

The Aysanew Kassa Trust

Improving Education in the Azezo Schools

NEWSLETTER

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Registered Charity 1090931

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The newsletter of the Aysanew Kassa Trust, set up in memory of the late Aysanew Kassa by his wife Jean Bailey and friends.

The key activity of the Aysanew Kassa Trust is to help students in need, based mainly in Azezo, complete their education through sponsorship and the provision of educational resources.

This year has been amazingly busy! We have started various new initiatives and organised different events to ensure that we can respond to the growing needs of our students and the Azezo community; and Pietro, our secretary, has updated our website, so do take a look! As ever, **all** of our activities both here in the UK and in Ethiopia are carried out by volunteers and we continually try to guarantee that every £1 donated reaches Azezo.

You can find more information on all of our activities, as well as the latest news, on our website at www.aysanew.org.



Setegn receives his PhD

2015's Highlights!

Since starting to sponsor students in 1995 (now 20 years ago!), we have helped hundreds of young people to graduate and build a better future for themselves and their community. This year, Jean was delighted to attend the graduation ceremony of **Setegn Alemu**, one of our early sponsored students, in the Netherlands, where he was jointly **awarded his PhD in Agriculture** by the Universities of Wageningen (Netherlands) and Aarhus (Denmark). Setegn was a star student at Azezo High School, before going on to study Agriculture in Hawassa University. He taught for three years at Dilla University and was then offered a scholarship to study in the Netherlands, where his outstanding work led to him gaining further sponsorship to study for his doctorate. It was an honour and a joy to be there for the defence of his thesis on behalf of all of his friends and family in Ethiopia. Now we await our first female student to gain a doctorate!

As well as Setegn's success, **11 of our sponsored university students have graduated** and so are now job searching. These are being replaced by **19 sponsored students who have gained places at Higher Education establishments** all over Ethiopia; thus this coming year we have the most sponsored students in higher education than ever before (**a total of 112, plus a further 80 in secondary education**)! Your help therefore continues to be invaluable!

Many of you might remember the request from Bruh Tesfa in Adigrat (Tigray) to help them open a hostel for Year 12 girls. We are delighted to say that it has opened with your support and this year it has 11 girls living there, all of whom are doing very well. Thank you all so much for your efforts!

We couldn't have achieved all this without your wonderful support throughout the years: Thank You!



Two of the girls in the Girls' Hostel

Plans for 2016

Our plans for 2016 are many and varied as we continue to support our sponsored students and improve the provision of education in Azezo as a whole, thereby benefitting the entire community!

These plans obviously include continuing to **sponsor our individual students** by providing them with monthly stipends to cover some of their expenses, as well as uniforms for those in high school.

We will also continue to **support the blind and partially sighted children** who live at Saint Raphael's School, run by the Daughters of Saint Anna. Modern technology means that many of the barriers to education that previously stood in the way of the blind or partially sighted have now fallen; and we want to ensure that the many blind children who attend the schools of Azezo have access to equipment such as laptops, digital recorders and sports facilities.

Through the support of the Japanese government, Azezo High School has recently completed a massive development of new classrooms and a library for the students in Years 11 and 12. This school has **3700 students registered** for this academic year and so at the time of writing we are reviewing the needs of the school and its pupils with the school director. **Keep an eye out for further developments on this via the website in Spring.**

Fundraising

Thank you once again to our runners and supporters for the **London 10K** in July. Henry, Tom, Kate and Cinzia (left to right in the picture overleaf; Fresghi and Pietro were just spectators!) pounded the streets of central London and we were also treated to the sight of record-breaking Ethiopian long-distance runner Kenenisa Bekele, who led the pack.



Our runners and some of our supporters for this year's London 10K

This year, the AKT Trustees and over 60 friends and supporters had an amazing day at the **Clink restaurant in Brixton prison** in October. We were treated to a delicious gourmet lunch and managed to raise over £2000 for the AKT, as well as supporting the Clink Charity, which trains prisoners as chefs and waiters and helps them in the rehabilitation process when they are released, in order to reduce reoffending rates. It really is another worthy cause and it was a privilege to speak to those who waited on and cooked for us. Thank you to all those who came along and helped make the day such a success.

Prior to this, in September, Egigyu and Julian **hosted a scrumptious Ethiopian dinner** at their house and donated the proceeds of £250 to the AKT. A very warm thank you to them both for their generosity and for having given all the attendees such a wonderful time.

We are looking to organise similar events in the coming year to raise money for our projects, raise awareness of our work and highlight the beauty of Ethiopia to a wider audience. **If you or anyone else you know have any ideas or would be able to help us plan something, please do get in touch!**

In the meantime—and just in time for Christmas!—we have launched our very own **'Alternative Gift' ideas**. These include footballs or laptops for blind children, a school uniform for a high school student, text books and pens for a child for one year. **Do take a look on our website:** you may wish to buy something as a “gift” for a loved one, and help our beneficiaries in the process!

Thank You!

As always, a very big thank you to you all for your continued support throughout 2015: there is no way we could have achieved all we have achieved this year without your help. Education is allowing some of the poorer children of Azezo to break the chains of poverty that bind them and build a brighter future not just for themselves, but for their families and the generations to come too. We hope that you will be able to continue to help in the coming years.

A special word of thanks to St Mary's Church, Wilshaw; St Mary's Catholic Church, East Finchley; and Soroptomists International, Reigate Branch, who have continued to sponsor our work in Azezo, especially providing help to the blind children and girls.

Thanks again to the trustees—Jean, Caroline, Daniel, Mulugeta, Pietro and Tessa—for their hard work and for giving up their time so willingly. And, of course, thanks to our team in Azezo, led so ably by Melash and Eshete, who continue to work for us voluntarily despite their busy jobs to

ensure that our projects have the greatest positive impact possible in the community and making the logistics of helping our sponsored students run so smoothly.



Special footballs for blind children allow them to play too!

Thank You Everybody!

If you or someone you know can help in any way please let us know; more information is available at www.aysanew.org, or email us at aysanewkassa@hotmail.com.

Donations can be made via bankers orders (Barclays Bank Account Number 80808350, Sort Code 20-58-51), the website or cheques made payable to 'Aysanew Kassa Trust' can be sent directly to Aysanew Kassa Trust, 72 Brackenbury Road, London N2 0ST, UK. Please do also complete a gift aid form if you are a UK taxpayer as it will increase the value of your contribution.

REMEMBER: *a little goes a long way in Ethiopia.*

Where is Azezo?

Azezo is situated approximately 10 km from Gondar city in the Gondar region of Ethiopia. More than 50% of the population is aged 15 and under. This is a very poor community, with limited infrastructure or facilities to help children with their education. It is, however, a town that is developing and in the last year some progress has been made with the introduction of cobblestone side roads.

Many children in Azezo are orphans or live in single parent households. Without education, they are condemned to a life of poverty. Since the beginning of the AKT more than 160 children have completed higher education with your help. Many of our earliest students have gone on to study for higher degrees - including PhDs! It is through education that they can be best equipped to help with improving the lives of their own families and local community; by becoming teachers, nurses, doctors, lawyers, engineers, agriculturalists etc. We are exploring ways to harness the support of those who graduated in the early days of AKT.



The market in Gondar: a vibrant and colourful place