

Ethiopian Education Fund
November 2013



Dear Friends of the Ethiopian Education Fund,

Another academic year has started in Chiri, the village in Western Ethiopia where our work is focused. We are happy to announce that we have eight students continuing their education, three students that finished 10th grade and three new students that will join our program this year. Stephanie was able to visit Chiri in October and was thrilled to talk with all the students and the high school director, who is becoming more active in our work.



Photos: Desta; Tigist and her daughter Tsion; and Melaku.

Our big news is that the Chiri school district has agreed to work directly with the EEF to help choose new students and keep all the students motivated. The students we are supporting need a lot of help because they are often the only child in their families attending school. Keeping them on track and motivated makes a big difference in their success as they go farther than anyone else in their families.

There are a number of other additions to keep the program running smoothly and allow us to add more students. A microfinance program in Chiri will help us distribute funds to the students (a double positive as we can invest in the community and provide cash to the students). We have also recruited our good friend and teacher Zelalem to help us with the in-country administration of the program, which is essential as we add more students. Jeff is still living in Addis Ababa (and will be until July 2014) and finds himself fielding phone calls from students weekly. By working with microfinance institutions and enlisting Zelalem, we are putting plans in place to continue our success even when Jeff is not in Ethiopia.



We have three students who are pursuing post-secondary education now because of good scores and because they have been part of the EEF program. Two of the students are enrolled at technical colleges that will allow them to become nurses in three years and serve their communities. We are also supporting Tsegaye, one of the original EEF students as he begins his

Master's Program in Social Work (photo at left).

As we expand the reach of the EEF so that more smart kids from poor families can go to school, we need your support even more. We are a 501(c)3 organization so all your donations are tax deductible and go to supporting the students. Consider that \$30 will support a student for a month (\$360 a year) as she or he strives for a better life; \$200/month (\$2,400 per year) will support a student in college. Preference is given to girls, students from marginalized peoples and households headed by women. Studies show that every year of additional education allows students to better contribute to their own lives and their community when they become adults.

You can donate online at <http://ethiopianeducationfund.org/donate/> or directly by mail. Monthly donations are a great way to stay involved in our program throughout the year. Thank you to those who have already signed up. The Ethiopian Education Fund has been supporting students in rural Ethiopia for 8 years and we and the children are so grateful for your continued support!

All the best,

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Conversations With Our Students (April 2013)
Rochelle Stowe, EEF Board Member

It was my first time to Ethiopia, and I was unsure of what to expect. To say that it is an adventure getting to Chiri, a village in a remote part of Western Ethiopia, is an understatement. A whirlwind of change is the norm. There are dense urban towns, stretches of wide prairie, farmland, more cows than you can count and a few precarious bridges. But Chiri is the breath of calm on a winding mountain road, a broad place on a narrow ridge. And meeting the people for the first time is like seeing old friends - an odd familiarity in a place that you've never been before.

I learned what each student desired from life when I spoke to our students in the backyard under a tree, sitting in a mud-built house, and standing outside of a traditional round *tukul* home. I learned about their favorite subjects and more importantly about their dreams: what they wanted to be and do and change in their communities.

I was surprised that many of the students we support are independent - they know how to take care of themselves and their families live far away from Chiri. Some are without parents and they rely on each other. And still others live with relatives.

That's where we come in. We have the opportunity to create bigger and better things in this little town and beyond. Our students are already emotionally strong, but we can help them become mentally strong, to give them a different kind of life - nurses, teachers, social workers - not bar girls, manual laborers or thieves (yes, one of our most talented students told me he might be a thief if he wasn't in school).

There are two things I know - my life has changed because of Melaku, Desta, Gabaynesh and the other incredible students.

And our lives continue to change, too, because all of us are part of something greater.