



IT'S ALL ABOUT PEOPLE!

THE AFRICAN CONNECTION

A Semi-Annual Newsletter of East African Village Outreach (EAVO)

9688 Ashstone Way, Elk Grove, CA. 95624

Winter 2019



Ethiopia Trip Report

By Adele Ohs
Secretary

In early November, I travelled with East African Village Outreach (EAVO) director, Seifu Ibssa to Acheber, Ethiopia. Also in our party were Richard Smith, Chairman of the International Development Committee for the Temecula Rotary Club; Hirut Ibssa, from New Orleans and whose father had been born and raised in Acheber; and Begashaw, our Ethiopia EAVO liaison.

Our itinerary was daunting. We drove to Harba Chulule to visit with the 11th and 12th grade students there. The 15 girls and 20+ boys welcomed us warmly.



The girls fixed coffee for us ladies while we discussed the use of the Days For Girls (DFG) reusable feminine hygiene kits they received last year. We discovered that most of them had used them for one year and thrown

them out, so we clearly have some communication and training to do about the proper care for the kits. (More about this later). We also talked with the boys about respecting the girls as their sisters and protecting them from



bullying or improper advances. The students have clearly formed a community of their peers; we had lively discussions about their needs and how EAVO can best meet those needs in the context of their living quarters.

While in Harba Chulule, we were invited to the offices of the district governor to discuss a matter of dispute over the land granted for the Lana Reese Preschool in Acheber. The school is



operational, but the water distribution center has been vandalized and is unusable, and the neighbors are allowing their

livestock to graze on the school property. The practice violates the agreements EAVO had about the use of this donated land. EAVO needs to be able to erect a fence to keep the school safe for students, but neighbors now contend that they weren't adequately compensated in the land donation. The matter must be settled between the district government and the local Acheber officials. However, since the school is an



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EAVO project, we were involved in the negotiations and the fate of the water distribution site.

As we descended into the valley where Acheber town is located, we stopped to view the land where the future

Community Center will be built. The land is



fenced and ready for the preschool construction to begin. Further on, as we passed the town and approached the north edge of the

valley where the guesthouse and Ajo pre-school are built, we were greeted by a band of noisy horsemen surrounding us with song and waving sticks. Further

on, a group of men on foot stopped our caravan to greet us—it was a great honor. The



community clearly appreciates EAVO's involvement in community development, and especially their native son, Seifu.

The next day we visited one of the 16 water distribution sites near the guesthouse. We followed that with visits to the Ajo Preschool and

the elementary school where we have supplied desks for some classrooms. We distributed some DFG kits for



seventh and eighth grade girls and some solar lights. We were encouraged that the eighth graders who took the national exams last year all passed, and the teachers there impressed us with their devotion and commitment to the future success of the next generation.

Our visit to the high school in Acheber surprised us—the government has added numerous buildings to the original four classrooms EAVO helped build. Apparently, the site will be developed into a much larger, regional high school. We discussed some anomalies in the girls' pass rates from last year's exams, distributed more DFG kits and solar lights.

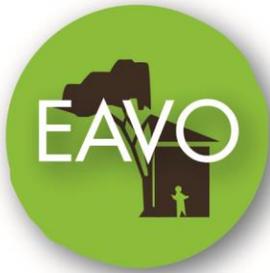
We ended the first days' work with a visit to Lana Reese Preschool where we talked with the



teachers and students and examined the fence "problem" and the vandalized water distribution site.

Later in the week, Seifu and I went with Tamirat, the new Secretary General of Guennet Church, and Pastor Gossaye to visit the

work in Roben Jirecha. We drove up the



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mountains in teff and barley harvest season; all around us farmers were cutting and bundling their harvest by hand. In Roben Jirecha we were greeted by the pastor of the church on the property and by the teachers. There were fewer students in class because of the harvest, but the



little ones who were there were seated and respectful. Their teacher expressed his commitment to teaching in his

native village as an act of giving back to his community and investing in the future of the country. A visit to the well that EAVO put in several years ago was an example of a community taking responsibility for themselves. The people are paying a small charge for the water, which pays for the water technician.

We had meetings with officials from Harvest



Church of God, our partners in Acheber, and with Guennet Church, our partners in Roben Jirecha.



We also met with a young lady, Raeye, who is trying to start a DFG work in Addis. Her enterprise is not fully operational yet, and she and

a partner have only worked with high school girls in Addis so far. We proposed that we would pay for her and her friend to travel to Harba Chulule and Acheber to train our girls in proper use of the

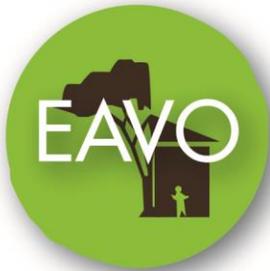
kits and also some basic female issues that aren't readily available to them. We will make arrangements with the schools for them to meet in the near future.

My last meeting was with a group of our college alumni. Only a few of the many graduates were able to meet with us, but we had an encouraging conversation. Some highlights: one of the men we met with is now supporting a younger brother in university, and they are all in an alumni foundation which is committed to regular giving to support Acheber's students further education. Begashaw communicates with those who could not attend, and many are joining the association.

Begashaw was instrumental in supporting all of our high school and college programs and is growing in leadership skills. Our friend Getu made arrangements for our ease and comfort at all steps along the way, and everywhere we were welcomed by friends and family of EAVO and the Ethiopian people.

I was aware, as I met with our Ethiopian friends, that I was representing all of you, our donors. Your generous gifts to EAVO, make these partnerships to support education and community growth in Acheber and Roben Jirecha possible. The honors that we received belong to each of you; your donations have funded all this growth. As you contemplate the end of 2019 and 2020, please continue to make EAVO part of your giving. Your participation is making a difference.

[More pictures next page](#)



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Getu's wife Abbay prepared tasty meals for the road



Dozens of solar lights have been donated to the schools in Acheber, Ethiopia.



Acheber Valley with the town from a distance

Board Members

- *Dr. Olana Aberra, Chairman*
- *Adele Ohs, Secretary*
- *Skip Ohs, Treasurer*
- *Mary Staples, Member*
- *Jim Reese, Member*
- *Jaime Major, Member*
- *Aberra Damessa, Member*
- *Seifu Ibssa, Executive Director*

We would love to hear from you!
Email your comments or questions to any of us:

skip@eavo.org

adele@eavo.org

jim@eavo.org

mary@eavo.org

olana@eavo.org

jaime@eavo.org

aberra@eavo.org

seifu@eavo.org

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