

February/March 2007 Activity Report

Algiers Projects

We installed the new satellite T V in the compound and began working out requirements and procedures for it's educational and incentive use with the kids..

We have been unable to get a permanent installation of the Internet and a phone in the compound, so as an interim solution, Hirpo (a friend of VOH in Arsi Negelle) is providing a small corner of his new office in Arsi Negelle and our phone and internet connection will be temporarily installed there. We should have a permanent connection in the compound soon. Not perfect, but much better than our current alternative!!

All of the Kersa School desks and library tables and chairs have been delivered, installed and are being used. See photos. The school personnel are so-o-o-o-o thrilled!!



The 39 fruit trees have been ordered and will be ready for pick-up soon! They will be planted in the compound shortly.

Thank you so much, Dan, Lita and family!!!

Mark and Dawn Smith Projects



The health center in Kersa has been built and is awaiting the connection of electricity and water, as well as the governmentally required responsibilities in finishing the facility by the village.

I traveled to the Ginchy area village, with humanitarian missionaries, where the new water system is being installed by LDS Charities for 14 villages and 31,000 villagers. The villagers there are excited to have a health center there, also funded by the Smiths, and all of the arrangements to get that started are being handled so that construction can begin.

Furnishing of Domes

All of the domes have been finished and are occupied by the VOH High Risk Children. The beds have been completed and installed and the children are enjoying their new quarters immensely. It is hope that construction on the domes can continue very soon, so that the plan for the High Risk Children Center can be completed as planned to house some 250 resident children and provide rehabilitation for 250 non resident children and their families. Daryl Gibb is working on a new construction technique that will use a reusable balloon (up to 1,000 domes) that will be used to complete the build-out of the HRCC.



Adoption of High Risk Children

We moved into final stage of completing the paperwork to facilitate the adoption of 6 HRCC children: Emuti and Maryama, by Dan and Amy Wilcox; Rameto and Yubo ,by Jim and Donnete Hicks; and we began the legal work on the adoption of Aiysha and Abate, by Patrick and Sally Munsey.

Thanks to the families that are adopting these wonderful children.

VOH Coop Dairy Development

We had multiple meetings with the Kersa Illala village chairman and his committee, as well as the farmers committee, to present the plan of developing the Coop Dairy in the village, to the individual farmers of the village and surrounding villages. The acceptance was immediate and farmers are now signing up. We will be finalizing the by-laws, moving into the new Coop Dairy Office in the Village of Hope Compound and beginning the collection and sales of milk to ADA (in Debre Zeit – just South of Addis Ababa), within the next few weeks, under the direction of Megersa Yosef.

We also completed the construction of a 4 cow dairy barn on the compound with a corral and pasture, to house the three new purebred Jersey cows (part of an shipment we are planning of about 200 dairy cows – mostly Holstein) we are attempting to buy from major dairy farms in Kenya. During March, Kedir will be preparing the land in the compound to plant elephant grass (a very successful and good dairy feed being used successfully all over East Africa) which is being ordered and shipped to us through the efforts of Megersa.. We are also the beneficiaries of a new artificial insemination company that has been established in Ethiopia (Ethiopia Livestock Development Company, LLC), that will make championship dairy and beef bull semen available to us and other dairy and beef farmers throughout Ethiopia.



Our efforts in the compound have two purposes. First of all we want to provide milk for our high risk children. Secondly, we want to act as an example to Ethiopian farmers of the simple technology available to them to improve their income and live-style as a result of implementing improved dairy farming techniques on their own cows and for their own family.

Kedir has also completed his first Artificial Insemination Training session in Addis Ababa and is excited to begin inseminating cows in the VOH coop dairies.

VOH Office

Since receiving the VOH compound, there has been a small building on the premises that has stored old mill equipment that we gave to the farmers' association. It has been very difficult to get that equipment out so we could remodel it and use it as a VOH Office, but

we finally achieved that long held goal. Contracts have been awarded to a local builder to put a new repair the walls and roof of the facility, put in a new floor, ceiling, door and window, and partitions. These changes will allow that building to be used as an office for Village of Hope (on the East side) and for the VOH Coop Dairy effort (on the West side). We are very excited, both to have some privacy for the staff and Governing Council, as well as to free up the clinic for medical and high risk children uses.



The area in front of the VOH office will be used as a demonstration site for villagers to come and examine on the way that low tech solutions to sanitation and hygiene, as well as smokeless stoves, shallow well pumps and other solutions to common problems in the villages of Ethiopia. We will also be demonstrating means of increasing family incomes, such as the production of poles for construction by growing eucalyptus trees and growing false banana and banana trees.

We have also authorized the digging of a trench from the clinic to the front of the compound and the burying of water pipes and electrical cable to get water and electricity to all parts of the compound, including the High Risk Children Center (resident and non-resident), the future Women's Education Center and Vocational Education Center, the milk barn, the guard house, and the VOH office.

We're very excited at the potential for this new facility in the compound.

Village of Hope High Risk Children Center

We have recently admitted four new children into the HRCC. Three siblings from the village, Chaltu, Taiba and Sultan, whose mother abandoned them, and Iftu, from the Lake Langano area, who was brought in by Pastor Tgro, Chairman of the Governing Committee. We will likely add several more children in the near future and will be keeping you informed as the VOH Village Governing Committee makes these decisions.

Clinic Pharmacy

Our wonderful nurse, Bonso, R.N., has cleaned and restocked the clinic pharmacy so that as we have medical groups coming, we will know what medications we have and which medications need to be added to support the medical groups that will be coming to the clinic in June and July. August. The entire clinic has been fitted out with new glass windows by Kedir, to improve security and the light in the clinic. Thank you so much Bonso and Keidr!

Organization Adjustments

In order to improve the day to day operations of VOH in Kersa Illala and surrounding villages, we have appointed Abu Milkesso as Project Director and will be hiring a full time, credentialed social worker to manage the HRCC on a dialy basis. This is part of our effort to Ethiopianize the management of our Ethiopian operations. This will allow foreigners like DeAnna, Steffanie, Brian and me, to focus our efforts more on supervision, PR, resource acquisition and fund raising, than being burdened down with the actual day to day operations of the facility. This will allow us to go and come as dictated by the demands of the moment.

In the interest of everyone (staff and children) in the compound understanding their responsibilities and how they can best contribute to the success of our efforts, we have also implemented a policy of posting employee job descriptions, children behavior standards and the consequences of not meeting these standards, admission requirements, medical and dietary guidelines for everyone in the compound, and the issuance of a monthly menu (in advance and approved by Bonso) to insure that the nutritional requirements of all the children are met with an appetizing and varied diet for all.

Regards:

Lon