



Welcome Packet
Salisbury School Global Education Squad
Ghana, June 5-15, 2019

Dear Salisbury School Students and Parents,

Welcome to the **Squads Abroad-Global Education Squad** to **Ghana** from **June 5 - 15, 2019**. In a few months your group will embark on an adventure-of-a-lifetime experience that includes volunteer and cultural learning activities designed to enrich your understanding of the country while making a positive impact in the local community. Our staff in **Ghana** is busy preparing for your group and looks forward to sharing this enriching experience and their beautiful country with your group in **June**.

This **Welcome Packet** is designed to prepare you for your upcoming adventure with your classmates. This Welcome Packet includes a **Checklist and Timeline, Immunization Information, Passport Information, and Country Program Information**. We hope it will answer any preliminary questions you may have but we are also available anytime to assist with any additional questions or concerns.

A few weeks before your Squad trip departs we will send out the **Final Expectations Packet** which contains more detailed information about your trip. The Final Expectations Packet will contain the **Final Daily Schedule, Project Details, Flight Information, Packing List, Contact Sheet**, and final travel instructions. We will also hold a Final Expectations conference call, and go over some information in more detail as well as answer any questions you may have.

We greatly appreciate your decision to travel with **Squads Abroad**. Last year our Squad groups provided over **3,000** service hours and over **\$22,500** in donations. With your help, we hope to continue to expand our international impact within the country and back home as more globally conscious citizens. Feel free to call **(559) 761-0351** or email any of our staff below with any questions or concerns.

Yours in the journey,

Erik Werner, Director of School Group Programs @ ewerner@squads.ngo
Hailey Roodberg, Program Specialist for Ghana @ hroodberg@squads.ngo

Things to Do

Checklist

- Registration:** Make sure you are completely registered for the trip @ <https://www.empowered.org/Salisbury-High-School>
 - Register to volunteer on your school's initiative
- Forms:** Complete all of your forms on your Empowered Signup/Registration Page
 - Agreement & Release: Students and Parents **must read and sign** online
 - Health and Information: **Adult Parent or Guardian must complete** online
 - Behavioral Expectations: Students and Parents **must read and sign** online
- Passport and Immunizations:** Make sure you have a valid visa and passport (cannot expire within 6 months of departure) and schedule and complete recommended immunizations
 - Provide your passport information more than **60 days** prior
 - Receive necessary immunizations
- Pay Balance:** Balances are due on April 6th. Go the website and select 'Donate Now' to make a payment to your individual account
 - Please note when making a payment you're given the option to waive credit card fees by unchecking the box after putting an amount*
- Fundraise:** The group is responsible for raising \$1500 that will be donated directly to the Volunteer Match assignment and project the group will be doing

Timeline

- **120+ Days** prior begin fundraising planning and efforts! (**February 2019**)
- **90+ Days** prior to arrival in country (**March 2019**)
 - Apply for/ renew your passport if necessary
 - Talk to your doctor to set up an appointment for any necessary immunizations and medical clearances
- **60 Days** prior to arrival in country (**by April 6, 2019**)
 - Agreement & Release and other registration forms are due
 - Passport information (exactly as it will appear on your document) is due to purchase flights
 - **The remainder of the program fee is due**
- **3-5 Weeks** prior (**May 2019**)
 - You will receive your final expectations packet including packing list, contact sheet, and final travel instructions
- **Day of Departure (June 5, 2019)**
 - Carry your passport, copy of your passport, and travel contact sheet
 - Keep an open mind, have fun, and embark on an amazing journey!

IMMUNIZATIONS

The Ghanaian government does **require** immunization for **yellow fever**. Documentation of yellow fever vaccination is required for entry into the country. For any other immunizations for travel in Ghana, we do recommend following the **[guidelines of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/ghana)**. @ <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/ghana>. We want to emphasize that, in general, Ghana is considered to be a very safe travel destination. Nevertheless, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) do recommend some immunizations. As with *any* medical recommendation, we strongly suggest that you **consult your physician** and/or a travel medicine clinic to make the final decision about immunizations.

REQUIRED VACCINATIONS – ALL TRAVELERS

Yellow Fever: Required for arriving travelers older than 9 months of age due to the high concentration of mosquitos in the area. You should receive this vaccine at least 10 days before your trip. After receiving the vaccine, you will receive a signed and stamped *International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis* which **you must bring with you** on your trip. For more information about yellow fever and prevention tactics, visit: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/yellow-fever>

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS – MOST TRAVELERS

General Vaccinations: All routine vaccines (such as measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine, etc.

Hepatitis A: CDC recommends this vaccine because Hepatitis A outbreaks occur throughout the world and sometimes in countries with a low risk for hepatitis A (including the US). You can get hepatitis A through contaminated food or water in Ghana, so talk to your doctor to see if the vaccine is right for you.

Malaria: The CDC recommends taking prescription medicine before, during and after your trip to prevent malaria. Your doctor can help you decide which medicine is right for you and also talk to you about other steps you can take to prevent malaria.

Typhoid: You can get typhoid through contaminated food or water in Honduras. CDC recommends this vaccine for most travelers, especially if you are visiting smaller cities or rural areas or if you are an adventurous eater.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

A travel visa is permission from the government to enter and leave the country you are visiting. You will need to apply for a **visa** in order to travel to Ghana. All participants should locate their nearest Ghanaian Consulate and contact them directly to obtain an application and learn more about the official requirements here, <https://ghanaconsulateneويورك.org/gcn/VisaApplication.aspx>.

NOTE: Do not apply for your visas more than 82 days in advance of your trip (before March 15, 2019). **The tourist visa is only valid for 90 days** starting from the date of issue.

More tips and supplemental information about applying for a visa will be sent in upcoming weeks.

Ghana requires a valid **passport** through the length of your stay. Please reference the State Department website, <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/ghana-travel-advisory.html>, to find out more information, apply for, or renew your passport.

According to the travel.state.gov website, passport processing times are as follows:

<u>Routine</u>	<u>4-6 Weeks</u>
<u>Expedited</u>	<u>2-3 Weeks</u>
<u>Expedited at Agency</u>	<u>8 Business Days</u>

If your child is not a U.S. citizen, it is your responsibility to determine whether a visa is necessary for entry. Non-U.S. citizens must contact the appropriate embassies and consulates to inquire about any visa requirements for all countries being visited. You may also opt to go through an agency that will provide advice and services.

General Information

The Country

With its welcoming beaches, gorgeous frontier, rich culture, vibrant towns and diverse wildlife, Ghana is hailed as Africa's golden child. The incredible energy and diversity across the country reflects the stable democracy and fast-paced development that has especially benefited the country in the past few years. Ghana maintains a stable government and the economy is highly dependent on the export of primary commodities such as gold, cocoa, and oil.



The Community

The home-base is in the friendly town of Ho located about 3 hours away from the capital city, Accra. The warm climate makes the area perfect for crop farming, where its wide range of produce is displayed at the lively and huge open market that attracts people from all over the region. Surrounded by mountains, agriculture and waterfalls, there is much to explore in this safe community.



The People

Ghanaians are peaceful, caring and hospitable people that are known for their warm national character and where visitors are always welcomed as friends. Over 100 different ethnic groups call Ghana home. The Ewe people of the Volta Region in the village of Ho will become your family and will make this a unique place to make lasting connections.



The Food

Ghanaian cuisine heavily relies on cassava and plantains for many of their dishes. These can be mashed into fufu and banku which are traditional foods cooked and served with aromatic soups or grilled tilapia. Jollof, another favorite meal, is a rice dish mixed with a rich sauce containing tomato, onion and peppers. Kenkey is a version of a tamale consisting of corn dough wrapped in corn husks. Delicious sweet potatoes, rich stews

and fresh vegetables are abundant in Ghana.



Ghana's Education System

General Facts:

- In Ghana, over 28% of the population lives in poverty at under \$1 per day
- Common sources of income include agriculture, fishing, charcoal trading and driving
- At the time of independence in 1957, Ghana had only one university and a handful of primary and secondary schools
- Currently, there are 12,225 primary schools, 6,418 junior high schools, 475 high schools, and 140 accredited colleges and universities in the country
- Ghana introduced free compulsory education at the primary and junior high school levels in 1995
- As of 2017, education at the high school level is now free in Ghana
- The sole official language of instruction throughout the Ghanaian educational system is English, although students may study in any of eleven local languages for the first three years of school
- Even though 90% of children in Ghana are enrolled in school, the system reflects a gender gap and disparities between rural and urban areas

Access to Education

Since independence, Ghana has distinguished itself among many Sub-Saharan African countries in its educational developments. However, schools are too often underfunded and overcrowded, and the need for individual attention, guidance and encouragement to children pursuing their dreams is key to a brighter future. Higher education is more heavily male than female and more wealthy than poor. Male students from the highest income demographic are seven times more likely to enter and successfully complete higher education than those from the lowest income. With the rise of enrollment in secondary education, competition for joining higher education institutions has greatly increased: In 2001, the university of Ghana had admitted 96% of the relevant applications where in 2011 the acceptance rate had fallen to 52%. This increasing selectivity highlights gender and socioeconomic inequalities in Ghana regarding education. Being a woman or living in a rural area can reduce the chance of reaching higher education at all.

Challenges

Addressing the issues of access to schools, gender disparities and poor infrastructure facilities are major challenges within the education system in Ghana. In terms of access to schools, children must walk miles and in some cases cross one or two rivers to get to school in most rural areas, which deters many parents from encouraging their children to go to school. Cultural beliefs play a major role in gender disparities as girls are expected to carry out domestic chores and receive tutorials and training on how to manage their marital home in the future. Girls are taught to be serviceable to their husbands and their parents as well, hindering their options for the future. Infrastructure issues also need to be addressed especially in rural communities, seeing as some primary schools only have six rooms for over 500 students and students either lie on the floor to write notes or sit on broken pieces of furniture. Lack of teachers tables and portable water are major challenges, too.