

OUR 2022 MINISTRY UPDATE

This week, as I have been preparing to write this letter, I have reflected not just on the last year but the previous five years. Reflecting on the last five years brings a sense of awe regarding the leading of the Holy Spirit and a strong feeling of gratitude regarding all God has done since the beginning. In the summer of 2017, when visiting my friend Genet, who also lives in Fargo, ND, she told me about a group of orphans needing care in her hometown in Yabelo, Ethiopia. That day, as she shared with me, I immediately became overwhelmed with a deep sense of compassion that I knew was from the Holy Spirit. Within just minutes of her sharing, I said to Genet, "We need to pray right now," so we did just that. I will never forget that time of prayer when we fervently asked the Lord to help the children we had heard about.

Immediately after praying, the Holy Spirit impressed on my heart that we were not only to pray but that we were to do something. I came home and shared with my husband, and he echoed what the Holy Spirit impressed on my heart by saying, "I think we need to do something." Interestingly, just months before, a close friend of mine had called to share a dream in which she saw me on "red dirt" distributing food to children who had none. After she shared, I shrugged my shoulders and curiously thought, "Well, Lord, I have no idea now what that could even be about." It was not until later that I connected that dream to the orphans. When I saw the red dirt on our way to Yabelo, Ethiopia, I recalled my friend's dream.



Taken during our trip to Ethiopia on our way to Yabelo

I share all that to say that when God starts a work, He is faithful to sustain and lead us as we trust Him and step out in faith. As I have been recently going through *Experiencing God* by Henry Blackaby, I am reminded of how we get to co-labor with God and join him in His work locally and worldwide. **Before I update you on last year, I want to express how thankful I am for God's provision and leading and for guiding us from the start until now as we continue to provide care to orphans in Ethiopia.** God brought together a great board of directors and has worked through many donors, encouragers, and people praying over the last five years! We are so thankful.

In March 2022, we raised \$4,300 for our Education Fund as one of our primary goals was to start increasing the amount of money for schooling (present and future). Half of the funds will be used over the next two years to pay for grade and high school tuition. Currently, each child's schooling cost is around eight dollars a month. Half has been set aside for post-secondary school expenses. We are thankful for this provision. Additionally, we raised \$25,053 to fund all the other needs of operating the children's home this last year.

Last spring, we were made aware of an opportunity for Shining Lights Children's Home to rent two acres for a garden on the same property where the children's home is located. After praying for several months, the church that owns the property agreed to rent the land to the children's home.

Renting this land enables them to grow food to eat. After months of prepping the land (clearing, tilling, and digging out big tree roots without machinery), and praying for rain, teff seed, a staple in Ethiopia, is now in the ground and has sprouted! A substantial portion of the \$800 total monthly food budget is spent on teff. Growing teff themselves will help manage the cost of food which has increased due to civil conflict and instability in the country.



After : The new garden planted with teff

In last year's end-of-the-year letter, we mentioned the vision for the future and the desire to care for more orphans in Yabelo, Ethiopia. This September, the Ethiopian board of directors for the children's home agreed to provide care for four more orphans. There is one room in the children's home, a living area, that can fit two more sets of bunk beds. While many families have been struggling to take care of orphaned children in their care and have approached the director of the children's home, the Ethiopian board and director have agreed to prayerfully seek the Lord on which children should be added. They will also work alongside the local government officials as we step out in faith to care for four more children.

As we end this year and prepare to care for more orphans in Yabelo, Ethiopia, would you prayerfully consider partnering with us in one of two ways?

- By making a monthly recurring donation to the ministry to help us cover the monthly costs of operating the children's home. Recurring donations can be set up on our website's donate page (see below).
- Making a year-end donation of any amount to Shining Lights Ministry as we fully support and fund Shining Lights Children's Home.

Thank you for your prayers and support,

Board Chair

Bianna Nelson

Ways to Donate:

Online: www.shininglightsministry.org/donate

Mail: Shining Lights Ministry, 119 37th Ave E, West Fargo, ND 58078

Shining Lights Ministry is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, and donations are tax-deductible. We encourage you to check with your employer to see if donations can be matched. We are currently approved to receive workplace matching funds through Benevity.

P.S. Also included below is a summary of our functional expenses for the fiscal year July 2021-June 2022.

Functional Expenses - \$31,770

