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# BLESSING THE CHILDREN POST



## Caring for the Orphans & Widows

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## THE HANDS & FEET OF JESUS



Rebekah from Pennsylvania.

It is early morning in Debre Zeyit, yet I can hear the soft sounds of someone quietly working in the kitchen. As I prepare for my day I walk downstairs to an amazing smell that is wafting up the stairway to meet me. Breakfast has been prepared for the missionaries in the guesthouse by a quietly devoted young woman from Pennsylvania - Rebekah. She has made an amazing spread of

Christ, who has captivated her whole being. She is the true epitome of being the hands and feet of Jesus.

I have recently found out that this is Rebekah's second trip to Debre Zeyit. She loves coming and helping out with the program in any way she can. She is hoping that she can keep returning through the years to see the children grow and develop into what God has for each one. She is excited to see the progress happening each time she returns. She is really excited for the high school building project to get under way.

Rebekah has helped BCI Academy move towards excellence with her gift of creativity and painting. Thanks to her creative painting, the beautiful outside wall of the kindergarten has added excitement for the students as they walk to school every day. She has painted educational balloons in the playroom of the school and added teddy bears to the wall in the second kindergarten room to make learning more exciting and fun. The children have bright colors that greet them and numbers that will help each one learn to count to 100.

scrambled eggs, cinnamon rolls and fresh fruit. What a treat to those of us who enjoy starting the day with a warm breakfast. I come to find out from the other missionaries in the house she has been making breakfast and dinner faithfully since she arrived in Debre Zeyit because none of the other young women in the house can cook.

Curiosity strikes me as I continue to delve into who Rebekah is and what her purpose was in coming to Ethiopia. I find her working from sunup to sundown whether she is filling her day with teaching art class at the school, cleaning up in the guesthouse, sweeping the floor in the kitchen or painting at the kindergarten. Rebekah keeps herself busy. She isn't a showy young woman waiting for praise and glory but one who is a servant of Jesus Christ. She is a young woman dedicated to her Savior, Jesus



Some of Rebekah's amazing art work.

Rebekah's desire is to have more of Jesus in her life and to leave the things of the world behind her. She has chosen to do this by giving up her time and talents in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to join the missionaries in Debre Zeyit. I have worked with Rebekah over the last month and I can say it has been an honor to meet and spend time with her and to see how she has blessed all the children in BCI Academy and the families she has come in contact with on home visits. Thank you for being a blessing to me while I have been in Ethiopia. I hope you return to Ethiopia very soon! God bless you!



**KEITH V. STRAWN**  
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

Please join us in this edition of the Post to read about our first college kid! On the cover you'll find an article about a recent missionary who made an impact.

Inside you will find Tsedenya's story, one of urgent need, and our monthly highlights feature how we are continuing to help the poor, orphaned children of Ethiopia.

Thank you for your support and continued prayers. Because of you, we are touching lives in Ethiopia.

Abundant blessings,

## PRAISE REPORT: OUR FIRST COLLEGE KID

Blessing the Children has been running a child sponsorship program in Debre Zeyit for six years now and we've often discussed the big question – "What will happen to the BCI sponsor children when they graduate high school?" Up until now it was just talk, planning and prayerful discussion but this year a decision had to be made. A decision for Selamawit Teklemuz.



Selamawit in 2008

Selamawit in 2013

Selamawit has been in the BCI sponsorship program for 5 ½ years and she was one of the first children to be added to the program. She is a full orphan who has no siblings and lives with her grandmother. She is a bright, gentle, kind and beautiful girl. She has always loved school and done well, receiving very high marks. She loves to learn, so much so that she walked 45 minutes each way to attend school. Last spring, Selamawit graduated high school and moved away to attend college on a government paid tuition.

At this time, BCI had a decision to make. Do we continue to support her through college or do we age her out of the program? This was the first time a decision had to be made on the matter and after much prayer and discussion, we made a decision.

Although most child sponsorship programs around the world age out their children when they graduate high school, BCI decided to take a different approach. We very much want to see our kids succeed in life and we wholly believe education is a great contributor to our kids' future success so we decided to continue Selamawit's and future children's support and to follow them through their college years.

Since Selamawit is our first college kid, we are still learning and will continue to learn a lot in the next year on how to best support her and our upcoming young adults. It is our hope that we will be able to support more of our children through college and into young adulthood. We recently paid a visit to Selamawit. We wanted to check in on her and see how she is transitioning to her new college life. She said she is doing well and she is adjusting to school but she misses her grandmother very much. Her studies are going well even though she isn't able to study what she wants to.

In Ethiopia, it is not always financially possible for students to study in the field that they desire. At the end of grade ten all students take a test and based on the results the government determines what field they may study and

what college they may attend in order to receive free tuition. This decision is based on the students' area of strengths but is also based on the projected needs of the future economy in Ethiopia.

The students are not limited to the government's determination and may attend a college of choice for study in their field of

choice but they will not receive free tuition and must pay out of pocket. This is almost impossible as it is difficult enough for students attending college with a free tuition to pay their additional expenses. Expenses outside of tuition include: books, lab fees, school supplies, transportation expenses, living expenses and any other needs they may have.

Selamawit has always wanted to become a doctor and although she is sad that she doesn't have the opportunity to pursue this dream, she is grateful she has a chance at an education. A chance at a bright future. Selamawit was assigned to study Civil Engineering.

When asked how it feels to be the first BCI child to attend college, Selamawit said she was happy and felt very lucky for this opportunity. Even though college is free, it is still very difficult, if not impossible, on poor students whose families aren't able to supplement their education. Without BCI and her sponsor, it would not be possible for Selamawit to attend college and make enough money working to support herself.

BCI will continue to support Selamawit by providing her with school supplies, food support, medical support (when necessary) and a small cash allowance each month to cover additional needs like rent, books, lab fees, etc. Selamawit feels



Goldi, Kelkias, Selamawit & Tadesse.

## PRAISE REPORT: OUR FIRST COLLEGE KID CON'T

very encouraged that BCI and her sponsor believe in her and are willing to continue to support her.

We used the weekend with Selamawit to encourage her and to make sure she knows that everyone is very proud of her. We prayed with her and overwhelmed her with gifts!

Selamawit left us with a renewed spirit and a determination to make the most out of her college years. We are very happy to have come to the decision to continue supporting our children after high school. We always want the very best for each and every child and are so excited about the

bright futures our kids have!

We ask that you pray for Selamawit during this transition. We pray that she may have Godly teachers and meet young people who share her faith and love of Christ.

We would like to provide Selamawit with a laptop to help her with her studies. If you are able to provide her with a laptop in working condition, new or used, or would like to make a donation towards a laptop, please let us know!

A laptop will go a long way in helping her keep on top of her work and we would love to be able to provide her with such a blessing.

## URGENT NEED: TSEDENYA ALEMAYHU

From the outside Tsedeny Alemayhu is a beautiful, eleven-year-old girl who loves to draw. Yet, ever since she was just six month old she has had a tough life. It was at the young age of six months when she began having seizures, a sign of chronic epilepsy.

Since this diagnosis, Tsedeny has been fighting for her life. On top of her medical battle, Tsedeny's father passed away leaving Tsedeny's mother to care for three children.

Tsedeny's mother works as a janitor in a local Red Cross office and although her income of 1,000 Ethiopian birr (about \$52 USD) is better than most families, it does not cover Tsedeny's medicine, which is 105 birr per month, and the family's basic living expenses.



Tsedeny Alemayhu

Despite her illness, Tsedeny tries to live a normal life and loves to play soccer. She is a cheerful girl and her favorite color is red.

Tsedeny is in desperate of need of a full \$90/mo sponsorship so we can begin providing her basic support and ensuring that she receives her medicine on a daily basis.

In addition to her sponsorship, Tsedeny also needs a one time donation of \$200 for a check up to ensure that she is still on the right type and dose of medicine to best help her.

If you or someone you know would like to change this beautiful girls life through sponsorship or a one time donation to cover her doctor visit, please contact us ASAP. Time is of the essence for this young girl.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Monthly Grain Support for January 2014

Vitamins, spaghetti, flour, teff (grain), cooking oil, onions, soap & hair oil.

