

Adoption Advocates International



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This webpage is devoted to kids who are making a difference in the world by helping to raise funds, donations and awareness about the orphan crisis in Ethiopia and who are helping to support the children at Layla House through their activities.

If you know of someone who should be featured, please contact Susan Poisson-Dollar at susanpd@adoptionadvocates.org.

Vicente Collins-Friedrich's Bake Sale for Dessie's Dream

During the month of July, Vicente's summer camp class of 6-year-olds learned about Ethiopian culture and the children of Dessie. They were inspired to raise funds for the school AAI is helping to construct by contributing from their piggy banks and holding a bake sale and lemonade stand. Aided by Vicente's sisters (Meseret, 12, from Ethiopia and Alia, 11) the kids put on a fabulous event with cookies, cupcakes, brownies, and Meseret's popular dabo. The event raised \$324.23 for Dessie!



Elementary students knit bonds of friendship with Layla House children

"In through the window, around the back; through to the front and off comes Jack!" Ms. Eaton's first and second graders recite this ditty in unison, although they don't need it anymore. Initially, this rhyme taught them how to knit, but now they are pros. These children are students at Carnation Elementary School in WA state where AAI parent Doug Poage is the principal. When they learned that the children at Layla also liked to knit and crochet, they made needles and collected yarn to send over with Doug. The children also sent letters and cards. When Doug returned, he shared pictures of Layla children knitting and he also brought cards they had made in return for the Carnation students written in both English and Amharic. What a great way to share their new hobby with children on the other side of the world!



Shoshana Fishbein's Bat Mitzvah – June 2008

Shoshana Fishbein's Bat Mitzvah invitation asked her guests to contribute to AAI's Layla House in lieu of sending traditional presents for this special occasion. Thanks to her generous spirit and wonderful friends and family, Shoshana has raised over \$8000 for Layla House enabling us to complete some long-awaited projects and to provide special activities for the children waiting there. Shoshana is the niece of adoptive parents Erica and Fred Taylor and her two new cousins, Meskerem and Daniel, were adopted from Layla House in February 2008. We are so grateful to the Fishbein and the Taylor families for continuing to support the children at Layla House.



Lemonade Stands for Ghana and the Grace Fund – June 21, 2008

Two families held lemonade sales with material provided by Crayola Crayons and they dedicated the proceeds to AAI programs. Lucas and Jonah Ferrell, awaiting a sibling group of 3 from Ghana, raised \$105 to help buy new beds for children at Eban House.

Cynthia and Maylot Ward of Scotia, NY held their lemonade sale to benefit the Grace Fund and raised over \$100 as well.



Union High School Teacher and Students Support AAI's Dessie's Dream Project

Union High School—Vancouver, WA students created a video to support AAI's Dessie's Dream project to complete a school building for over 1500 students in the town of Dessie.

See their video at this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBOjkCM5XUc>

Dave Shoup is a history teacher at Union High School in Vancouver Washington and an AAI adoptive parent with two Ethiopian-born children. Over the years, he has tried to connect his students with the real world around them, and has used projects through AAI in order to do that. This year he and his students decided to make a short video comparing their lives with those of the children of Dessie to illustrate the need for them to reach out and help. Dave and his students raised approximately \$3000. The photo shows a group of students who held a car wash and contributed the proceeds. Others donated their lunch money and even their paychecks. Dave hopes they feel inspired to help others throughout their lives.



Wes Goodman (12) organizes Shoe Drive for Layla House

The following is excerpted from the article that ran in the *Bozeman Chronicle*

Monforton School children have cleaned out their closets to collect 136 pairs of used shoes to send to orphans in Ethiopia. "We thought it would be cool to raise shoes for these kids," said Wes Goodman, 12, whose family originally had the idea. Students cleaned the donated shoes Friday and then arranged them on the school lawn in the outlined shape of Africa.

"The whole thing is kind of cool, sending shoes to kids who really need them," said Hailey O'Brien, 13, secretary-treasurer of Monforton's student council. The school only has 180 students, so collecting 136 pairs of shoes is pretty good, said sixth-grade teacher Sally Broughton.

"Monforton is not a school with a lot of money, but it's such a generous school," said parent Ceci Goodman, "My children play basketball and have a ridiculous number of shoes," Goodman said. She was also inspired by a video that showed a little boy from Ethiopia "dancing with jubilation at this first pair of shoes."



Broughton said this was the first time Monforton's Student Council had taken on an international project. To help Monforton students understand what it's like to have no shoes, they watched the Oscar-nominated film "Children of Heaven," about a poor brother and sister in Iran who share one pair of shoes, Broughton said. "Learning how there are people in the world who don't have all the wonderful things they do" is important for students, she said. They are also "learning that to be good citizens, we need to do service for each other."

Hylom's Bingo Party Raised Over \$11,000!!!

Nine year old Hylom Love was moved by the plight of HIV+ orphan children in Ethiopia and wanted to sponsor a child at the AHOPE orphanage. He decided to hold a bingo party to raise funds. Here is his invitation to the party, which he passed out to about 75 of his friends at school:

HELP ME HELP ETHIOPIA

I am Hylom. I am nine years old. I was born in Ethiopia and lived there until my Ethiopian parents died. I became a member of the Love family after they adopted me at age six.

While living in Ethiopia I had the experience of seeing people who were sick with HIV and other diseases. I've seen how sad they are. I don't think the people I loved in Ethiopia would have died if they could have taken medicine. I was like the thousands of children who still have to live with sickness and loss in Ethiopia. But, I'm healthy and in a new family now.

I want to help my friends in Ethiopia. I'd like to ask you to help me sponsor a child who is HIV positive. I just learned about a group called AHOPE FOR CHILDREN. Here's the information that I read on their website: www.ahopeforchildren.org.

World Wide Orphan Foundation's Barlow Clinic in Addis Ababa is providing overall medical care and the ARV "cocktails" to the HIV positive children in care.

AHOPE Ethiopia has a nurse on staff to monitor the day-to-day health issues of the children. While AHOPE was

providing care for children with an expected short lifespan, they now are providing care and education as appropriate that will allow the child to develop skills for an independent adult life.

Here is his mom's report about the event:



The Bingo event on Saturday was a smashing success! Over 100 children attended. Combined with the adults who walked in and out, lingered, and helped for the two hours, total participants - about 150 people! (The hall holds 125 seated, so the house was PACKED with great energy!) Our record of the amount raised to date is over \$11,000.

A trio of green, yellow and red balloons floated from the center of cans covered in images from Hyelom's invitation and pictures off the AHOPE website. Over those three tables was a PowerPoint slideshow walking guests through visuals of WHERE Ethiopia is located on the globe, WHAT Ethiopia and her people really look like living, shopping, working, and eating, with captions on pictures to describe the views.

A Yale based African acapella group's CD played in the background.

Families arrived with children ages preschool through 6th grade to play. About 10 (Middle and High School aged) kids stayed to help run the event. They helped greet, chaperone at tables, serve food, write on white boards for Bingo visuals and organize Bingo Balls as they were called.

The children were greeted at the door, asked to fill out a name tag, find one BINGO card, and then find a seat.

The adults were greeted by a "registration" table of sorts. On the table was one standing frame holding Surafel Chalachew's picture and sponsor information. In another frame was a list of those who helped the success of the event through their donated services or products.

Also atop the table was a large empty "candy jar" (for collecting cash), yellow blank donation cards, green information cards, Ethiopian baskets (to hold donations and pens), and a container of paperclips (for attaching donation to card). We had a small silent auction for two cookbooks written by award winning chef Marcus Samuelsson (Ethiopian born, Swedish adopted) titled "A SOUL OF A NEW CUISINE". (The books were worth \$40 each. The total donation from these two books was \$135.)

The children were AMAZING!! The momentum was inspiring. I had tears watching the enthusiasm and positive energy throughout the afternoon. Halfway through the event, I noticed Hyelom's head at different tables. I was curious. AH-HA! His gifts at work!! Unprompted, he made the choice to visit EACH of the 10 tables to visit friends and say hello. By his choice, he didn't play Bingo, just enjoyed his friends playing bingo. When he got home with great enthusiasm he shouted "THAT WAS THE BEST PARTY OF MY LIFE!!"

Adults left with a sincere expression of gratitude (which looked and sounded different than a b-day party thank you). The awareness raised, and lives touched, are hard to measure but even more encouraging.

For more photos [from the event], [click here](#).

Henry and Zelalem are Having a Party!

Henry and Zelalem will be having a joint birthday party (14 and 10) and they hope you can come!

In lieu of presents Henry and Zelalem will be collecting donations for Adoption Advocates International, an agency that provides adoption services for orphaned children from China, Thailand and Ethiopia as well as providing sponsorship programs to serve those children who are able to continue to live with extended family members or neighbors while they continue their schooling.



Leah & Her Change 4 Orphans Project Has Raised Over \$1,400 for Orphans in Ethiopia

Hi my name is Leah. I live in Colorado. I am 12 and in 7th grade. People in Africa are dying from AIDS uncontrollably and the children are left with no parents and lots of them have HIV too. There are 4.6 million orphans in Ethiopia alone. Many of them live in crowded orphanages, with neighbors, relatives or on the street. Some have family but they have no money to feed them so they are brought to the orphanages.

I decided that I want to start a penny drive and donate the money to an Ethiopian orphanage. My goal is to get one penny for every orphan in Ethiopia. The orphanages need supplies and medicine and the children have no toys. My family is about to adopt a little girl from Ethiopia and that is what helped me with the idea. We will deliver the donations ourselves when we pick up our new sister.



So, if you have any pennies in your pocket, just think about this. The reason I chose pennies is because most people when they see a penny on the ground they just walk by it, like they didn't even see it. Most of the world is doing the same thing to the Orphans of Ethiopia. Please don't just walk by them. Make a difference.

PLEASE DONATE YOUR PENNIES TO A GOOD CAUSE!

Extraordinary Hope Leonard

Hope Leonard is eight years old, and has touched the lives of hundreds of children in Ethiopia. You see, Hope's only Christmas wish for 2005, was that every child at Layla House and AHOPE in Ethiopia would receive three pair of new underwear. That's it. No Furby, Barbie doll or coloring book from Santa, only underwear for these orphaned children.

"We adopted Hope in 2003, and now have this unusual challenge every Christmas," said Sharon Leonard, Hope's mother. "Last year, Hope told the mall Santa she wanted 'peace on earth' and nothing else. The year before that she asked for enough food to feed all the hungry children who live in orphanages." Actually, Hope wanted 11 sisters from Africa for Christmas, but she knew that was a pretty huge wish. "I know it's hard to live in an orphanage, because I was in one in China for a long time," Hope said.

Sharon knew they couldn't provide 480 pair of underwear for Hope's wish for Christmas, so she shared Hope's story with her church and adoption e-mail friends. "I thought Hope's wish was so unselfish, it was important to share it with others," said Sharon. "Maybe people would think more about the real meaning of the holidays, and do something special this year." And that they did. Within hours, Sharon began receiving e-mails from people, saying they were greatly affected by the story. Underwear began arriving the next day, and soon, 3,000 pair had arrived to give to the children at Layla House and AHOPE. "I can't explain the joy and excitement that overcame Hope as the gifts of underwear stacked up in our living room," said Sharon.

Needless to say, Hope was thrilled to be able to personally deliver, 3,000 pair of underwear to Layla House and AHOPE in April 2006. In addition to the underwear, Hope and her sisters were also able to bring clothing, toys, shoes, medical supplies, art supplies and balls of all size. Even 100s of marbles! All thanks to the generous donations of so many people.

Hope almost got her other wish fulfilled too. Although not eleven sisters, her family did adopt a sibling group of four from Layla House!

Christmas 2006 hold even bigger wishes, as Hope again plans to return to Ethiopia with more surprises for the children who wait for families.



Hope and some of the 3,000 pair of underwear she collected for the orphan children in Ethiopia.



The Leonard Family at Layla House after their four new children joined the family, with the help of the GRACE Fund.



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