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Caring for the Orphans & Widows

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UNIFORMS: A NEW APPROACH

Our motto at the BCI Academy is "Excellence in Everything." Working in a third-world country, we find this to be more of a journey than an end. Partially due to availability of quality materials, and partially due to being in a culture where people strive for enough to simply survive another day... not much attention is paid to excellence. Even so, it's a principle that we strive for daily.

Over the past years, we have tried several local manufacturers in Ethiopia to supply school uniforms shirts for our BCI Academy. Several companies claim to have durable uniforms, but we have been disappointed with their uniforms not lasting.

This past year, we got our foot in the door of a manufacturer that only deals in quantities of 5,000 or more and claimed their products were "Export Quality." They agreed to a run of 800 shirts for us and we were excited that we finally found a quality uniform for our kids.

The price was much higher than we paid previously; almost \$6/shirt, but we figured if we want quality we'll have to pay for it.

We picked up half of the shirts and paid for that half. In just a month of use, the uniforms were discolored and the stitching was beginning to fail. Our staff returned the unused uniforms and will not be paying for the remainder.



These experiences of trying to purchase uniforms in Ethiopia has caused us re-think our approach. We contacted a uniform wholesaler here in the United States for pricing. A member of our board used to run a school uniform company and this was their supplier, so we know their quality.

When we spoke to the U.S. wholesaler and shared how these were for children in Ethiopia, they offered us an additional 8% discount to their already low prices.

We will be getting quality uniform shirts for just \$3.25 each, half the cost of uniforms available in Ethiopia. We really need two shirts

for each child, for a total of 700 shirts.

The total cost needed to purchase the uniform shirts is \$2,275. We need to order them now so that we have the summer to ship the shirts with team members, saving the shipping cost to Ethiopia. This will permit us to have the uniforms available for the beginning of school this fall - in September.

Please consider making a donation to this urgent need or sharing this need with someone you know.

This is an urgent need and will make a great impact as we strive for excellence in everything, including school uniforms.

Will you join us in this new approach?



KEITH V. STRAWN
FOUNDER & PRESIDENT

Dear friends,

Please join us in this edition of the Post to read about the opening of the BCI Academy KG and see pictures of our littlest students! On the cover you'll find an article about the new approach we are taking towards school uniforms.

Inside you will find Oholiab's story, one of urgent need, and our monthly highlights feature pictures from the BCI Academy English Competition.

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

Abundant blessings,

LITTLE VOICES | THE BCI ACADEMY KG

As you walk through the gates of the BCI Academy you hear many things. You hear teachers explaining the day's lessons. You hear children in grade 4 reading aloud in English. But as you keep walking you will hear little voices. Little voices of little children singing their "ABC's" or singing Amharic songs. You look around wondering where the little voices are coming from because you haven't seen any children younger than grade 1. But if you keep walking straight to the other end of the school compound, the little voices will only get louder. Once you step out of the BCI Academy compound you will see the BCI Academy KG School.



In Ethiopia, schools that house nursery, preschool and kindergarten students are called a "KG (Kindergarten) School." Blessing the Children purchased this house in the summer of 2012

with the intent of using it as the school building for the KG School. The house was unfinished when it was purchased and needed a lot of work to bring it up to a usable condition, including; flooring throughout, a bathroom, paint inside and out and other finishing touches like molding. After a lot of fund-raising and hard work, we were

excited to open the BCI Academy KG School for the children's use in the fall of 2013.

What a labor of love this KG School has been! Blessing the Children staff in Ethiopia, the States, and Canada have prayed over this KG, local workmen have labored long hours to complete the school building, and many donors from around the world have put money into this school to make it possible. We have also had missionaries from the States, Canada, and Australia painting the school inside and out to get it ready for this school year.

The BCI Academy KG School has a nursery class (3 year olds), a KG 1 class (preschool), and a KG 2 class (traditional Kindergarten) and about 70 students are currently attending school here. The school is equipped with a playroom that has learning toys for the children to play with and it also has a television for the children to watch educational movies.

We are very excited to be able to offer the youngest of our students the opportunity to learn in such a fun environment. The children love their school and we have seen a big improvement in their educational experience with the start of the BCI Academy KG.

For more pictures of the BCI Academy KG and our youngest students who attend, visit our WordPress Blog!

<http://blessingthechildren.wordpress.com/>



URGENT NEED: OHOLIAB MULUGETA

Oholiab Mulugeta has been through a lot in his young life. Oholiab was born in 2006 and shortly after his birth he was diagnosed with Disseminated Tuberculosis. Disseminated Tuberculosis, also known as Military Tuberculosis, is a form of tuberculosis that is characterized by a wide dissemination into the human body and by the tiny size of the lesions.

Oholiab has been consistently in and out of the hospital since he was diagnosed and has had six operations: four operations on his legs and two operations on his spine. He has also spent six months in a body cast. Oholiab is able to walk although he has a significant limp and much pain. He tires easily and his condition does not improve. Many of Oholiab's developmental milestones have been delayed and he is in need of continued treatment for his legs and spine to enable him to walk and get around like a normal child without pain.



The last several years have been difficult for his family with uncountable trips to the hospital, many nights of worry, heartbreak for their son who doesn't understand why he isn't like other children and a large sum of medical bills they can never hope to repay.

Despite his difficult life, Oholiab has taught his family and many others who have heard his story a thing or two about hope, love and determination. Although the family's income of 1,500 birr (less

than \$80 USD) a month is a little bit better than some families, it is certainly difficult for them to put food on their table while paying medical bills. Oholiab loves to play hide and seek with his best friend Dawit and in the future he says he wants to be a pilot or a doctor.

Oholiab is in need of a full \$90/month sponsorship to be added to the BCI Sponsorship Program so that he may begin receiving support.



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We are offering you the opportunity to Go Paperless!

If you chose to go paperless, you will receive an email receipt for each

donation. Your year end donation report will be the only paper receipt you receive.

To opt in, email us at Info@BlessingtheChildren.org with the subject line "Go Paperless" and include your full name.

HIGHLIGHTS

BCI Academy English Competition

Join us for next month's edition of the Post for the full story!

