



MAN ON A MISSION

GHANA-BORN CARRIER HELPS NEEDY IN HIS HOMETLAND

When Emmanuel Anim-Sackey carries the mail in the middle class neighborhoods along his route in West Orange, New Jersey, he brings along with him vivid memories of the poverty he left behind in his native Ghana, nearly 5,000 miles away in western Africa.

It's this sharp contrast of images that has inspired "Baba," as his friends from New Jersey Merged Branch 38 know him, to sift through scores of North Jersey yard sales and thrift stores over the last several years, gathering up used clothes, shoes, school supplies and other treasures. His goal: to personally deliver these simple possessions to his friends and relatives who still live in Abetifi-Kwahu, his small home village situated about 100 miles north of Accra, Ghana's capital.

"I come from a poor neighborhood," said the carrier, who grew up the youngest of nine children. "Ever since I came to the United States, I've tried to help those still in Ghana."

Anim-Sackey's mission started out simply enough. When the letter carrier wasn't tending to his route (or working his part-time night job at Newark Airport), he spent whatever spare time he had hunting for clothing, books and toys—cast-offs in this country that would be considered luxuries back home. However, the generous Ghanaian was forced to limit his collections to what he could afford to ship overseas or carry with him on an airplane.

Surging support

Several months before his most recent trip last spring, though, he casually mentioned what he was doing to some fellow shoppers at a neighborhood yard sale and word of Anim-Sackey's cause soon spread throughout West Orange. Dozens of residents

Opposite page: New Jersey Merged Branch 38 member Emmanuel “Baba” Anim-Sackey delivers mail to 11-year-old Tyler Viezel, a youngster who has been active in collecting supplies for Anim-Sackey’s cause.

Photo by Robert Sciarino/The Star-Ledger

got behind their letter carrier and his charity campaign. Businesses and families all over town began to solicit donated items on Baba’s behalf. One resourceful customer on the NALC member’s route organized a school-supplies drive and managed to collect enough notebooks, filler paper and pens to fill 150 backpacks.

“The whole township got involved,” the 49-year-old letter carrier marveled.

As luck would have it, West Orange Mayor John McKeon lives on Anim-Sackey’s regular route. When he learned of the letter carrier’s venture, the mayor invited Baba to appear on his local cable access television show to talk about it and to discuss living conditions in Ghana. Ghana is slightly smaller than Oregon and the country is rich compared to its neighbors in sub-Saharan Africa, but wealth is relative—the per capita GDP in Ghana is \$1,500 a year; in the United States it’s \$48,000.

“We complain about these tough economic times and our burdens,” McKeon told the *Newark Star-Ledger*, but Anim-Sackey provides “a good reality check,” he said. McKeon later issued a proclamation on the town’s behalf officially “adopting” the village of Abetifi-Kwahu.

More than a satchel-full

The enthusiasm of Anim-Sackey’s customers and friends helped create a mountain of contributions—enough to fill a donated 20-foot shipping container. Fortunately, a number of supporters gave enough money to cover the \$4,000-plus shipping costs. And Rep. Bill Pascrell, whose 8th Congressional District embraces the 45,000 residents of West Orange, helped cut through some red tape to expedite the shipment’s journey through customs.

Soon, the town’s collections were on a boat bound for the Gulf of Guinea, and when Anim-Sackey arrived in Abetifi-Kwahu to distribute the donations, he was shocked to find hundreds of villagers waiting to greet him.

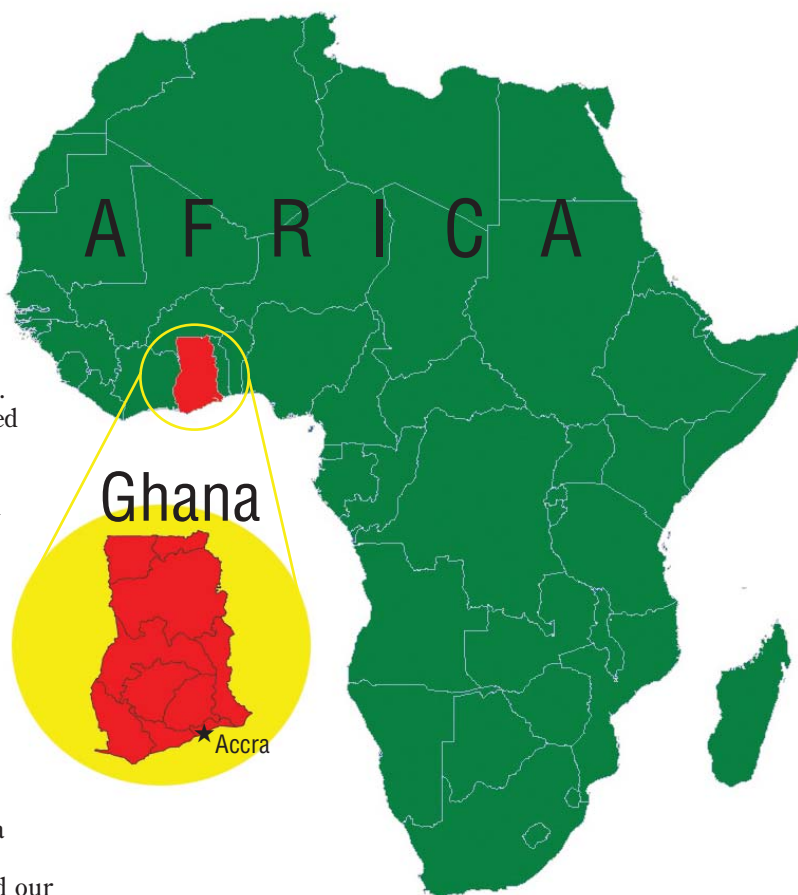
Most surprising, he said, was the number of children who showed up, “excited and clapping their hands.” Teachers and village leaders aided the carrier in making sure the donated goods went where they were most needed.

Anim-Sackey’s recent successes have inspired him to dream about one day starting a library in Abetifi-Kwahu to store and share the donated books, and he has ambitions to eventually open an Internet café there.

Meanwhile, as this issue of *The Postal Record* was being prepared, the letter carrier was preparing for another journey across the Atlantic and hoping the donations he takes with him to Ghana will exceed last year’s bounty.

“God brought me here for a purpose,” Anim-Sackey told the *Star-Ledger*. “I have to help the people I left behind.” ✉

Baba Anim-Sackey can be reached through New Jersey Merged Branch 38’s office at 374 Morris Ave., Springfield, NJ 07081 or 973-564-7244.



G H A N A	
Capital:	Accra
Official language:	English
Government:	Constitutional presidential republic
	<i>Independence from the United Kingdom</i>
	★ Declared March 6, 1957
	★ Republic July 1, 1960
	★ Constitution April 28, 1992
Area:	92,098 sq. mi.
Population:	23,000,000 (2008 estimate)
Gross Domestic Product (per capita):	\$1,500 (purchasing power parity)
Flag:	