



2020 Bridges

The NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program



You Can Be an Ambassador

We're delighted to bring you the 15th issue of Bridges.

We hope you will continue to serve as an Ambassador for Ethiopian-Israeli high school students by passing this newsletter to friends and family who might also want to support our students.

Your endorsement can ensure that more deserving Ethiopian-Israeli teens get the good education that is the key to their successful futures.

Questions? Call Karen Gens, our U.S. Director of High School and College Sponsorship Programs at 212-233-5200, ext. 230, or email: education@nacoej.org.

She'll answer questions, contact prospective sponsors, and chat about the joys of sponsorship (she's been a sponsor for years).

And, if you have news to share about your student, please let her know.

Thank you so much for your dedication to these Ethiopian-Israeli young people!

The 2019/2020 School Year has Been Like No Other in History...



Dear Sponsors,

In Israel our Ethiopian high school students - like all students in Israel and almost everywhere - have found themselves no longer in their classrooms, and trying to learn on-line.

Some Ethiopian-Israeli families have computers and internet access, but many don't. So it has been a great challenge for our students.

This year is so different from any we've experienced before. Because the schools have been closed for so long, our students have been deeply impacted and so we have fewer wonderful success stories to share.

Nonetheless, we want you to know how deeply grateful our students are for the sponsorships you have given them. And we hope that as research progresses on a vaccine for Covid-19, we will, sooner, rather than later, have our students back in the classrooms with your sponsorships enabling them to make the most of their learning experiences. Best wishes... *Karen*

High School Sponsorships = Educational Excursions, Enrichment Programs and More...

Since 1997, the NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program has changed the lives of thousands of Ethiopian-Israeli teens. It is a bridge that enables them to go on from high school to college.

Basic high school tuition is covered by the government, but Israeli schools charge other fees which many Ethiopian families cannot afford. Your sponsorship allows your student to go on school trips, have extra study hours, attend special programs, and be able to take advantage of all the school's educational opportunities.

As many students say, a sponsorship lets them be "...just like the other kids." You give these teens self-confidence and an education that's key to getting into, and succeeding in, college. And this enables them to go on to successful futures. Thank you.

Each One has a Story and Each One is so Grateful...

Before Covid-19 changed the world forever and before the schools were closed in Israel, our high school students wrote to their sponsors to bring them up-to-date on their studies and to offer their heartfelt thanks. We want to give you a peek into what some of the students are studying and how they relate to their sponsors under normal conditions:



From: Yohana Negusa
To: My Sponsors

Hi, it's Yohana. I am in the AMIT high school in Rehovot and this year I am taking: the 5-unit English class, the 4-unit math class, and the 5-unit accelerated classes in Bible, Jewish Law, physics, and literature.

In my free time, I love volunteering at the library near my home, where I help them with whatever they need. I help kids with their homework, fix problems with the printer, wrap books, replace books, work on the computer, and anything else.

I just love interacting with other people at the library. I hope to be a doctor, where I will also help people.

A few days ago, I received my report card for the first half of the year, and I'm very happy because I got high marks. It proves to me that my hard work is paying off.

Thank you so much for sponsoring me. I really appreciate it, because it means I can feel more relaxed and focus on school...*Yohana*



From: Liav Tegenie
To: My Sponsors

Hi, it's Liav.

It's important to me to do well in school, by working hard, investing my time, and earning results.

I just took my first Bagrut (Matriculation) exam, on history - the exam was straightforward and simple. I prepared and studied really hard, and when it came time to answer the questions, I knew all of the material we had studied last year.

Outside of school, I study at a laboratory at the Weizmann Institute, so that I can expand my knowledge...we do neurological experiments and discover things I might want to study in the future.

I'm hoping, in the future, to study physics or science. I want to research space flight, serve in the Israeli Air Force, become an astronaut, and work at NASA.

Education is a major part of my life. Even when I have free time, I use it to study.

I like using my brain, challenging myself to learn things, and to think in different ways. I especially love physics and biology. Thank you for sponsoring me...*Liav*



From: Shlomit Elene

To: My Sponsor

Hi, it's Shlomit.

I'm majoring in communications, where we record videos and learn about communications.

My favorite subject is English.

There are 9 people in my family: my parents, 5 girls, and 2 boys. I'm the 3rd child.

I really want to get a job...but I have to invest my time in studying because I have to take Bagrut exams this year.

My parents work really hard, because they have to support all of us - there are a lot of kids. So, I'm really happy that I have this sponsorship. It really helps my parents. Thank you so much for all of your help...*Shlomit*



From: Rachel Gesese

To: My Sponsor

Hi, it's Rachel.

I'm 15 years old, and I'm a student at Amit high school. I live in the Kiryat Moshe district of the city of Rehovot, in Israel.

This year, I'm taking a 5-unit English class, 4-unit classes in math. During my free time I volunteer at the school library. I help wrap and organize books, and replace them.

My favorite hobbies include going out with my friends.

I'm trying to be a good student. We just got our report cards, and I need to improve my grades. Thank you for helping me. I really appreciate it. With thanks...*Rachel*



From: Oshrat Kebede

To: My Sponsors

Hi, it's Oshrat.

Two weeks ago, I took my first Bagrut exam, and I think it went pretty well.

It's important to me to let you know that I really invest a lot of energy studying and preparing for exams. I studied for many days in a row, and a lot of nights, also, so that I would know the material as well as I could.

A while ago, we took a trip to the south of Israel, and it was one of the best trips we've ever taken. We saw places I never thought I would see. We spent Shabbat together with another school - from the city of Rishon—and it was a really fun Shabbat.

So, thank you so much for all of your help. I really appreciate it. It's really important and I really, really thank you and appreciate you, because this really helps me with school...*Oshrat*



Leah Barkai Retires

Leah Barkai, who ran the high school sponsorship program on the Israel side for many years, has retired.

We want to offer her our deepest gratitude for the years she has spent ensuring that our students and their sponsors develop the best relationships possible.

We wish Leah a wonderful retirement and send her many thanks from all the students and their sponsors.

Welcome Oreet

Oreet Schreiber-Shata has taken the reins of the high school sponsorship program as well as the college sponsorship program at the Israel end.

We welcome Oreet who has already jumped right into the position only to find herself – as all of us – with the schools closing due to Covid-19.

Oreet's work so far has been wonderful and we look forward to our partnership with her going forward. Just one example: Last winter she conceived of and coordinated the highly successful AAS event attended by current and former students. The event honored sponsors Barney and Rachel Gottstein.

Oreet has come to NACOEJ with advanced degrees from Bar-Ilan University and the Open University in Israel as well as a great deal of experience working with young people.



38 Years and Counting...

Since 1982, NACOEJ has provided humanitarian and educational aid to the Ethiopian-Jewish communities in Israel and Ethiopia. NACOEJ is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Just the Facts

2019-2020 School Year

- **93 sponsors participated in the High School program**
- **581 students were sponsored**
- **37 schools in 11 Israeli cities participated**
- **156 of our students graduated**

Hundreds of students still need sponsors.



North American
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