

September 19, 2010

Hello!

I have now finished up my second week of teaching at the Mt. Zion School. It was definitely a stressful week, but I am learning a lot about what it takes to organize lessons and keep the kids' attention. I am now teaching my class with one other volunteer, an Australian girl named Ayla, which makes the class much easier to manage. She and I alternate teaching classes, and we both help each other while the other is teaching.

We have divided our teaching duties based on a timetable created by the teachers. So far, I have been teaching Natural Science and Information and Communication Technology — essentially a computer course — which is especially difficult because we don't have any computers to work with (or electricity, for that matter). We have, however, fashioned a keyboard out of paper, and I use a cell phone and book to demonstrate using a mouse and mousepad. Ayla has been teaching Mathematics and Religious

and Moral Education. Language and Literacy has so far been taught by one of the Ghanaian teachers, because that class incorporates both Tui and English.

On Friday, Ayla and I decided it would be worthwhile to establish some class rules, such as "Always follow your teachers' instructions" and "When you finish your work sit quietly and do not distract your classmates" (an especially important rule, as the kids have a habit of talking to each other in Tui when they have finished a task in class). The lessons sometimes proceed very slowly, mostly because the lack of English skills makes it difficult for many of the kids to understand instructions when they are first given. I am adjusting to the slow pace of learning; however, and trying to organize lessons accordingly.

This weekend, I went with a group of volunteers on a six-hour ferry ride on Lake Volta, an almost unimaginably huge man-made lake. That night, three of the volunteers and I made our way

to the Shai Hills, a beautiful area a couple of hours away from Kwamoso that is home to the Shai Hills Resource Reserve, a wildlife sanctuary. We stayed overnight at the Shai Hills Resort Hotel (which, like many "resorts" in which I have stayed in Ghana, had barely functioning plumbing and a very cold shower). One highlight of our stay was a baboon casually strolling by as we ate breakfast on Sunday morning. After breakfast, we went to the wildlife reserve, where a guide took us on a three-hour walk. Because it was not early in the morning (which is apparently the peak time for seeing many of the animals), we did not see much wildlife (this particular reserve is home to antelope, several kinds of monkeys and nearly 200 species of birds). We did, however, visit a bat cave and saw several baboons near the reserve's entrance gate. I am hoping I'll have a chance to visit another wildlife reserve before leaving Ghana.

All the Best,

Abby