

Sisters provide aid in Ghana



Kyndl Quayle, left, and Camryn Quayle talk about the volunteer service trip each took to Ghana through a newly established Boise nonprofit, Ghana Make A Difference.

Pair help out at orphanage in African country

POCATELLO — Kyndl Quayle spent four months in the small town of Kasoa, Ghana, while younger sister Camryn Quayle spent nearly three months there.

Both say they would like to return.

The sisters each went to the African country through a newly organized operation, Ghana Make A Difference, a humanitarian aid nonprofit based in Boise and founded by former Pocatellans Cory and Stacey Hofman, the girls' uncle and aunt.

The Hofmans, according to Kyndl and Camryn, were visiting one of the their daughters last summer who was volunteering to help an orphanage in Ghana when they were moved

by what they saw. In looking at other orphanages in the area, they found one that had just lost its financial support a week earlier.

They decided to take up the cause. Kyndl and Camryn became the organization's first and third volunteers to spend time in the African country helping at the orphanage.

What they described is a Ghana couple, Patrick Nwodobeh and his wife, who are attempting to care for, feed and house 36 children in a three-bedroom home. They also have a secondary home offsite where volunteers stay while in Ghana.

When Ghana Make a Difference, or GMAD as its called, started up, the Nwodobeh's orphanage, the West African Children Foundation, didn't even have running water. One of the first things GMAD did was raise the money to connect the orphanage to the Kasoa water system.

Last October, Kyndl got on a plane and headed for Ghana where she stayed until February. She had about two weeks there with Camryn, who arrived in January, before she headed back home. Camryn was in Kasoa until early April.

The sisters' time there was filled with work, but there was ample time to play at the orphanage and on their own.

"Everyday at 6 a.m., you would go and help bathe the younger kids, five years and younger, and help get them ready for school," Camryn said.

After that was a bit of off time. Each said they would head back to where they were staying and have some breakfast before heading back to the orphanage at about 10 a.m. to help with lunch.

"We help the cook make lunch and then serve the kids," Kyndl said. "They are cooking outside, using charcoal, and when it's done, you sit on stools and serve the kids."

Then there's another break and it's back to the orphanage at about 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., when they get the most substantial time with the kids. During this time, they will play with the kids, work on projects, crafts, and helping to make and serve dinner.

Throughout their time there, the sisters said they also worked on some projects to help make day-to-day life a little easier. Camryn said one of the projects she worked on was to

make shelves with small compartments to give each child a place to put their stuff, their clothing, their toothbrush.

One of the first things Kyndl said she just had to do when she arrived was to go out and purchase new cooking bowls for the orphanage.

“They would stand in these big bowls and you would wash them with a bucket,” she said of bathing the children. “Then they would cook in the same big bowls without even washing them.”

They now use the bowls Kyndl bought for cooking while using the old ones for bathing and cleaning.

Another project Camryn said she helped to complete was the washing of all the clothing at the orphanage. She said there was a substantial amount of clothing that was dirty, just not being used, and piled up. She said washing the clothing — entirely by hand, of course — helped them to determine which garments were still able to be used and what needed to be discarded.

Their off time allowed for plenty of exploration of Kasoa, which the sisters said is located near Ghana’s capital city of Accra. Their exploration included ample sampling of the local cuisine, which both said they enjoyed.

“You can get it anywhere,” Kyndl said of the food offerings in Kasoa. “You stop at an intersection and they swarm your car.”

“The women sell it right off of their hats,” Camryn added.

One of Kyndl’s favorites, she said, was an item called banku, which is made from fermented corn and cassava root. The two are combined and worked into a dough about the consistency of Play-Doh, she said. Camryn, however, said she didn’t enjoy the dish as much as her sister.

Each wants to go back one day and help again, but they also hope others will go there as well. The opportunities are there and the cost is very little once you get to Ghana.

“The plane ticket over there is the most expensive part of it,” Kyndl said. “It’s about \$1,500.”

Those wanting to volunteer their time to the West African Children Foundation orphanage in Kasoa through GMAD, can find out more at Ghana Make A Difference's website at www.ghanamakeadifference.org. The group will organize your service trip, but you will be responsible for the costs involved.

Those wishing to help in other ways can donate through the website and purchase some authentic Ghana items or some GMAD T-shirts, jerseys and wrist bands.

The sisters said 100 percent of the proceeds GMAD collects go to helping the orphanage in Kasoa.