

Winter storm Warning

Appalachian State University closed at noon today due to winter storm.

Posted at 8:33am on February 12, 2014 via Blackboard Connect.

Appalachian will close at noon Wed. Feb. 12

Appalachian State University will close at noon on Wednesday, Feb. 12, due to forecasted dangerous weather conditions. Central Dining will remain open. According to policy, staff members designated as critical or essential employees will be notified by their supervisor... [Learn more](#)

[Parking lot closure and snow removal notification](#)

Posted at 6:36am on February 12, 2014. Last updated at 8:01am on February 12, 2014.

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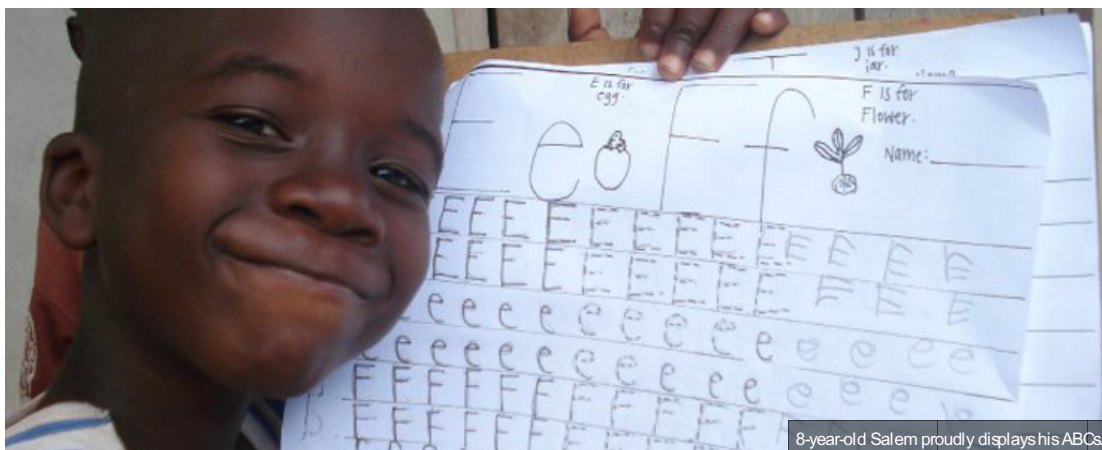
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8-year-old Salem proudly displays his ABCs.

Making a difference in Ghana

Editor's Note: Senior social work major Amanda Ronne spent spring semester in Ghana, West Africa, as a student at the University of Ghana at Legon. While there, she helped teach children through a non-profit organization called [Mawuvio's Outreach Programme](#). Her life changed in the process.

Ronne will return to Ghana in December to continue work with the non-profit group. She is also considering joining the Peace Corps, pursuing a master of social work degree with a focus on international social work, or moving to Ghana to continue Mawuvio's outreach. This is her story.

By Amanda Ronne

Studying abroad is usually a time to explore a new country, make international friends, and obtain credit hours somewhere other than one's home institution. While spending five months in Ghana, West Africa, I experienced all of these along with an additional life changing involvement. Being a [social work](#) major in Appalachian State University's [College of Health Sciences](#), I knew I would want to spend some of my time volunteering with a needy non-profit. Little did I know, I would be a part of developing one.

Within my first couple of weeks in Ghana, I met an American friend, Renee Farwell, who was working within a community to provide education to children who cannot afford the uniform, book, and exam fees required to attend public primary and secondary school.

Renee was teaching basic math and English skills to about 20 children on the front porch of a home. These children ranged from 3 to 16 years old. Some of these students had parents/guardians, some did not; some



Ronne teaches students outside the Mawuvio's Outreach Programme compound.



9-year-old Margret draws a map of Ghana while attending class at the Mawuvio's Outreach Programme.

Make a Difference

Philanthropic support enables Appalachian to maintain its high academic quality, compelling activities outside the classroom, life changing experiences on the athletic field, and participation in internships and service programs that develop our community leaders of

tomorrow. There are so many reasons—and ways—to [give to Appalachian](#).

lived in small one-room shacks and while others lived outside; some got to eat one meal a day, and others ate one meal every three days.

None of these children had ever attended school. The amount of poverty that these children lived in is indescribable, yet what was even more shocking was their strong desire for an education, even if that education was just on a porch of a home while they have to sit on the floor fighting over who gets to use a clip board.

On my first visit to the porch, I was inspired by the children's eagerness to learn despite their daily struggles of not receiving basic necessities such as food and shelter. I noticed the strong need for structure, organization, and a few more helping hands for this newly registered NGO, non-governmental organization called [Mawuio's Outreach Programme](#), and I started working hard to provide assistance.

With the help of a few Ghanaian community members along with new volunteers, Renee and I worked together to develop structure through attendance, lesson plans, and discipline policies. We also expanded our services to provide mentoring, library, and inter-cultural programs. In the five months I spent with these children, I saw unbelievable improvements in not only their educational achievement but also their overall well being. We taught several teenagers how to read English, the 7- and 8-year-olds how to write the alphabet and their names, and addition, subtraction and multiplication skills. Also, the amount of violence they used toward one another practically vanished compared to the daily physical fights that used to occur.

In many ways my education as a social work major prepared me for the obstacles I faced while working in this impoverished community. I not only taught these children in the classroom, but I also spent a great deal of time addressing issues such as abuse, truancy due to child labor, hunger and neglect. Recognizing the signs of physical and sexual abuse and how to tackle these difficult issues was one major way I felt my education prepared me. Another way I can connect what I have learned in my social work classes with my volunteering experience was knowing helpful tactics of how to address these complex issues with the families while being culturally sensitive. Applying my social work knowledge outside of the United States was very difficult at first; therefore, I relied a lot on other Ghanaian community members to guide me. As time went on, and I established reputable relationships with the children and families which ultimately enabled them to trust me, and it was then much easier to apply my social work skills.

Now that I am back in the United States, with a few other international volunteers, I am working hard on fundraising to build a school/orphanage/community center for the children we worked with. This building will ensure a safe and more productive learning environment while also increasing the number of students we serve and services we provide. We have raised approximately \$12,000—enough to purchase land and start the process of construction of the building.

I am also beginning the process of applying for Mawuio's Outreach Programme's 501(c) 3 status to increase fundraising and grant opportunities.

This journey has and continues to be a challenging one; however, seeing effective changes in the lives of these children has made this process worthwhile and rewarding.

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classes at the Mawuio's Outreach Programme.



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This is the future school site of the Mawuio's Outreach Programme.

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Page last updated: November 15, 2010

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