

Woman on a mission to outfit orphanage in Ghana

By Julie Slack
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Ginger Gyimah-Boakye's house is almost filled to the ceiling with boxes and boxes of supplies, all headed to Ghana.

She's on a mission to outfit an orphanage for 300 children who live on the streets of Wamafo, in the Ba Region of the developing country.

Ghana is taking care of the physical building, but the Milton woman — who is in the process of changing her name to her Ghanaian name, Nana Akua Makafui — has offered to collect all it needs to run smoothly.

She spearheaded a local fundraising campaign, collecting clothing, books, hygiene products and medical supplies. It will be shipped over the coming months in time for the orphanage's dedication in October.

Having grown up in foster care, Nana knows firsthand how troubled life can be.

As a three-year-old child, she said she knew her calling. Growing up, she watched docu-

mentaries on slavery.

"It would break my heart," she said. "I wanted to make a difference. I didn't know how, or what."

As she matured, she started a career in health care, making different connections and networking. She began going to a Ghanaian church in Oakville and "totally fell in love with the culture and the people. I identified with them."

And despite her nationality, she said she's more African than Canadian.

"There's a saying, I'm not African because I was born in Africa, but I'm African because Africa was born in me," said Nana, who is Milton's first Habitat for Humanity homeowner.

The first time she went to Africa was six years ago and she has been back several times since. Each time it takes her longer and longer to adjust when she returns to Canada.

She's such a frequent visitor she has been named a Queen. The Kings and Queens Association in Toronto installed her as a Queen in the Royal Ghanaian Royal House of



Ginger Gyimah-Boakye, who goes by her Ghanaian name Nana Akua Makafui, is photographed with a young child during a recent trip to Ghana. *Supplied photo*

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