Back to the Future in Ethiopia

Remember meeting Ashagaree Teka, a college student we introduced to you in last year’s “Degrees of Success”? He had overcome a difficult past as an immigrant child to become a championship runner and an Israeli Defense Forces sports trainer for soldiers before becoming an AAS student at the famous Wingate College, working toward a degree in sports. Since then, an organization called Hatzi (Gazelle), that encourages promising young Ethiopians in sports, especially running, sent Ashagaree back to Ethiopia for a month of training in challenging high altitudes. Ashagaree came back feeling changed by the visit to his past and what he saw as Ethiopia’s future. Since then, an organization known as the NACOEJ/Barney Adopt-A-Student Program has given Ethiopian-Israeli students the financial support they need for higher education.

To our great joy, they said “Yes!” "We are So Proud to Announce..." continued from cover

We are So Proud to Announce New Leadership at AAS

After the death of our beloved Vidal Sassoon, who lovingly guided the NACOEJ Adopt-A-Student Program that bore his name through two decades, we needed another sponsor to lead our oldest educational program in Israel into the decades ahead.

The immediate choice in all our minds was not one, but two sponsors: Barney and Rachel Gottstein, already the sponsors of more than 100 AAS students a year, the originators of Barney’s Books as part of the AAS program, the sponsors of the NACOEJ Limudiah Literacy Program — and two of the most caring and committed people we have ever known.

The Gottsteins’ students receive a personal answer from Rachel to the letters they write — a phone call from Barney if a student’s world seems to be crashing — an ever-renewed supply of beautiful children’s books to take home to their own children or younger siblings. These generous gestures endear the Gottsteins to their students and all of us at NACOEI.

We had only one question. After all they’ve already done and were continuing to do, would these two gracious and loving people also agree to formal leadership of the entire AAS program now?

Just the Facts

In the 2012-2013 school year...

• 139 AAS scholarships helped support 396 students in 5 universities and 30 academic colleges, including 15 nursing schools and 11 engineering schools
• 145 sponsored students finished their coursework and graduated in their fields of study
• 50 sponsored students were studying for advanced degrees.
• 28 sponsored students received Masters degrees.

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Since 1982, the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEI) has provided humanitarian and educational aid to the Ethiopian-Jewish community in Ethiopia and Israel. NACOEI is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Degrees of Success

The NACOEJ/Barney and Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program

You Can Be an Ambassador

We are pleased to bring you the sixth issue of Degrees of Success, a newsletter exclusively for you, our deeply-appreciated AAS sponsors.

We are all very proud of our students and the accomplishments they have achieved with the invaluable help of your sponsorships.

If you have news that you would like to share about your students, please call Karen Gens, our new Coordinator of High School and College Sponsorship Programs at 212-233-5200, ext. 230 or email her at Education@naceoj.org.

And please pass on our information to your family and friends who you think might be interested in helping deserving Ethiopian college students in Israel. You are an ambassador for these young men and women and your endorsement will go a long way. Thank you so much.

AAS Sponsorships Enable Ethiopian-Israeli Students to Achieve their Potential

Since 1987, the newly-named NACOEJ/Barney and Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program (AAS) has given Ethiopian-Israeli students the financial support they need for higher education.

While most Ethiopian students receive the first three years of college tuition from the Israeli government, all must pay for their living expenses, which include rent, food, transportation, textbooks and other essential educational materials.

Very few Ethiopian-Israeli families are able to help. In too many cases, financial burdens force Ethiopian students to drop out and take unskilled jobs. AAS scholarships provide them with the modest monthly stipend that helps them to stay in school and earn a degree which provides them with a profession and the key to breaking out of poverty.
A Journey from Sponsor to Volunteer to Staff...

Introducing Yehudit Abramson

Yehudit Abramson is the Israeli Coordinator of the NACOEJ/Barnes and Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program (AAS). Yehudit was visiting Haifa University with Leah Barkai, Israel Coordinator of the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Sponsorship Program, when this photo of Yehudit and a high school student was taken.

They were there to distribute children's books through the Barney's Books Program created by the Gottsteins. The program provides children's books for AAS students to take home to their own children or for children to read and enjoy together. This wonderful program brings the joy of reading and sharing books with young children who may have their first experiences with the written word as a result. The books remain with the children after they receive them.

From High School to College with NACOEJ Sponsors

While bringing Barney's Books to Bar-Ilan University, Yehudit Abramson met Tyonya Taganya, who had a NACOEJ sponsor in high school and now has another sponsor through AAS while she attends law school.

Tyonya has very fond memories of her high school sponsor who sponsored her for several years and stayed in touch with her following high school. Tyonya did a year of volunteer service in the Scouts movement. Then, in the army, she became an officer and team commander in a communications and engineering unit. She's now in her second year of law school and doing very well. NACOEJ sponsors have been with her all the way, ensuring that Tyonya can fulfill her great potential.

From Their Letters...

There is so much we can learn about the importance and joy of sponsoring Ethiopian-Israeli college students from the letters they write to their sponsors. Here are just a few examples: