



Habitat for Humanity®

Ethiopia

Message from the National Director

I would like to very politely and humbly convey my greetings to all of our readers. As indicated in different occasions, the year 2009 has been very exciting with full of very encouraging achievements. Most of all, HFHE team enjoyed ever increasing supports of our generous donors and volunteers who stood beside us even in this difficult time of global economic recession. This is a testimony of the selflessness of our respected donors and supporters. It is true that the main driving force for them is the fact that they recognize the unacceptable living conditions of countless families who need decent places to live in and escape the rain, the scorching sun and other dangers. In all the cases, our donors and partners have played the leading role in making remarkable differences. As a na-

tional program, we believe that we have also discharged our responsibilities of delivering the intended services on behalf of the donors.

One of the impressive things for us is that several national HFH programs in Africa have made donations to HFH Ethiopia through tithing to our program during the year. This was done in a spirit of fraternity and close collaborations. We are very much pleased to be privileged by the various sisterly programs in the continent.

The participation of global village (GV) volunteers during the year also stood the highest ever. These volunteers built houses with the families and communities at large. Their efforts have helped in moving more families into decent places to live. The number of families served was also the highest ever.

Generally, progresses made in light of the prevailing global economic crises have been very encouraging as most of the achievements are not what we expected.

Thanks to all of you who supported us in reaching here.

We are also pleased to inform you that currently we are in the process of adding very exciting new programs into our work. The main one is the program of providing water and sanitation services. As one can imagine, families in slum areas and school children in many communities suffer from lack of adequate potable water and proper sanitation services. Providing toilets and clean water is very urgent in numerous communities because the living conditions of the families in the various slum areas and that of school children are so unbearable beyond abilities of words and numbers to explain. As usual, we continue to rely on each and every one of you in everything we do to reduce human suffering in relatively more integrated ways of supporting families in need of decent living homes.

Kebede Abebe
National Director

Happy New Year 2010
From the entire family of Habitat
for Humanity Ethiopia.

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Changing Lives at Stake

By Michael Chebud, August 2009

Childhood laughter quickly faded away from the face of the three years old Alemnesh Liyew when her mother passed away in 1970 leaving her with her father and nine brothers. The family faced yet another set back seven years later when their father died with no one else to look after the little children.

To add insult to injury, the only girl from the family, who was only ten when her father died, started to see sores and disfiguring nodules on her skin. Hardly did she pay attention to what she thought was a minor skin infection as she was toiling to win bread together with her siblings for the family's survival. As years went by, Alemnesh found out that she was infected with a severe form of leprosy.

"I am the only one from the family who got infected with this devastating disease," says Alemnesh, who is now 42 and a mother of three. On top of the pain caused by the disease and loss of her parents, Alemnesh also felt anguish over housing chores as she was required to cook for the family and look after cattle. "It was unbearable," she says recalling those

days. "As the disease intensified on my body, I left my brothers and home town looking for medication," recalls Alemnesh back 20 years ago. But it was too late to escape deformities for Alemnesh who subsequently lost all her fingers to the disease.

In a small shack provided to her 14 years ago by a generous man in the town of Bahir Dar, 578 km northwest of the capital Addis Ababa, she lived for several years with her



Alemnesh and her kids in front of their shack

three children whose father has abandoned them a year ago.

Alemnesh entirely depends on begging to feed her children who are all under 10. During harvest season, Alemnesh goes to Humera-a rural farm area- every year in search of better alms from daily labourers and land owners. Her kids stay with a roommate who looks after them un-

til their mother returns. They hang around eagerly what their mom brings from the farm area.

Barely has the family ever imagined leaving in a decent home until Alemnesh heard about the works of Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia (HFHE). After she qualified for housing assistance from HFHE, Alemnesh was selected as one of leprosy affected beneficiaries. From the latest 32 houses built in the town, one was handed over to



Alemnesh in front of her new house

Alemnesh and her three children in November 2009.

"We will no more fight over a communal toilet," says her nine years old son Tesfahun Yahelew. "We will also have friends here." Habitat has so far built 117 houses in Bahir Dar since it started operation in the town in July 2008 to change lives at stake.

Program Highlights

HFHE has constantly scaled up its program, since it celebrated its 1000th house milestone in August 2008. Until December 2009, the number of full houses completed rose to 1568 with additional 215 more houses under construction. In the period of one and half years the growth was 36% of

all time houses. The annual income from mortgages and the total mortgage receivables has almost doubled in the last 18 months. The number of GV teams hosted rose from 9 to 13 in one year. Number of houses built for vulnerable groups increased by 47 (60% all time VG houses) in six months. The provision of energy

saving stoves this year rose to 321 in the two quarters which is 68% of all time ESS supplied and 64 % of this year's plan. About 1500 mosquito nets distributed in six malaria prone communities and clean water installation is to be implemented in five towns where construction of Communal toilets has also been started.

Leading Players in Vulnerable Group Housing Recognized

By Yoseph Gedamu, program manager

Habitat for Humanity Ethiopia (HFHE) is working to integrate vulnerable groups (VG) into the wider community through housing program. Currently the affiliates in which VG housing program is integrated reached three: namely Dessie, Kombolcha and Bahair Dar. The number of VG families served increased to 78.

The integration of VG families into other communities ensures not only a decent place to live but also helps reduce stigma and discrimination by preserving their dignity. HFHE has achieved better results in this program due to the commitments of local associations, donors and volunteers.

In the VG integration program HFHE has been working with Ethiopian National Association for Persons Affected by Leprosy (ENAPAL) through its branch association in Dessie town. The cooperation between HFHE and ENAPAL attained higher level and HFHE's work maintained wider recognition through its supporters and partners of the VG housing program.

The main actors in promoting

vulnerable group(VG) program such as the municipalities of Kombolcha and Dessie towns were recognized by ENAPAL on June 24, 2009. The two municipalities were awarded certificates of appreciation for their response in providing land in ways suitable for the integration of the VG families to the larger community. Father Raymond MacCullagh of Northern Ireland, the leading contributor of the VG housing program, was appreciated by ENAPAL and acknowledged as the first honorary member of ENAPAL.

Habitat Northern Ireland was also appreciated by ENAPAL and awarded certificate of recognition for its contribution in integrating the VG housing component.

The ceremony of all these recognitions was held in Kombolcha affiliate during house dedication with the Global Village team led by Father Raymond himself. During the ceremony Mr. Leulseged Birhane, Chairman of the managing board of ENAPAL, Mr. Gatewety Yirga, Mayor of Kombolcha, Mr. Demise Abebe, former Mayor of Dessie town were Present. HFHE staffs and other local officials also attended the ceremony.

Global Village Update

With consistently increasing interest of GV teams, HFH Ethiopia has hosted ten teams from May to December 2009 which is more than ever before. The teams were from USA, Canada, New Zealand and N. Ireland with the number of team members ranging from 11 to 22. During their stay in the country, they participated in diverse house building activities, visited previous houses and exchanged cultural experiences with different communities. They also visited churches, monasteries, Lake Tana, Blue Nile Falls and Lalibela among others tourist sites.

So far, about nine teams have made bookings for this year and HFHE hopes to receive more in the months ahead.

We would welcome any team wanting to help build houses, communities and hope for families living in poverty housing. Finally, once again we would like to take this opportunity to extend many thanks to all team leaders and members for their time and financial supports to help HFHE build more houses and change the lives of families and communities. Hosting each GV team has been a great pleasure and experience to all of us here.

We would like to sincerely thank our all time donors. Special thanks to the following donors who supported our most recent programs

O'Keefe, Michael J. Father
MacGullagh, Father Raymond
Pulak Mary Linda
Kernytsky Stefania
Richard Brauer
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Anderson Jeff & Leesa
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HFH Northern Ireland
HFH Maumee Valley
HFH New Zealand GV Team
HFH Omaha
HFH North Central Georgia
HFH Dorchester
HFH of Greater Newburgh
HFH Romania
HFH Hungary
HFH Rowan County
HFH Gage County
HFH of Estes Valley
HFH Aiken County

Finding the Candle Within

By Susan Stinson, Global Village trip participant, 2009

When I first started fundraising in July 2009 for the Habitat for Humanity (HFH) trip to Debre Markos, Ethiopia, I used the title "Finding the Candle Within" for my fundraising letter. This was in reference to being generous with helping donate funds for the project. Now this little phrase has so much more meaning to me and embodies the spirit of my journey to a wonderful place, thousands of miles from my home...to a community of villagers, leaders, team members and Habitat workers. The warmth of these people being brought together by the common cause of building strong communities with decent housing touched each of us like the flame of a candle in the distance on a cold Canadian winter night.

There are so many amazing experiences I will remember about the HFH Global Village trip to Ethiopia. There is absolutely nothing like plunging your hands to the elbow into a wonderfully gushy pile of mud, turning, lifting it to your shoulder and tossing it on a wall...I could only dream about this as a child. The mud flinging was made better by sharing this experience with fellow team members as we engaged in a little "chika talk" (chika being the Amharic name given to the mud mixture) about the meaning of life

and other more trivial topics. I'll never forget standing on the top of a twelve foot high twig house frame, that looked similar to a life size game of Jenga, with a local carpenter as he motioned for me to lift a



pole weighing much more than I did, and being able to do it (this activity was certainly not mandatory but something I really wanted to do)! At the end of a full day's work in the village, we would get back to the Shebel Hotel to be greeted by smiling staff that always asks, "How was your day?" And then off to a soothing hot shower...ahhhh. At night, laying my head on the pillow, feeling completely overwhelmed with a sense of fulfillment and accomplishment, I knew I was making a difference. Humbled and grateful in knowing that I was protected by HFH Ethiopia staff and our village community, I slept.

The final ceremony at the village was so fantastic to be a part of as

eight families receive a key to their new house and a Bible. It really happened; we helped these people move to a new home and a new life. The warmth inside bubbled to the top and showed on each team member's face as we handed the family the keys and Bibles, this was why we all travelled from many different countries to Ethiopia.

Upon returning to Canada and the freezing cold temperatures, I still feel the warmth of the candle within; in the experiences of an amazing trip that has lifted my heart and provided a reference point for looking at the truly important things in my life. Thoughts of the village children running with open arms to greet

the bus as we arrived every morning, remembering the gentle, caring and playful nature of the women who fed us each day and admiring the unrelenting work ethic of the local villagers who led us in building the homes...these visions have filled me with humility and hope. We really are a global village and we can impact each other's lives with simple and pure gestures of love. I am truly thankful and blessed to carry these experiences with me and to share them with others.

My profound appreciation to all those who donated to this HFH Global Village trip. I can assure you that the funds were used in support of a very worthy cause. I hope you can join me on a future build!

Readers are kindly requested to use the following contact addresses for any comments or questions.

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