

Healing hands



- Font size: [Decrease](#) ([\(#\)from=\(#\)http://www.thecouriermail.news.com.au/?from=ni_story](#))
- Email article: [Email](#) (</sundaymail/email/popup/0,23830,21275431-5003426,00.html>)
- Print article: [Print](#) ([javascript:print\(\);](#))
- Submit comment: [Submit comment](#) ([#submit-feedback](#))

Bernadette Condren
February 24, 2007 12:00am

A CHANCE conversation between a couple of Gold Coast footy mates means a small village in the West African country of Ghana will have a medical centre by year's end.

Griffith University (<http://www.griffith.edu.au/>) medical student Marty Brewster and his Aussie rules club mate David Loft were chatting one evening, and their thoughts turned to overseas aid.

Brewster and some of his classmates studying medicine and dentistry were looking for an overseas aid project, and Loft was involved with the Gold Coast-based Watson Foundation, a non-profit organisation formed in 2001 to provide support for less advantaged countries.

The Watson Foundation had already made small inroads into establishing a medical centre in the Ghanaian village of Dabaa, on the outskirts of the nation's second largest city of Kumasi, and was interested in expanding the project with some additional fundraising.

Over subsequent weeks sketchy details became solid outlines, and by January a site had been chosen in Dabaa and the Watson Foundation had formed a solid partnership with the Griffith University team **Hope4Health** (<http://www.hope4health.org.au/>).

Brewster, who is president of Hope4Health, and the other committee members now find themselves in a first-time-fundraising whirlwind.

"Everyone that's involved in the project just wanted to do something, make some difference, and since we were in a position to do so it snowballed from there," he said.

"There was also a fair bit of naivety because we didn't know how much work there would be."

Hope4Health's major event is the Out of Africa Jazz Dinner Dance at the Gold Coast Convention and Exhibition Centre on Saturday, May 26, where the Griffith University students aim to raise \$70,000.

The Hope4Health's section of the Dabaa medical centre will have a focus on maternal and child care in a country where one in nine children dies before the age of five from diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria.

The chance of giving birth with the aid of a skilled health professional in Ghana is less than 50 per cent, and the maternal death rate is 540 per 100,000 births – compared with six in Australia.

In a twist of fate, one of the dentistry students involved with Hope4Health is Jenny Perry, whose father Chris is the Royal Australian College of Surgeons Queensland chairman and a Ghana veteran.

Dr Perry first visited Ghana in 1980 as a surgical registrar. Last year Jenny told her father about the project – the news coinciding with his own plans to return to Ghana in January.

"I've worked in the place (Ghana) and love the people, and to have young medical students and dental students getting involved in philanthropy is a great thing," Dr Perry said.

While in Ghana this year, Dr Perry visited the site of the medical centre and is confident the project will benefit the Dabaa townspeople and provide employment opportunities for health professionals from Kumasi.

Construction of the centre will be in two stages, the first of which has begun and is due for completion next month. It will provide a dispensary, laboratory, consulting rooms, immunisation facilities and rooms for minor medical procedures.

Stage two, funded by Hope4Health, will add a maternity ward and family planning clinic and is due to be completed in December.

To find out more about the project visit www.hope4health.org.au

Share this article [What is this?](#) (#)

- [Digg this](#) (#)
- [Post to del.icio.us](#)
(*javascript:location.href='http://del.icio.us/post?v=4;url='+encodeURIComponent(location.href)+';title='+encodeU*)
- [Post to Newsvine](#) (#)



GIVING something back . . . Marty Brewster, centre, with other medical and dental students who are raising funds for a clinic in Ghana. Picture: Adam Head

- Font size: [Decrease](#) (#) [Increase](#) (#)
- Email article: [Email](#) (*/sundaymail/email/popup/0,23830,21275431-5003426,00.html*)
- Print article: [Print](#) (*javascript:print();*)

Ads By Yahoo!

© Queensland Newspapers. All times AEST (GMT + 10).

▣ (<http://mercury.tiser.com.au/adclick/SITE=TCM/AREA=NEWS.ROS/AAMSZ=1x1/pageid=1>)