

## **Ghana Medical Relief Volunteer Information**

### **Note from GMR Leadership:**

Welcome to Ghana Medical Relief and thank you for considering us as the organization of choice when it comes to going on a medical mission. We are a nonprofit organization that provides free healthcare services to underprivileged villagers in Ghana. Our organization is made up of volunteers like yourself with a strong desire to help others. At Ghana Medical Relief, we are able to provide our volunteers pursuing a career in medicine with meaning diversified experience by assigning them to work side-by-side with healthcare professionals across multiple specialties. We pride ourselves with our model and provide an opportunity for our volunteers that you won't find elsewhere. For our volunteers with interest outside medicine, we have opportunities in project management, logistics, inventory control, photography, communications, etc. At our core, we come together as individuals from different walks of life, we collaborate as a team and leave our missions as a family. So again, thank you for your interest, we look forward to doing amazing things together.

### **Typical Itinerary:**

Day 1 (Thursday): Travel Day - Departure to Accra, Ghana

Day 2 (Friday): Arrival in Accra + Opening Reception (meet & greet team)

Day 3 (Saturday): Travel Day to mission site

Day 4 (Sunday): Clinic Setup, Orientation + Training Day

Day 5 (Monday): Opening ceremony + Day 1 of Clinic

Day 6-8 (Tuesday-Thursday):

- 06:00 Breakfast
- 07:00 Registration & Triage team arrives at the clinic and start work
- 07:45 Rest of team arrives at the clinic and start work
- 15:00 Registration & Triage stops for the day
- 17:00 Rest of team stops for the day - close clinic
- 18:00 Dinner

Day 9 (Friday): Last Day of Clinic, Reward and Closing Ceremony

Day 10-11 (Saturday- Sunday): Excursion and Sight-seeing

Day 12 (Monday): Travel Day - Return Home

### **Travel Immunization:**

This is absolutely required and necessary. Consult with either Passport Health or a Public Health Clinic in your area for your required immunizations. At a minimum, you will need a Yellow Fever vaccine and an anti-malarial medication. In general most travellers to Ghana should update their tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis, MMR, Hepatitis A & B, Meningococcal vaccine,

Typhoid vaccine and Polio vaccine. There are travel clinics at most Universities and large healthcare systems and they can help you decide what you need.

### **Ghana Culture - Facts & Statistics:**

**Location** - Ghana is located in the subregion of West Africa and its about the size of the state of Oregon.

**Government** - Constitutional democracy

**Capital** - Accra

**Population** - ~30 Million

**Religions** - Christianity, Islam and traditional

**Climate** - Tropical

**Currency** - Ghanaian Cedi

**Languages** - The official language is English, however there are over 50 languages spoken throughout the country with the most common language being Akan. There are 3 dialects of Akan - Twi, Ashanti and Fante are widely spoken in Ghana. Most of the villagers that GMR serves speaks Akan.

### **Etiquette & Customs:**

- Handshakes are the most common means of greeting - use your right hand
- Always greet people first when you enter an area
- Always greet people from right to left using your right hand
- Always follow this order, regardless of age or gender or status of the people you are greeting
- Always use your right hand to give and receive items and to eat. The left hand is considered to be disrespectful as this is the hand used to perform 'dirty' work.
- Always be respectful especially to elders. The older the person, the more respect.
- Never make derogatory remarks about any religious, political or ethnic group
- Be aware that starting times for events are not exact. An event will usually not begin until at least one hour after the noted starting time (except when GMR has control of the event).

### **Volunteer Positions:**

To ensure that our medical school and pre-med student volunteers get a complete and diversified experience, we rotate our volunteers through these various positions. This approach provides our volunteers with the opportunity to shadow our physicians / nurses within the various specialties and experience the complete process for medical care.

**Pre-Registration (team of 3 people)** - we prefer the local village volunteers to oversee and execute this process. This process begins a few hours before clinic formally opens. Volunteers

start early to either assign numbers or record names of patients and get them in a queue for registration.



**Registration (team of 6 people)** - this is our first interaction with our patients, we want this experience to be caring, respectful and professional. We ask our volunteers to gather general information from patients by completing the registration form. Preference is given for volunteers who speak the local language.



**Triage (team of 12 people)** - We use our nurses, trained medical school and pre-med students to gather vital signs (blood pressure, heart rate, temperature, etc) so patients can be sorted according to the urgency and nature of their need for care. Training for measuring patients vital signs will be available the weekend before arrival at the clinic.



**Runner (team of 6 people)** - volunteers are asked to take patients from triage to the appropriate waiting area for their appointment (internal medicine, pediatrics, dentistry urology, OB etc..). This role requires a lot of walking back and forth, so a good pair of comfortable footwear is necessary.



**OB (1 - 2 people)** - volunteers will have the opportunity to work with our OB/GYN Physicians and Nurses assigned to this clinic. Volunteers will have the opportunity to perform lab work (H&H, pregnancy tests, etc...) and operate ultrasound screenings.





**Pediatrics (2 - 4 people)** - volunteers will have the opportunity to work with our Physicians and Nurses assigned to this clinic. Volunteers will be able to perform malaria testing, check temperatures and dispense medications at the pediatric pharmacy table.



**Internal Medicine (6 - 12 people)** - volunteers will have the opportunity to work with our Physicians and Nurses assigned to this clinic. Volunteers will be performing BSG testing, Malaria testing, take blood pressure readings and take patients to the pharmacy area for their medication.





**Pharmacy (4 - 6 people)** - volunteers will be able to fill prescriptions under the guidance of a pharmacist or pharmacy tech. Volunteers from the local village are needed here as translators who can dispense the medications



**Urology (1 - 2 people)** - volunteers will have the opportunity to work with our Urologist. Volunteers will work with the urologist team in the evaluation and treatment of genitourinary tract disorders.

**Dentistry (2 - 4 people)** - volunteers will have the opportunity to work with our Dentist and Dental Assistants. Some of the responsibilities include: handling of tools, observe extractions and lead short educational seminars while they wait to be seen.



**Seminar (4 - 6 people)** - volunteers are asked to lead training seminars on various topics. We cover diabetes, hypertension, dental hygiene and CPR. This is an opportunity for volunteers to continue to develop their public speaking skills and an opportunity for the mission to have a more sustainable impact on the communities. We use local volunteers here to assist in translating as required.



**Dress for Clinic** - volunteers should wear scrub pants and t-shirts or GMR shirts during clinic days. You want the clothing you have on to be comfortable and functional. Bring a pen, make sure your scrubs have pockets, and wear comfortable sneakers. Your clinic clothes are likely to get very sweaty/dirty while working in the clinic.

### **Tourist Attractions:**

Below are the places that we have visited in the past.....

**Kakum National State Park (Central Region)** - Kakum National State Park has a canopy walk that is deep within the forest and high above the ground. This excursion takes you into the forest on a 15 minute hike, after which you reach the canopy walk. You can choose to go left at the entrance to the canopy walk, and do only 3 suspension bridges, or you can go right and do all 7 suspension bridges. Due to the hike into the forest, we recommend sneakers and exercise clothes for this excursion



**Lake Volta / Akosombo Dam (Eastern Region)** - Lake Volta is the largest man-made lake in the world. On past missions, we have done a lunch buffet at a lakeside resort and had the chance

to take a scenic and relaxing boat ride on the lake. We were also given a tour of the Akosombo Dam, which was very impressive as the dam provides power to much of the country and neighboring countries in West Africa. The lake tour and dam tour did not require much walking, it was a scenic and relaxing afternoon and volunteers can wear what they want.



**Cape Coast Castle (Central Region)-** Cape Coast Castle is a somber experience. The castle dungeons are a little rocky and slippery, so we recommend sneakers during this tour and long sleeves/or a hat to protect against the sun in the castle courtyards.



Accra attractions (Kwame Nkrumah Mausoleum, Independence Arch, Arts Center, Aburi Botanical Gardens, National Museum of Ghana, University of Ghana and Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital).





### **Past Missions:**

We have previously held successful mission in Asiakwa, located in the eastern region of Ghana, and in Anomabo, located in the central region. Both missions upheld the organization's goal of providing healthcare to the residents of the hosting region. More information regarding these missions can be found on the website.

### **Other:**

An expanded volunteer packet will be provided 4-6 weeks prior to the mission that will provide additional information on the itinerary, what to pack for the mission and common Ghanaian expressions to help you fit in the community.