

CHANGING LIVES...TOUCHING HEARTS



TEAM TESFA
A SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

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Tesfa's STORY



Tesfa Alebachew was homeless for an entire decade. He was just a child - seven years old - when his mother died and he was forced onto the street. His father had left years before, and there was no other family member to care for him.

Now, he runs a shelter in Harar, Ethiopia, to keep other vulnerable children from struggling the way he did.

Tesfa is known as "Father" to more than 90 kids, from toddlers to teens. His own circumstances inspired him to make a difference, using tragedy and triumph to change the course of so many children's lives.

"If my story could help others, that would make me so happy. I am not ashamed of the life I have lived," he said.

When living on the streets, Tesfa was forced to sell khat, a plant that produces a high similar to amphetamines, in bustling street markets while begging for work. He asked passing businessmen if they needed any help, trying to pick up odd jobs. "Street life is very difficult," Tesfa admitted.

That includes frequent threats and a near-constant risk of violence, to say nothing of the emotional turmoil and trauma. Tesfa is open about the fact that he was "hurting psychologically" after living on the street.

Still, Tesfa worked to cultivate community even as a 10-year-old living on the street, raising money to help buy schoolbooks and supplies for other homeless or orphaned children. He tried to keep up with his schoolwork and encouraged others on the street to do the same.

A police raid to clear out children and adults living on the street prior to a visit to Harar by officials once landed him in jail for a few days. He pleaded with the guards to let him out to write a crucial three-day Grade 8 exam that plays a big role in securing future educational opportunities. He was allowed to write the exam and then returned to jail.

As a teenager, Tesfa and his father reunited. But their relationship couldn't recover from the deep fractures created earlier in his life.

Tesfa never felt accepted, especially among his father's new family, which included other children.

So he moved out again, on his own, to chart his own path. He created his own kind of family.

HOW THE SHELTER WORKS

Tesfa's Shelter is a special place.

There's just no other way to describe the incredible model Tesfa has developed for the shelter, a place of safety and family built on volunteer power and contributions from local citizens.

Tesfa is the founder, the leader, and the manager. He created the shelter to help children on the street - children just like him. He's used a tragic past as motivation to build a home for those who no longer have one.

He, too, is a volunteer. He's not paid for his time running the shelter, and instead works one week per month to make ends meet.

It's a family affair, too, with his wife donating her time to act as the shelter's auditor and medical doctor.

The entire shelter is overseen by a volunteer board, including the chairman of the local social affairs office, an ophthalmologist in a nearby community, and three local merchants.

Other businesses in Harar chip in to help support the children at the shelter, too.

A barbershop provides hair cuts, clinics offer free medication, local shops keep the shelter stocked with menstrual products (these products are quite expensive and not always accessible in Ethiopia), and schools cover the childrens' registration costs. Religious institutions provide services and religious clothing.

It's an incredible model, a unique way to ensure the children have everything they need while operating on a shoestring budget.

The shelter is all about love and support, but it's also practical, running like a well-oiled machine.



The SHELTER *continued*

Every child in the shelter has a job based on their age and abilities

Older children are paired with younger ones to help ensure they're bathed, their clothing is clean and their schoolwork is done.

"If the children are going to succeed, we have to be a family. If one is sick or in trouble, the (other) 90 will contribute their skills to help," Tesfa said.

When you visit the shelter, it is meticulously organized and clean. The children live up to this standard and take pride in their home.



*"If the children are going to succeed,
we have to be a family."*

A beautiful model of culturally sensitive care

Some of the teenagers have specific roles to keep the shelter humming. Maranata and Hamdi are monitors, a pair of point people. Aysha is in charge of the kitchen and cleaning. Yezina is the head of education. Siti is taking first aid courses through the Red Cross, because she's in charge of health and safety. Mebratu is the leader of sports and physical activity. In each of those areas, up to three additional children assist and report to the leader in charge.

School is a big priority for Tesfa. The children at his shelter attend three schools, and they often hold the top average grade among their peers, up to 98.4%.

The shelter operates as a team. There is a family meeting once a week to talk about any challenges and share updates about school, behaviour, responsibilities and any additional concerns or ideas. "We work (it) out together to solve any problem in the shelter to make our compound better," Tesfa said.

*Your funds make
this possible*

Guiding PRINCIPLES

Understand the Team Tesfa sponsorship by exploring our guiding principles

- Respect the Ethiopian culture:
 - Trusting and respecting our partner on the ground.
 - Working collaboratively to establish expectations of the program.
 - Not imposing our values.



- No child will feel left out or feel less than any other child in the shelter:
 - All children will have a letter from our volunteer writing team once a month that will be read by Tesfa to the whole group.
 - All children will celebrate special holidays, monthly birthday celebrations and an annual awards ceremony.
 - All children will be treated the same and will be seen as equal regardless of whether they have a sponsor or not.
- Development or changes to our program will be community driven as much as possible:
 - We will consult with and collaborate with our partner if and when changes are needed or desired in the program.
- Invest and build into children's lives to allow for a brighter future:
 - We will strive to provide necessities and education to enable children to thrive in the environment and their culture.

MORE GUIDING *principles*

- All actions will protect the children from harm:
 - Sponsors will be told not to post pictures of their sponsored child on the internet or share their sponsored child's personal information with others.
 - Mothers with a Heart for Ethiopia will not post pictures with names of the children on their website.
 - Children's information will not be released to anyone until they have registered as a Sponsor.



- Regular assessment and evaluation of program to measure needs and ensure accountability to donors:
 - A yearly assessment will be conducted to determine if funding is sufficient and to determine if needs of each child are being met.
 - Report cards will be provided to Mothers with a Heart for Ethiopia for each child living in the shelter.
 - A medical report, progress report on development and psychological wellness on each child living in the shelter will be included in the bi-annual report to Mothers with a Heart for Ethiopia from Tesfa.
 - Sponsors will receive a bi-annual update on their sponsored child.

Communicating with your SPONSORED CHILD



No child left out, all children treated equally

This is one of the guiding principles of the sponsorship program. Our goal is to have every single one of the 92 children in Tesfa's Shelter sponsored, but we realize that will take time. In the meantime, we want every child to feel they are being treated the same as all other children right from the inception of the program.

We also recognize that many Sponsors find it very challenging to write their sponsored child, to find interesting and new things to share.

In order to reduce the pressure on Sponsors and to ensure all children (whether they have a Sponsor or not) at the shelter feel cared for and loved, a volunteer team of writers has been created. The volunteers will write one letter per month from the "Canadian Friends" that will be read to the full group of children by Tesfa.

The letters will help the children better understand life in Canada and the hearts of their Canadian friends, provide encouragement towards their education and life skills, encourage the children to think about their futures, instill the confidence their Canadian friends have in them and provide encouraging short stories. The intention is to warm the children's hearts, assure them they are cared about, and to encourage them in their daily lives to work towards realizing their brightest future.

The volunteer writing team is a unique approach to address what many Sponsors recognize as a challenging aspect of being a Sponsor while meeting one of the guiding principles of "no child is left out and all children are treated the same."

In an effort to stretch every dollar of your sponsorship, this unique approach to communication means our organization is not paying for translation of Sponsors' letters to Amharic and the children's letters to Sponsors from Amharic to English.

As a Sponsor, you will receive an updated picture and report on your sponsored child's progress and activities twice a year. Your report will be created by Tesfa who cares for your sponsored child as his own child and who monitors closely their educational progress, their physical and emotional wellness and who is their biggest support and cheerleader.



Sponsor Guidelines DOS AND DONTs

Many DOs:

Read the Sponsorship Welcome Kit and spend time learning about Ethiopia and Tesfa's Shelter, to further your knowledge of the culture and society in which your sponsored child lives.

Share with family and friends the excitement of sponsoring a child at Tesfa's Shelter and being a part of Team Tesfa!

Enjoy receiving and reading updates about your sponsored child, twice a year.

Reach out to Shelley Green, founder of Mothers with a Heart for Ethiopia, at kcbudjo@hotmail.com, with any questions you have about the sponsorship program or your sponsored child.

Celebrate the progress and success of your sponsored child! As a Sponsor, you are changing a life and touching a heart in a very profound way!

*Touch a life . . .
become a Sponsor*



Only 3 DONTS



1

Please do not post pictures

Please do not post pictures of your sponsored child on social media or share their personal details with others outside of those sponsoring the child.

(In cases where the Sponsor is a family or a workplace, those involved in the sponsorship can receive the personal information and picture).

One of our guiding principles is that all actions will protect the children at Tesfa's Shelter from harm.



2

Please do not send gifts

We recognize that it is likely not all 92 children will have a Sponsor. In order to ensure that all children are treated equally, we will use a part of your sponsorship amount to pay for special dinners during cultural holidays, an annual awards ceremony to celebrate the children's accomplishments and a birthday celebration once a month to celebrate children born in that month. All of the children, whether they have a Sponsor or not, will participate in these activities. In fact, all children will receive all that your sponsored child receives because other funds raised will support the children who do not have Sponsors.



3

Please do not visit Tesfa's Shelter

We are currently not arranging or supporting visits to Tesfa's Shelter for our Sponsors. Ethiopia is not stable at this time.

We will reconsider Sponsor trips in the future when Ethiopia is more stable.

10 Facts About HARAR, ETHIOPIA

This ancient city is a vibrant,
beautiful place full of history



1. Harar is a historic, walled city in eastern Ethiopia. The old town - Harar Jugol, known as the fortified town - is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is said to be the fourth holiest city in Islam and is home to nearly 100 mosques.
2. It was the capital of the Harari Kingdom in the 1500s, before independence in the 17th century. Harar was later integrated into Ethiopia in 1887.
3. About half the population of Harar (49%) is Orthodox Christian, with a strong Muslim population (45%).
4. Harar is the capital of the Harari region, the smallest regional state in Ethiopia.
5. Harar has long been a commercial centre, acting as a trading hub with connections to Djibouti, Somalia and other parts of Ethiopia.
6. The population of the city of Harar is about 150,000 people according to the most recent Ethiopian census data and projections.
7. Harar is known for its coffee, khat or qat (pronounced chat - a leafy green plant that's chewed to produce a high similar to amphetamines) and traditional woven baskets, which are used for everything from transporting goods (often carried on top of the head) to storing injera, a staple of Ethiopia cuisine.
8. About half of Harar residents (49%) speak Amharic as their first language, followed by Oromo for 24%. Harari is the third most-popular language (12%), and more than 6% speak Somali.
9. The regional poverty rate stood at 7% - the lowest in the country - before the COVID-19 pandemic, but 63% of children were still deprived of basic needs, such as nutrition, sanitation and health.
10. Spotted hyenas have been in Harar for 500 years. They're treated well. Just outside the city walls, they're fed scraps of meat, a practice that began in hopes of keeping the human population safe from attack. Now it has become something of a tourist attraction.

BECOME *a sponsor*

Join Team Tesfa!

Your sponsorship covers the cost of everything your sponsored child needs. This sponsorship program is different from others in that you are providing for your child's shelter and all other needs.

It costs over \$15,000 Canadian to raise a child each year or \$1,250 per month.

The cost to raise a child at Tesfa's Shelter is \$1,000 Canadian per year or \$84 per month. Our money goes a long ways in Ethiopia.

Ways to make your sponsorship payments:

1. Pre-authorized monthly bank withdrawals.
2. Pre-authorized monthly credit card payments.
3. Post-dated cheques.
4. Annual one-time payment by cheque or credit card.



Be a Co-Sponsor

If the sponsorship amount is out of reach for you but you want to join Team Tesfa and change a child's life, here are some ideas to consider:

- ask a family member(s) to share in the cost of the sponsorship
- ask a friend(s) to share in the cost of the sponsorship
- invite a group at work to become a sponsor together
- invite members of a book club, exercise group, etc. to become a sponsor together

To sign up today, visit www.motherswithaheartforethiopia.com.

If you have more questions or need assistance in getting registered as a Sponsor, please call 519-532-2089.

Get in touch with us

WEBSITE: www.motherswithaheartforethiopia.com

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