Anthropology major Abby McIntire will spend the next year in Ghana, working as a co-op in the village health clinic she helped create. “I love it there,” she said. “The people are so friendly and vibrant and welcoming. I’ve never seen anyone without a smile when you offer a greeting. I can be gone for two years, and when I return, they remember me.”

As a chief fund-raiser for the clinic, Abby has gathered roughly $7,000 from local churches for structural improvements and medical supplies at the two-person operation that serves the 700-person village of Nsanfo. “When I first started out, the clinic was totally dilapidated,” she said. “We did a lot of exterior work, and fixed the plumbing, painted it and bought furniture for the patients. Now we’re working on improving the clinic itself.”

Abby discovered the simplicity of the farming village when she took her first trip to Ghana as a high school student. She went to teach English and volunteer, and from that point on, was hooked. This will be her fourth visit.

The small village of tin-roofed concrete houses is a second home to the Dover, Mass. native. A host family has adopted her “like a daughter” and generously offers her a place to stay amid the community of rolling hills and dirt roads.

Although McIntire is not yet sure what career path she will take, she intends to interweave her interest in African culture, she said. And in the next year, she will help ensure citizens of the Ghana village receive the medical attention they require. “We see a lot of snake bites and malaria,” she noted.

In November, she’ll be recognized for her efforts when she is named Queen Mother of Development, a designation of high honor in the community. Her own mother plans to attend.

While she is at the clinic, McIntire hopes to work to create volunteer co-op positions for Northeastern nursing students at the clinic. “It’s a pretty grassroots effort,” she says. “I love it.”