

2017

3RD QUARTER REPORT



RAINING

10/9/2017

Executive Summary

Autism Awareness Care and Training (AACT), is a local support and education centre for children with autism that was founded in 1998 by Mrs. Serwah Quaynor, a mother of a child with autism. AACT is committed to supporting individuals and families affected by Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

This report summarizes the various activities undertaken by AACT over the 3rd quarter of 2017.

AACT made strategic alliances with a number of organizations namely; Mentors Chess Academy, Sisters Keeper Foundation, A. B. Business Consultancy, Wolfpack Consult, Ark International School, and Kings College International School.

AACT continued with its structured behaviour modules, academic, social and life skills training that helps children with autism develop further. Sensory, and communication skills also continuing.

The children were engaged in clay moulding, beading, painting, papier mache, etcetera, as part of AACT's art therapy project. The tactile nature of the clay helped our children to develop their imaginations, sensory, hand-eye coordination and motor skills while having fun.

Dance and Movement and therapy was adopted to give our children the opportunity to learn sounds and meaning of words, build their motor skills and strengthen their memory skills through continuous practise of self-expression. They learnt how to play the various musical instruments specifically, the piano, drum and xylophone. Movement therapy helps support their intellectual, emotional and motor functions.

AACT continued the use of the media, social media and print media as a regular tool for awareness creation. TV appearances and radio presentations were made on some selected media stations. Also, many write-ups on autism and what AACT does were posted on Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter.

Continued trainings were organized for caregivers, and volunteers on autism and the best practices to adopt to improve the care given to our children with autism.

In line with the inclusive education policy, AACT sent five (5) children to join the mainstream school to learn how to cope with new environments, situations as well as socialize and interact with their regular peers in the mainstream schools. Despite the progress and advancements made over this quarter, we still encountered some challenges. Most of our children are not coming to receive training due to the inability of their parents to pay for training. Therefore, we need financial assistance or sponsorship for those children so they can receive quality education and training they need.

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Introduction

This report covers three months (July, August and September) of 2017. Over this period, we focused on our core activities, in particular:

- ❖ Teaching and training of children with autism (to improve on their behaviour, academics, social and life skills for social inclusion in both the family and the community)
- ❖ Inclusion of children with autism in the mainstream schools for support in their academic work and social integration.
- ❖ General public and media awareness on autism.
- ❖ Training of mainstream teachers, resource teachers, and students on autism and the need for children with autism to be accepted in the society.

Autism Awareness Care and Training

1.0 Revenue

No.	Description	Amount (Ghs)
01.	Child Subscription	15,100.00
02.	In-Cash Donations	1,500.00
03.	In-Kind Donations	4,500.00
Grand Total		<u>21,100.00</u>

Autism Awareness Care and Training

2.0 Program Management



AACT received one female National Service Personnel by name Miss Karen Odonkor from the National Service Secretariat to join its diversified current team. She has some experience with regards to working with children with autism in the past. Her presence has added up to the skills and performance base of AACT management.

During this same period, AACT received a female caregiver returnee by name Miss Jacklin Amoo famously known as Naa. Naa left for Akosombo in July 2015 to help with the Akosombo Special School, but returned to AACT in April, 2017 to continue her work with our children. Naa has experience in handling children with autism and her return has become a blessing to AACT. All to the benefit of our children with autism.

3.0 Strategic Alliance



Over the quarter, AACT has made new alliances with some key partners including Mentors Chess Academy (who trains caregivers and children with autism how to play chess). Sisters Keeper (an organization committed to raising funds to support vulnerable people), A. B.

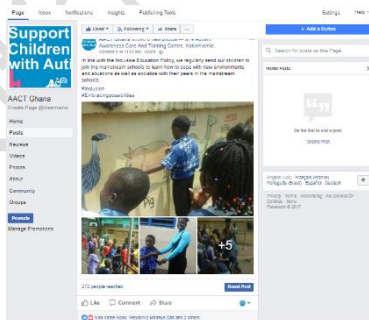


Business Consultancy (Consultants in Corporate Advisory, Tax and Business Support Services committed to supporting persons with autism as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR), Wolfpack Consult(CSR), Ark International School, Kings College School.

This is all in the interest of promoting awareness of autism so as to reduce the stigmatization associated with autism and to promote inclusion of persons with autism in the mainstream schools and the communities in Ghana.



4.0 Communication/Awareness Creation



As part of our core mandate to create awareness and educate the society about autism, AACT continues to use social media, radio and TV stations to reach out to the general public. Over the quarter, many write-ups about the magnificent works our children do at the centre were posted on Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and website platforms.

Also inspiring stories were shared on these platforms to portray the unique abilities children with autism possess. Radio and Television stations were not left out to further the cause of creating awareness

and educating the general public on autism

5.0 Teaching and Training of Children with Autism

AACT continued with its structured behaviour modules, academic training, and social and life skills training that aids our children to develop their intellectual capacities and other sensory, communication and social skills.

5.1 Assessment

This quarter saw the assessment of about four children who at the time, were suspected to be on the autism spectrum. After the assessment, all the four children were found to be on the autism spectrum. Due to financial constraint of the parents, the four children couldn't enrol with AACT to receive training.

However, efforts are being taken by AACT to get sponsorship for these children. The parents of the four assessed children said they found us through friends in the community and the internet.



5.2 Art Therapy



Our art therapy project which was sponsored by the North American Women Association – NAWA ended this quarter. The various activities undertaken during the project period greatly aided our children to develop and enhance their sensory, fine and gross motor and eye-hand coordination skills. Our children were able to produce beautiful masterpieces of which AACT sells to generate income for its sustainability.

Even though our art therapy project period expired, AACT continued with its normal lesson plan for art therapy as it used to do. Our children were engaged in different art activities ranging from painting, bead and craft work, clay moulding and papier mache.

5.3 Ceramics

There is something very therapeutic about playing with clay even as an adult. During the art therapy project period, clay moulding was adopted as part of the activities undertaken by our children. The tactile nature of the clay helps our children to develop their imaginations and motor skills while having fun.



5.4 Dance and Movement



The music and movement program is a form of therapy that gives our children the opportunity to learn sounds and the meaning of words, build their motor skills and strengthen their memory skills through continuous practice.

Our children learnt how to play the various musical instruments specifically, the piano, drum and xylophone. They loved the songs sang along as the instruments were played by both themselves and their caregivers.

5.5 Inclusion into mainstream school

In line with the inclusive education policy, we continued to send our children to join the mainstream school to learn how to cope with new environments, situations as well as socialize and interact with their regular peers in the mainstream schools.



Over the quarter, about five (5) of our children were sent to mainstream schools located in our neighbourhood. They include Ark International School, and Kings College School. As a result of our inclusion program, our children are able to interact, socialize and cope in unfamiliar environments.

6.0 Training for Caregivers



Over the quarter, AACT trained about twenty-five (25) caregivers and two (2) volunteers. The training focused on best practices to adopt when handling children with autism. The trainees had the opportunity to ask questions, contribute and share their thoughts concerning the subject area.

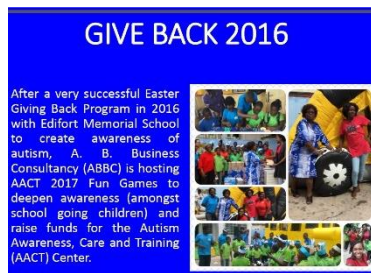
7.0 Other Programs and Activities

7.1 SmileyFest

Wolfpack Konsult in collaborations with AACT organized a SmileyFest program for children with developmental disability including, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, etc. SmileyFest is a fun family day filled with games for children with developmental challenges as well as their siblings. The program saw all these children come together to have fun, play together and enjoy themselves to the fullest. It was a great and memorable experience especially for our children with autism.



7.2 AACT 2017 FUN GAMES



After a successful Easter Giving back program in 2016 with Edifort Memorial School to create awareness on autism, A. B. Business Consultancy (ABBC) is hosting AACT 2017 fun games to deepen awareness (amongst school going children) and raise funds to support the Autism Awareness Care and Training Centre

8.0 Challenges

Despite the progress achieved over the 3rd quarter, AACT encountered some challenges. Most of our children are not coming to receive training due to the inability of their parents to pay for the cost of training of their children. Therefore, we need financial assistance to sponsor these children receive the quality education and training they need.

9.0 Conclusion

AACT continues to be sustainable through our social enterprise module, by selling our art and bead works, the contributions of parents, cash donations and the in-kind donation from friends of AACT and volunteers.

CHANGE STORY OF JULIA ABOAGYE MENSAH



Julia is 10 years 3 months old and currently lives with her mother. She joined the Autism Awareness Care and Training Centre (AACT) in July 12th, 2013. Before Julia joined AACT, she was assessed and diagnosed with Microcephalus and Autism Spectrum Disorder. She had poor attention and listening skills and difficult attending to activities as she kept flitting between objects and toys. She showed little understanding of spoken language and not toilet trained. She couldn't hold the pencil well, eat with her fingers and brush her teeth and hair. Julia chews on non-edible objects (such as plastic bottles) and obsessed with sachet water. She does not interact with peers during play. She most likely to be on her own. She cries when she feels uncomfortable. She loves to make sounds and clap her hands.

As a result of the intervention strategies put in place by AACT, She is now able to turn take during group activities with verbal and physical prompts. She has good situational understanding in highly familiar situations and follows basic familiar instructions supplemented by gesture, such as sit down, come here (with pointing), can make meaning from context but appears to have difficulty with following less predictable simple commands like 'point to cup', 'show me the banana'. She approaches others with smiles and now picks things she likes from anywhere she walks into. She is now able to hold the brush, spoon and feed herself with support. Her level of contribution during lessons has picked up a bit more in terms of her actions. She can climb the slide by herself and slide down with no support, while keeping herself upright as opposed to previous times when she would end up lying during the sliding.

She is able to hold onto a slinky and the spiky ball for a long time. She is able to scribble and colour but can't keep within the boundaries. She is able to use the toilet PECS to communicate when she wants to visit the washroom with prompt. She is now learning how to use the water PECS. Julia has come a long way and continues to be challenged even further to gain vocational skills that can be useful as a full adult person. We are grateful for the support from parents as well that has made her program effective.