

## Lalibela, Ethiopia

Habtamu, one of the young people the WFA project supports in Lalibela, has completed his engineering degree! I first met Habtamu in January 2008 when he was cleaning shoes and carrying loads for people to support himself. He had left his village some years before after one of his parent's died, as the remaining parent's new partner did not accept him or treat him well. He walked for many, many days to reach Lalibela where he could attend school. Habtamu studied hard with a passion to study medicine. He reached the benchmarks required to attend university but he was allocated to textile engineering (in Ethiopia students are allocated to university courses rather than being able to choose). Despite his initial disappointment he worked hard in his course and came to love engineering. COVID saw all schools and universities closed from March 2020 so his graduation, which would have occurred in June, was delayed. However from late October schools and universities started to open again and Habtamu has graduated in January 2021.

**Congratulations Habtamu!**



## Spread the Hope

Following the successful Christmas Gift Card offer, we would like to extend this fundraising project. If you are interested in purchasing a gift card we will be able to continue this for future events, such as birthday's (family, friends, work colleagues etc), Valentine's Day, wedding anniversaries or simply a gift for any occasion! Please contact the WFA Office if you are interested so that we can arrange gift cards for you!



# Repairs to teachers residence



WFA has been supporting Liwan in Ethiopia since 2007. Liwan is a remote region with 4 villages made up of mud and thatch tukels spread over a large distance, far from any road or services. It is a beautiful area and the people are wonderful and resilient, living a very traditional lifestyle. However, Liwan has high maternal, infant and child mortality and women and children are very disadvantaged. It is common for men to have 4-7 wives, and each mother (often married very young) having 4-10 children.

Thank you so much to all those who donated toward the repairs to the school buildings over 2019-2020. The repairs are complete and look fabulous.

I received the exciting news in mid-October 2020) that the government has increased the school to grade 5! This is fabulous, as although some of the boys are sent to Dekia (a large village about 4 hours walk away) to the WFA supported boarding school for grade 5 and up, this is not common for the girls due to early marriage practices.

Our urgent need at the current time is to repair and extend the teachers residence. It will cost an estimated \$7500, and we are grateful for the donations already received over the past few months to help us toward that goal. We also hope to raise additional funds to re-do pit latrines (once full, new ones need to be dug) and repairs for the gravity fed clean water system. The teachers residence was initially built when there were only a few teachers, and needs to be extended to cater for more teachers – and their families. In addition, the buildings are made in the traditional way with packed earth and sticks, and although the WFA supported buildings are done with a concrete foundation and an iron roof which extends the life of the building, the walls still need repairs every 10 years or so. Later we will raise funds to build some teachers homes for teachers with young families in Shittio, a village nearby where WFA funded the building of a health post, which will provide a greater level of security for them. The government has already provided the land for this purpose.

**History of the project:** In 2007 the village elders requested help with providing a school and health services and WFA funded the building of a school grade 1-4 which was completed in 2008. The school is co-run and supported by the government. The Government provides half the teachers wages and government text books, with WFA child sponsorship funds covering the other half of the teachers, guard and cook wages, food for the students, text books, pencils and sports equipment. Research shows that

even a few years of education makes a significant difference in girls being married later, and it being more likely that they and their infant will survive childbirth, and that their children will be more likely to live past the age of 5 years. Mothers and fathers who have had a few years of education are also more likely to send their children to school, so the positive impact continues into the next generation.

Initially it was almost impossible to get teachers to come to Liwan given its extreme remoteness and due to safety concerns, as the area is known for settling disputes with spears. However, provision of a home for the teachers to live in, and the school having better facilities and equipment as a result of WFA support, helped to improve the reputation and soon teachers were willing to come, despite the remoteness and challenges. Other past WFA initiatives in this region to provide a holistic approach to development have included funding the building of boarding houses with student kitchen and shower/toilet blocks in Dekia for students continuing into grade 5 and above (although now will be for grade 6 and above), a health post in Shittio, building 8 classrooms for the Dekia high school, solar sets ups for the health post and boarding houses, food and agricultural projects including oxen and seed, clean water gravity fed system, and others.

We are also seeking sponsors for children in Liwan. In Liwan no individual child/family receives sponsorship money. The funds are used for covering school, food security and health needs in the community. Every family is in poverty, so it is not appropriate for any particular family to receive support so instead all money goes to elevate the community. Given the challenges in follow up photos and reports of the sponsored children (any special attention to a child brings jealousy and danger for the family), this is a 'roll-over' program, with new children allocated each couple of years rather than follow-up reports being provided. This means it is a good option for if you wish to choose to gift sponsorship of a child for 6 or 12 months for someone else, without an obligation for ongoing support. Sponsorship is \$70 per annual quarter (\$5.30 a week) and tax deductible.

If you would like to donate toward repairing/building the teachers residence (tax deductible - no donation too small), please indicate your donation is **for LIW-S**.

*Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can. (Arthur Ashe)*

Sandi Petersen

Project Officer for World Families Australia, Ethiopia

PO Box 116 Stirling 5152

Ph: 0408 712 308 email: [rspetersen@optusnet.com.au](mailto:rspetersen@optusnet.com.au)

Website: [www.worldfamilies.org.au](http://www.worldfamilies.org.au) Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WorldFamiliesAustralia>



# Meskele Kristos

First of all, a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from the team at World Families Australia!

2020 has been a year of incredible challenge and change but as the year draws to a close, we are excited to see what 2021 will bring.

On a personal note, I wanted to give you a brief update on my role as project officer for the Meskele Kristos Project... After 10 years coordinating the project, I have decided to resign from this voluntary position and seek expressions of interest to see if someone else would like to take on this role. I believe that with a new person will come new ambition and enthusiasm for this special project and new life and progress will move this project into a new phase. In the interim, and until a replacement officer is found, the project will be managed by the administration staff at World Families Australia.

Before we move into 2021, I wanted to take a moment to reflect...and to take an opportunity to thank a few people.

Medical & Emergency Fund - These funds have helped to cover medical expenses, health checks and food and transport for children needing assistance

Engineers without Borders (Israel) - For their support with the water tank and the water harvesting system.

Save Your Holy Land Association - Especially Yemane (photo below) who is coordinating the project locally.



Below I wanted to outline what this project has achieved with your support since I started in the role back in 2010:

The first pit toilets installed and sanitation education provided at the school

Building walls which were crumbling have been repaired and mud benches replaced with tables and chairs

New library constructed and equipped with resources

Water tank and water harvesting system installed in conjunction with Engineers without Borders from Israel

Food distribution and nutrition supplement program operated as needed during food shortages

School supplies and school materials provided to students to make it possible to receive an education. Teachers were resourced with teaching materials and aids also

Clothing supplied and distributed by visiting sponsors

Medical assistance provided to school children and prosthetic aids provided to a couple of the children in the project.

A small business established for one of the children ageing out of the project provided by a sponsor

New kitchen building constructed

On behalf of the children and families supported by this project, thank you for your ongoing commitment, investment and support over the years. With much appreciation and thanks, Dee Hudson

## Jimma ~ Ethiopia

I apologise for the lack of communication this year - as you can imagine Covid-19 had a major impact on being able to get updates and for our Social Worker with the Daughters of Charity to be able to safely visit or see families.

However, I have recently received a letter from Sr Tsege, who is the Sister in charge of the Daughters of Charity in Jimma which I thought you might like to read. Kedouse is also busy in the background getting updates for us.

I trust that everyone had a wonderful Christmas period full of love, health and happiness even if it is a much different "festive" period that what we have experienced in the past. Much love to all, Michelle

What a year it has been with Covid-19 making such a huge impact around the globe. For our Ethiopian families it has meant that our sponsor children stopped schooling in March and only returned late October. I really don't know how they managed as Ethiopians don't have the luxuries of JobKeeper, unemployment benefits, rental assistance etc so to be able to earn any income during this period of lockdown would have been almost impossible and the importance of our sponsorship even more critical. When you read Sr Tsege's letter below (sic) you can start to understand the desperation of their situation.

Below is the unedited letter from Sr Tsege

*Dear Michelle representative for Ethiopia sponsorship program  
Greeting of peace, love and Joy of Christ be with you forever, from Jimma Ethiopia.*

*Wishing you a very happy Christmas season and New Year blessing to you, your family and all your co-workers, to all those who serve and work for the poor.*

*Christmas invites us to renew our commitment to proclaim Christ, the Savior of the world and the light of the universe.*

*It is a long time since we did not have contact but you and your staff is always in my thought and prayer there is not a day pass without thinking of you.*

*Then first of all I sincerely I would like to express my deepest gratitude for you and your team for your great support and continuous effort to support our poor lepers community and the poorest members of the poor children of Jimma area from the starting days of this project. We don't know what we would have done without your donation and your great support for the poor.*

*Michelle I can say you are especial person and you are send by God to support the poor people of Ethiopian specially for the leprosy community. You know still same of the poor children they come to school without any breakfasts and what we offer them in the school the only food they eat.*

*Our school every year is growing in number of children and other service so this year 2020 in the kindergarten we have 355 in the two K.G and in primary 230 children all together we have 585 children.*

*In our cause we only choose from the kindergarten those who are more in need of food other ways it is very hard to feed 355 children because the food price is very highly increased it is almost triply from the previous price. It is very hard for us to make prioritized because their poverty is undesirable hard to express their situation especially now adding with COVID19 pandemic they are dying.*

*We have 262 children in sponsorship program 250 are supported with world family Australia (WFA). Other 12 children are supported by Rosi & kluth from Germen even that it is not regular some time.*

*We followed up this children if they are continue their education but for the last nine month they are at home because of the COVID19 they got little amount so they frustrated and the distract the community and us with lack of food and work.*

*We support about 25 women's from our respected area with skill training and helping them to work for self-reliant (income generating) but it is not working because of the COVID19 this and other 300 people with their families from the leper community are in bad situation. We are trying to support them with the emergence support for food, medication, sanitation materials but it is not enough. Other group who are supported by our projects are 14 university student most of them are from the leper family we support them with clothing, stationary and transport but at this time they are at home and are on the Marcy of other generics people because their parents are disable.*

*The above mention people are our direct and regular beneficiaries but have many direct and indirect who are supported by our project. Some time it is beyond my limitation the suffering of the poor people Hard to believe it is very challenging in this mission. Any way Myself and my companies not only helping them with material but by listening to their cry in more deep and affectionate way and by ensuring them that we are with them and helping them to see the value of life.*

*Again than you for all your support and encouragement you have given us which encourage us to do more and to work with zeal and enthusiastic.*

*Finally In behave of my Congregation the D.C. and the beneficiaries I would like to express my deepest gratitude for all your hard work and continual effort to support our projects. The poor people also send many thanks, appreciation with a lot of Christmas love.*

*God bless you Yours Sincerely Sr. Tsege Abraha*



Speakers are available to tell groups about the work of W.F.A.

Please contact us through the office: (08) 8258 7909

## LAST DAY FOR YOUR GIFT THIS QUARTER

**1st March 2021**

**Please Note**  
**Any articles for the next newsletter should reach the office by 26th April**

## PROJECT OFFICERS for WORLD FAMILIES AUSTRALIA

### ETHIOPIA

DEKIA	Dee Lumsden	0413 187 049
ADDIS-BGW	Morgan Smith	08 8522-7694
BULBULA	Kate Drogemuller	08 8948 0623
JIMMA DOL,DOC-B DOL-S	Michelle Nethery Michelle.nethery@gmail.com	

LIWAN, BONGA,  
LALIBELA, SUPPORT FOR  
SIGHT IMPAIRED &  
MEDICAL PROJECTS

Sandi Petersen	0408 712 308
----------------	--------------

BONGA Rural	Emma Lewis	0415 978 066
-------------	------------	--------------

JIMMA-DOC BONGA Feeding, BONGA-BWDP SAMERRO	Christine Hoffman Gemma Pilcher	0417 793 300 07 5438 0953
--	------------------------------------	------------------------------

WOLAYITA	Katie Davis	03 6425 1563
----------	-------------	--------------

MESKELE KRISTOS	Dee Hudson	0404 454 390
-----------------	------------	--------------

### INDIA

Minjur	Jenny Minck	08 8258 7909
--------	-------------	--------------

### INDONESIA

Ruth/Naomi Community Centre	Chrissy Sulisty	0451 766 483
--------------------------------	-----------------	--------------

Mission Uplift	Mavis Pardede	0413 871 206
----------------	---------------	--------------

### KENYA

Neema	Liz Rankin	0434 692 207
Testimony Homes	Dani Potter	08 8283 0728

### PHILIPPINES

Bruce/Elaine Smith	0414 953 533
--------------------	--------------

### SRI LANKA

Shalom Children's Home	Steve Hodgson	0438 875 957
Colombo	Karan Coombe-Smith	0403 690 695

### THAILAND

Peter Mann	08 8363 2585
------------	--------------

### FINANCIAL/SPONSORSHIP ENQUIRIES:

Kerry Walker Sponsorship/Financial Officer  
[wfasponsorship@bigpond.com](mailto:wfasponsorship@bigpond.com)

Robyn Merritt Sponsorship/Financial Officer  
[wfafanance@bigpond.com](mailto:wfafanance@bigpond.com)

### OFFICE HOURS:

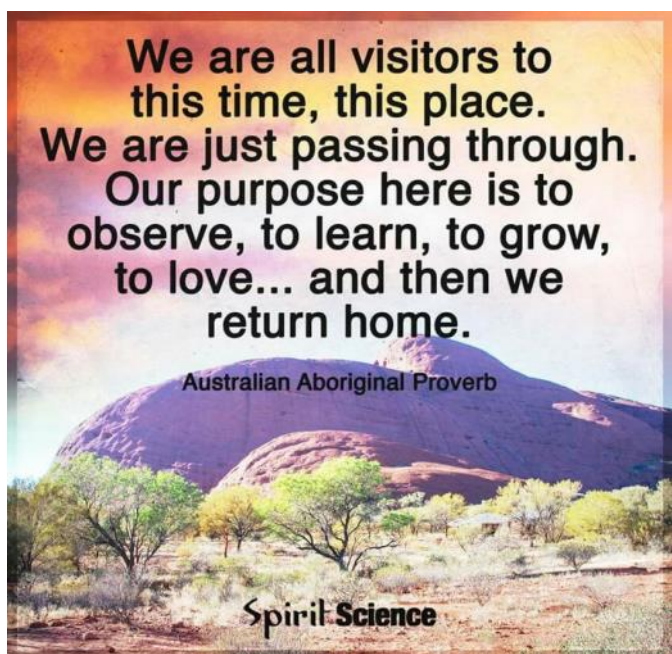
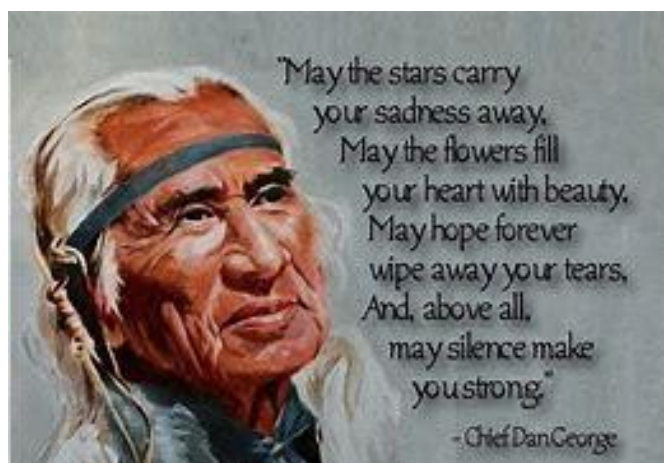
**Tuesdays**  
**Phone 08 8258 7909**  
emails monitored daily

### POSTAL ADDRESS:

**50 Fern Grove Bld.**  
**Salisbury East SA 5109**

**EMAIL:**  
**WEB:**

[worldfamilies@bigpond.com](mailto:worldfamilies@bigpond.com)



Opinions expressed by contributors to Sponsorship News are not necessarily those of World Families Australia

Editor: Diane Amato

