

Newsletter
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Kekeli Inc./ 518-465-6576

Kekeli Inc.
News

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(left) David with his mother and brother, one of Kekeli Ghana's Success Stories

(right) A bead necklace made by one of Kekeli's Self-Advocates



**Greetings
from Ghana**

Over the last four years we have seen many challenges that persons with disabilities face in education, health care, acceptance in the home, and in the community. Kekeli Ghana has been expanding our disability program. We now work with groups in five different communities with over sixty children and adults with disabilities and their parents. We have organized parents' groups and self-advocacy groups to train people on their rights. This year Kekeli hired a Project Manager from Ghana to assist with the groups. We regularly visit the families in their homes to assess their needs, document each case and talk to them about services available in the country. The challenges are very big, and it takes commitment from all parties involved to make an impact, but slowly we are seeing many challenges turn into success stories. In this newsletter we want to focus on a few of the many successes. You might know a few of them, such as Mawunyo (the girl in the basket); however, some of the faces are new to you.

We are working on a website which shows more stories: <http://www.kekeli-ghana.org> It is your support that makes these success stories possible.

Thank you!

Carrie Brown



Pat, Kekeli Ghana Self-Advocate and Inclusion Ghana Board Member with Edna, Kekeli Resource Person, Mary, Inclusion Ghana Board Member and Carrie, Kekeli Director during the Inclusion Africa Conference in Accra, Ghana

Success Stories

Kekeli Foundation, with funding from Disability Rights Fund, has formed self-advocacy groups in Ho, Helekpe, Ahunda and Abutia Teti. We have also been training persons with intellectual disabilities in weaving and jewelry design. Our self-advocates share their stories, their dreams of attending school, starting a family and leading an independent life at meetings and community programs. Diana (right), one of our self-advocates in Helekpe, has identified three children with disabilities and reported the cases to Kekeli Ghana staff. She has been assisting us in our meetings by discussing the challenges for persons with disabilities in schools and the community. Pat (in group photo on pg. 1) is a Kekeli Ghana Self Advocate and an Inclusion Ghana Board Member. This year Pat attended the Inclusion Africa Conference in Accra which was organized by Inclusion Ghana. She had the opportunity to meet groups from 16 African countries that are working together to advocate for the rights of persons with intellectual disabilities.



A year ago David (in left photo with his mother and younger brother), from Abutia Teti, could not walk or sit independently. David's mother, Eunice, is a member of Abutia Teti's Parent Self-Help Group which was formed by Kekeli Ghana. During group meetings, we discuss the rights of persons with disabilities and how their children can lead independent lives. David's mother has been an inspiration to Kekeli Ghana. David is one of four children, and his father has been very ill and unable to work. Eunice has sacrificed her time and money to send David to a physical therapy program through the Nsawam Orthopedic Training Center at a village near Abutia. David and his mother stay at the physical therapy center and go through training every day. David is now five years old and walking with support from braces and a walker. When David starts using crutches they will return to Abutia. David cannot speak, and Kekeli Ghana is now planning a training program for David's mother and other parents in speech therapy.

Felicia (far right) and her mother, Ernestine (right), are members of our group in Ahunda. Last September Felicia was supposed to start school, but those plans were interrupted. Felicia's mother and father had separated when he became abusive. Her father came to Ahunda to take Felicia and her younger brother to his village, about four hours away. Weeks later he returned to Ahunda to inform Ernestine that the children had been burned in a fire and hospitalized. She told Kekeli Ghana staff and we contacted the Regional Social Welfare office to report the case. Ernestine went to the village where her children were and found them uninjured. The father had used the story only to bring Ernestine back to the village. Felicia and her brother are now back in Ahunda and attending school. Ernestine is still attending our meetings and is a strong advocate for the rights of persons with disability.



Success Stories

Eight months ago Kekeli Foundation was introduced to C, who had both arms amputated after her husband attacked her with a machete. C now has her prosthetic arms. Kekeli arranged with Tulsi Trust to sponsor all of her medical expenses including the cost of prosthetic arms. She was fitted with her prosthetic arms and trained to use them at the Orthopedic Training Center in Nsawam, Ghana. She is now back at home with her family and has started farming again.

(left to right) C at the hospital in September, C at Nsawam Orthopedic Training Center and C with her prosthetic arms.



(Below left) Mawunyo in her basket (Below right) Mawunyo in her new wheelchair



“You should go see the girl in a basket,” said one of the members of the parents self-help group as I was working with the group in the village of Abutia Teti. When I arrived at the house, I met Mawunyo, a girl with CP, sitting in a blue, plastic laundry basket placed in a dark room. Two years have passed since I first went to visit Mawunyo and she is now 17 years old. Over the last two years we have assessed Mawunyo to determine what could be done to help her, especially in ways that would provide her with some education. APF Ministries, Tema, donated a wheelchair. Two ramps were made in her home with funding from Tulsi Trust.

Now Mawunyo is getting ready to start school. A uniform has been made for her. When anyone asks Mawunyo “what is your favorite thing to do?” she always replies, “Go to school!” even though she hasn’t started school yet.

Getting to this point has not been a quick or easy task. Kekeli has had to earn the trust of Mawunyo’s parents and family, work with the local school and its teachers as well as the Ministry of Education, find her a wheelchair, and seek funds: to pay for the ramp, an aide to assist Mawunyo, the cost of her uniform and school fees. Tulsi Trust has generously donated the money needed. Now all the pieces are coming together.



(above) The new ramps at Mawunyo’s house

(left) Mawunyo in her school uniform



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Every donation makes a big difference in the lives of people in Ghana

Note cards available

Sets of four note cards are available for \$10 depicting images of Ghana by Ghanaian photography students. All proceeds will go to Kekeli Inc. to help support future student projects. To order cards contact Mary Jane Brown at (518) 465-6576 or by email kekeliinc@gmail.com

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