



Connecting Hearts

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

Did your sponsored child have a birthday this month? See the joy of the first-ever birthday celebration at Tesfa's Shelter.

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A MESSAGE FROM TESFA

Hear updates directly from Tesfa Alebachew about the children and shelter operations. This month we share a special video.

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NEWS, NEWS, NEWS

Read the latest news from our organization and keep abreast of new campaigns and interesting developments.

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WELCOME TEAM TESFA SPONSORS

TO YOUR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to Connecting Hearts! This is our Team Tesfa Sponsorship newsletter which will be published every three months.

The newsletter is to help you feel connected to your sponsored child(ren) and Tesfa and to show you what you are helping make possible in the lives of the 93 children at the shelter.

There will always be much to share with you and we hope you will take the opportunity to read the information and news as you have time. Please let Shelley Green know if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions at shelley@moms4ethiopia.ca. Our organization is committed to being accountable and responsive to our sponsors.

YOU, every one of our sponsors, are making an incredible difference in the lives of the children being cared for through Tesfa's Shelter. We are incredibly thankful for each and every one of you. THANK YOU!

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CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS

THE FIRST-EVER BIRTHDAY PARTY

One of the elements of the Team Tesfa Sponsorship Program is to help every one of the 93 children feel celebrated, special and valued.

As a part of the annual budget, there is money to spend on a monthly birthday party for all of the children who have had a birthday that month. Tesfa purchases cakes, special candies, fruits and a small gift for each child.

One of the ways Ethiopians bring cheer to a birthday party is a spray that looks like snow. The sparklers on the cakes look like fireworks.



You can see in the pictures that the shelter is decorated, the birthday children are wearing their best clothing and each child is made to feel very special.

Tesfa said one of the girls was in tears because she had never been celebrated before. We believe that most of the children have never, ever had a birthday party.

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Here in Canada, we know celebrating the birth of someone you love helps to encourage them, build their self-esteem and let them know they are cared about and valued. We are thrilled to know the children at Tesfa’s Shelter - your sponsored children - will experience this joy.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Seniya Abdurezak
 Yabsira Siham
 Haniya Sara
 Sebontu

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Netsanet Murad
 Kirubel Hanan
 Efnan Ararnata
 Sebontu Hamdi
 Semir

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Bereket Eyob
 Meryem Eman
 Fikir



3As: Awards, Accomplishments & Accolades

TEAM TESFA AWARDS

Mothers with a Heart for Ethiopia's Sponsorship Committee wants to help Tesfa encourage the children to achieve their best and be motivated to grow, accomplish what they can and show others compassion.

The Team Tesfa Awards will be held once a year. For the first Team Tesfa Awards ceremony, Shelley was in Ethiopia and brought certificates for all the winners. Funds to purchase special foods and drinks for the Team Tesfa Awards are included in the shelter budget.



TEAM TESFA AWARDS

The awards recognize many different skills and characteristics. In many cases, there are multiple age groups for each category:

- Best Behaviour
- Best Effort in School
- Best Hard Work
- Creative Award (art, writing, poetry)
- Most Compassionate
- Top Academic Achievement
- Top Male Athlete
- Top Female Athlete



A volunteerism award will be given at the next Team Tesfa Awards as the children needed this concept to be introduced to them.



AWARDS AT SCHOOL

Tesfa has a serious focus on education for the children.

They are diligent in their studies and are expected to spend dedicated and disciplined time studying every day.

One of the schools the children attend had a ceremony celebrating the top ranking students of each class.

Several children from Tefsa's Shelter were recognized for their academic achievements.

SCHOOL AWARD WINNERS

Children who received school awards for ranking in the top of their classes:

- Yabsira ranked 2nd in Grade 1 with a 97.8% average
- Siham ranked 2nd in Grade 3
- Eyob ranked 2nd in Grade 4
- Ashenafi ranked 1st in Grade 4
- Israel ranked 1st in Grade 5
- Alemayew ranked 1st in Grade 6
- Kirubel ranked 2nd in Grade 6
- Yosef ranked 3rd in Grade 6
- Kidus ranked 3rd in Grade 7
- Aysha ranked 2nd in Grade 7
- Sudi ranked 1st in Grade 7



TESFA RECOGNIZED

Tesfa was awarded special recognition by the Ministry of Women and Children for taking 100 children from the streets and reuniting them with their families.



Tesfa connected with the families to ensure they were able to provide for their child(ren). They have now returned to school. This incredible man never stops responding to the needs in his community ... amazing!

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A NEW ADVENTURE

LUNCH AT A HOTEL RESTAURANT

Tesfa works with local businesses to seek support for clothing, haircuts, school supplies or other donations to cover as many of the shelter needs as possible. Before COVID-19 and the escalation of political and tribal tension, Tesfa was operating the shelter strictly with local support, though it was not always sufficient to cover all the children's needs.

Even before the pandemic, political instability had reduced local support to the point where Tesfa was unable to pay rent and the older children were not eating three times a day. Mothers with a Heart for Ethiopia has now been providing all the financial support needed to care for the children for over three years.



One local hotel promised to provide a nice lunch to all the children once a year. The children went to dine at a nice place with plenty of food. What a great experience to eat at a restaurant and be exposed to such a pleasure. A special day for all!

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TESFA'S SHELTER AT WORK

VOLUNTEERING TAKES HOLD

There's been a very touching development in the shelter: A few of the children have developed volunteer initiatives! One of the older girls selects an elderly person each week to visit, provide meals, and help spruce up their home, such as painting the inside.



Maranata and Addisu go to the streets to ask one child to come back to the shelter to bathe, receive a new outfit and shoes, have a meal and spend some time together playing a game. These children are setting a beautiful example for others in the shelter!

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Friends Ink

When our Sponsorship Committee developed the Team Tesfa Sponsorship Program, we held as the highest priority that no child would feel less than another child.

We recognized two things:

1. It would take some time to have all 93 children sponsored.
2. Many sponsors would not be comfortable writing their sponsored child.

Friends Ink is a group of five volunteers who love to write and take turns writing the whole group of children once a month. Our volunteers in Friends Ink are loving this role and the connections we are making with the children on behalf of all our sponsors.

READ OUR LETTERS

You can read the letters we wrote and see the photos we sent to Tesfa's Shelter each month by clicking below:

[December 2022](#)

[January 2023](#)

[February 2023](#)

[March 2023](#)

[April 2023](#)

[May 2023](#)



HAPPY
**VALENTINE'S
DAY**



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REACHING OUT

LETTERS IN REPLY



A beautiful thing has happened: The children decided - all on their own - to write us back!

This has been an unexpected delight for all of the Friends Ink volunteers and has helped grow our connection with the children. These responses are helping us better understand Ethiopian culture and their day-to-day lives.

Through our letters to the children and their letters back to us, we are developing a connection that has already gone beyond our imaginations. We are thrilled to know the children feel that, too.

We hope that in reading the letters from the children, you too will feel that sense of connection. [Click here](#) to read the letters (and find out about Mango Month)!



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A MESSAGE FROM TESFA

HEAR HIS STORY



There is no better way to bring you a message from Tesfa than [this video](#) captured when Shelley was in Ethiopia in November 2022.

[WATCH IT HERE](#)

You may recognize this story if you attended Gems & Java 2023. Hearing Tesfa share his personal story is a great chance to understand how - and why - he opened this shelter and dedicated his life to caring for so many children. You can [read more about his journey here](#).

This man amazes, delights and inspires us all. It brings such comfort and joy to know that his heart and soul are serving each one of the 93 children in his care.

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NEWS, NEWS, NEWS

WE'VE GOT BEAUTIFUL UPDATES TO SHARE

- An impressive \$67,045 was raised at Gems & Java 2023! Thank you to all the donors who made this possible.
- Children now sponsored = 45!!! We only launched the Team Tesfa Sponsorship Program six months ago. What we thought was a lofty goal for 2023, to see 50 children sponsored, is now totally achievable. We are so thankful to all of our sponsors for making the choice to respond to this need and this opportunity to change a life.
- We have reached a huge milestone: Thanks to all of our donors, sponsors and volunteers, we have sent just over \$1 million to Ethiopia!!!! Incredible! So many lives have been touched and changed through those dollars.



\$1 MILLION

THANK YOU!



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GET IN TOUCH

QUESTIONS, IDEAS, WANT TO HELP?

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter, or if you are interested in volunteering with our organization, please reach out!

Shelley Green, Founder, can be contacted via email at shelley@moms4ethiopia.ca.

To learn more about our organization and follow along with our stories and successes:



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