

Livingston County Chamber of Commerce
Mission Ghana – Memorandum of Friendship

November 2009

Farewell Speech, Monday, November 25th
Mac Dic Royal Plaza Hotel
Korforidua, Ghana

I would like to acknowledge and thank Daasebre for the invitation to visit the New Juaben and the Akwantukese Festival.

Since I first met Daasebre at the Rochester, New York Airport and he spoke to a crowd of welcomers I have had the deepest respect for his wisdom, his love of the New Juaben and it's people, and his open mindedness to see the value in forming a partnership with the City of Rochester and the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce.

When I was elected to serve as the Vice-Chair of the New York State Chamber of Commerce the Daasabre was one of the first to send me a congratulatory message.

I would like to thank the Municipal Chief Executive for Meeting with me twice this past week and for providing support for the many things we have done and seen. Important to the message I will bring back to the United States.

I would also like to thank the owner of the Royal Plaza Hotel. The quality of the facility and the professional staff are beyond compare. Everyone at the hotel has made us feel comfortable and at home.

Everyone here tonight has in some way befriended my son and I. You have shown sincere friendship in helping me learn about Ghana and the New Juaben.

I would especially like to thank my friends that traveled to Rochester and Livingston County two years ago.

I would like to thank the Chief, Nana and Queen Mother who have accompanied my son and I throughout the week, paving the way for us to understand all that we were experiencing. They have both enriched our stay with their friendship and guidance. Thank you, Daasebre.

I want to share with you three concrete and momentous events that have occurred due to our partnership and the fruits of this visit:

1. The creation of the New Juaben Regional Chamber of Commerce
 - Interim Executive Committee and Interim Board of Directors
 - Two meeting dates set for development of bylaws and projects

2. The creation of a Women's Leadership Committee
 - Beautification project identified
 - Young Women's Leadership Club leaders identified

3. A New Juaben page on the Livingston County Chamber of Commerce website with links to the New York State Chamber site with businesses, schools, government listings along with pictures. This is a modern and simple way to connect businesses and tourists with the New Juaben. I will start this project immediately on my return.

Our wise Daasebre encouraged my son and I to visit Cape Coast, the White Castle and see for ourselves what our President, Barack Obama saw when he visited just a few months ago. With the help of the Municipal Chief Executive that trip was made possible. It was a wonderful journey. The history behind the castle, the beautiful ocean, stopping at fruit and shrimp stands along the way, and of course visiting the Kwakum National Forest. I am still shaking from the rope bridges.

Last but not least, four years ago I met a man with a vision and a love for his birth country, Ghana. He was determined to engage people around him to form a Partnership of Friendship that would benefit business, education and culture on both sides of the ocean. Dr. Victor Berko-Boateng, Nana, has inspired all of us to say, "Yes we can!" I am forever grateful.

I will miss all of you but you will stay in my heart. Thank you.