

**Ethiopian Education Fund
Newsletter | Nov 2016**



Dear Friends of the Ethiopian Education Fund,

From the bottom of our hearts and on behalf of the students, thank you for your support. Your ongoing generosity and the fantastic support we received at the fundraising events this past year in Seattle, Olympia, Whidbey Island, and Spokane allowed us to increase the number of students in the program to 25.

When a student enters our program, the EEF makes a commitment to be with her or him every step of the way. As long as she keeps passing her grade, the EEF is there whether that is through Grade 10, vocational school, nursing or teaching college, the university, or even graduate school. We manage our funds carefully so no student ever has to stop going to school when they've passed their grade (see our work in action by [watching this video](#)).

This fall we've had three long-term students graduate from our program. The EEF has supported Tigist for 8 years and played an important part in her life especially after the birth of daughter Tsihon 7 years ago; Tigist is graduating in nursing (photo at right). Tamirat (below) has been in the EEF program for 7 years and will become a laboratory technician returning to serve his people who live in one of the most remote parts of Ethiopia. Finally, Asayech will graduate from a 3-year vocational school program as a certified electric machine operator and already has a job (see her story at the end of this note).



We have students moving up through the primary and secondary school like Meselegn, Simegn, and Habtuma. One of our students Aletu did so well on his Grade 12 leaving exam that he was placed in the Engineering Program at Jimma University. This is an incredible accomplishment since there are so few slots for engineering. And if you remember from our last newsletter, Gebaynesh and Desta, two strong young women from one of the marginalized tribes in the area, are continuing their education in teaching and welding, respectively.

At this time of the year, we ask that you consider supporting the EEF by donating [online](#), through a check (see our new address below), or in person. Any amount will help: \$30 allows a student to attend primary or secondary school for one month and \$360 for the entire year; \$40 will support post-secondary students like Desta for one month and \$480 for the year.



Those of you who attended the fundraiser know that we are also selling fantastic Ethiopian Coffee roasted by Olympic Crest in Olympia. We appreciate the support that Chuck and his entire team provide us through the provision of outstanding coffee. Contact us for more information about how you can get your coffee needs met and help students in Ethiopia at the same time. Learn more about Olympic Crest [here](#).

We also want to send out a special thanks to those making regular monthly and yearly donations; your ongoing generosity is greatly appreciated and ensures that we are with the students every step for as far as their education takes them.

One final note: Over the last year, Ethiopia has been experiencing protests throughout much of the country, some of which have turned violent. The government recently declared a state of emergency to bring calm to the situation. Fortunately all of our students are safe, school graduations are proceeding, and primary and secondary schools are now in session. I (Jeffrey) will be traveling to Ethiopia as part of my international development work in agriculture in November and hope to visit the students in the countryside and learn more about how they are doing.

As the year comes to a close, let me say *Betam Ameseginalehu* (many thanks) for your support; and as the New Year approaches, let me say *Melkam Addis Amet* (Happy New Year) to you and yours.

Warm regards,
Jeffrey, EEF Co-founder

Asayech's Story

Your support makes a difference. The EEF started supporting Asayech when she was in Grade 8. She had been selected because she was smart but from a poor family. When Stephanie and I visited her (and her mother and younger sister; see upper photo) in the village of Chiri 5 years ago, we introduced ourselves while sitting in their worn-out tukul (a dirt floor, mud-walled house). Poverty does have a face, in this case it had three faces. But determination was there even though Asayech was shy and frequently looked away when speaking.

We wondered if she would be ready to leave the small, insular village of Chiri if she passed her exams. We just weren't sure. As it turned out, we were in for a surprise.

Asayech studied hard, and passed her Grade 10 leaving exam, but did not do well enough to go to Grade 11, nursing school, or teaching school. But with that passing mark and her incredible determination, she traveled to the larger town of Bonga and asked about her options. This village girl was not willing to stay in the village! Unbeknownst to us at the time, Ethiopia does have vocational programs. Asayech found a 3-year program and enrolled in electrical machine operator school, and we continued to support her by increasing her stipend from \$360 per year to \$480 per year. We met her again in 2015 and found a confident woman looking directly at us when speaking (lower photo). And this year Asayech graduated and is now in a 2-month training program in the capital city of Addis Ababa because she has been hired by the Ethiopian Electric Power Authority to operate their machinery. Success!!!

I know what her life would have been like without an education. I have seen it too many times in Ethiopia over the years. And now Asayech, with her determination and education, is on the road out of the poverty trap. Let us all wish her and her family well.



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