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## HOPE returns in force to Ghana

By Jessica J. Burchard  
*The Winchester Star*

**Winchester** — Project HOPE is providing support and medical supplies to two locations in the Republic of Ghana during a four-week humanitarian mission.

On Feb. 20, 12 volunteers and two staff members from the Millwood-based international health care nonprofit arrived in the West African country aboard the U.S.S. Nashville.

Their first stop in Ghana was the Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital and the second at the Essikado clinic.

They are scheduled to return home on Tuesday.

At the regional hospital, volunteers assisted with a midwifery program.

"In these countries, the use of a midwife is very important," said Marisol Euceda, media relations specialist with Project HOPE, during a phone interview Sunday morning. "When we come here, it's important to show the midwives how to keep the children safe."

The country's 2000 census estimated the population at 18,912,079, with an expected growth rate of 2.7 percent annually, according to the newspaper Web site [www.modernghana.com](http://www.modernghana.com).

"There are lots of babies being born here," Euceda said. "One of the midwives told me that it's baby season here."

No medication is given to women during the birthing process, Euceda said.

Euceda witnessed her first childbirth while observing the volunteers in action. She is photographing and documenting their experiences on a blog, [www.projecthopeinthefield.blogspot.com](http://www.projecthopeinthefield.blogspot.com).

Project HOPE collaborated with the Navy to offer aid to Ghanaian children and families as part of the African Partnership Station mission. This is the organization's second trip to Ghana, and the 11th with the Navy.

Since it began in 1958, Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People




First-time Project HOPE volunteer Lara Holbrook, a nurse midwife from Cambridge Health Alliance in Cambridge, Mass., works with a newborn baby at the Effia-Nkwanta Regional Hospital in Ghana.  
 (Photo provided by Project HOPE)





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### Events Calendar

March 2009						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### Upcoming Events

- 3/10 [Shenandoah Valley Christian Academy Kindergarten Open House](#)
- 3/10 [Top of Virginia Regional Chamber Business After Hours](#)
- 3/13 [Shenandoah Valley Christian Academy Open House](#)
- 3/13 [MSV Galleries at Night: Focus on Art](#)
- 3/14 [SURF & TURF](#)

(STUFFED PORK & FRIED OYSTER) DINNER

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Everywhere) has helped millions of people across the globe. The organization was established under President Dwight D. Eisenhower's administration as a way for Americans to bring health education and improved health care to communities around the world.

Project HOPE volunteers in Ghana have seen a total of 1,175 patients, attended 19 births, written 1,946 prescriptions, and conducted 1,088 education interactions, according to information from the organization's communication offices in Millwood.

During their time at the Essikado clinic, the volunteers worked directly to train several medical staffers.

"The physical therapist is working with two other physical therapists at the hospital," Euceda said. "One is really young and basically has been out of school a year and the other one is a resident."

A pediatrician and a few nurses are also working at the clinic.

Euceda said the physicians in Ghana see and treat illnesses they don't see in the United States — the most common being malaria and sickle cell anemia.

"Ghana still needs help with medical supplies, but it's not as bad as other countries," Euceda said.

Ghana became an independent country on March 6, 1957, and a republic on July 1, 1960.

Prior to her visit to Ghana, Euceda worked for Project HOPE in Liberia.

She said she is keenly aware that the Project HOPE representatives need to respect Ghanaian culture.

"Everybody's pretty open to suggestions we make," she said. "It's all about forming a relationship, so you cannot go in making demands."

Project HOPE is always looking for qualified medical personnel to volunteer for its missions. To learn more about the opportunities, contact Carter Hall offices at 1-800-544-4673.

[www.projecthope.org](http://www.projecthope.org)

— Contact Jessica J. Burchard at [jburchard@winchesterstar.com](mailto:jburchard@winchesterstar.com)

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