



wellwishers

Saving and Enriching Lives in Ethiopia

Ross' Piece Another financial year has almost gone and now could be a good time to consider your donations to favourite causes to maximise your tax return. I hope that you will think of WellWishers in your deliberations.

I am pleased to inform you that the fundraising dinner in Canberra in April was very successful. With the help of some generous donations, Robyn and her helpers raised about \$12,000 - enough for 2 much needed wells, plus we gained many new supporters for WellWishers. Congratulations to all involved and many thanks to our sponsors.

Membership subscriptions are due from 1 July 2008. Only financial members will be able to vote at our AGM (see below).

Apologies for the delay in receipting donations made in April and May (I was on holidays). The receipts will be issued later this month. Be assured that all donations received prior to 30 June 2008 will be formally receipted for 2007/08 financial year.

NEWS IN BRIEF

A Supporter's Story

In April, a US couple returned from Ethiopia. He had emigrated 35 years ago leaving rural Sakba village 8 years earlier. Read Ghebre Gebregziabeher's emotional story over the page.

Thank You, AnglicORD

Our 3 year long, great arrangement with AnglicORD finishes at the end of this month. See below for further details and new exciting developments.

New Postal Address

To enable efficient control of mail, particularly when I am away, WellWishers now has its own postal address.

PO BOX 670
MULLUMBIMBY
NSW 2482

Village Beneficiaries



Recent surveys show that villagers receiving clean water in a village now varies from 500 to 750 people.

More Good News

In 2008/09 our Friend will again match all donations on a 1:1 basis. Now however, a maximum of \$60,000 worth of donations will be matched, an increase of \$5,000. SINCERE THANKS.

Donations of \$55

For \$55 a typical family gets a share of a new well. Why not stretch your budget to make a monthly donation? Contact Ross to facilitate a monthly payment.



NATIONAL RAFFLE

WE HAVE A WINNER!

As quite a few unsold tickets were returned, we just failed to raise enough funds for a well. Happily, a supporter topped up the shortfall. Thank you to all those who bought and sold tickets.

Congratulations to Peter, a supporter from Sydney, on winning this great prize. We hope to run the raffle again next year.

Pictured is John Mackay, CEO of ActewAGL, (Canberra's supplier of electricity, gas & water), drawing the raffle with Trustee Robyn Beetham of Canberra. We thank Mr Mackay for



drawing the raffle & also ActewAGL for their generosity to WellWishers.

"In Australia, fresh water for human consumption is taken for granted", Mr Mackay, said, "but in Ethiopia it is a very different story, particularly in regional areas. ActewAGL is therefore pleased to assist WellWishers in its endeavours."

FAREWELL TO ANGLICORD, WELCOME TO CWS

At the end of this month, we say farewell to AnglicORD as our Australian Partner. I personally would like to thank Greg Thompson and his staff for their service, help and advice over the past 3 years.

From 1 July 2008, our partner will be CWS, the community development arm of NCCA (www.ncca.org.au). CWS will not be providing any monitoring services within Ethiopia, enabling WellWishers to spend more on wells each year. CWS will however provide the same tax deductibility status.

The on-the-ground monitoring will continue to be provided at a high level by NCA, an independent Norwegian NGO that has operated in Ethiopia for over 30 years. NCA has been undertaking this important activity since the formation of WellWishers and we are very happy with the level of expertise provided by them.

As before, no pastoral activities are involved with this programme.

IMPORTANT NOTICE WellWishers First Annual General meeting will be held at 4pm on Monday 8 September 2008 at 132 Leicester St, Carlton Victoria. All supporters and members are encouraged to attend. The Agenda will be posted to all those who are interested, so please feel free to contact me for a copy. Ross Allan will be retiring as a trustee and being eligible will be seeking re-election at the AGM. Please note only members financial from 1 July 2008 will be eligible to vote (including by proxy). Our thanks to Oxfam Australia for making space available for the meeting.

Please become a Member of WellWishers - all you need do is complete this form, return it to the address below with the annual membership fee for 2008/09 of \$1.00 (payable with 2 x 50¢ stamps). For the successful democratisation of your Trust, I urge you to become a member.

Application for Membership of WellWishers Trust

NAME

ADDRESS

POSTCODE

Ghebre's Story

Ghebre's first visit to Ethiopia came after he had found a 2004 article on the internet which mentioned his birth village of Sakba. "We had found Sakba thanks to an article by Ross Allan from Australia. He had built a water well near Sakba and we wrote asking how to get there. (I had left as a child and did not know anymore how to get there.)."

He left his village forever and due to remoteness & communication difficulties, had no contact with any of his family since that time. He moved to Addis Ababa and later migrated to the USA. "Mr.Allan connected us with the REST Organisation in Mekelle. Weredeka, a staff member: researched our family & found the information. We made a plan to meet."

Ghebre and his wife Viola, made their first visit in January 2007 "to meet family, relatives and friends. Arriving in Addis Ababa 35 years later was shocking. The city has expanded, pollution is serious. The airport is amazingly modern, the design spectacular. Seeing old friends was exciting and brought a lot of memories. We flew to Mekelle, my nephew Kidane greeted us, he was born after I left the country. REST arranged a four wheel drive for rent to take us to Sakba.

Every family member was gathered and waiting in my birth place. My sisters welcomed me with hugs and tears. The event was overwhelming for me. The minute I saw their faces, I realised how hard life is for them, their hands and feet are full of calluses, when I touched them. Everything felt too small, the house, etc. Also I could not find extra grains stored like in the old days. We used to have many different grain reserves, and a lot of it. The mud bed I used to sleep on and other things in the house had changed. The area has dried up a lot. Streams are nowhere to be seen.

I visited St.Marys Church where we used to worship. We took family pictures in front of my house. I was ill with the flu and decided to go back to the hotel after about 2 hours. I told them I would come back the next day but I did not make it because I was confused - it was too difficult to deal with their conditions and lifestyle.

After we arrived in Addis we got a call from family - they wanted me to come back. I told my family I would be back sometime soon. We flew back to LA." Ghebre later told Ross he was so overwhelmed emotionally and with the conditions people lived in being so different to what he had become accustomed to, he was ashamed to say he couldn't cope.

Ghebre and Viola decided to fund a well after their 2007 visit to Ethiopia. "We thought that the best way to help my family and the residents of Mai Gasha/Sakba area, would be to build a well."

Ghebre was much more prepared for his 2nd visit in 2008.

"When we arrived in March (2008) the well was almost complete. Upon our arrival in Addis we met Weredekal who was there for work. He flew with us to Mekelle and organised a field trip to Sakba with other REST members. On Saturday we met family and community members next to the well. There was a celebration marked with greetings, speeches by the REST people and community representatives, and dancing. We observed the REST people working with the community. There were priests and residents with Ethiopian flags witnessing the inauguration. After that ceremony we celebrated with the family and REST people in my family house.

We spent the entire next day on the road, visiting the many wells that Ross and his organisation have dug with REST. People brought food to the fields to celebrate with us and thanked everyone for the water. We saw them grow vegetables, tomatoes, onions, corn, peppers. One well is a huge progress and saves lives.

On Monday we ate lunch in my sisters house with relatives. The well workers were still doing finishing touches. We had time for sightseeing stops to a mountain church and a museum. My brother who I never saw in 35 years, called to let us know that he was coming from Matamma, at the Sudanese border, within 3 days. He came & spent time with us till he left for Sakba with the priest to meet my sisters which he never met in 35 years.

We flew back to Addis & returned to the U.S. This trip was enjoyable & productive but I can sense the hardships of my family. As a child even though I was working hard, life was easier.

For me it is the biggest reward to see them again, sharing ideas, talking, laughing in the little time we had. I did my best. Thanks to Viola I have valuable videos & great pictures which I will always treasure. Viola handled the culture shock really well. I would never have made it, without finding Ross' internet article or his follow-up help & advice."



If you prefer a hard copy of this Newsletter rather than by email, I would be happy to provide this. It may make it easier for you to pass a copy onto friends & family. Back-copies of all Newsletters are available upon request and may also be viewed on the website - www.wellwishersthioopia.com is still in infancy and we would appreciate feedback from you about the information provided and if there are areas we can improve. We'd also love you to send our website link to anyone you know who may be interested in WellWishers work.

Please note that Donations are to be in favour of "WellWishers" and posted to the address at the bottom of this Newsletter. This ensures we take advantage of the before mentioned \$1 for \$1 extra donation. About 95% of funds raised go to the actual Wells projects. There are no pastoral activities related to this project. All donations over \$2.00 within Australia, are Tax Deductible

DONATIONS: \$6,000 provides 1 Well - The Friend's 1:1 donation (up to a limit) gives 2 wells, helping up to 1,500 people

Please tick Square **only** if interim receipt is required (you automatically receive one later from our Australian partner)

Enclosed is my Donation of \$ _____ (Cheque/MO attached - in favour of WellWishers)

Address (incl. postcode) _____

OR: Debit my Visa/MasterCard/Bankcard - **Please circle your card type** (automatic periodical payments available)

Name on Card: Signature:

Card Number: Expiry Date:

Name for Receipt Purposes **if different** to account name: _____

You Can Donate Online: www.ourcommunity.com.au/wellwishers