“Without food we cannot learn!”; Janet stands confidently in her class of approximately 70 pupils, and answers her teachers question about the importance of school meals. All pupils at Atomic D. A 3 are given daily school meals. The meals make a big difference to the majority of children who go to school on empty stomachs.

Janet is 14 years old and in class 6. She lives alone with her mother, in Dome; a 10 minute walk from school. Her mother is a trader who works at the Dome market. Her favorite food is rice and stew. She happily announces that she eats regular servings of her favorite food in school.

Before the Ghana School Feeding Program (GSFP), students used to pay the head teacher for their meals. Some students could not afford the meals, and were sometimes given their school fees to pay for meals. The school fees would be paid at a later date, when the parents were in a better position to pay. “...Without school meals some pupils can faint in class, others start stealing their friends money, or even stop going to school...” Isaac announces. He is happy with his plate of jollof rice, but wishes there was also the option of yam in school. Isaac’s father is a farmer. Though his father does not supply the GSFP, he is keen to know where the food comes from. Within the homegrown school-feeding program, food is bought from the local farmers; caterers and cooks use this food to prepare nutritious meals for the primary school pupils. In this way a triple win situation is created in which more children go to school, the farmers income increases and children are fed nutritious meals. The pupils have a good understanding of nutritious food. When asked about the importance of nutritious food, they answer almost in unison “It gives us energy!”; Beatrice adds on, “it makes us grow and be healthy” Elizabeth adds on “good food gives us good eyesight”

Along with their daily meals, pupils are given deworming medication under the national deworming intervention supported by PCD and Dubai Cares. Along with the dissemination of deworming medication, the pupils in the class are educated on good hygienic practices to avoid worm infections. All pupils in class 6 know that the easiest way to prevent worm infections is simply by washing hands regularly with soap. They are also taught the value of nutritious meals which will help them grow to one day live their dreams of being anything ranging from doctors to pilots to musicians of the future.