

Village of Hope

April 2006 Expedition Report

Expedition Participants:

Jodie Caffery, Tammy Munn, Shumba Kennard, Ken Barson, Margie Barson, Verna Gneiting and Kelly Vanleuven

The VOH High Risk Children's Center (HRCC) has officially begun its' work serving the desperate children of the Kersa Illala village cluster and surrounding villages. Our first child is Emuti (5 years old), found in Turmi, Omo Valley, abandoned at birth. She was living in a restaurant, where her mother had been a waitress. Her father is unknown (probably a truck driver). The owner of the restaurant was "looking out for 'Muti,'" waiting for her mother to return and claim her. Recognizing her precarious situation, the Turmi Village Chairman signed Muti over to Lon and VOH, to rescue her from a life of rejection and suffering (see attached summary on her life prospects and the prospects of other parentless children in Ethiopia).

All members of the expedition spent many days, with their translators, scouring the four village cluster (Kersa Illala, Kersa Korke, Maga Kersa, and Turge) for high risk children. They found many that will be screened by Steffanie Reeder (our Director of HRCC Operations) and Abu Milkesso (our HRCC Executive Committee member and member of the Governing Council), who will select the most desperate, to officially inaugurate the operation of the HRCC rehabilitation program. Thanks to Jodie, for volunteering to stay two weeks extra to help Steffanie and Abu.

Steffanie and Abu are on the verge of receiving VOH's government license to officially operate the HRCC as a government sanctioned provider of rehabilitative services for high risk children and dysfunctional families in the Kersa Illala area. They are working closely with regional government officials in Shashamene to get that license, which is expected to be awarded imminently.

Ken Barson, who is a Master Gardener, extended for an extra week and worked extensively setting up a drip irrigation system, for Steffanie's prototype garden. This garden is extremely important, as the entire compound will be converted to a huge garden and will provide a significant portion of the food the children of the HRCC will be fed with, as well as providing the children with an opportunity to contribute to their sustenance by working in the garden on a regular basis.

Following in Pirko Gibb's footsteps, Verna, Kelly, and others, treated many of the sick and afflicted in the VOH health clinic, during their 3 week stay in the compound. They were visited and assisted, at the clinic, on two occasions, by visits from Dr. Adane, one of the most renowned pediatricians in Ethiopia. He often makes himself available to us for

consultation, insight into tropical diseases, and purchase of wholesale medicines from the Ghandi Hospital pharmacy. We appreciate all that Verna does for Village of Hope, on an on-going basis, and the tremendous help of Dr. Adane.

Four of our HRCC houses are finished, one is being furnished and moved into, and the slab for the 5th is completed. The forms for the 5th house are now being placed into position, in preparation for cement to be applied, then that house finished, as well. At that point, we will have 5 houses built and 20 to go, on the grant from NuSkin Enterprises funding 25 houses and a Vocational Education Center adjacent to the Children's Center in the VOH Compound. Thank you, NuSkin Enterprises, the funding source, and Kedir Tuna, the builder, of the village, under the direction and mentoring of Daryl Gibbs, of Wallsburg, Utah, (along with his advisors at the BYU structural engineering group).

While the expedition was going on, Keith Fenstermaker, was feverishly working to totally revamp the VOH web site, to be a more efficient fund raising tool to help the children of Kersa Illala cluster of villages. The site is becoming more intuitive, more graphic and more of an introduction mechanism to the needs of the desperate children of Kersa Illala. Please direct your attention, and the attention of your friends and relatives to the site (www.villageofhope.org). Let's use it to fund the education of those, who would otherwise not be educated, and to the well-being of the children, who's circumstances for survival, happiness and success are currently non-existent. Thank you Keith, for what you are doing for our children!

Megersa Yosef is doing an amazing job of getting our new joint venture with Dean Franciskovich and World Wide Sires, under the sponsorship of Land O' Lakes and USAID, off to an extremely strong start. He travels Ethiopia from one end to the other, visiting dairies and farmers, teaching the benefits of Artificial Insemination for the future of farming in Ethiopia. Our first order of semen is soon on its way, with the long-term prospect for improving the productivity of the Ethiopian dairy and beef herds, looking very good, indeed!

You may know, the average Ethiopian cow, gives slightly more than a quart a day. The average American dairy cow, gives 30 to 50 times that much. Thus the protein production potential of each genetically improved dairy cow, in Ethiopia, can provide the Ethiopian people 30 to 50 times more than what it currently does. This will provide more protein to the nutritional pool each year, than the slaughter of hundreds of Ethiopian steers. This effort has the potential to vastly improve the health and nutrition of Ethiopian peasants, while reducing the grazing pressure on the land and revolutionizing family income growth for the participating farmers, throughout Ethiopia.

All of this is being managed and directed on the ground, in Ethiopia, under the leadership of our Governing Council, chaired by Pastor Tigro, Vice Chairman Hagi Hamid Mohamed and the 6 other village leaders on the council. We salute them and the great work they have done and are doing. Congratulations and a special thanks to everyone working to help VOH save kids and especially to our April expedition

participants, Jodie Caffery, Tammy Mumm, Shumba Kennard, Ken Barson, Margie Barson, Verna Gneiting and Kelly Vanleuven.

The Prospects for Parentless Ethiopian Children and their Children

Emuti, has a mother and father. Both are likely living; but she, nor anyone else, know who or where they are. For this reason, she is “parentless.”



In fact, Emuti’s mother was a waitress at a restaurant in Turmi, in Ethiopia’s famous Omo Valley. From what we know of her, she had two main activities, waiting tables and having liaisons with the truck drivers that stream through Turmi and her employers restaurant and hotel. Emuti’s mother worked in the restaurant for an unknown time, got pregnant to an unknown man, had Emuti, and shortly after her birth left Turmi for places unknown. That was 5 years ago, and Emuti, none the wiser about this whole situation, was fed and clothed by the owner of the restaurant, a good hearted, single women of about 40 years, who had no idea she was to have a baby dumped in her lap, and really would have preferred it had never happened. She made as much of a bad situation as she could and patiently waited for 5 years for Emuti’s mother to show up and reclaim her. Of course, this never happened.

With this start in life, Emuti is predestined to a life of rejection, physical and sexual abuse and sorrow. A person, who has no “known” family, is in Ethiopia, an outcast. A child born without a father or mother is born in violation of the cultural norms that say, “a child born outside the bounds of matrimony is unacceptable.” Emuti is thus, an unacceptable person. As an orphan, it’s tough, but not a disgrace. If parents are alive, but

indigent, ill, criminals, psychotic, or anything else, it's tough, but it doesn't qualify you to be an outcast. Emuti is an outcast! Luckily, she doesn't yet know that she's an outcast. It is unlikely that anyone will ever marry her, or befriend her, or love, or accept her. She has no one now, and chances are close to 100%, that she will never have anyone. She will likely be treated worse than the lepers were anciently (paradoxically, there are still many lepers of in Ethiopia, and "modern" Ethiopia society is reaching out to help them as much as they can). Emuti will be completely excluded from society, while struggling to survive in it.

The only love she will get, or job she will get, is that of a prostitute. When she has, what Ethiopian's call bastard children, there is a lady in each village that will know how to insert her hand up Emuti's vagina and kill her baby. If, by chance, one of her baby's survive to birth, they will be taken from Emuti and thrown into the river, or on the rock pile, or left out for the hyena's (known as hyena's daughters), to die. Three recent cases of this have been reported to me, to have occurred near our village. Though few will acknowledge it, and it is against the law, it is not against the culture. For this reason, it is never prosecuted and murder charges are almost never levied. It is ignored, by the people, law enforcement and the government. If Emuti tries to keep her babies and raise them, she will be chased out and isolated.

Emuti is one of thousands, perhaps tens of thousand of girls and women in this trap! They are "high risk." Let's help them!

Post script: Dan and Ami Wilcox of Salt Lake City are adopting Emuti, Congratulations to the Wilcox's and Emuti!