

# st. Matthew's Children's Fund Ethiopia

Promoting the well-being of vulnerable children in Ethiopia



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Spring 2010

## News in brief

### Thank you

Many thanks to all the churches that held collections or sent gifts for SMCF over the Christmas period. Initiatives included a Christingle service, sales and sending of communal Christmas cards instead of individual cards. We really appreciate your support, especially with the many demands facing churches today.

### Read all about it

As part of our Twenty5 campaign, women's magazine Marie Claire carried an article about four orphaned Ethiopian women whose incredible stories offer courage and hope to the next generation. To read the article visit: <http://www.marieclaire.co.uk/features/440036/ethiopian-famine-the-orphans-stories-of-survival.html> or see the [www.twenty5ethiopia](http://www.twenty5ethiopia) website

### Match making

If you are lucky enough to be employed – have you asked your employer if they will support us too? Some large employers offer matched giving, where they will 'match' a percentage of your gift to us. Others might consider making us one of their selected charities and thus eligible for staff fundraising. If you're too shy, then tell us, and we'll ask on your behalf. You never know until you ask!



## Truly Remarkable

### Compared to many international charities SMCF spends a relatively small amount on its operations in the UK.

We believe this is important, but it does mean we must be inventive in promoting the charity and attracting new supporters. As preparation for our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary we sought help from a number of PR and communications companies, and The Remarkable Group, based in Winchester, volunteered to assist. They suggested that best way of getting our message across to supporters new and old

was through creating a video, so in January The Remarkable Group's Chief Executive Stephen Pomeroy and two cameramen went to Ethiopia for ten days to film the work. Here are some of Stephen's recollections of the filming trip.

'I set off with two colleagues, Nic Yeeles and Ehsan Bhatti, from Remarkable's in house film production unit Reko, to seek documentary evidence of how Ethiopia is faring 25 years after the devastating famine of 1984. 'We were travelling with JeCCDO (the Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organisation)

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## Leave a legacy – and help children like Feker Alemu

Fourteen year old Feker Alemu has already had considerable sorrow in her short life. Both of her parents died of HIV/AIDS around three years ago and she was in danger of losing her home – the one-room dwelling that their parents had struggled to provide for her and her older brother Melaku.

But thanks to generous supporters in the UK this story has a happier ending. Feker was referred by the community to JeCCDO for help. JeCCDO arranged for a legal guardian to look after her affairs and helped transfer the title of the land to her and her brother's names, so now they can't have their home taken from them.

JeCCDO also gave her a uniform and books so that she could continue to go to school. Feker explains: 'before I had to share with a friend,

so I couldn't go to school when he did. Now I can go all the time.' She is very keen on sciences and maths, and would like to go to university when she finishes school.

Melaku and Feker's parents, poor as they were, were able to pass on something to their children. Would you also pass on something to children like them by leaving a legacy to SMCF? A gift in your will could provide a substitute family and an education for an orphaned child like Feker, and could help ensure their community is a thriving place to grow up in.

For further details see [www.smcfethiopia.org/legacy.htm](http://www.smcfethiopia.org/legacy.htm) or ring 020 7022 1860 and ask for a copy of our free Guide to making a Will.



*Feker outside her home.*

**Twenty5 Ethiopia**  
25 years after the famine: creating a future for Ethiopia's children  
[www.twenty5ethiopia.org](http://www.twenty5ethiopia.org)



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on behalf of the SMCF's Twenty5 Ethiopia Campaign. Moving from Addis Ababa to Dire Dawa on the eastern border, then to Bahir Dar in the north and on to Debre Zeit in the central Ethiopia, we saw a good cross section of Ethiopian life.

'Everywhere we went, I had the very strong impression that the people here, despite the harsh environment in which they live, are both enterprising and determined. The children have a delightful excitement about wanting to learn. They are incredibly polite, eager and enquiring. Equally determined are the adults: One lady we met milled grain and spices to sell, but also ran a business with her son making bricks for construction. 'There were, of course, heartbreaking stories of the struggles people have had

to endure: The most extraordinary was the story of 25 year old Biadgign. In 1984, as the famine held Ethiopia in its lethal grip, JeCCDO rescued him as a tiny baby from the lifeless body of his mother. He was so vulnerable and so close to death; the vultures had begun to attack, leaving him with lifelong scars on his face, arms and legs.

'JeCCDO saved his life and were there in the next 25 years too, to oversee his upbringing and education. Today Biadgign plans to run a printing company.

'JeCCDO's work focuses on the long term solution: giving people the confidence, tools and resources to fend for themselves, and teaching them new skills, such as how to create irrigation systems and build food

defences to protect vulnerable villages and crops from deadly flash foods. By finding new ways for the people here to build sustainable agricultural systems, JeCCDO has effectively changed the centuries-old farming culture.

'We had a rare opportunity to see for ourselves that people here haven't just taken handouts. Through the work done by JeCCDO and the SMCF, they've been encouraged to help themselves. But with so many children undernourished and still vulnerable in Ethiopia, the Twenty5 Ethiopia Campaign is a timely reminder that although the aid work continues, ongoing funds to help sustain all those lives so badly scarred are still desperately needed.'



## Discover Ethiopia

Have you ever wanted to see the work you support first hand and have the holiday of a lifetime?

Trip date 12th – 25th November 2010

SMCF, in association with Silk Steps Travel, is offering a 14 day trip to Ethiopia including visits to some of the wonders of the world and the Ethiopia tourists just don't see.

Highlights\* include:

**Bahar Dar** Visit the monasteries on beautiful Lake Tana and the Blue Nile falls by boat. **Gondar** See the 16th century castle and ancient churches

**Axum** Wonder at the 2,000 year old obelisks and the home of the Ark of the Covenant. **Lalibella** Walk around the 12 rock hewn churches and magnificent scenery. **Awassa** Drive south through the Rift Valley, walk around and relax by two beautiful lakes **JeCCDO** Meet people, see where they live and learn about their lives in the communities where JeCCDO works. Find out at first hand how they are pulling themselves out of poverty

**Hurry!** Places are limited. Contact us at [info@smcfethiopia.org](mailto:info@smcfethiopia.org) for further details of itinerary and costs.

\* Itinerary may be subject to change.

## Growing enough food in a changing climate

Many families in Ethiopia are finding it difficult to feed themselves and their children. Food production has been badly affected by changes in climate, particularly unpredictable rainfall and issues such as environmental and resource degradation. A new project, generously funded by the JJ Charitable Trust, will help address the food insecurity problems of poor urban households in two locations in Ethiopia.

In the northern area of Debre Berhan the climate is becoming colder with more regular frosts, resulting in damage to traditional crops. For families to survive they have to adapt and grow crops that will withstand the lower temperatures, so that they have

enough nutritious food for themselves and surplus to sell at market for income.

In Dire Dawa, eastern Ethiopia, unpredictable rainfall means that children are going hungry as their parents are unable to farm in traditional ways. The people need to learn how to grow drought-resistant crops, how to conserve water and how to protect themselves from flash foods.

The need to create a sustainable future for children in these areas is great. Luckily JeCCDO and other local communities have already found solutions, and we thank JJ Charitable Trust for allowing us to introduce these solutions to further communities.

## Keep on Running

SMCF is looking for enthusiastic runners to help us continue our work with orphaned or vulnerable Ethiopian children and their communities. We have guaranteed places in the following races:

### BUPA 10k 31st May 2010

Run through London on the 2012 Olympic marathon course, starting on Birdcage Walk and passing many of London's famous sights, including the Houses of Parliament, The London Eye, Millennium Bridge, St. Paul's Cathedral and Nelson's Column.

### Run to the Beat 26th September 2010

Run to the Beat is London's music half marathon, beginning and ending at the

O2 arena, with live music throughout the course. The south London course takes in the Royal Artillery Museum, Charlton Park and the Royal Observatory at Greenwich.

### Royal Parks Foundation Half Marathon 10th October 2010

Starting and finishing in Hyde Park, the 13.1 mile route runs across four of London's Royal Parks - Hyde Park, St. James's Park, Kensington Gardens and Green Park.

If you would like to get fit, enjoy a wonderful day out and help orphan children or if you can display a poster in your church or workplace please contact us on: [info@smcfethiopia.org](mailto:info@smcfethiopia.org) or telephone 020 7022 1860/1861.

## St Matthew's Children's Fund Ethiopia

3rd Floor, Downstream Building, 1 London Bridge, London SE1 9BG

Please contact: **Peter Jones** (Director) • T: (00 44) 020 7022 1860/1861 • E: [pete@smcfethiopia.org](mailto:pete@smcfethiopia.org)

web: [www.smcfethiopia.org](http://www.smcfethiopia.org) email: [info@smcfethiopia.org](mailto:info@smcfethiopia.org)

