on the need "to build". But it was not until 2018 that the decision to actually start the process of building was made. Initially a *levy* was established for each parent but that didn't yield anything. The next option was to do *fund raising* in the community and beyond. Once money began to come in, the plan was to build as much of the new Kindergarten Classroom as possible either until the funds ran out, or until enough came in, whichever happened first. Buildings in Ghana are often started, paused, and completed, in stages, based upon available funds.

One Ghanaian business entity - a non-Akrampa individual - gave an initial donation of the equivalent of *\$140*, with which the **foundation of the Kindergarten building** was started. Subsequent to this, during each year's *Graduation Day*, appeals for funds were made, and whatever was raised went towards the building process. The parents are mostly peasant people and not on any regular income so it was very difficult to make headway. This *very slow* and unyielding method is the reason why it had taken us *so long* to build.

The people of Akrampa raised enough money on their own to build the foundation of the building and the four walls. And then the money ran out. At that point we had the beginnings of a building, but it was unusable for the children.

The entire Akrampa School student population is growing, now close to 600 total students, which is continuing to *raise the need for extra space*. At times we are having to turn away several possible new students. With this new Kindergarten facility, we will be able to divide the population of little children in our current overstretched building and *make room for another thirty or more children in this new Kindergarten building*.

By the end of 2023, I considered the need as urgent and informed the Ghana Committee that the parents and community of Akrampa had done as much as they could on their own, and help was needed. The Ghana Committee was ready, as always to raise funds, but then God surprised us. By God's grace, a family in Ohio who have been long time supporters of the mission decided to give the needed funds for the project. This donation allowed work to begin quickly, in an effort to complete the building as soon as possible. Now, the windows, a new roof, electricity, and floors have been completed. We are currently at the stage where *painting will be done and decorated, the way a Kindergarten classroom should look* for small children. Once the building is fully completed, then the children will be allowed to use it for school. This will come after a befitting and traditional *dedication ceremony*.

Blessings, Pastor Ben Wilson