Sponsorships Encourage Students to Develop Their Potential

Sponsorships give Ethiopian students the chance to gain the most out of school. In some cases, students’ talents become a gift for everyone! The outstanding examples below help us understand how valuable your contributions are.

Sivan Sisai,
a talented ninth grader in the gifted program in the Katzir A High School in Rehovot, excels not only at her studies but in dance. She discovered dance after a teacher recommended the program to her in seventh grade. Sivan had lost her mother the year before and the school’s special dance program has helped her to stay engaged in school, despite her grief. She is thankful to her sponsors, Sandra Groin and Jordan Laby of Ventura, CA, who have made it possible for her to afford the program since seventh grade. This past year, Sivan dance her way through high school!

Did you know that in the 2008-2009 school year…

• 1189 students were sponsored in the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Sponsorship Program
• 56 schools in Israel participated in the program
• 218 of our students graduated high school!

A large portion of the Ethiopian community in Israel is of school age and must complete school in order to help their families break out of poverty. Tragically, Ethiopian high school students in Israel have a much higher drop-out rate than other Israelis. But our sponsorships enable Ethiopian teenagers to stay in school, taking full advantage of educational and social activities and securing a better future for themselves and all Ethiopian Israelis! Thank you!

Shachar Baruch
has a head start on university! Shachar is a ninth grader at the Menachem Begin High School in Ness Ziona. In fifth grade, he took a mathematics course by correspondence through the Weizmann Institute for Science. Since then, he has been taking special courses in math and science, won first-place in the Municipal Bible contest in sixth grade, and took second-place in the Municipal Battlefield Heritage Contest (a quiz on Israeli military history) in seventh grade! Currently, Shachar is in an advanced program for math at Bar Ilan University and takes math and science courses at Tel Aviv University. By taking university courses in high school, Shachar hopes to finish his first university degree before he serves in the army! Sponsors Benjamin Z. Forester, Charlotte Friend and David Michaels can be very proud of the achievements of this gifted student.

T his spring, participants in a NACOEJ mission to Ethiopian and Israel visited a high school that participates in the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Sponsorship Program and were able to meet some of the sponsored Ethiopian students in person. A discussion with the students at Ramla-Lod High School, a good school in a poor neighborhood, illustrated the students’ engagement in their studies and their high hopes for the future.

An education at Ramla-Lod High School not only teaches students to value academic studies but also to give back to the community by participating in a variety of community service projects. Leah Finder, the school’s vice-principal, explains that all students are required to complete 60 hours of community service and volunteering in soup kitchens, libraries, health clinics, youth movements, Magen David Adom (Israel’s national emergency medical relief organization) and more. One of the students in the NACOEJ Sponsorship Program, Oshrat Tewev, helps first graders in a local school while another,

NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY
NACOEJ/EDWARD G. VICTOR HIGH SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM
132 Nassau St. • Suite 412 • NY, NY 10038 • 212-233-5200 Ext 230 • Fax: 212-233-5243
E-mail: highschool@nacoej.org • Web: www.nacoej.org
Barbara Ribakove Gordon, Founder and Executive Director

Barbara Ribakove Gordon, Founder and Executive Director

E-mail: highschool@nacoej.org • Web: www.nacoej.org
Barbara Ribakove Gordon, Founder and Executive Director

NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY
NACOEJ/EDWARD G. VICTOR HIGH SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM
132 Nassau St. • Suite 412 • NY, NY 10038 • 212-233-5200 Ext 230 • Fax: 212-233-5243
E-mail: highschool@nacoej.org • Web: www.nacoej.org
Barbara Ribakove Gordon, Founder and Executive Director
Small Groups That Make a Big Difference: A Model Seder Raises Support for High School Students

A little creativity goes a long way—especially in Delray Beach, Florida! The Sisterhood of Temple Sinai of Palm Beach County, sponsors of two high school students through the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Sponsorship Program, has found a unique way to inspire its members about Ethiopian Jewish and enlist their support. At the annual Sisterhood Women’s Pre-Passover Seder, the theme of Exodus is expanded to include stories of women from throughout Jewish history who were part of an exodus, from ancient to modern times. Sheila Firestone, the coordinator of the Sisterhood’s Special Events, makes the connection between the Biblical Exodus and the exodus that Ethiopian Jewish women experienced and still experience. At this year’s seder, the focus was on Biblical mothers and the relevance to the NACOEJ high school program was a natural. As Sheila noted, the seder community is invested in this program because “we’re all mothers!” Part of the celebration included reading stories of Ethiopian-Jewish life from NACOEJ newsletters. The choice to sponsor two Ethiopian-Israeli high school students reflects the group’s interest in building personal relationships with the Ethiopian community. Updates about the group’s two high school students were given. As an added program component, three NACOEJ embroideries were raffled off and proceeds from the event and raffle more than covered two student sponsorships for the upcoming school year! Always a time of hope, this Passover gave two more Ethiopian girls in Israel a reason to celebrate!

Ethiopian Students Give Back

From throughout Jewish history who were...<br>Continued from page 1

Ethiopian community, largely new to high-society. It is crucial for them to do well so that they can go on to pursue a higher education and train for a profession. She has special sympathy for the Ethiopian community which has faced so many challenges adapting to a new society. Ms. Axelrod will continue to sponsor Hadas and Nimrod and is already thinking about how to ensure that their other siblings get a good education!

Sponsors Give and Ethiopian Students Give Back

Ortal Admassu, tutor of younger students. Axelrod immediately offered to sponsor the Wendam family to the NACOEJ staff to see if there was any way in which NACOEJ could help—and discovered that NACOEJ also offered to sponsorships for Ethiopian high school students! NACOEJ-New York connected the Wendam family to the NACOEJ staff in Israel, and after a fruitful meeting with Hadas and Nimrod, the students were accepted into the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Sponsorship Program. Ms. Axelrod immediately offered to sponsor both students.

Following in her sister’s footsteps, Hadas is already planning to attend the prestigious Assaf Harofeh Hospital! She is also an example for my younger siblings who want very much to follow me and succeed in their own way. Especially because we are Ethiopian and feel that education will open doors for us. For an Ethiopian student it is not easy to concentrate on studies when he or she knows that the financial situation at home is a problem, when parents can’t financially support their children and have to lean on them.”

Evelyn Axelrod, a long-time NACOEJ supporter, feels that the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Sponsorship Program is important because it gives young Ethiopians extra support at a time when it is crucial for them to do well so that they can go on to pursue a higher education and train for a profession. She has special sympathy for the Ethiopian community which has faced so many challenges adapting to a new society. Ms. Axelrod will continue to sponsor Hadas and Nimrod and is already thinking about how to ensure that their other siblings get a good education!

A Sponsor Gets Involved

May 26th, 2009

The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry

Shalom,

I wish to thank you once again for the support you grant our students from the Ethiopian community.

Your support encourages these students to focus on their studies and to apply themselves diligently to overcome the challenges that they face in school.

Your donation makes it easier for the students to acquire the necessary study supplies and equipment. It also pays for the school’s compulsory cultural program which includes educational trips, professional activities and cultural enrichment, according to the needs of each student based on the program of study that she has chosen. Your donation does not cover all their needs, but enables the school to complete anything that is missing for each one of these students.

I hope that during your visit here you were exposed to at least some of the dedication and fruitful activities in our school.

Sincerely,

Leah Finder,

Vice Principal

Ramla-Lod High School

May 26th, 2009

The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry

Shalom,

I wish to thank you once again for the support you grant our students from the Ethiopian community.

Your support encourages these students to focus on their studies and to apply themselves diligently to overcome the challenges that they face in school.

Your donation makes it easier for the students to acquire the necessary study supplies and equipment. It also pays for the school’s compulsory cultural program which includes educational trips, professional activities and cultural enrichment, according to the needs of each student based on the program of study that she has chosen. Your donation does not cover all their needs, but enables the school to complete anything that is missing for each one of these students.

I hope that during your visit here you were exposed to at least some of the dedication and fruitful activities in our school.

Sincerely,

Leah Finder,

Vice Principal

Ramla-Lod High School

May 26th, 2009

The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry

Shalom,

I wish to thank you once again for the support you grant our students from the Ethiopian community.

Your support encourages these students to focus on their studies and to apply themselves diligently to overcome the challenges that they face in school.

Your donation makes it easier for the students to acquire the necessary study supplies and equipment. It also pays for the school’s compulsory cultural program which includes educational trips, professional activities and cultural enrichment, according to the needs of each student based on the program of study that she has chosen. Your donation does not cover all their needs, but enables the school to complete anything that is missing for each one of these students.

I hope that during your visit here you were exposed to at least some of the dedication and fruitful activities in our school.

Sincerely,

Leah Finder,

Vice Principal

Ramla-Lod High School

Be An Ambassador

“We are happy to bring you the fourth issue of “Bridges”, written by Judy Dick, Coordinator of Educational Programs. While you hear about the progress of your own students, we would like to let you know about the accomplishments of other students in the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Program. Let us know if you have news about your own students that you want to share! Please feel free to call us at 212-233-5200, ext. 230 or e-mail highschoo@naceoj.org. In addition, please pass on our information to friends and family who might be interested in supporting the program. You are an ambassador for those wonderful boys and girls, and your endorsement will go a long way toward enabling more Ethiopian teens to get the education they need in Israel.”