

THE AFRICAN CONNECTION

A Quarterly Newsletter of East African Village Outreach (EAVO)

Introduction: Our executive director, Seifu Ibssa, travelled to Ethiopia in September and was able to help establish an association of college graduates EAVO supported during their high school and college years. We hope that this association will continue the life changing work EAVO. Here is his report:

An Association is Born: *(By Seifu Ibssa)*

In the past 12 years since we began our high school / college programs, a total of 46 students, all from Acheber village, have graduated from universities and colleges. With one or two exceptions, all have joined the workforce as engineers, accountants, bankers, nurses, teachers, etc.

My brother Hailu, who is heading the high school and college programs for EAVO, has been dreaming about establishing an association of these fine graduates for quite some time. Our objective is to have these graduates continue and expand the work EAVO began a decade ago.

Acheber college graduates meeting to form an Association

A few months before I travelled to Ethiopia, I sent out a call through Facebook to all the graduates we supported. Most were out of town for work or for the holiday, but 15 of them attended a meeting at a hotel about five minutes' walk from where Hailu lives. We were joined by a sympathetic mentor and volunteer, also from Acheber region, whose job is to consult with the government.

It is a tradition to have an older person bless a meeting before it begins, so I asked my brother to bless our meeting. He then made a short speech that was very moving for the attendants – some were moved to tears. He said, “My dear sons and daughters, I am now aging. I turned 79 this past March. I cannot continue the work I started with my younger brother, Seifu. Please take this responsibility from me”.

The participants quickly began discussing what to do and how to go about making a difference in the village in which they were born--how to change the lives of the young and the old. They chose five committee members to explore ideas, to come up with bylaws and an appropriate name for the organization, and to call a meeting within six months. Hailu and I were ecstatic about the formation of this alumni group. We told them we will be the first two members of the organization and continue to support them with ideas and finances. It was a day of jubilation! A day of passing the torch from our generation to the next.

Away From Family:

Although a high school has been built in Acheber after many obstacles, only 9th and 10th grade students are able to get their educations while they still live with their families. The 11th and 12th grade students must travel about five hours to the nearest town for high school. Currently, EAVO pays for their rent and provides them with mattresses and other essentials. Thanks to your gifts, four students from the poorest of the poor families also get financial support for their food.

Hailu (background) with his 11th and 12th grade students

Hailu periodically knocks at the door of the government's education bureau--lobbying them to send teachers to Acheber for these 11th and 12th grade students. Please continue to pray for these students who study away from their homes and families. And thank you for your continued donations to support our efforts to ensure these students' futures.

Church School Transferred:

We are pleased to inform our donors that Bethel Evangelical Church (the Ethiopian fellowship in Sacramento CA) has agreed to take full responsibility for the church school EAVO began supporting in Endegagn ten years ago. The school was originally built 35 years ago with the help of Bethel Church's current pastor, Tamirat Haile Weshebo, but it was in disrepair when EAVO agreed to help. Thanks to you, we upgraded the school from preschool to 1-4th grade, complete with an office and 8 classrooms. EAVO has been paying for teachers salaries for the past 10 years. The community has also benefited from a water project that EAVO funded with about \$7,500.00.

Our objective is to have either the community, our partners, or a combination of both to take full responsibility for the schools we built, so that the community will claim ownership without relying on foreign aid.

Class in session in one of the 8 rooms EAVO built in Endegagn

The Rotarians in Acheber, Ethiopia:

Five members of the Sacramento Rotary Club journeyed to Acheber village, Ethiopia, to participate in a water project serving more than 5,000 villagers. The Club donated more than \$33,500 for the project and an anonymous EAVO donor gave \$6,000. We are deeply grateful to all the members, but particularly to Mr. Clayton Lee and Mr. John Phair who worked tirelessly to make it happen. We are also thankful to Finot Rotary of Addis Ababa for partnering with this project.

Special thanks to Clayton Lee, an EAVO friend, for getting the stalled project off ground! Thank you!

A Message from the Board:

As 2017 ends, we hope you will consider making a special gift to the work of East Africa Village Outreach. As you can see, your contributions make a significant difference to the lives of the people of Ethiopia and Kenya. Thank you, and may you and your families be blessed during this special season of celebrating the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Mail your tax deductible gifts to:

East African Village Outreach
7276 French Road
Sacramento, CA 95828

OR

Give online at our secured website:

www.eavo.org

Thank you!