

PRAYER REQUESTS



Bereket Abush

18-year-old Bereket Abush was abandoned by his father and his mother died of a sinus infection. He has suffered from a longstanding, chronic illness and in early August he received his eighth blood transfusion.



Nardos Melaku

8-year-old Nardos Melaku never met her father, who abandoned her mother when she was two months pregnant. A few months ago, her mother developed intestinal issues, which led to her hospitalization. It is difficult for her mother to work now.



Natsanet Assefa

9-year-old Natsanet Assefa lives with his mother and grandmother. His mother suffers from mental illness, leaving most of his care to his elderly grandmother, whose health has declined. Natsanet suffers from neglect due to these circumstances.

Post Newsletter

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FULL CIRCLE: A SPONSORSHIP JOURNEY

The story of Mekdes Shisema, by her longtime sponsor, Rick.

My wife, Sheila, and I fell in love with Mekdes (name meaning "temple") on our second trip to Ethiopia. She was a full orphan. Looking back, we saw potential in her that needed to be brought out. We couldn't see her having the opportunity to overcome the harshness of her life on her own so we made the decision to welcome Mekdes into our own family. Since then, we've seen her through birthdays, braces, university dorm living in Addis Ababa, and university graduation. We've met her aunt, some of her extended family, and we've taken on her younger brother, Adana.



Mekdes as a Teenager

Mekdes has faced typical struggles adjusting from the security of the sponsorship program to living as head of household. In fact, she has told us more than once that "adulthood" is not as fun as she imagined. As a result of sponsorship, education at the BCI Academy, and the influence of international missionaries, she has been afforded the opportunity to strive for her potential. She is a young adult and will continue to mature with time.

We've noticed signs of her maturation by the questions she has begun to ask, such as "how do I manage expectations?" and "what books should I read?" She's much more observant toward her own culture, with its

pluses and minuses, and she's much more observant of Sheila and I, with our pluses and minuses. She is in the process of discovering a bigger world view than is possible only in the context of one's own country.

As we reflect back on the past decade of sponsorship, we realize that it has been a two-way street: Mekdes has helped Sheila and I see our potential. The gratitude also goes both ways.

Since graduating from university, Mekdes has moved into the workforce and is now employed as an English teacher at the Bethlehem campus of the BCI Academy. Her English skills have been fostered by the many English speaking missionaries who have all had a profound impact on her vocabulary. She picks up on the nuances of sarcasm and humor, and some travelers from Texas even tried to teach her a drawl.



Mekdes with her First Grade Class

EPIDEMIC WITHIN A PANDEMIC

The BCI Academy is not only a school of excellence, providing a quality education to children in the BCI sponsorship program as well as children in the local community, the school is also a valuable resource for the Debre Zeyit community. BCI has a strong record of working in partnership with local officials to provide critical aid to the community.

From July 7-8, the school campus was made available for local health officials to offer a measles vaccination clinic. All children aged 9 months to 5 years from the Debre Zeyit area were able to obtain a measles vaccination. The measles vaccine is especially

critical at this time, since the Central African Republic Ministry declared a national epidemic of measles on January 24, 2020. Thousands of cases have been reported in Ethiopia thus far.

It's hard to imagine battling an epidemic within a pandemic, but this is the reality facing Ethiopians. We felt blessed to loan the school campus for such a worthy cause. It's just one more way God is using the ministry!



An infant is vaccinated



A mother comforts her young daughter

GROWING A GREENER FUTURE

Today's seedlings are tomorrow's trees.

In an effort to combat deforestation, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia created an initiative called Green Legacy, with a goal of planting four billion trees during the rainy season of May to October in 2019. On July 29, 2019, the country planted 350 million trees in a 12-hour period, setting a world record.

The BCI Academy has chosen to take part in the Green Legacy initiative, with a goal of planting 110 trees across the school campus. The effort was kicked



School staff working together for a green future

off on July 24, 2020, when teachers and staff worked together to plant dozens of seedlings.

Tree cultivation is a labor intensive activity, the scope of which is commonly underestimated, even by professionals. The school staff put in hard work but also enjoyed their time

spent together after many months apart. The activity provided a great opportunity to say thank you for their efforts during this most challenging school year, and to keep their spirits strong as the next school year approaches.

URGENT CANCER TREATMENT NEEDED

Eyob Husen was once a happy child. Despite a lifelong mental challenge, he is one of the happiest people you could meet. Eyob is very friendly and sociable. During the spring, his mother, Hareg, took notice that he wasn't his usual self. He was becoming increasingly fatigued and began suffering from pain. Hareg took him in for a medical evaluation and he was admitted to the Black Lion Hospital in Addis Ababa, where he spent two weeks before receiving the devastating diagnosis of blood cancer.

Once a strong, active teen, Eyob now spends most of his time in bed. Hareg provides constant care for him and is now limited in her ability to work. She has lost most of her customers because she isn't able to work nearly as many hours as she once could.

Eyob's doctor has formulated a treatment plan that will require 2 to 3 trips to the Black Lion Hospital each month. The hospital is approximately one hour north of Debre Zeyit. Eyob and Hareg must take public transport. The cost for his treatment and transport is \$140 USD per month. It is unknown at this time how long his treatment will continue. The doctor also advised that Eyob drink milk daily to bolster his nutrition and medication tolerance. Eyob needs urgent support to receive this treatment. If you would like to help provide this critical support, please reach out. No amount is too small. We also invite you to join us as a prayer warrior. Please pray for strength and healing and for comfort for the family.



Eyob resting at home

IMMEDIATE NEEDS

Eyob's Cancer Treatment

Give Eyob a chance at life by supporting the treatment of his blood cancer.

Need: \$140/mo.
Raised: \$0
Remaining Need: \$140/mo.



Tablets for Education

Provide tablets to keep the children connected to education during the pandemic.

Need: \$35,280
Raised: \$7,200
Remaining Need: \$28,080



Touchless Thermometers

Provide touchless thermometers to be used at both campuses of the BCI Academy.

Need: \$600
Raised: \$400
Remaining Need: \$200



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