

July/August 2006 Administrative Work Trip Report

Lon spent 6 weeks in Ethiopia during July and August. The following is a summary of that trip:

- 1) There is a Cholera epidemic in the villages surrounding Kersa Illala, but because of the clean water in Kersa, there were no cases of Cholera in the village itself. Because of the Cholera in Maja, Turge and villages around Arsi Negelle, the government is requiring our village to build a health clinic by the end of September, where government doctors can attend to patients affected by contagious diseases, such as this Cholera epidemic. Village of Hope has been approached by the village committee to help in funding the construction of the new clinic. We don't want them to use our clinic, as if government paid doctors come, the government will take over the clinic.
- 2) The installation of the doors and windows for the first five domes has begun, in preparation for moving high risk kids into them. We have also received funding for furnishing 12 of the domes, and that process has also begun. We expect that the first five domes will be in full use, before the October expedition arrives at the compound. Maggie Diamond and Tammy Little have recently arrived to assist Stephanie in the tasks of caring for the children that are beginning to inhabit the high risk children center.
- 3) In an effort to provide adequate health care for the high risk kids and the villages surrounding Kersa Illala, we have interviewed a very qualified RN to work three afternoons a week in the VOH clinic. He would work Monday and Friday afternoons, caring for our four village area, and Wednesday afternoon caring for patients from more distant villages who come to our clinic. It will cost about \$125 a month to pay his salary for this effort and will likely cost another \$200 a month for medications. Anyone who could help us fund this effort with a year's commitment to pay for the RN's salary and/or medications, it would be tremendously beneficial.
- 4) In addition to Emuti (who was the first high risk child we admitted and was abandoned by her mother and father), and the first two teenage girls, Chaltu (who has twin baby girls, Balditu and Mergitu), and Longale (both of whom fled abduction and forced marriages before being taken into the VOH compound), we have admitted Dibaabe (see her story below), who will give birth in a couple of months to a baby fathered by her father. Dibaabe needs a sponsor, and her baby will also be available for adoption. We have also admitted a family of four orphans from the village of Shalla. These children are siblings, Aiysa (girl), Abate (boy), Genet (girl) and Maryama (girl) (ages 10, 9, 8 and 7 respectively), whose parents died of Malaria, a couple of years ago and whose grandmother has been unable to support them. They need to be adopted, as a family, if possible.

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Dibaabe, Chaltu and twins (Balditu and Mergitu), Aiseya, Abate, Emuti and Maryama, Longale

- 6) In addition, to these kids. We have applications for admission to an infant, who is free of AIDS, but whose parents are being treated for AIDS in a hospital in Addis Ababa. This infant will be admitted as soon as our facilities are ready. We also have applications from four orphans from the Lake Langano area, and three orphans from a village, closer to Kersa Illala. In addition, we have about 130 high risk children identified in the Kersa Illala, Korke, Maja and Turge villages, that need to be admitted as soon as possible to the VOH High Risk Children Center. As you can see, we really have our work cut out for us with the high risk kids and any help anyone can give us in supporting the kids, or finishing the children center, would be greatly appreciated.
- 7) We completed fencing in the playground for the kids, in front of the children center residences, so the kids now have a secure place to play, fenced off from traffic. We need more playground equipment, like teeter totter, revolving wheel (to supplement the swings and slippery slide, that we already have), and other equipment to help the kids in their play time. The play ground is not huge, but it can now accommodate a children's soccer game, volleyball and other such activities.
- 8) We desperately need student educational sponsors. We have close to 1,000 children who have applied for educational help, and because of the delays in getting our web site functioning, with all of the children to be profiled there, we are running way behind in our efforts to get the kids sponsored and in school.
- 9) I was requested to visit two villages would like our assistance. Both list a health clinic as their top priority. One village is in the area of Ginchy (West of Addis on the way to Ambo) and the other is about 18 km East of Arsi Negelle. Both are remote (Lon had to go on horse back to get into both of them during the rainy season), but both could be greatly benefited by health centers, which will receive government doctors, nurses and medications.
- 10) We (VOH) have recently become involved in a joint venture between USAID, Land o' Lakes Dairy, and World Wide Sires (a joint venture between the two largest artificial insemination firms in the US) in a dairy development effort in Ethiopia. The goal is, is with professionally run dairies, improved genetics and feed, to provide economic development, increase Ethiopian's protein and fat consumption, give rural farmers an alternative to field crops, which is now their only farming option, reduce the grazing pressure on the land, and provide people with one or two cows with a way of getting into the dairy business. With this in mind, Lon attended a meeting to establish an Ethiopian Cattle Breeders Association in Addis Ababa.
- 11) Additionally, after this meeting, we approached the VOH Governing Council and the Village Committee about establishing a cooperative dairy to serve the farmers in Kersa Illala, Korke, Maja, and Turge. This initiative was welcomed by the village elders and the farmers were elated at the prospect of having this opportunity.
- 12) On the way to Ethiopia, Lon stopped in England to meet with friends (Michael Roberts and his two daughters, Georgina and Harriet) who might be able to help

in finding Britains interested in becoming the focal point of a UK chapter of VOH. Also, while in Addis, he similarly met with Germans interested in establishing a German chapter of VOH.

- 13) Final point – Our web site is going to be critical to our success in funding our work in Ethiopia. One of our major means of “driving” potential sponsors and expedition members to our web site is for each of you to spread the word to friends, acquaintances and the mass media, about what we are doing and how they can help. If you have any contacts with mass media outlets (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.), please arrange for articles, public service announcements and other exposure for VOH, telling them to visit the web site and select cause within VOH to fund and be personally committed to. Thank you Brian and James Barlow for all your web site improvements. Also, any who would like to be on our email list for VOH operating information, are welcomed to provide their email address and we will include them in our cadre of supporters.

Thanks so much for everyone’s help and support,

Love,

Lon and DeAnna