

## SIMPLE STEPS TO BECOMING A VOLUNTEER



### Required skills:

- No skills are required but you must speak some English.
- The work is suitable for all ages and volunteers are warmly welcomed at all times of the year.
- Volunteers will usually assist the untrained teaching staff and the two orphanage “mothers”, plus contribute to the general interaction with the 40 children at the home. These children crave contact with the outside world, and the little ones desperately need help because there are too few adult staff members to cover their everyday needs.
- You will be living on the farm with the children and their carers so your hours must be flexible: the busy times are outside of school hours.
- There are no restrictions on time taken away to explore the local area and enjoy tourist attractions.

Volunteers will enjoy their stay far more if they are acquainted with the cultural differences and the difficulties faced by everyone living in this environment

### Formalities: Placement forms etc.

- The management at Volta Home do not do paper work; booking forms; instructions; documents; duty rosters or questionnaires. Your itinerary and daily schedule is up to you.
- It is useful to contact previous volunteers or check the blogs on the website so that you can give some thought to what you might like to contribute.



### Address of The Volta Home

The orphanage is at Ve-Deme (Deme Road), just 25 minutes by bus (trotro) before the town of Hohoe in the Volta Region and 4 or 5 hours north of Accra by bus. Just ask the bus driver to put you down at Vedeme Junction.

### Costs

- 200 cedis (the local currency) is payable on arrival and covers the accommodation and all meals for any visit up to and including 2 weeks. After 2 weeks the cost for accommodation and meals is 100 cedis per week, or for part of any extra week.
- A donation of 20 cedis (\$15 US) is traditionally given to Mrs Annabi (directly to Mrs Annabi). This donation is used to pay wages to any women who help her. This fee will NOT be paid for you by your agency (if you are using an agency) so be sure to pay it yourself if you want to be respected by the cook!
- The fees here are very low in comparison to other orphanages. That is because there is an expectation for volunteers to help towards the cost of buying medications; eggs and fruit; clothing etc. and donating towards the wages for women helpers. Agencies must be aware that this is traditionally why the fees are so low. Extra money paid to Pastor Annabi will not necessarily be spent on the needs of the orphaned children. His buildings (etc) and the school take priority. That is why we have taken on this responsibility independently.

### Accommodation

- Volunteers are housed on the premises in a building that was built especially for this purpose. It has 3 bedrooms; basic furniture and electricity.
- There is no running water at Volta Home but volunteers have their own toilet and shower block which is similar to that used by most families in this area.

### When you are decided:

- Email [info@volthome.org](mailto:info@volthome.org) and give details of your planned dates for volunteering at the orphanage:
- Feel free to ask any questions or request the contact email address of a previous volunteer.
- You will then be directed to leave a message for Pastor Annabi on [isaac.mawuena@yahoo.com](mailto:isaac.mawuena@yahoo.com) giving him details of your plans; date of arrival and consent to pay the accommodation fees by calculating according to the costs given here

### To be better Prepared:

- Check through the website thoroughly and read the blogs for a better understanding of the orphanage.
- Download the "cultural advice" blurb via a prompt and read it carefully
- Contact ex-volunteers for further information so you are better prepared for the more negative aspects of the Home in areas of management; nutrition; discipline; childcare and visitor relationships.
- Google for information about Hohoe tourist attractions and plan to spend a few days on the Cape Coast before you leave Ghana.
- Consult your local medical practice about any necessary vaccinations (allow 3 weeks).
- Apply for your visitor's visa at least 3 weeks before leaving.



If you speak English you will find travelling in Ghana is easy.

- It is quite simple to travel from Accra to Vedeme Junction or to Hohoe by bus and we suggest you make these arrangements after enjoying a night or two in Accra. The Lonely Planet offers the best advice re accommodation and transport in Western Africa, so we suggest you download the Ghana section from the Internet before you travel.
- No airport tax is required in Ghana.
- Take a few US dollars with you as these will always be accepted and will get you by until you find an eftpos machine. Catch a city shuttle, or a taxi to Osu (a popular suburb) will cost less than \$5 but you must haggle! In Osu you will find a comfortable place to stay for less than \$40 per night.
- Buses leave regularly from the Tudu Lorry Station and take about 5 hours to get to Vedeme Junction, but they leave when they are full or when they are ready! The cost of this trip is less than \$5
- No one at Volta Home has a car and nor do they drive - so if they offer to meet you and escort you to Volta Home you will be paying their return bus fare etc. We suggest you do this simple journey alone.
- Try to get an early bus or tro-tro so that you are not finding your way to the orphanage in the dark!
- Everyone you speak to will be willing to help - and most will speak some English.

Ask the driver to put you out at Vedeme Junction, before Hohoe (pronounced Ho – hoi). From here it is easy to find your way to the Volta Home. The orphanage is a 3-minute walk from the junction, and is well sign-posted.

Hohoe is another 25 minutes on from Vedeme Junction. It is a great little town and some volunteers choose to continue in the bus and spend a night at any of the small hotels, before heading back to Volta Home the next day.

Things to pack - or to buy before you reach the orphanage:

- A sleeping bag and light sheet.
- Long sleeved shirts and trousers for protection from mosquitos in the evening
- Clothing; check [www.weatherbase.com](http://www.weatherbase.com) for seasonal weather temperatures.
- A torch
- An appropriate plug adaptor for your electricity appliances
- Note that you cannot carry liquids of more than 100ml in the aircraft cabin, so we suggest you buy most of your supplies in Accra and travel very lightly on the plane.
- Gifts for the children can best be bought in Hohoe where they will be lifestyle related – see the volunteer comments on “Advice for Volunteers” for help in this regard.
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Things to buy in Accra

- \$2 SIM card and some pre-paid credit for your mobile
- A few newspapers for the teachers at Volta Home - they will be greatly appreciated
- Other supplies: water; biscuits; disinfectant; soap; washing powder; toilet paper; a towel; a bucket; sun-block; extra mosquito repellent; disinfectant to add to shower water; and drinking water

Hohoe is about 25 minutes from the orphanage and has extensive markets and stores if you need extra supplies.

- It also has an Internet café - there is no Internet at Volta Home.
- The pharmacy in Hohoe will know how best to solve any health issues arising from living in this environment. They have all the regular over-the-counter medications.
- There is an eftpos machine at the Hohoe Barclays bank in Hohoe. Be sure to travel with a visa card as many other cards do not work well in West Africa.

Security

- After you have accounted for your accommodation expenses you will not need money at Volta Home. The Orphanage does not have much security and is open to the community, so you must take this into account and take full responsibility for your possessions. It is not far to the eftpos in Hohoe when you need to do any shopping or buy gifts of food and medications for the Home.
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Finally: Make a note to ring Pastor Annabi “Gran’pa” when you land in Accra (020900 6621) and tell him clearly when you plan to arrive at Volta Home. Mrs Annabi will need to prepare your meals so be careful to give keep them informed. The children will be waiting to welcome you!

*Bon Voyage*

*This special experience will bring you many beautiful friendships*