

Changing Lives the WISE Way

Partners in the Horn of Africa works with the Ethiopian charity WISE (Organization for Women in Self-Employment) to fund microfinance loans and life skills & business development training for over one thousand poor female entrepreneurs. This is one woman's story...

My name is Worke Yusuf. I was born in 1979 in Gunchere, a village in the Gurage region. Since I was born and raised in a remote area I was not able to go to any school. My brother brought me to Addis Ababa at the age of 15 with the hope that I would look after the house he was living in. This did not work out, so I had to get a job as a nanny for a low salary.

In time, I was able to save enough money to rent a small street stall. I started selling oranges and charcoal, but found I could not make a profit. I quit the shop and started selling decorative grass for coffee ceremonies in the morning and corn in the afternoon.

Partners in the Horn of Africa is a non-denominational Canadian charity operating in Ethiopia. We follow two principles:

- **100% of any donation goes directly toward project costs in Ethiopia.** All administrative and fundraising costs are covered by *Friends of the Horn of Africa*, a separately funded sister charity.
- **We work with an Ethiopian partner who proposes the project and is required to contribute at least 15% of the total cost in cash, labour and/or materials.**

We work with both rural and urban communities, focusing our efforts and investments in areas of unmet need. Our projects respond to community requests, addressing a range of needs such as education, basic infrastructure, water and sanitation, food security, and livelihoods.



A WISE business skills instructor using story boards to teach mostly illiterate women

In the meantime, I got married and gave birth to three children. We had to move to a smaller house when our house was demolished by the local authorities to build a modern building. We were really struggling. My husband could not take the hardship and he left us. We barely had enough to eat. My children could eat just once a day and it was not enough at all.

I was stressed and unhappy with the way my life was going. A friend of mine told me that she had taken a loan to start a small business from a WISE cooperative and convinced me to join. They helped my children with clothes and provided them with food. While I was taking the training, I wanted to buy corn to sell. The training coordinator arranged a loan of about \$10 US to help me get started.

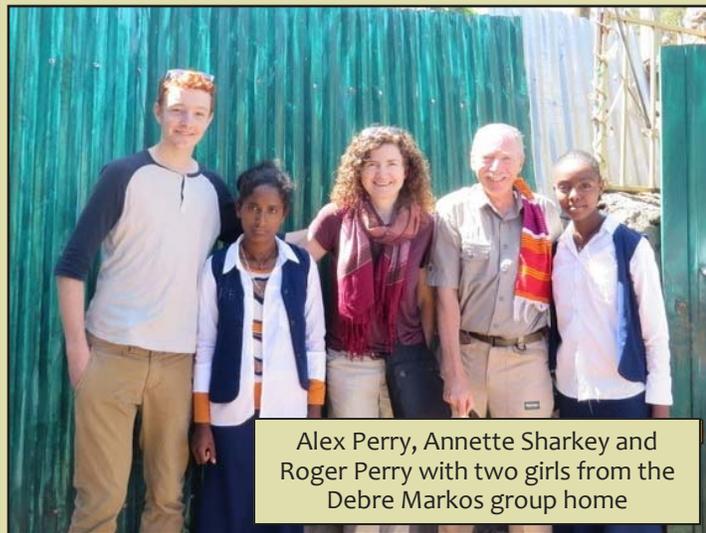
Using this money, I made a profit of \$20 and I could soon go to her to return the money. She was really happy with what I had achieved. She informed me that the money I was returning would be deposited in my saving account. After taking the business skills training, I took a loan and started doing business in a shop that was part of a government project. *(continued on Page 4)*

Kalamalka Rotary Visits Ethiopia

From a story submitted by Annette Sharkey

In November 2014, four Canadians travelled to Ethiopia for a one week tour of **Partners in the Horn of Africa** projects. Roger Perry and Annette Sharkey are members of the Kalamalka Rotary Club in Vernon, BC. The club has provided funding for a number of community initiatives managed by **Partners**. Joining Roger on his 4th trip to Ethiopia was his 18 year old grandson Alex Perry. This was Annette's first visit to Ethiopia and she invited her friend and colleague Jane Lister, Regional Dean of Okanagan College - Vernon Campus.

The adventure began in a town close to Bahir Dar where they were met with a joyous and lively welcome from the students, parents and teachers of the Ambo



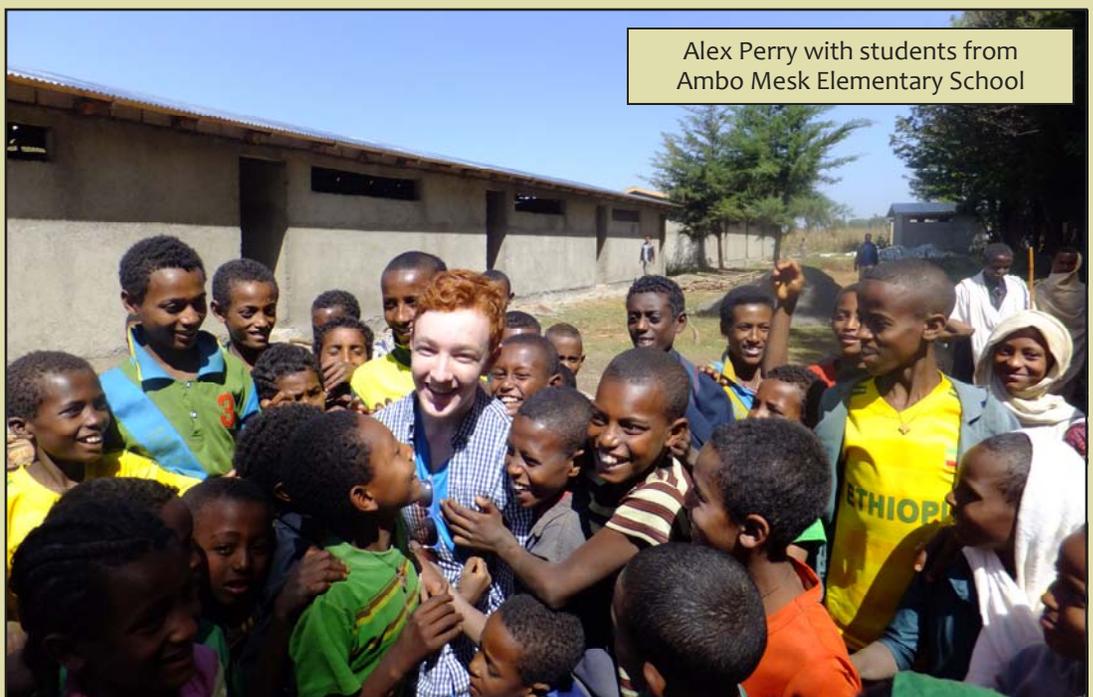
Alex Perry, Annette Sharkey and Roger Perry with two girls from the Debre Markos group home

Mesk Elementary School. After a presentation and tour of the new school and latrines under construction, the roughly five hundred community members were invited to share their thoughts with the Kal Rotarians on their priorities for future projects. Overwhelmingly, the community would like to see a high school built in their area. Next on the priority list were a water pipeline, a bridge, public toilets for the entire community, and finally, teacher capacity building.

On the return journey from Bahir Dar, the Canadian visitors spent a day in Debre Markos visiting a **Partners** group home for orphaned girls attending high school. The determination of these young women to overcome so many odds to further their education is amazing. The Kalamalka Rotarians were struck by their courage and perseverance despite being so far from their home communities and away from family and friends. This same courage was evident the following day in a visit to Jimma House, another **Partners** group home for girls. When asked about their plans, some of the girls shared their dreams to become a teacher, a doctor or to study science and accounting. They were fascinated with Roger's ginger haired grandson Alex, and it was wonderful to see how quickly these young people from different cultures connected and enjoyed each other's company.

On the final day of the journey, the group visited the **Partners** Bethel Group Home, located two hours east of Addis Ababa. Babies, toddlers and school age children are all flourishing under the care of a dedicated staff of nannies, cooks and caregivers. You can feel the love and joy bubbling from these children despite the fact that most were abandoned as babies and have suffered malnutrition or neglect. Home is where the heart is and the staff have exceptionally big hearts. Many children have been found adoptive families, but those that do stay get the best of care.

Roger, Alex, Jane and Annette all felt that this was the trip of a lifetime and were honored to meet the local champions and recipients from each community project. Alex declared that his grandfather had provided "one of the best days of his life". Ethiopia just has that effect on you... it's hard not to fall in love with the country and its people.



Alex Perry with students from Ambo Mesk Elementary School

Executive Director's visit to Ethiopia & the Ambo Mesk School Complex Inauguration

Since the beginning of the year, **Partners** has been reorganizing its projects by sectors, as detailed in our 2015 Project List. In particular, we have decided to strengthen our office in Ethiopia with the hiring of new staff



Raffaele Teodonno (3rd from left) with dignitaries and staff at the opening of Ambo Mesk school

members to improve our capacity to better assist our Ethiopian partners and communities. Our Executive Director, Raffaele Teodonno, travelled to Ethiopia for about a month in January to be involved in this reorganization process. For the first time in our history, 50% of our team is composed of women!

During Raffaele's stay in Ethiopia, it was possible to conduct a very productive 1-day seminar for all the implementing partners. He was pleased with the very high commitment of these local charities to the communities and people they assist with their projects.

Raffaele was able to visit the community of Ambo Mesk and the inauguration of the new school construction funded through our Comprehensive Basic Education program.

The inauguration ceremony was nothing short of spectacular, with over a thousand people taking active

part in the celebration, with dances, numerous speeches and distribution of gifts and acknowledgments. **Partners** was also represented by its new and old Country Representatives, Alemneh Bizuneh and Tesfaye Kifle, as well as our engineer, Tesfaye Tefera, who has been key to the success of this project.

In the near future the community will undergo more works on this site, in particular the completion of toilets, a water system and a footbridge. The new school complex will be used not only for regular classes, but also for awareness raising on health and sanitation, adult education, training for income generating activities and community meetings.

Upcoming events

On Thursday May 21, we will hold our annual **AGM and Ethiopian Dinner** in Vancouver! Enjoy some great authentic Ethiopian food, meet some interesting people and get an update on our activities. Contact our office for last minute ticket availability.

In June, Raffaele will travel to Toronto to meet with a group interested in **Partners**, generously hosted by long-time supporter and former board member Seaton McLean.

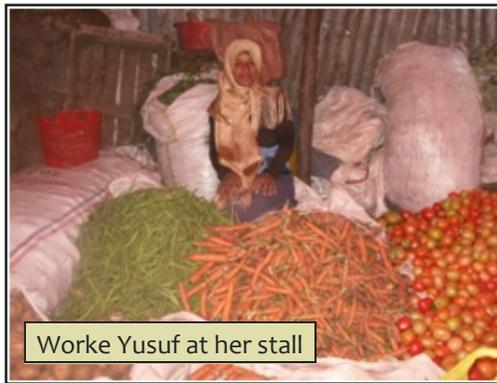
In June, we will also be travelling to Brooks, AB to present to a large group of Somalis and Ethiopians working in the area.



Some of the children in the care of the Bethel Group Home

Get the latest news and info about upcoming events on our website partnersinthehorn.org, join our e-news email list and check out our Facebook page at facebook.com/partnersinthehorn

(Continued from Page 1) The training has changed me a lot. It taught me how to invest, attract customers, make profit and what I should do in case of loss. I can now fulfill the needs of my children. One of my children is studying in university. I have rebuilt my house and I am able to save around \$10 per month as a contribution for the shopping center our group is going to build. I also contribute about \$5 every week to my cooperative saving fund, and that makes me very proud that now not only do I have enough for my family, but I can also share with others. I am really happy with the life I have now.



Worke Yusuf at her stall



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Donations of \$20 or more are issued a tax receipt for Canadian and American donors. We are a Canadian CRA registered charity and American 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

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Meet the Board - Q&A with James Hickling



James Hickling first became a Director with **Partners in the Horn of Africa** in 2004, and he rejoined the Board again in 2014. He is a lawyer whose work focuses on creating economic development opportunities for First Nations in British Columbia. James lives on Bowen Island with his wife Melissa and their two sons, Jonah and Ezra.

How did you connect with Partners? In 2001, I met one of the founders, John Baigent, when he was representing the Canada Labour Congress in Ottawa. We had a great conversation about an esoteric legal issue but I had no reason to think we'd ever cross paths again. The next

year, I read an article he wrote about **Partners** and I thought, "I know that guy!" So I wrote to him to ask how I could help. He wrote back and asked for my five best ideas – and I guess he thought a couple of them were pretty good!

What made Partners a good fit for you? Three main reasons.

1. I had always been interested in the amazing culture and history of the Ethiopian people.
2. Ordinary people inspired by an idea and doing extraordinary things? I was drawn to it as if by gravity - I just had to become a supporter.
3. I really, really like the idea of people in Canada partnering with people in Ethiopia. It makes so much sense.

What would you like Partners to achieve in the coming 1-2 years? I'd like for **Partners** to continue to grow at a slow and steady pace. One of our strategic goals is to build on the success of our traditional partnership model, while at the same time adapting to emerging trends in charitable giving. I think we are already on the right track because our partnership model appeals to loyal supporters who know the value of financial accountability and efficiency ... and to new donors who want to be more directly involved and connected with the projects they choose to support.

Donation News - Welcome America!

We now officially have full 501(c)(3) non-profit status in the USA, in addition to being a full CRA registered Canada charity. For American donors, we can issue tax receipts that are accepted by the IRS, so please tell your American friends!

Our mission is to improve the lives of Ethiopians. We listen to their needs and partner with them on projects that empower communities & individuals, and contribute to their well-being.