



# NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY LIFELINE

SUMMER  
2017

## No Child's Life Should Depend on Chance

All of a sudden, an urgent letter from seven prominent Members of the Israeli Knesset (MKs), and a heartbreaking report from a pediatric clinic in Gondar, Ethiopia, are changing our world.

The seven MKs, who had just been in Ethiopia, and found the Jewish community in "appalling circumstances", urged us to start doing again what we did in the past when, with "exemplary longstanding devotion", we helped Ethiopian Jews who were left behind.

**That was the letter that began to change our world.**

Next came the report from the clinic (considered the best in Gondar), spelling out in agonizing detail some of those "appalling circumstances" for the most helpless, most vulnerable Jews still in Ethiopia – the little children.

The Jewish children in Gondar, from birth through five years old, had just been examined in the pediatric clinic.

The examinations were paid for by a private donor who wanted to know if things in Ethiopia were as bad as we were hearing.

**They turned out to be worse.**



*This child just received life-saving medicine.*



*Looking at the pictures in this Lifeline, just taken in Ethiopia, I can hear you say, "These children don't look malnourished – they look beautiful and healthy". They do, because you see only their faces. But years of experience in Ethiopia taught us that the children's bodies, swollen under their clothes, tell the real story. The black and white photo (left above), which was taken years ago, and the body of the little girl in yellow, taken recently, are examples of beautiful faces above tell-tale swollen bodies. Today doctors measure many factors in addition to swollen bellies.*

More than half the youngest children were "significantly malnourished". Some were already "stunted" and in desperate need of food.

Some children were seriously ill with pneumonia, typhoid, typhus, malaria, high fevers, diarrhea, dehydration, parasites, and edema, among other things.

A few were so sick that they had to be put in the hospital at once. One child needed emergency surgery. Another would probably have died had it not been that, "just by chance", the examination, and instant hospitalization, came "just in time".

**Just in time? Just by chance?**



**No child's life should depend on chance!**

Some sick children could be treated at the clinic, but needed further medical follow-up.

Some of them just needed prescribed medicines.

**But their parents had no money to buy them.**

The head of the clinic himself bought some of the most-needed medicines. Our friend bought the rest. But an ongoing solution had to be found.

A solution not just for medicine.

Not just for follow-up doctor visits.

Not just for hospitals and surgery.



For all those, but also for food!

**These Jewish children need much more food than they have been getting - much better, more varied, more nutrient-rich food than their parents can ever afford.**

So a solution to this ongoing, life-threatening lack of nourishing food has to be found.

Our generous friend will start covering the children's needs. He is seeking partners to help.

We know he wants NACOEJ to be a partner in helping to fund food.

**It makes sense.**



For years, we ran feeding centers for Jewish children in Ethiopia – thousands of children, tens of thousands of meals.

**These nutritious daily meals were life-changing and life-saving.**

We literally saw the children who ate our meals growing stronger.

Toddlers began to run around on increasingly sturdy little legs that had been too weak before. Tiny boys and girls, unnaturally short for their age, started to grow. Their immune systems, nourished by good food, helped fight off many diseases.



**NACOEJ has a wealth of experience to share in a feeding program.**

But with all our financial commitments to education for Ethiopian-Jewish children in Israel – can we also help provide food for Jewish children left behind in Ethiopia?

The real question is: How can we not?

Thirty-five years ago, NACOEJ was born with four mandates. The first was simply to help Jews survive in Ethiopia.

All the rest – to help them reach Israel, succeed in Israel, and preserve their ancient Jewish traditions – depended on their surviving while waiting in Ethiopia.

Even back then, aliyah was often



delayed. Even back then, we reached out for partners.

And we found them.

**We found partners in you, our wonderful American Jewish family, some of you with extensive means, some not so much – but all wanting to help the children in your own way.**

Schoolchildren, synagogue groups, Jewish federations, ordinary people, campus organizations, and caring philanthropists came forward.

Many of these same good people – friends like you - are with us still, and we continually welcome new friends.

Some are already asking what they can do to help the 9000 Jews still in Ethiopia.



We hope and pray that you are among them, and that, at this time, you will donate to the best of your ability, and also reach out to your own family, friends and organizations to help in this crisis.

**The children need you desperately.**

If you can help, you'll want to know that a good meal for a malnourished Jewish child in Gondar consists of eggs, a banana or an orange, potatoes, carrots, fafa (fortified porridge), a roll, and milk.

Even when you include the cost of preparation, it only comes to about \$1.25 per meal, per child.

**As I wrote this, I got word that around 200 of the most desperately underfed children, age two and under, had just started eating these life-changing, life-saving meals once a day. They are in the photos you see here.**



But we have to provide funds quickly if these meals are not only to continue, but be increased to two a day, as the doctors urge.

And we must do everything we can to enable the "older" children, ages three, four and five, to come

and eat too.

**Please help us feed these hungry Jewish children the meals they urgently need.**

For too many of the children, our help can be a matter of life and death.

Please fill in the enclosed reply card and send as much as you can, to help as many children as you can. Thank you and bless you.

*Barbara*

P.S. We cannot and will not forget our Ethiopian children in Israel who urgently need our educational programs.

More and more schools are asking for our help.

And these children still in Ethiopia today will also need our educational programs when they arrive in Israel.



## The Little Engine That Could...

Remember a beloved book we all read as children, "The Little Engine that Could"?

The little engine, which was built just to pull a few cars on and off railway switches, was asked by a large, stranded train to pull it over a mountain. This was after the other larger, stronger engines said "no".

The little engine said "yes" and set out over the mountain, saying "I think I can, I think I can". And he did, bringing food and toys to children waiting on the other side.

**NACOEJ, like the little engine, has, for 35 years, said "yes" to helping Ethiopian Jews in both Ethiopia and Israel.**

Sometimes the task seemed overwhelming for a small, grassroots organization. Sometimes larger organizations, like the larger engines, said "no".

But for 35 years, NACOEJ has been working on behalf of Ethiopian Jews, through thick and thin, never stopping, quietly growing, and always continuing to say: "Yes, we think we can!"

This year, you, our dedicated donors, have made it possible for NACOEJ to reach a milestone – our 35th Anniversary. Together, we have worked ceaselessly to help Ethiopian Jews reach Israel and to assist them once they are there.

**You have enabled NACOEJ to accomplish things no other organization has even tried to do – things that often were miracles of dedication and commitment.**

So, we want to take this special opportunity – our 35th Anniversary - to thank you, our wonderful NACOEJ family, for being our devoted partners all this time.

Without you, we would never have been able to accomplish all we have. With you, we will continue to make miracles happen for Ethiopian Jews.

**Because of you, "We know we can!"**

**Happy Anniversary to all of us!**



## To Say We Were Ecstatic Doesn't Do Our Feelings Justice

In May, 2015, NACOEJ heard that the Bayside Jewish Center was being sold.

It had been in existence for over 75 years but, sadly, dwindling membership was forcing its closure.

The good news was that the Bayside Jewish Center was generously considering donating the proceeds of the sale to a number of organizations, NACOEJ among them.

The sale of a building and the distribution of the proceeds is a lengthy process and we knew it would take some time.

Proposals and meetings went back and forth and then, in May, 2017, we presented our Limudiah program in Kiryat Ekron as our model for a grant.

**This past June we learned that NACOEJ was awarded a grant that will cover two years of the Limudiah in Kiryat Ekron!**

To say we were ecstatic and deeply grateful doesn't do our feelings justice.

Two prominent plaques will go up to honor the generosity of the Bayside Jewish Center, one in the NACOEJ New York office and the other one in the entrance to the school in Kiryat Ekron.

There will be a dedication ceremony that will include the school, the Mayor of Kiryat Ekron, other officials, and, we

hope, members of the Bayside Jewish Center as well, so they can be thanked in person by the children.

In the meantime, the children will be sending letters expressing their gratitude and excitement.

**And the Bayside Jewish Center's name and ideals will live on, even after its doors close, through the education of Ethiopian-Israeli children.**

This story illustrates just one of the many ways it is possible to provide urgently-needed support to Ethiopian Jews via NACOEJ:

- Direct donations
- Mitzvah Projects
- Bequests and endowments
- Gifts of real estate
- Proceeds of sales
- Distributions from IRA's and more.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss giving ideas of your own, please phone Danielle Ben-Jehuda, Director of Development and Donor Relations, at 212-233-5200, ext. 227 or email [donors@nacoelj.org](mailto:donors@nacoelj.org).

**She is looking forward to hearing from you and working with you. ■**

## More of the Community Still in Ethiopia...



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## Congratulations to...

NACOEJ Office Manager Nelya Danielova and husband Yuriv Danielov on the recent marriage of their son Salmon Danielov to Ester Kandov.

Congratulations as well to Salmon's sister Rita Danielov and her husband Yan Kusayev, and young nephew Jonathan Kusayev.



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