Outreach Global - Creating opportunities for global engagement and contributions toward community development across the globe

The Outreach Global office facilitates and provides short-term global education experience, service learning programs, training and development, and volunteer opportunities with foreign universities, governmental agencies, businesses, NGO’s, and other external agencies to advance the engagement of our faculty, staff and students work across the globe.

Photo credit: Mr. Edward Thomas Jr., Opelika, AL
In the midst of Covid-19 pandemic in Asia and some European countries in the early months of January, 2020, Outreach Global office and School of Nursing Annual Ghana healthcare program went on successfully in Accra and Sekondi, Ghana between Feb. 28 to March, 10 2020, without coronavirus health scare incident. This year, Auburn team served over 1,400 patients including over 650 patients in Accra clinic and over 750 patients in Sekondi, Ghana. The office also donated medical supplies received from Brother’s Brother Global Relief Foundation in USA to its Ghanaian hospitals, clinics and special needs education partners.

Outreach Global’s short term service learning in Ghana has experienced tremendous growth with additional collaboration with AU Harrison School of Pharmacy and Social Work department offering their services to patients in Ghana. Since 2017, the program has offered free health care and education to over 4,000 patients/citizens in Ghana.

The healthcare program which is designed to offer volunteer opportunities to AU nursing, pharmacy students, faculty, staff and alumni has provided opportunities for participants to learn about the healthcare needs, culture and educational systems of Ghana, West Africa. In addition, participants were exposed to economic structure, politics, religion, social and tourism perspectives of the African continent.

With Covid-19 pandemic, Outreach Global office will continue to provide GlobalConnect Virtual Education Abroad and Tours to our students, faculty, staff and global partners to fill the void created by the pandemic. For more information about Outreach Global office programing and training, contact us at: http://www.auburn.edu/outreach/global/, email: outrglb@auburn.edu and telephone: 334-844-5716.

Support Outreach Global office with your donation!

www.auburn.edu/outreach/global/

“The healthcare program which is designed to offer a service learning and volunteer opportunities to AU nursing, pharmacy students and other students, faculty, staff and alumni has provided openings for participants to learn about the healthcare needs, culture and educational systems of Ghana, West Africa. ”

– Dr. Elizabeth Quansah
Every year this outreach seems to amaze me. It is so overwhelming, yet so gratifying. I know we were born to bring light to others and to always leave others better than we found them. In this instance, I believe I was truly the one who was left “better.” Every road we traveled, every person we touched, every child we laughed with, and every life we changed was a perfect example of who we were created to be. We can take life and the things we think we own for granted, yet in an instance we could be the ones in need. I know that providing free healthcare to so many in need was a privilege for me. I did not take it lightly. Every student, doctor, pharmacist, social worker, and nurse that it took to run the clinics in the sweltering heat was a gift to me and my ability to remain sane and joyful while caring for so many people. I am thankful for the opportunity to love on others and it was an honor to which I would do all over again.

Valarie Thomas
Associate Clinical Professor
DNP, RN, CMSRN
Auburn University
School of Nursing
The Auburn Outreach Ghana Healthcare Program allows my students to apply what they’ve learned in the classroom to a real life setting very different from what that are accustomed.

This experience provides students to the chance to learn culturally competent care in a way that can’t be replicated in lab. Getting to interact with patients and colleagues across the world shows us that we are all learning and working together to improve health outcomes for our respective communities. We have so much to learn from one another. I know that I’m a better professor because of my time here.

Christopher Martin
Assistant Clinical Professor
AU School of Nursing
“Although I have visited Ghana several times, this trip stands out because it was the first time I have traveled with nursing and pharmacy students and faculty. Participating in the Ghana Healthcare Program was an amazing professional experience as it highlighted the need for social work to be integrated and institutionalized in Ghana’s healthcare system. I enjoyed seeing how prepared and excited nursing and pharmacy students were to provide comprehensive screenings of ears, eyes, blood pressure, glucose testing and general health examinations to community residents.

As I engaged with local constituents (i.e. health clinic patients), I could not stop thinking about the social, economic, and environmental factors that impacted each person’s state of health and whether or not those seen had the necessary financial resources to purchase the prescriptions they were prescribed and/or transportation to get to the hospital to follow up on physician recommendations. I found some peace in knowing that the Ghana Healthcare Program provides quality healthcare screenings to many people who would not have access to quality community health without this program. There is no doubt that AU’s Global Outreach Healthcare program is making a significant impact in the Ghanaian communities it serves. To help people achieve and maintain a state of optimal health, social workers are needed to help individuals access services, provide education, and offer support for those coping with acute, chronic, and terminal illness. I look forward to future trips with the Ghana Healthcare program and leveraging my relationship with social work faculty and practitioners in Ghana to help integrate and institutionalize social work in the Ghanaian health care system.”

Felicia Tuggle
Assistant Professor
Master of Social Work Program, AU

“I found some peace in knowing that the Ghana Healthcare Program provides quality healthcare screenings to many people who would not have access to quality community health without this program. “

– Dr. Felicia Tuggle
At first glance, in Accra all you see is a lot of brown dirt and the brown dusty market stalls. Even many house on the way to Sekondi-Takoradi were just small brown boxes that people lived in. But, what I was able to see and experience by this Outreach Global trip was all the color and vibrancy that Ghana really has to offer. Outwardly, you see that most of the clothes and jewelry are very colorful, but by getting to really know some of the people, you realize how colorful and vibrant the people are inside as well. I was so amazed by their inward beauty, their happiness, hospitality and joy! Everyone was so excited to see our group and always so welcoming. Even more importantly, they were so appreciative of what we could provide. I left with a great appreciation for everything I have and take for granted on a daily basis such as air condition, clean water, and sanitation services.

I am sure I will never look at a trash can the same again. It also showed me what I and my students, the whole group actually, is capable of without electricity and air condition. When we lost electricity and air, no one ever blinked or complained. We all just kept working and serving the people who were there to see us. We were a well-oiled machine and a great group to be with. I was so proud and impressed with all of us. It was such an amazing and inspiring experience, I would go back again in a heart beat. It proved to me that life is really just a beautiful rainbow.

Allison Chung
Associate Professor
Pharmacy Practice
AU Harrison School of Pharmacy

“Outwardly, you see that most of the clothes and jewelry are very colorful, but by getting to really know some of the people, you realize how colorful and vibrant the people are inside as well.”

Dr. Allison Chung
The 2020 Ghana Healthcare Program was my first international experience. I had never been outside of the continental United States before. Natural caution and the admonishing of others had prepared me for the culture shock that was expected to await me in Ghana. However, I wouldn’t describe what I encountered as culture shock. Things were different than I was accustomed, to be sure: new foods, languages, and motorist habits that mimicked the complexity of worker bees. But each unfamiliar experience was accompanied by something that was familiar and reassuring—the love and smiles of the Ghanaian people, languages they spoke fluently.

In the short time that has passed since the Auburn University team returned to the United States, life has changed drastically. A global pandemic has made the world paradoxically feel both suffocating and infinitely large. However, the Ghana Healthcare Program experience is a constant reminder that regardless how separated people might appear, care and love for one’s neighbor is intrinsically human and bridges the divide between us.”

Aaron Carpenter, MPA
Outreach Coordinator
Outreach Global
“Ghana will always hold a special place in my heart. This year has been particularly special to me. Amidst the rise of Covid-19, we were able to serve hundreds of people in Sekondi-Takoradi and Accra at the healthcare clinics. A highlight for me was practicing “Fanti”, the local dialect when I spoke with the people who came to register. Another highlight of this trip was our visit to the special needs school. The big smiles on the faces of the kids as we danced and spent time with them will forever be etched in my memory. Returning to the U.S. with the experiences from Ghana has inspired me with an urgency to do my part to make the world a better place.”

Mac-Jane Crayton
Graduate Assistant
Outreach Global

“The big smiles on the faces of the kids as we danced and spent time with them will forever be etched in my memory.”

– Mac-Jane Crayton
My time in Ghana for the Healthcare Outreach Program was absolutely amazing! I loved getting the chance to meet new people and experience a new culture. Just some of the many amazing experiences I had in Ghana included dancing with kids at a special needs school, touring the Cape Coast Castle, bartering at the market, “breaking in to” the Ghanaian national soccer stadium, and visiting Ghanaian pharmacies to see how they were different from our own. Everyone I met was so incredibly kind, full of joy, and so thankful for the work we were doing. As a future pharmacist, learning about the Ghanaian health care system as well as a pharmacist’s role in that process was very eye-opening. It made me truly appreciate the ease with which I can see a doctor or pick up my prescriptions at home. I was initially nervous about going on this trip as a first year pharmacy student, but I feel that I was still able to make an impact and I came back so much more confident in my abilities than when I left. I got to learn so much about working in conjunction with other healthcare professions as well as with my own professor and classmate. I am so thankful that the pharmacy school was included in the trip this year and that I was able to have this experience. This was a trip I will never forget and will change how I go about my future career! I highly recommend this trip!

Haley Brobst
Pharmacy Student

“As a future pharmacist, learning about the Ghanaian health care system as well as a pharmacist’s role in that process was very eye-opening.”

— Haley Brobst
My time in Ghana was amazing! From the majestic shoreline, to the beautiful fabrics and clothing, to the vibrant culture, to the best mangoes, pineapples, and watermelon I’ve ever tasted, my experience in Ghana is one that I will never forget. Working alongside peers, nursing students, and team of highly trained medical professionals (pharmacists, nurses, nurse practitioners, physicians and administrators) from Auburn University and Ghana afforded me a once in a lifetime opportunity to learn and grow as a future pharmacist. I gained lots of experience in patient counseling, learned more about regional common disease states and treatments, and even learned a little Fanti. The Ghana Healthcare Outreach Trip opened my eyes to the disparities that exist in healthcare and how many things I take for granted. I also learned how large of a barrier language can be; luckily, I had lots of help from volunteers and patients. One of my most memorable experiences was getting to tour Cape Coast Castle, a site through which many African slaves passed through the “Door of No Return” before they were shipped to the Americas. While in Ghana we were able to immerse ourselves in the Ghanaian culture by Independence Day celebrations and tasting local dishes, like banku and goat pepper soup. Although I was sad to leave Ghana, I was happy to return with a new set of friends and mentors.
After being accepted to Auburn’s School of Nursing and finding out that there was a medical mission trip to Africa, I knew this was something that I wanted to participate in. Traveling with professors and meeting the amazing families that welcomed us with open arms was heartwarming and made the experience even better than I could have ever imagined. Getting to serve 1,200 plus patients in just 4 clinic days took a lot of hard work from the Auburn staff, Nursing Students, and the Mayor of Sekondi-Takoradi – with whom we worked very closely with. My most fond memory was getting to distribute stuffed animals to a couple different classrooms of students who were treated at the clinic. To see the joy in their eyes when you would give them a big bear or a lollipop really made me appreciate how fortunate we are to live in America. This opportunity is one that will never be forgotten, and I look forward to seeing what the next group of students gets to accomplish while in Ghana.

“Getting to serve 1,200 plus patients in just 4 clinic days took a lot of hard work from the Auburn staff, Nursing Students, and the Mayor of Sekondi-Takoradi – with whom we worked very closely with.”

Paula Bernstein
Nursing Student

PAULA BERNSTEIN
I am so thankful and blessed that I was able to travel, love on, and serve the people of Ghana with the skills that the Lord has blessed me with through the Auburn University School of Nursing. The people of Ghana will forever hold a very special place in my heart. They were all so beautiful and never failed to greet you with the biggest smile on their faces. It was life changing to see their joy despite their circumstances. It was an honor to be able to provide accessible health screenings to the people of Sekondi-Takoradi and Accra. Throughout the clinic we saw many patients, most of whom couldn’t remember the last time they went to the doctor, light up with the realization we were there to provide care for free. In only four days of clinic we saw over 1000 patients, and God provided every step of the way! The work was challenging at times, and the environment and culture were drastically different than life in Auburn, Alabama. However, the experiences we had and the friends we made strengthened us all both as nurses and individuals.

One memory from this trip that I will hold in my heart forever is visiting the special needs school in Sekondi-Takoradi. This school provides housing to children with a wide variety of intellectual disabilities. I was overwhelmed with emotion to see how excited the children were to see us as soon as the bus pulled in. They greeted us all as we stepped off our bus with the sweetest smiles and the biggest hugs. We gifted them with stuffed animals and candy. Seeing their excitement over little things we take for granted was the best gift in return. Before leaving the school, we had a giant dance party with the kids and the joy radiating off them was contagious. After a few tiring days, this was exactly what we all needed.

I am so incredibly thankful for the Auburn University School of Nursing and Auburn University Outreach Global staff for making this trip and my dream to serve in Ghana a reality. It was amazing to see the eighteen people serving on this trip arrive as separate individuals and walk out as a family. I will never forget the memories made on this trip. The impact it has had on me is something I will take into every aspect of my life from this moment forward. I truly cannot recommend going on this trip enough. I can promise you it will change your life forever!

Hannah Black
Nursing Student
My experience in Ghana this year was one that I will not forget. The communities we visited welcomed us and greeted us with open arms. We were able to assist the community and supply resources that are not easy accessible to the community and provide healthcare to those who do not have access. While in Ghana, we were able to learn about the history and indulge in the culture by visiting museums and visiting various places. This experience taught me that cultural context is crucial in patient-centered care, so learning about the culture through visiting museums, cultural sites, and speaking with community members taught me how patients there prioritized health care. By understanding patient priorities, I will be better able to assist patients and this opportunity helped with that. Loved being immersed in the community while working at the healthcare clinic and communicating with the local community.

Abby Campbell
Nursing Student
“Creating opportunities for global engagement and contribution towards community development across the globe!”

- Outreach Global Mission
If I could use two words to describe my experience in Ghana they would be: amazing and confidence. This was my first experience out of the country and I feel so blessed to have gotten the opportunity to go to Ghana and serve the community. The people were so friendly and the scenery was unlike anything I’d ever seen before. Palm trees and beaches and bright colorful markets filled the landscape. I got to build up clinical skills and judgments while working in clinics. This experience also introduced me to so many other girls outside of my cohort and allowed me to make new friends. This trip was an amazing, once in a lifetime experience and I really hope I will get the opportunity to do something like this again!

Megan Hood
Nursing Student
The Outreach Global trip to Ghana was truly a unique and inspiring experience. I was able to grow my nursing skills through valuable clinical experience and learned how to adapt in clinical situations where resources are limited. The people of Ghana were some of the friendliest I have encountered. Seeing a different way of life and the challenges faced by these communities opened my eyes to the privileges we take for granted. Providing care through the free health clinics in Sekondi-Takoradi was particularly rewarding. Seeing the smiles and appreciation on someone’s face as I handed them their new pair of glasses at no charge is something I won’t forget. While this trip challenged me physically and emotionally in ways I didn’t expect, it was an incredible experience and I would defiantly recommend it to anyone thinking about going.

Shelby Pyron
Nursing Student

“Seeing the smiles and appreciation on someone’s face as I handed them their new pair of glasses at no charge is something I won’t forget.”

– Shelby Pyron
The 2020 Summer Ghana trip was one of the most incredible experiences I have ever had. It put a lot of things into perspective for me and made me realize just how lucky and blessed I have it. During the trip we got to go on many cultural excursions such as visiting historical sites, attending their Independence Day ceremony, bartering at the market, touring the city, trying different foods, and more. These activities really exposed us to their culture and helped us learn a lot about their history. The healthcare clinics were hard work, but the work was very rewarding. At the end of the day when they did a final count of how many people we saw and helped I felt as though we were really able to make an impact on the community and to have the people so thankful and excited to have us there was an amazing feeling. I am so thankful to everyone who made this trip happen, to my peers, instructors, and to the Auburn outreach employees who worked so hard while we were there and still, and to the people in Ghana who allowed us to come and welcomed us in.

Anissah Vekris
Nursing Student

“During the trip we got to go on many cultural excursions such as visiting historical sites, attending their Independence Day ceremony, bartering at the market, touring the city, trying different foods, and more.”

– Anissah Vekris
I was asked to write about how this trip changed my life, and at first, I tried to come up with some grand way, some beautiful way that would take your breath away. I wanted to woo the people reading this by the awe-inspiring way I was changed. But the more I thought about it the more I couldn’t come up with something so groundbreaking. Until it dawned on me, this trip showed me that throughout the heat and lukewarm water, people didn’t have a lukewarm joy, but rather a burning fire to seek help, to get better, to be better. I saw a boy whose father was reddened with fear wondering why his son was falling behind in school, I saw elders eager to see if their blood pressure is finally under control, I saw moms with their babies and children helping their younger siblings. Even with so many surface deep differences these people all shared one thing, joy. And that’s when I realized my “earth shattering moment.”

It wasn’t anything grand or big or dramatic, but rather brought a small smile to my face. I was reminded that no matter where you are in life joy can be found.

This trip may not be the easiest, but the joy you will leave with will stay with you forever. Although the days are long and you’ll sweat out more than you thought possible, it is more than worth it. Bring lots of snacks and be ready to work because you will not want to leave these people once you meet them.

Annaliese White
Nursing Student
GALLERY
AU Outreach Global Team, Nursing, and Pharmacy students

AU Outreach Global Team, Nursing and Pharmacy students and AU Faculty and staff at Atlanta International Airport, ready for Accra, Ghana departure

AU nursing students sanitizing prior to boarding call to Ghana

Dr. Allison Chung, (Associate Professor, Pharmacy Practice) ready for takeoff

First day at Accra, Ghana

AU healthcare program team touring the city of Accra

AU Nursing students enjoying the view at Makola local market area in Accra
AU healthcare program team visit to Fort Orange, Ghana port authorities

AU healthcare program team visit to the Cape Coast Slave Castle

Ghana Cape Coast Slave Castle

River view of the Ghana Cape Coast Slave Castle

Sea view of the Cape Coast Slave Castle

AU healthcare program team with Ghana Cape Coast Slave Castle tour guide
Dr. Thomas with Nursing students at welcome dinner by Mayor of Sekondi/Takoradi metropolitan assembly

Dr. Quansah, Aaron and Chris at welcome dinner hosted Hon. K.K Sam, Mayor of Sekondi/Takoradi metropolitan assembly

Nursing students at welcome dinner hosted Hon. K.K Sam, Mayor of Sekondi/Takoradi metropolitan assembly

Prep night: AU healthcare program pharmacy team getting all medications ready for first day of health clinic

Ready for health clinic

First day of health clinic
Welcome by Hon. K.K Sam, Mayor of Sekondi/Takoradi metropolitan assembly and team at first day of health clinic
Dr. Thomas providing guidance on how first day of clinic will go

Ghana nursing students with AU nursing student

Pharmacy team

Anissah Vekris, Nursing student working at health clinic
Abby Campbell Nursing student working at health clinic

Hannah Black, Nursing student working at health clinic

Annaliese, Nursing student working at health clinic

Overview of Health clinic

Aaron Carpenter distributing stuffed animals to elementary school students

Chris Martin distributing stuffed animals to elementary school students
First lunch break during healthcare clinic

Shelby Pyron Nursing student working at health clinic

Nursing student working at health clinic

Dr. Quansah making stops at stations to ensure smooth operation of program

End of first day of clinic

Dr. Chung and Shavonne Cater, working the pharmacy station
Late Hon. K.K. Sam helping AU team distribute stuffed animals to elementary school students during healthcare clinic

End of the day debriefing with AU team

AU nursing students with elementary school students during healthcare clinic
AU team with students of the special needs school in Ghana

AU team recognizing the hard work and support of Mr. Sarkordie, a member of Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) administrator, at the end of the Sekondi health clinic program

Dr. Quansah appreciating the hard work and support of Mrs. Regina Quaicoe, a senior nurse at the Effia Nkwanta Regional hospital Sekondi/Takoradi metropolitan area
Dr. Quansah chatting with students at the Takoradi, Ghana mall

Visit to the cultural parade during Ghana’s Independence Day celebration

Nursing students buying fresh organic local pineapple at ShopRite mall during cultural immersion tour

Ghana’s Independence Day celebration

Donation of medical supplies to Effia-Kwanta regional hospital emergency ward/unit at Sekondi, Ghana

AU team enjoying Ghana’s Independence Day celebration cultural parade by local preschool students
AU team quick visit to University of Cape Coast

Dr. Quansah distributing stuffed animals to children at the healthcare clinic in Accra

AU team visit to the beach

AU team relaxing after a hard day's work at Takoradi beach

Hannah Black distributing candies to children at the healthcare clinic in Accra

AU Pharmacy team at healthcare clinic in Accra
Chris and Hannah working at healthcare clinic in Accra

Annaliese attending to a patient at healthcare clinic in Accra

Visit to Ghana Independence square, Accra

AU team at Accra sports stadium

Team at Accra’s Black Star

Art display at hotel

Visit to Accra Art center
Stuffed Animal Donations!
Tribute by Dr. Elizabeth I. Quansah, Director, Auburn University (AU) Outreach Global

Hon. K.K. Sam, the Chief Executive (Mayor) passed away in Ghana on June 12, 2020 after contracting Coronavirus. The mayor was one of the active and committed partners AU Outreach Global had in Ghana, West Africa. Auburn University Outreach Global office entered into partnership with Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) in 2017 after a signed MOU between the two institutions. As the Chief Executive of the Assembly, Hon. Sam welcomed AU delegation to his office in January, 2017 and offered his unwavering support and commitment to AU-STMA community outreach healthcare program. As a result of his hard work and passion, AU team were able to provide free healthcare and medications to over 3,000 patients, donated hundreds of medical supplies, stuffed animals and books to citizens, hospitals, and clinics in Sekondi-Takoradi since the program’s inception in 2017.

For the past three years, the mayor supported the AU-STMA Annual healthcare program; he and his team provided AU Faculty, students and staff with accommodation, local transportation, cultural activities and also treated us with good meals prepared by his wife and family at his official resident. Hon. Sam consistently spent countless hours with all AU delegations, he was accessible and was never absent during our visit to Sekondi-Takoradi. He took upon himself to personally show us the beaches, the Takoradi mall, ate with us three times a day during the week-long program, and ensured that we were comfortable and equipped for the program at hand. He was proud of his cities and didn’t waste any opportunity exposing us to his beloved twin cities. Hon. Sam was an outstanding politician whose primary goal was to care for his constituent’s needs, provide them with quality healthcare and develop Sekondi-Takoradi in his unique way. Up until his untimely death in June, AU Outreach Global and STMA were about to embarked on Fijai recreation park project and building of triage area for the Effia-Nkwanta Emergency ward. During our engagement with Hon. Sam, he never politicized our community outreach programs. He was honest, respectful, humble, a good listener, a hardworking politician and most importantly, an irreplaceable partner to AU Outreach Global Sekondi-Takoradi initiative. Auburn University had the opportunity and hosted Hon. Sam in June, 2019 at Auburn University main campus at, Auburn, Alabama. To the delight of several students, faculty, administrators and staff who have met him before, we all had the opportunity to roll out the red carpet for him to reciprocate all the excellent hospitality he rendered to us during our numerous visits to Sekondi-Takoradi. At AU, he met Deans, Vice Presidents, Directors, Professors and the Auburn City Mayor, Major Sanders. He had plans of establishing strong relations with Mayor Sanders and Auburn City Council for beautification, trade and commerce, and environmental projects in Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana. Although Hon. Sam is no longer with us, we know his legacy will continue to live on.

May Hon. Anthony K. K. Sam rest in perfect peace!

HON. K.K. SAM

In Memoriam

Tribute to Hon. Anthony K. K. Sam, Former Chief Executive (Mayor) of Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA), Western Region, Ghana.
Thanks!

Thank you Brothers Brothers for donating medical supplies.

Special thanks to Alabama Department of Defense, Risk Management - Montgomery, OLLI, Harrison School of Pharmacy and everyone who donated stuffed animals for the 2020 Ghana healthcare program.