



THE BCI BEAT

Have you heard? We now have a YouTube series dedicated to sharing news about the BCI ministry and the unique culture and traditions of Ethiopia. Our program, the BCI Beat, launched on the 29th of January. A new episode airs weekly on Wednesday's at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Stories include everything from child updates to school happenings to medical news. We will continue to share ministry news through our newsletter. The weekly format of our YouTube series will provide even more news stories and interesting information. You might even spot



Watch us at:

<http://www.youtube.com/c/BlessingtheChildrenIntl/>

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FIRST-TIME MOM AT 54



Merga Hordofa

Merga Hordofa is an absolutely precious 6-year-old boy. By the smile on his face, you would never know the tragic start he had in life. His birth mother was unable to afford the cost of raising a child. There are no support programs in Ethiopia to help mothers in her position. It's not uncommon for an impoverished mother to abandon her newborn child in an effort to save herself or in the hopes that someone will take the child in and provide a better life. Merga's mother abandoned him on the street as a baby. God looked out for Merga and led a 54-year-old woman named Afrase to encounter him. Afrase had never been blessed with children of her own and decided to take Merga in and raise him as her son.

Afrase is now 60 years old. Like many third world countries, Ethiopia's life expectancy is lower than the western world. A 60-

year-old woman is considered elderly. Afrase is quite impoverished herself and has no income outside of the \$9 USD she makes each month by watching her neighbor's cows, and a little bit of change here and there when she washes clothes for her neighbors. The cost of her rent is \$16 USD, so it is a challenge to keep a roof over their heads and food in Merga's belly. In addition to her age, Afrase's health makes work a challenge. She struggles with health issues related to her kidneys and uterus.

Merga is in love with his mother. Afrase is the only mother he has known and he adores her. Afrase stated that Merga is her only reason to continue living. They are a precious pair and it's clear that her heart is golden for taking in Merga, despite the additional hardship this causes her financially.

We're so pleased to have been given the opportunity to help this family through the sponsorship program. Merga is currently on our waiting list. If you would like to step into his life and make a difference as he grows, you are sure to make that sweet smile bigger.



Afrase and Merga

TRIP OF A LIFETIME

Teyent Asrat is a 21-year-old university student who lives with his mother and sister. His father died from tuberculosis when Teyent was just a baby. After awaiting sponsorship for many years, he now has support to help him attend a local university where he is developing his musical talents. Teyent recently had the opportunity of a lifetime to travel on a study abroad trip to Madagascar. His university covered all of the expenses to travel to Madagascar for 10 days and attend music camp. Many young Ethiopians have never ridden in a car, let alone on an airplane. Teyent could not have dreamed of such an opportunity on his own. It's so exciting to see the unique stories God is weaving in the lives of our children as they grow up. Teyent's gifts have already taken him beyond Ethiopia's borders to explore the world. We look forward to seeing where his musical talents will take him in the future.



Teyent Asrat in Madagascar



Changing the World - One Child at a Time!

INSPIRING TEENS: EAYASU WONDIMU

Eayasu Wondimu is an 18-year old grade 12 student who has been in the BCI program for more than 10 years. Eayasu lives with his mother, aunt and cousin and enjoys spending time with his best friends, Bemnet and Tewodros, who are both in the BCI program. The three friends attend church together and enjoy discussing Bible verses and visiting recreational areas.

Eayasu has some musical abilities, and he can often be found writing and singing his own songs. He feels that singing is one of his callings and he would like to pursue singing professionally in the future. Academically, Eayasu's favorite subject is economics. He aspires to become a successful businessman and use his earnings to create an organization that is concerned with the welfare of youth.

Eayasu is involved in the local youth community and spends time with youth whom many consider to be "bad kids" in order to try to bring them to Jesus. Even though he knows in his heart he is doing the right thing, his life is made difficult because of his choice to associate with these youth. This makes his social life especially challenging. We commend Eayasu for his strong character. He is a testament to the impact of sponsorship and an education at the BCI Academy.



Eayasu Wondimu

A CASE OF FALSE IMPRISONMENT

Bemenet Olana is a grade 10 student who has been in the BCI program for many years. Bemenet lives with four siblings and her mother. Her father, a former soldier, was seriously injured by a bullet and left permanently disabled. Bemenet's parents met while her father was in a rehabilitation camp in Debre Zeyit. When the rehabilitation camp moved to Addis Ababa, Bemenet's father moved along with it, based on advice from his doctor.

Bemenet's family has now been separated for many years. Bemenet and her mother and siblings live off a pension of \$11 USD per month. Recently, her mother has been working as a saleswoman to earn extra income. With no proof of wrongdoing, the buyer's association chairman accused her of theft and she was sentenced to 18 months in jail. Bemenet and her siblings are devastated. They are now living with no parent and no source of income besides the \$11 USD monthly pension.

We often use the phrase "there is no shortage of need," and Bemenet's case is a perfect example. Above and beyond monthly sponsorship, Bemenet would be blessed to receive additional support to help her through this difficult time until her mother is released from prison in 18 months. An additional \$20 per month for the duration of her mother's prison sentence will ensure she can meet her most basic needs until her mother can return.



Bemenet Olana

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Sponsorship of Merga

Provide sponsorship for 6-year-old Merga Hordofa

Need: \$90/mo.

Raised: \$0/mo.

Remaining Need: \$90/mo.

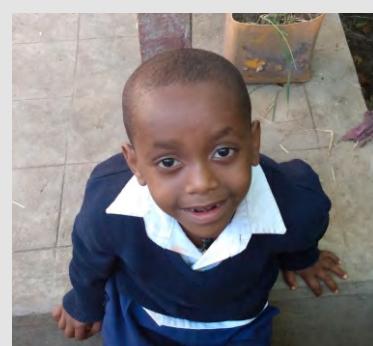
Support for Abenezer

Extra help for Abenezer while his mother goes through cancer treatment

Need: \$150

Raised: \$33

Remaining Need: \$117



Extra help for Bemenet

Provide 18 months of support until Bemenet's mother is released from jail

Need: \$360

Raised: \$0

Remaining Need: \$360

You can make a donation by phone at (888) 269-2719, by web at www.BlessingtheChildren.org or by mail to:
Blessing the Children, 2265 Fraser Road, Kawkawlin, MI 48631