

## 400 Years and an Ocean Apart

Written by Robert ID785

Friday, 28 January 2005 05:58 -

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Nine months in the making, "400 Years and an Ocean Apart" was a collaboration between Sankofa and C.A. Benjamin Associates, LLC. The film is being shown to selected audiences throughout the month of February 2005 in celebration of Black History month. Sankofa has also announced that any additional showings can be requested by contacting Sankofa International, Inc. Sankofa will also be returning to Ghana, West Africa again in 2006 and beyond. The trips are open to anyone who is interested in "Going Back, Giving Back, and Bringing Back - the knowledge of their heritage and the wisdom of their past".

In addition to reconnecting African Americans back to their African roots, the mission and great works of Sankofa is worthy of attention. This organization serves as a true model for those who understand the need to "Go Back, Give Back, and Bring Back". Sankofa strives to make a difference in the lives of those less fortunate and to give a new purpose in life to those more fortunate.

Sankofa International Inc.'s mission is to enhance the quality of life of needy Africans living in rural African villages, especially children. This is a holistic approach that includes, but is not limited to, health care, basic education, housing, sanitation, and finance. With continued oversight, Sankofa provides a consistent and organized foundation, along with the technical guidance and assistance needed so that problem areas can be addressed effectively at the grass roots level. Short to mid-term, the expected outcome is continued growth and development to help eliminate problem areas. Long-term, the expected outcome is the creation of villages and a people who are self-sustaining.

Sankofa is currently operating within the Ashanti region of Ghana and has been doing so since 1994. The two villages targeted are Adum Afrancho and Odumasi. However, through effective outreach programs, Sankofa has already begun to make a positive impact on other surrounding villages. To date, SANKOFA has taken electricity into the villages, restored the foundation for the aging village school, built a new wing for the school, completed medical exams for over 300 students and teachers, awarded Secondary School Scholarships to six graduating students, conducted HIV-AIDS education, and implemented an international educational pen-pal program involving village students and students in the United States.

Sankofa International's founder, Mr. Richard C. Willis, envisions an Africa where rural villages are self-sustaining and have all the comforts offered in most communities in the United States. A graduate of the University of the District of Columbia's graduate schools of Counseling and Psychology, Mr. Willis has taken on a monumental task in relieving some of the burden from the

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government of Ghana. In recognition and support of his efforts, the Supreme Chief of the Ashanti Kingdom, Otumfou Osei Tutu II, Unanimously, along with his people agreed to appoint Mr. Willis their Tribal Chief for Economic Development under the stool name Nana Asamoah Akenten.

Since its founding in 1994, up through 1999, Sankofa had not received any corporate/government sponsorship; therefore, for the most part, Sankofa founders have again paid out-of-pocket for the Program, and individual donations made during fundraisers have been used to cover program expenses in Ghana. To date, there has not been a time whereby individual donations covered, in full, all expenses in Ghana. The Founders and a handful of supporters have always made up the difference. Mr. Willis attributes this to his faith in God and the dedication of Sankofa's supporters.

Sankofa has received recognition both nationally and internationally for its programs. For example, Fox T.V. news covered Sankofa's annual fundraiser and aired portions of the program over the air. CNN and Comcast aired a story on Sankofa. Also, the Prince George's Journal in Maryland printed a front page article on Sankofa's efforts. In Ghana, the Ghana News printed an article covering medical exams and scholarships for village students. Additionally, Sankofa officials were interviewed on Ghana's FM radio station. Finally, as a result of Sankofa's efforts, Sankofa officials were invited to the palace of Otumfou Osei Tutu II, the Supreme Ashanti Leader.

Watch the trailer [HERE](#) .

Sankofa International Inc. is a 501(c)(3) public charity as is continually looking for both public and private support to continue this worth-while mission.

Richard C. Willis, Chief Executive Officer

Yaw Fobi Agyapong, Treasurer

Everett W. Hackney, Secretary

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