Hello!

My second week in Ghana has definitely exposed me to new challenges. Because the children at the orphanage are on holiday from school, the other volunteers and I have begun teaching lessons every morning at 9 a.m. in the orphanage dining hall. There is a teacher who lives at the orphanage with the kids, and this week he helped teach the older children while another volunteer and I focused on the younger children. During our first lesson, the teacher (who is only 19 himself) helped the older children with math problems, while another volunteer and I helped the younger children write the English alphabet. The children converse with one another in their native language of Twi, but they learn English in school, and they always seem curious to learn new words.

For our second lesson of the week, the younger children colored pages from coloring books while we conversed in English about what the picture depicted, and
the older children drew pictures from various categories such as fruits, vegetables and man-made objects. I am adjusting to the informal structure of these lessons, which becomes easier as I realize that opportunities for the children to learn are always present. For instance, every conversation is a chance for one of the kids to learn new words and expressions, and reading books together is a great way for the kids to practice their reading skills.

The third lesson of the week was the most interesting for me, because the teacher was not there, and I was left to teach all 17 kids on my own. Because there is no set curriculum for these informal, holiday lessons, I decided to conduct a lesson on a subject that the kids had apparently never been taught—geography. Last week, I found a globe at the back of the orphanage's small bookshelf. When I asked a few of the kids what I was holding, several said a football, and the others had no idea. For the next several days, I used the globe to gauge the children's knowledge of
geography. Almost none could name any of the continents, nor could they identify Ghana, but they seemed fascinated and were especially interested in learning about the United States, England, France, Ireland, Canada and other countries represented by many of the volunteers they have met. For that reason, I decided to build the third lesson entirely around geography. I organized a game of hangman on the whiteboard, using country names and showing the kids where the countries were on the globe. It was amazing how engaged they were in the activity and I can't wait to try the same lesson again sometime next week.

In my free time this weekend, I took a trip with a group of other volunteers to Kokrobite, a beach about three hours away from Kumasi. On my first night, I had a chance to see traditional African drumming at the hotel bar, and on the second night the entertainment was a Rastafarian band. My "room" at our hotel for the second night consisted of only a mosquito net-covered mattress placed on the roof of the hotel stage aside several
other mattresses, for the very cheap price of six Ghana Cedis (about four American dollars). The trip to Korbóbé was very fun, but also very hectic, and I was definitely happy to return to Kuarⁿosó.

All the Best,

Abby