

Ethiopian Education Fund Newsletter | June 2015



Dear Friends of the Ethiopian Education Fund,

I'd like to say a hearty "thank you" to all the supporters of the Ethiopian Education Fund. You continue to make a difference in the lives of girls and boys in rural Ethiopia who seek to lift themselves out of poverty through education. Right now the EEF students are near the end of the school year and studying diligently to get the best scores possible. Of our 16 students, we have 6 who are taking life-changing exams. The scores of Tariku and Tarakegn in Grade 12 will determine if they go to the university or to a teaching or nursing college. In Grade 10, Desta, Gebaynish, Aynalem and Mitike will need exceptional scores to enter into Grade 11 or get admitted to a nursing or teaching college. Learn more about the EEF and our work by [watching this video](#).

One of the unique aspects of the EEF is that we make a commitment to each student. If she continues to pass her grades, we will be there each step of the way. Tigist (photo at right) is attending nursing college. The EEF has supported her since grade 8 because this type of commitment is needed to change lives and overcome the pull of poverty.



I want to emphasize how seriously we take our connection with the students and the community. In Ethiopia, your family and community are your foundation; they sustain you and nurture you; they are there for you. The EEF is proud to be part of this culture. It is all of us pulling together, both here and in Ethiopia, at home and in our communities, which will allow the girls and boys, young women and men, to attend school, do well, and give back to their families and communities.

In late 2014 we were able to strengthen our connection with the community. Elaine Tyrie, a longtime supporter of the EEF, spent three weeks in Chiri teaching English and helping EEF-supported students. You can read about her adventure on the next page. In addition, Elaine reports that the school has a great need for laptop computers. If you have one you'd like to donate, let us know.

We are very hopeful that all our students will pass their exams and go to college or university. However, it does mean that costs per student will increase from \$360 to over \$1000 per year. We hope that you will continue to support the EEF and make a difference in the lives of Desta, Asayech, and the other students. You can [donate online](#) or by mail; please consider an automatic monthly donation since it allows us to have a predictable flow of funds for supporting those already in the program and for adding new students.

We are planning to hold a fundraising dinner this fall in Seattle (19 September) and in Spokane (8 November); stay tuned for details. And please contact us if you'd like more information on the work of the EEF.

Jeffrey, EEF Co-founder

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Elaine's Visit to Ethiopia

Connecting with Students of EEF and the Community of Chiri

"Remember, you are Ethiopian now." Those were the last words my driver said to me as he stopped on the dirt road and dropped me off in the isolated village Chiri. It had taken us 12 hours to drive from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, along ever-smaller roads that brought me from arid highlands to the lush jungles of southwestern Ethiopia and the village of Chiri, my home for the next 3 weeks. I was welcomed by Dereje, the principal of the Chiri secondary school who is key member of EEF's community team.

On my second day, I walked to the school, learning the greeting for hello ("selam," which means "peace") and met with Dereje and assistant principal Tekle to formulate my assignment. I would meet with each EEF student, including home visits, and help them with their English. Learning English is central for their continued education because in Ethiopia, all instruction is in English after grade 8. Knowing English is necessary to pass.

The EEF supports 11 students in Chiri. One student walks 40 minutes one-way to school each day. Several students live in Chiri and go home on the weekend, as their families live in the surrounding countryside. Support from the EEF keeps these smart kids from poor families in school. Without EEF, they would be kept at home for cooking, farming, and fetching water.

All the students are highly motivated. They are either orphans or come from families too poor to afford the school uniforms and book fees that are needed to attend the public schools. One student summed up how important education was by sharing this Ethiopian proverb: When the spider's web comes together, it can tie a lion.

When it was time for me to go, the students and I shared a leaving ceremony, making bead bracelets, playing volleyball, taking group photos and finally walking together as a group back to the village as the sun set.

I left the next morning and knew how true the proverb is that says, "I carry you in my heart."



Elaine with the Principal and Vice Principal of Chiri High School and students supported by the EEF