
CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

ANNUAL REPORT

1 APRIL 2017 TO 31 MARCH 2018



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GIVING KIDS A BRIGHTER FUTURE

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No.	ITEM
1.0	Table of Contents
2.0	Description and Mission of Children of the Light
3.0	Special Programs
4.0	On-going activities through the year
5.0	Successes
6.0	Challenges
7.0	Acknowledgements
8.0	Future Plans

2.0 DESCRIPTION AND MISSION OF CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT

Children of the Light (CotL) continues to be a dynamic organization bringing education to life, for over 100 children yearly. Its educational program is unique, in that it nurtures the children in all areas of learning: Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Environmental issues, Arts & Crafts, Music and Drama activities. During our last physical year 2017-2018, we identified the need to increase our support to some of the children. Through individual child sponsorship, we are now providing assistance to thirteen children with school supplies, uniforms and school fees. Another initiative, we are now giving a hot meal to all the children who attend the Saturday classes. As always, in addition to academics the children are helped to grow emotionally, socially and physically. Six days a week children enjoy a lively educational experience which is conducted in a safe and non-threatening environment. In addition, each year the children participate in several exciting programs which broaden their scope of the world.

Page | 3

CotL seeks to make education an enjoyable and life changing experience to children who may fall through the cracks of the current educational system. CotL believes strongly that education is a vital component of enabling children to reach their full potential. We strive to meet this need in Ghana with providing holistic, child-centred and meaningful teaching.

“The mission of CotL is to impact young lives by providing creative, holistic child-centred education in order to build lives that influence society”



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3.0 SPECIAL PROGRAMS

During the year the children participate in a variety of educational and physical programs. These are outlined below:

April 2017 –

MATHEMATICS COMPETITION

On 1st April, CotL held a Mathematics Competition which included a written Mathematics test. The day started with a Math test for the children 5 years and above. On completing the test, they were collected for grading and returned to the children the following week. After the testing that same day, the children were divided into groups to compete in a number of Math drills. The competition was extremely competitive as all contestants were eager to take home a prize. The 1st and 2nd winners received a parcel of school and art supplies, and all 73 participants were given a gift pack containing school and art supplies. A refreshment was served after the prizegiving.



Sponsors: First Love Foundation, USA; CO Foundation, Netherlands; Britanica, Ghana; Extra Mile West Africa, Ghana; Top Choco, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

EARTH DAY CELEBRATIONS – Earth Day, 22nd April

On 21st and 22nd April, CotL celebrated Earth Day, the emphasis was on tree planting, with a focus on Kenyan’s environmental political activist and Nobel laureate, Wangari Muta Maathai. Prior to the event, the children researched and prepared colourful posters about Wangari. On the 21st and 22nd, the children assisted in a tree planting exercise on the lower CotL boundary, and also helped in clearing the land. In memory of Wangari, the line of trees planted were named ‘The Green Belt’. After the tree planting exercise, the children presented their projects on Wangari. A refreshment was served to all at the end of the day.

Page | 5



Sponsors: Tree Global, Ghana; Top Choco, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

May 2017 –

MOTHER’S DAY WALK

On 14th May (Mother’s Day), CotL walked with a local NGO, Child & Mother, to help raise awareness for the NGO. The children held signs that read: ‘Mother = Healthy Child’, ‘Happy Mother’s Day’, ‘Mothers Matter’, ‘Thank You Mum’, ‘We Love Our Mothers’, ‘Child & Mother’, ‘Happy Mother Happy Family’, ‘Every Mother Counts’. Water was given throughout the walk and everyone gathered at the Kitase Shell Station where a refreshment was served at the end.

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Sponsors: Child & Mother, Children of the Light.

FIRST DAY OF CLASSES AT THE COTL LEARNING CENTRE

On 20th May, CotL held its first classes at the CotL Learning Centre. The centre is located in Pepease – Springfield Community, in the Eastern Region, and has been under construction since 2009. Through the generous 2016/2017 donations, from the Australian High Commission, Ghana; Swiss Tropical Public Health Institute, Switzerland; First Love Foundation, USA; Steinhovden Skule, Norway, the centre finally reached a stage to move-in. There were 43 children in attendance for this glorious milestone for CotL.



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ANNUAL WALKATHON

On 27th May, CotL held its annual 12km walkathon themed: 'Quality Education for Everyone'. It was a great success with a great turn-out – 46 children and 15 adults. The children held signs that read: 'Quality Education for Every Child', 'Every Child Matters', 'Education is Power', 'Putting Children First', 'Touching Lives Forever', 'Quality education is a right not a privilege', 'Every Child Yearns to Learn', 'Knowledge is Power', 'Only the educated are free', 'No child should be left behind', 'Education is the key to success'. A refreshment was served at the final destination being the CotL Learning Centre. The event raised GH¢1,300.

Page | 7



Sponsors: Individual CotL supporters

June 2017 –

READING MONTH

June marks 'Reading Month' at CotL. Throughout the month of June, children are grouped according to their reading level and books are given out based on their level. A reading log is used to tally the number of pages read throughout the month of June. For Group 1, minutes are logged and Groups 2 & 3, pages are logged. Only staff and volunteers are permitted to sign for recordings and independent readers are permitted to take books home to read.

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Reading month 2017 started on Thursday, 1st June, and came to an end on Thursday, 6th July. Throughout the month we had a good turn-out of participants and volunteers who had come in to help by either listening to children read or reading to children.



OUTREACH PROGRAM TO AKWATIAKWASO, EASTERN REGION

On 24th June, CotL partnered with KAGA Foundation and visited Akwatiakwaso, in the Eastern Region. The vehicle was loaded with gently used shoes and clothing, school and art supplies, and 52 colourful parcels containing a wash cloth and bar of soap. The focus of the visit was to talk against child trafficking and child marriage. With the help of the community elders, the community gathered to receive the message and items. The parents were encouraged to send their children to school and cautioned on the signs of child trafficking. A Spelling Bee was also held during the program.



Sponsors: KAGA Foundation, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

July 2017 –

On 8th July, the banquet for the Reading month celebration was held. The event was held at the CotL Learning Centre. The guests included Nana Bonsu from Crayon Magazine, Patricia Ankrah and staff of FOCOS Orthopaedic Hospital, Salome from Ghana's National Spelling Bee. The speakers for the afternoon were the editor of 'Crayon Magazine', Nana Bonsu, and Salome of 'Ghana's National Spelling Bee', Nana spoke to the children on the importance of reading and encouraged them to read as reading opens your mind. Salome encouraged the children to read more as it will help them go far. A meal and drinks were served and prizes of school supplies were given to the children who read the most pages in each group. All participants received a parcel of snacks and school supplies. Included in the program was a presentation to three Junior High School students who had recently completed their final Junior High School exams. They were given a gift and spoke on how CotL has helped them over the years.

Page | 9



Sponsors: SHOPRITE, Ghana; Type Company Ltd., Ghana; First Love Foundation, USA; Healthilife, Ghana; CO Foundation, Netherlands; Top Choco, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

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August 2017 –

COUNTRY PROJECT PRESENTATION

On 5th August, the children presented their country projects to the children and staff. It was a fantastic learning experience for the children. The children prepared the projects during the months of June and July. They had been assigned a country and were tasked to prepare a poster from that country that incorporated the national flag, map, population, a particular animal or fruit that comes from that country. The younger children chose Italy, and they worked on their project as a group. The older children individually prepared a project on the country of their choice. One child prepared a project on the continent of Africa. The event was themed ‘What a Wonderful World’, and all who prepared and presented a project received a gift pack.

Page | 10



Sponsors: H&H Biscuits, Ghana; Top Choco, Ghana; Extra Mile West Africa, Ghana; Type Company Ltd, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

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12th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On 7th August, CotL celebrated its 12th year with a cake and drinks. CotL's Founder, Jeanette Opoku, gave a brief talk on the history of CotL. It was a joyful occasion.



Page | 11

Sponsors: Caves & Garden Ltd., Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

September 2017 –

AFRICAN PROVERBS AND FOLKTALES

On 2nd September, CotL performed two plays, one titled 'The Boy Who Changed' and the other titled, 'Ananse and the Lizard'. The teachers started rehearsing with the children four weeks prior to the event. In addition to the rehearsals, the children were assigned an African Proverb to learn. The event was held on the CotL grounds, the costumes were dynamic, and there was a great turn-out of parents who came along to watch the children perform.



Sponsors: H&H Company Ltd, Ghana; Top Choco, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

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TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP

On 9th September, CotL staff took part in a Teacher Training Workshop. English teacher, Esther Singh, shared ideas on strategies to teach journal writing and Artist and Designer, Susana Mantey, from Susel Ghana, demonstrated and taught creative art ideas.

Page | 12



RECYCLING COMPETITION, ART EXHIBITION, BAKE SALE – 30 September

ART EXHIBITION: Children with the guidance of their teachers prepared art work on the days prior to the program. The pictures were created from recycled materials, these pictures were exhibited on the bulletin boards at the centre.



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RECYCLING COMPETITION: CotL held the Recycling Competition. The judges were Nana Kwafu Mensah, Adwoa Gyimah, and Esther Singh. The recycled items were grouped into three categories: plastics, cardboard & fabric, tin.

1st prize: GHC 20.00; 2nd prize: GHC 15.00; 3rd prize: GHC 10.00 – each prize included snacks



BAKE SALE: There were a number of baked items donated for the bake sale. A total of GHC 873 was raised, this amount included cash donations.

Sponsors: Top Choco, Ghana; H&H Company Ltd., Ghana; Individuals CotL supporters.

October 2017 –

The regular classes continued which included preparing the children for the annual vocabulary test and Spelling Bee. Sport was also a focus throughout the month.



November 2017 –

VOCABULARY TEST

On 30th November, CotL held a vocabulary test for all children who had completed the vocabulary book for their level. Test papers were given out and an allotted time was given to complete the test. Once completed, the tests were collected for grading and returned to the children the following week. Page | 14



December 2017 –

SPELLING BEE

On 2nd December, CotL held its annual Spelling Bee. The children were divided into groups according to their level and given words to spell. The 1st and 2nd winners received school supplies and snacks and all participants received a take-home parcel. A refreshment was served after the prizegiving.



Sponsors: CO Foundation, Netherlands; Type Company Ltd., Ghana; Top Choco, Ghana; H&H Company Ltd, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

COLOURFUL PARCLES TO THE ELDERLY

On 16th December, CotL distributed 30 colourful parcels containing a wash cloth and bag of soap to the elderly in the community. It was a joyous occasion.



Page | 15

CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE AT NEAR-BY ORTHOPAEDIC HOSPITAL

On 17th December, CotL performed for the children on extended stay at the FOCOS Orthopaedic Hospital in Accra. There were thirty-three children in the performance which included three of the FOCOS children. Colourful soap parcels were given to the FOCOS children after the performance.



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24th DEC. CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE AT THE COTL LEARNING CENTRE DECORATIONS – REHEARSALS – PERFORMANCE

Decorations: Immediately after the Spelling Bee on 2nd December, the Christmas decorations began. The CotL staff and children decorated the centre and bulletin boards. The decorations were outstanding and were on display throughout the festive season.

Page | 16



Rehearsals: The script was prepared by Jeanette Opoku. The children were given their parts and they started rehearsing at the beginning of December. On one rehearsal, Nana Pierre, the illustrator of the children's book, 'A is for Accra', came to read her book to the children.



Performance: On 24th December, CotL performed at the CotL Learning Centre. The performance was titled, ‘Emmanuel’, it was a beautiful occasion with a delightful audience. A refreshment was served to all after the performance.



Sponsors: First Love Foundation, USA; Top Choco, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters
On 30th December, CotL held a last day party on the CotL field. A refreshment was served to all, and the children received the work they had done throughout the year.



January 2018 –

No classes for the month of January.

February 2018 –

Annual General Meeting – 2nd February

Classes resumed – 3rd February

Parents Teachers Meeting – 10th February

BLACK HISTORY PRESENTATION

The focus for the month of February was Black History. The children prepared individual projects on Ruby Bridges and Harriet Tubman. On 24th February, the children presented their projects to the CotL teachers and students. A refreshment was served after the presentation.



Sponsors: Top Choco, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters

SAUSAGE SIZZLE, NZ

On 24th February and 3rd March, CotL held a Sausage Sizzle fundraiser in Auckland, NZ. CotL volunteers worked together to barbeque and sell sausages to the shoppers. The event was themed, ‘Kiwis Helping Kids in Ghana’, and it took place at the ‘Westpac Grub Hub Community Kitchen’, in Auckland, a profit of NZ\$310 was raised at the event.



March 2018 –

GHANA DAY CELEBRATION

On 3rd March, CotL celebrated Ghana Day. The children, with the guidance of the teachers, prepared projects prior to the event. These projects were on the Greater Accra and Eastern Region. On the day of the event, the children brought in a variety of Ghanaian dishes to share, and CotL staff prepared a Ghanaian dish for the children. For the presentation, the children presented their projects and dressed in traditional Ghanaian attire and performed a number of cultural dancers. Included in the presentation was a display of the different grains grown in the Northern Region of Ghana. Staff member, Lamise Akunduo, talked about the Northern Region, and told the children how the different grains in the North are prepared.

Page | 19



Sponsors: Top Choco, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters

INDEPENDENCE DAY PARTY

On 7th March, CotL held a party to celebrate Ghana's Independence. Games were played and a meal and drinks were served to the children.



WORLD WATER DAY

On 22nd March, CotL celebrated 'World Water Day'. Preceding the event, the teachers and children designed posters about water. The afternoon started with the children picking up trash in the area and down by the stream bordering CotL's land. Staff member, Patience Akunduo, talked to the children on the importance of keeping our water bodies and environment clean. After the clean-up exercise, the children presented their projects on water. Following this, the children were served a local dish of kenkey and fish. After the meal, the children were shown the correct way to dispose of the waste, by separating and removing the organic waste for composting and plastics for recycling.

Page | 20



EASTER SATURDAY EVENT

On 31st March, CotL held an afternoon of designing and creating beautiful Easter art. This activity took place after the regular morning classes.



4.0 ON-GOING ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE YEAR

The regular classes continue on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. These classes include Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies etc. The children are also helped with the homework they receive from the school they attend. The one-to-one literacy classes are held on Fridays.

On receiving food donations, we continue to provide snacks and have started providing a hot meal to all the children who attend classes on Saturday.



Fortnightly, we continue to conduct a Sunday school program with the children in a near-by orthopaedic hospital. These children are on long-term admission at the hospital and many of them are from other African countries. The children look forward to this activity.

5.0 SUCCESSES

- Through the donations received, we have been able to continue the building of the Learning Centre and move-in. The centre also includes a beautiful library.
- The on-going programs continue to be enjoyable and very beneficial to the children involved.
- Through donations we purchased a new lawn-mower. This donation has been an immense help in keeping the grounds in order.
- We are now sponsoring thirteen children in regular school.
- We are now serving a hot meal to all children who attend Saturday classes.

6.0 CHALLENGES

- The need for an increase in committed support for our monthly operational costs and the special programs
- Funding to complete our building project
- Need for an additional Board member
- Need for two additional members of staff
- Need for a regular flow of volunteers
- Need for a bus
- Need for good road access to the centre, as when it rains it is challenging to drive to and from the centre.

7.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We sincerely thank all our contributors, sponsors and volunteers who have played a tremendous part in the on-going work of CotL.

OUR 2017/2018 SPONSORS:

First Love Foundation, USA; Shoprite, Ghana; PFC Auditing Services, Ghana; CO Foundation, Netherlands; Top Choco, Ghana; Hosanna Trust, NZ; Helensville Christian Life Centre, NZ; Hazel Dick Trust, NZ; Lifeline Insurance Services Ltd., Ghana; Extra Mile West Africa, Ghana; H&H Company Ltd., Ghana; Type Company Ltd.; Lynfield College, NZ; Lynfield and Hillsborough Rotary Club, NZ; One Tree Hill and Onehunga Rotary Club, NZ; Lynfield Community Church, NZ; RYLA District 9910 Governance Team, NZ; Steinhovden Skule – Norway, Healthilife, Ghana; Individual CotL supporters.

FUTURE PLANS

- 1) To have a fully equipped easily accessible Learning Centre in the Eastern Region of Ghana
- 2) To become an educational training resource provider in Ghana

Respectfully submitted:

Jeanette M. Opoku
Director
Paulett V. Opoku
Secretary