



**W**ELCOME, DEAR READERS, TO THE MAIDEN ISSUE OF *AFRICA ALIVE!* The exclamation point is part of our magazine's title to be sure, but it also expresses the enthusiasm with which I greet you. This magazine is a vehicle for delivering vital, easily digestible health and fitness information to those of us with relatively poor or no access to the internet and a tool for achieving the number one goal of The Longevity Project (the Project).

Before I elaborate on that goal, let me tell you a little about the Project. The Project is a not-for-profit, public-benefit organization (an NGO) whose *mission is to increase the life expectancy and quality of life of Ghanaians*. It is in a sense a pilot organization, the success of which will impel the development of similar organizations throughout Africa for the benefit of their respective host countries. We will tell you more about this continent-wide effort as time goes by; for now, suffice it to say that, in full agreement with Ralph Waldo Emerson that "the first wealth is health," a movement is under way to improve the health of Africans.

Increased public awareness of health issues and their solutions has been cited as the single most critical factor in increasing life expectancy in the U.S. population (which used to be, around the time of their Great Depression, as low as Ghana's is now<sup>1</sup>) and elsewhere. Thus, increased public awareness of health issues and the link between lifestyle choices and health is the number one goal of the Project and is also the *raison d'être* of this publication. We believe that prevention is emphatically better than the cure; it is generally more effective and efficient and less expensive and painful too. Thus, the bias of our articles will generally be in favor of prevention, though we will of course bring you news of curative therapies and practices as well.

We have attempted to create a magazine that readers will pick up time and again and keep around as a handy reference. No one thing can be all things to all people, but we have strived for variety and diversity in both the topics and the viewpoints represented to bring you some balance in perspective.

Given the alarming rates of diabetes and hypertension in the country (Prof. J.O.M. Pobe of Korle-Bu, a member of the Project's Advisory Board, was prompted to characterize the incidence of hypertension in the country as an epidemic), it was a foregone conclusion that these two topics should be treated in the first issue. Thanks to the kind permission of several powerhouses in the area of online health information, we have been able to include the two articles on preventing and/or managing diabetes and hypertension. As if in illustration of just how widespread these two diseases are, they rear their heads in a couple of other articles as well.

The two fundamental lifestyle choices that impact our health and well-being are the foods (or what passes for such) we consume and our level of physical activity or exertion. So, every issue will attempt to entice you with healthy, tasty and attractive foods and dishes and encourage you to get moving. As the Ghana Association of Physiotherapists puts it, "Movement is life." And, in a country in which most people pride themselves on being religious and grateful to their Creator, we might want to consider that taking good care of our health may be the best thanks we can give to God for the gift of life.

Ciao for now.

*A*  
Anna Bannerman-Richter, Editor-in-Chief

*Long live Ghanaians!  
Long live Africans!*

1 Life expectancy in Ghana is currently 58 years. Visit our website, [www.longevityghana.com](http://www.longevityghana.com), for more information and drop us a line regarding your reaction to this statistic.

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