

Pregnant women advised to seek medical attention to avoid complications

By Diana Mensah

WOMEN have been advised to seek medical attention during pregnancy to minimise difficulties and challenges associated with childbirth.

The Dean of the College of Health Sciences of the University of Ghana, Professor Alfred Yawson, who made the call, said exposure to environmental toxins and heavy metals affected the development of children, causing long-term damage to their health and well-being.

Prof. Yawson gave the advice at the launch of Wood and Wentz Samaritan Heart, a non-governmental organisation (NGO), in Accra last Saturday.

The NGO was formed to provide a safe and inclusive environment for children with special needs. Prof. Yawson emphasised the importance of protecting these children from abuse and neglect, while also ensuring their well-being and development.

"Parents of children with special needs face challenges, isolation and neglect, but can also find love and support in a dedicated society," he said.

He stressed the importance of early diagnosis and prevention of pregnancy-related complications. Prof. Yawson highlighted that parents and guardians of special needs children usually needed support to offset the cost of care, adding that "the cost is not always fiscal,

monetary, but also emotional support base".

He, therefore, urged parents to seek an opportunity to send their children to special schools that provide occupational therapy and support for their growth and development.

Event

The launch was aimed at raising awareness about children living with disabilities and the challenges they face.

The foundation is geared to provide counselling and domestic support for parents with special needs children in the country

while mobilising logistics and providing medical care for them.

A 13-member board was inaugurated to steer the affairs of the foundation.

The foundation was launched in remembrance of the late Ricky Wood, a special needs child born to Reuben and Efua Wood and a foster child to Tory Wentz.

Rationale

The Founder, Reuben Wood, said the gesture was to improve the lives of young special people and their families.

"This organisation was born out of our own difficult experiences in caring for our dear son Ricky, who was a special needs child, and how God sent a Good Samaritan to help us in carrying him across and above, all teaching us how to love these children without limits," he said.

He said the death of his son in 2021 broke their hearts. However, as a family, they decided to look beyond their pain and recognise the message of God's love and hope that surrounded his life.

The Co-founder, Tory Wentz, shared personal memories of Ricky, highlighting his resilience and love for life despite medical and physical challenges.

She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to remember Ricky and to continue his legacy through the foundation established in his honour.

Experience

Ricky's mother, Mrs Efua Wood, shared her experience and the difficulties of raising a child with physical ailments, emphasising the emotional toll it takes on families.

She expressed the hope for continued guidance and assistance for special needs families.

A parent of a special child, Christine Nanapanin Akosua Arhin, also shared the experience of her daughter's medical issues and the challenges of accessing therapies and treatments.



• Reuben Wood (right), Founder of Woods and Wentz Samaritan Heart, with Tory Wentz, Co founder (left) and other board members of the foundation after the launch