



Oasis Splash!

Abraham's Oasis

We are still the Oasis for the vulnerable and marginalised; we have added the name Abraham as this is given to all our fatherless children. In Ethiopia a child is given the father's first or given name as the second name. For example we have Caleb Abraham, Lydia Abraham and many others – all Abraham's children. Now we have named our oasis after these children.

We are in process of changing from an International Charity to an Ethiopian Resident Charity and it will be administered in country through a carefully selected board. Otherwise it will function with the same objectives and purpose as heretofore.

Childcare

Grace Village

- **The School**

Teacher Alemseged told us yesterday that we should be proud of our children; they had performed very well in an interschool competition. The school results for some children indicated a great improvement in their performance further indicating that opening this smaller classroom school has been of benefit to our children at Grace Village. Two of our teenagers are not doing as well as expected. We are following up on this to see how we can help them improve. The teen years are not easy anywhere!

- **The children**

Our new little boy Caleb Abraham, found abandoned in



Shire aged one year, is growing fast, now laughing with his little buddies and singing to the shadow play of the leaves. He is starting to walk thus enabling him to find a favourite person such as one of his new brothers or sisters in Yenenish's house. He is still eating up a storm, no doubt catching up on the hunger needs of his little previously starved body.

We have started Nursery for the toddlers to keep them safe while their mothers clean and cook. This has been good because we are able to check weights, health and

ensure extra feeds mid morning and afternoon for this vulnerable group.

- **Medical Note**

Berihu came back from Addis Ababa where he had had surgery on one of his ear drums after we found out that he had lost almost all of his hearing in both ears! It meant he was late for school, however, when he came back he not only caught up with his work but won first place in the interschool competition!

The two lads with epilepsy are well controlled and have had no further problems and our HIV+ children are well and healthy.

Community Care

Tesfalidet as a former school teacher knows exactly how to talk to children and how to support them when they are troubled. He and his colleague Frehiwot have completed the children's annual reports, which have been sent to donors. Upon glancing through these the majority have passed to the next grade. The children who have failed usually fail because they have insufficient support at home and when they are female they often carry a heavier domestic workload, especially if holding together a child headed household. However as a whole we are pleased with the overall outcome.

Some of the children have been dropped from the programme for various reasons such as school truancy or moving from the area. New children have been added and especially from the community where the unknown liver disease has decimated whole families.

Refugee Child Protection

- **The children**

Week by week children come to the refugee camp. Fifty children tried making their own way there walking along the dusty road, but they were turned back. News has spread that the reception is kind, even if conditions are hard. Bethel our Child Protection Officer is a trooper of the highest calibre taking care of her children like a firm and loving mother. We are blessed to have her!

- **The family visit**

Seven young ladies from Grace Village, all except one with no parents went to visit the refugee girls. They put on a drama depicting the flight of the refugee and the arrival at the camp, "Come, sit and eat my dears; our hearts are one..." We were so proud of our girls! They stayed the whole day and parting from these new found friends was 'like leaving family'. The girls at the camp said to Bethel, "It was just like having our own family come to visit..." and so a little comfort has been shared.

Health

Maternal and Child Health

What an exercise in patience has been our search for the right person for the job! Now we have an old friend coming on board to help us, a senior nurse who has recently lost his wife and has two little boys to bring up. He asked us if we had a job for him! He has been the



second in charge of the local government health office in charge of maternal and child health activities! He is well known and well respected in the area. Our patience in selected the right person has paid off and we now have the ideal man for the job.

Ato. (Mr.) Mehari will supervise our Grace Village children as well as undertake the task of maternal health education and outreach in the North-western Zone of Tigray.

Unknown Liver Disease

We got out of the car to greet Alganish’s mother, the three surviving girls came running, but we missed Alganish with her bright smile. Then the grandmother came – wasted and weak and crying – “I am dying and there is no one to help...” The next stop was Mrut’s widow, with the baby born after the father’s demise on her back. We cried together, yet another death... a young healthy man of 35 years. We checked the baby – wasted, “there is so little food...” the young widow said, “The milk is not enough.” Apathy written across her face and so we brought her home with us and gave her baby milk and food. Today I saw the little baby, cheeks filling out and the mother smiling despite her inner pain.

Donors have given us funds to buy food for this stunned and hurting community, as we move ahead with a farming project for the farmer-widows and the weak, sickly farmers, thus giving them hope of seeing their own harvest yet again.

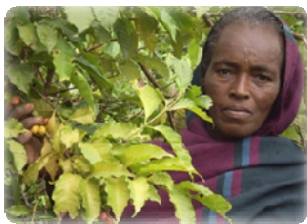
Farming

Grace Farm

Hadgu our new Agricultural Agent for Grace Farm has started his work and made some great plans and is ready to implement these for us. We would like to see returns on his efforts, to save money on our grocery bill and even to make a small profit in income generation.

Grace Boys Cooperative is embryonic at present, Hadgu and Gebre Mehdin, our Agricultural Agents plan a training session with our boys to teach them how to establish their own farm cooperative here at Grace Village. The boys would run this between school hours and grow, market and manage their own products and thus learn farming and marketing early on, thus preparing them for life in the ‘big world’.

Female Headed Households



Our strategy is changing – formerly the government would present a group of women and we would help from day one to develop a farming cooperative; now we

look for already existing cooperatives that have shown initiative and started the work for themselves, raised simple stone walls, or invested in a few coffee or fruit

trees or bought a few bees. These are the groups we are now reaching out to help. Encouraging the women to tell us what they want and providing funds in instalments after the women indicate positive investment outcomes.

Buildings

Multipurpose

The building is still not completed, the contractor was taking his time to finish, stretching the work to make it last another month and then another. So he has been released and we are left with a still incomplete structure as we go into the dry season and less water...

Veranda

This is finished and the table tennis table is set up and we often see the children there playing and just sitting there enjoying their time together under the shade of this structure. In the rainy season it will come into its own as a shelter for the children out from under their mother’s feet.

Reservoir and Wells

In October we talked of another reservoir, the expert told us the best location for it so that we do not disturb the natural spring lines feeding our current reservoir. Well... while we were away in Addis Ababa arranging for registration of the Charity, the local foreman for the new reservoir changed the location without our knowledge and dug where we had been told not to dig and water has leaked out... More experts come on Monday to sort things out... So the water saga continues.

The wells cannot be dug because there is still water in them! These are hard rock wells and the rain water filled them up and has stored the water, so we pump out the water and more surface water pours in. Once these rock wells are empty the well digger can dig further and we should have two more wells on site. Every water source is worth gold to us!

Our Donors

Water to the thirsty, food or the hungry, health to the sick, safe delivery to the pregnant woman, a home to the homeless, work for the lone mother, school fees for the fatherless child and hope for all their futures. This is what you have done through us and we thank God for you all! May God richly bless you this Christmas season as we remember God’s great Gift of peace to the world.

Karin u Id Bosch &

Ruth C. Kennedy

