

ANNUAL REPORT 2013



**North American
Conference on
Ethiopian Jewry**

*“Providing critical
education and food
to Ethiopian Jews”*

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*Photo of President Obama, President Peres, and Miss Israel on cover taken by Avi Ohayon
Thanks to Win Robins for Limudiah and other photos.*

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE CHALLENGE OF SUCCESS – A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

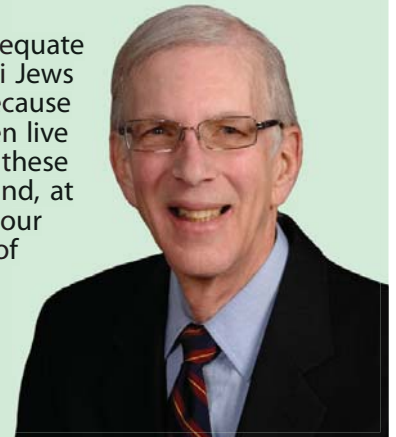
As a result of extensive lobbying and extreme pressure by advocates for Ethiopian Jewry, the Government of Israel and the Jewish Agency recently concluded Operation Dove's Wings which facilitated the Aliyah of a large segment of the remaining Ethiopian Jews. Clearly, there remains in Gondar a remnant who anxiously wait for their cases to be reviewed and, so, we cannot totally claim this effort's conclusion until all questionable cases have been reconsidered and those deemed eligible are enabled to fulfill their dreams.

Through our shared effort, we have been able to build an Ethiopian Jewish community in Israel of 130,000 precious souls. As NACOEJ supporters, we should feel pride in our accomplishment and share the great joy of the Ethiopian Jewish community.

But, with success also comes responsibility. Ethiopian Jewish children enter Israeli schools without the experience of rigorous classroom learning. Their challenge is compounded by a new culture and an unfamiliar language. It is exacerbated because parents frequently lack the educational tools to help their children at home. Ethiopian children are no less intelligent than their peers. They just need our extra support to enable them to become full contributors to Israeli society. NACOEJ programs in Israel such as LIMUDIAH will help remediate these problems—but they require our support.

Beyond education, there are other challenges. Many Ethiopians cannot provide adequate housing for their families, negatively impacting on reaching their full potential. Israeli Jews from Ethiopia feel discrimination. Ethiopians want jobs but many cannot get interviews because of lack of training and mentoring. Reports indicate that 65 to 72% of Ethiopian children live below the poverty line. We are at risk of creating a permanent underclass in Israel. All of these challenges will require NACOEJ to enrich its quality hallmark educational programs and, at the same time, initiate new and aggressive efforts to advocate for Ethiopian Jews. With our success in enabling their Aliyah, let us now assume responsibility to improve the quality of life for Ethiopian Jews in Israel.


Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein, President



A YEAR OF EFFORTS AND ADVOCACY – A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In the 2012/2013 school year, NACOEJ met unexpected problems – and two out of three times, succeeded in solving them.

When the Israeli government announced a cut in the number of olim allowed to make aliyah from Ethiopia – down from a scant 200 a month to 110 a month – NACOEJ rallied American Jews to protest to the Israeli Embassy, local consulates, and Jewish Federations. We also dealt effectively with claims that there was no room in Israeli absorption centers. As a result, the numbers went back up, and more Ethiopian Jews settled into new quarters in southern Israel, undeterred by storms of rockets from Gaza.

We also encouraged other organizations and Knesset members to join us in protesting cessation of full government tuition grants for immigrant college students – a measure which would have denied higher education to virtually all Ethiopian college students and many other olim. (Our AAS grants cover some basic living expenses, but not tuition.) Again, success: the grants are still in place, undiminished, and so is the Student Authority that administers them.

Tragically, we haven't yet succeeded in bringing more Ethiopian children into our all-important Limudiah after-school classes, despite our great results and dramatically increasing demand from schools and municipalities for the program. To prevent a shocking 50% of Ethiopian children from continuing to fail in elementary schools nationwide, when at least 80% of those in Limudiah succeed – and even excel – we will need to double and redouble our efforts to raise the funds necessary to add more programs.


Barbara Ribakove Gordon, Founder and Executive Director



LIMUDIAH INTENSIVE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM FOR ETHIOPIAN-ISRAELI CHILDREN



The Urgent Need for Limudiah Programs

In Israel, 72% of Ethiopian immigrant children live below the poverty line. Half of all Ethiopian-Israeli elementary school children end the school year below grade level (this percentage increases in higher grades). In stark contrast to this alarming figure, at least 75% of our children in NACOEJ Limudiah programs reach class level or higher.

What the Limudiah Programs Do

The Limudiah works with young students in grades 1-6, providing them with 10 weekly hours of academic assistance in reading, mathematics, study skills, and homework assistance plus enrichment in English, computers, arts and crafts, music, Israeli culture, and holiday celebrations. Limudiah teachers are trained to be highly sensitive to the cultural and familial issues, as well as poverty and hunger that challenge many Ethiopian-Israeli children.

Why the Limudiah Programs Work

The Limudiah programs combine many distinctive elements that ensure early success for Ethiopian-Israeli students:

- Begin in first grade
- Work in the children's schools in close cooperation with home room teachers
- Ensure small grade-level groups
- Hire the best professional and creative teachers
- Begin with a nourishing hot lunch
- Provide individualized curricula and study materials



2012-2013

Limudiah Programs

- 676 students
- 15 schools
- 9 communities:
Bnay Ayish, Gan Yavne, Jerusalem, Kiryat Ekron, Lod, Ness Ziona, Ramla, Rishon LeZion and Rehovot

Celebrating 20 Years of Change

Our first Limudiah class, in Ramla, opened 20 years ago. At that time, virtually all of our students were immigrants. Now, many are Israeli-born, but still the children of immigrant parents who came to Israel unable to speak Hebrew, without the background necessary to help their children in school, and lacking job



skills translatable into Israeli society.

Our students usually grow up in homes without books and with illiterate parents. So there remains a very large gap to be bridged for many Ethiopian-Israeli children.

Today NACOEJ serves a very diverse student body, from new immigrants and others needing extreme remedial help, to those with the capacity, talent, and skills to reach above grade level, but needing ongoing support to do so.

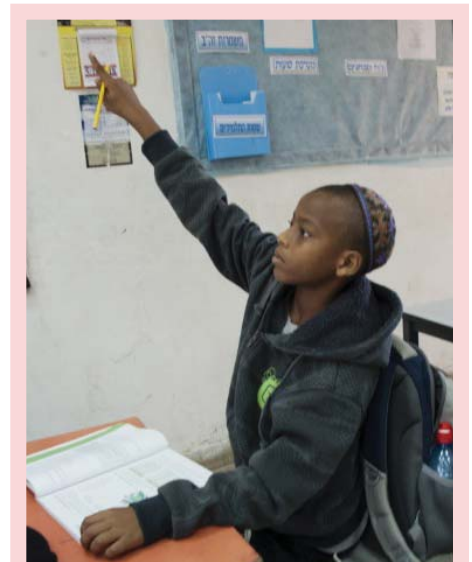
A Question of Percentages

This past year NACOEJ has been involved in the ongoing debate in Israel as to the relative advantages or disadvantages of schools that have high percentages of Ethiopian students.

The Ministry of Education decided to close schools that have a majority of Ethiopian children. But there are not always good alternatives for the children, who may be bussed to schools without special help for them.

At present, we work in schools in which the percentage of Ethiopian-Israeli students ranges from 6% of total student body to 56%. In the past we worked in schools in which over 90% of the student-body was made up of Ethiopian-Israeli students.

Our many years of experience and developed expertise tell us that what matters most for the children's success is not the percentage of Ethiopian-Israeli students in the school, but rather the quality of the teachers and their concern for, and understanding of, their Ethiopian-Israeli students as well as the presence of a Limudiah.



NACOEJ / EDWARD G. VICTOR HIGH SCHOOL SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Why High School Sponsorships are So Important

Since 1997, the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High School Sponsorship Program has made it possible for countless Ethiopian-Israeli teenagers to attend good local high schools, rather than leave home for state-subsidized boarding schools which, more often than not, do not provide high-level education and do not prepare them for college or high-level employment.

While basic high school tuition is covered by the Israeli government, local schools charge additional compulsory fees that are very often beyond the means of Ethiopian immigrant families.

What Sponsorships Mean for the Future

Good high schools enable Ethiopian teens to be well prepared for the Bagrut (matriculation exams) so that they can be accepted at Israeli universities and colleges. So they can go on to become doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, social workers, dentists and more.

More Help is Needed

But each year there are students on our waiting list who do not receive sponsors.

We hope to add many more sponsors to our rolls this year so these young people will receive the support they need to move forward toward successful futures.

In the 2012-2013 School Year...

- 1,105 Ethiopian-Israeli high school students had NACOEJ sponsors (*same as last year*).
- They were spread across 58 schools in 19 cities (*same as last year*).
- 220 sponsors participated in the program (*same as last year*).



What NACOEJ Sponsorships Provide

The NACOEJ sponsorships, provided by generous sponsors, cover a large part of the required high school fees, which include lab fees, educational school trips, compulsory cultural programs and seminars, books, school supplies, and more.

Thanks to this NACOEJ program, many Ethiopian students are able to live at home and study at good local schools. They are able to take advantage of all the educational, cultural, and social activities their schools offer.



NACOEJ / BARNEY & RACHEL LANDAU GOTTSTEIN COLLEGE SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM (AAS)

The Vital Importance of College Sponsorships

When Ethiopian students are accepted into college in Israel, the first three years' tuition is covered by the government. But rent, food, transportation, books, and other necessities are not, and most Ethiopian immigrant families cannot pay for them. So students often drop out of college and take low-level jobs, limiting their ability to achieve financial success in the future.

How College Sponsorships Enable Ethiopian Students to Graduate

Since 1987 the NACOEJ college sponsorship program, lovingly guided for years by the late Vidal Sassoon, and now stewarded by the dedicated Barney and Rachel Landau Gottstein, has enabled Ethiopian Israelis, from impoverished, immigrant homes, to graduate from college. Sponsorships (modest monthly stipends) help cover living costs so students can complete their degrees.

The Results of AAS Sponsorships

First: a new generation of Ethiopian-Israeli college graduates who hold respected jobs as computer scientists, engineers, medical professionals, social workers and more.

Second: a large increase in Ethiopian-Israeli college graduates pursuing advanced degrees. AAS sponsors often continue their support of their students through graduate school.

Third: AAS sponsorships develop warm relationships between students and their sponsors, transcending miles and lasting for years beyond college.

The Future

Despite the large number of college students that NACOEJ AAS sponsors support now, there are many more who need help. To let bright young Ethiopian-Israelis be forced to drop out of college due to financial constraints is a terrible waste of talent Israel needs. We hope to find many more sponsors in the year to come.

In the 2012-2013 School Year...

- 139 AAS sponsors helped 396 students in 5 universities and 30 academic colleges, including 15 nursing schools and 11 engineering schools.
- 145 sponsored students graduated in their fields of study (*up from last year*).
- 50 sponsored students were studying for advanced degrees (*up from last year*).
- 28 sponsored students received Master's degrees (*up from last year*).



Michal's Story

Michal came to Israel with her family in 1991, just before Operation Solomon. One of nine siblings, she's a "NACOEJ student". She was in our Limudiah in the Tachmoni Elementary School in Rehovot and then had a NACOEJ sponsor in high school.

After high school, Michal did national service at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital, assisting a dentist. "I always wanted to pursue higher education...As a dental assistant, I was exposed to health professionals...nursing appealed to me most." Michal has begun nursing school in Kaplan Hospital at Hebrew University. She can succeed academically – but only an AAS sponsorship will enable her to complete her degree.

ADDITIONAL ESSENTIAL PROGRAMS



Barney's Books

This special program, developed and sponsored by the Gottsteins, provides beautiful children's books for AAS students to read to their own children or their young siblings. The program introduces the joy of reading into Ethiopian homes. Children keep the books. Co-sponsors are invited.

Mitzvah Projects

Since 2008, when the program was launched, a variety of Mitzvah Projects have been completed for NACOEJ, raising urgently needed funds for the Limudiah and other programs.

Hebrew Schools, B'nei Mitzvah, teenagers, and adults of all ages work hard on their projects, and the result has been a huge success for participants and those they helped. Please see the NACOEJ website and click on Get Involved and then Mitzvah Projects to see many interesting projects, including that of Sarah Bank whose outstanding efforts sponsored an entire Limudiah class.

Back-to-School Program

This important two-week program helps prevent the loss of educational skills that often occurs over the summer when children are on vacation.

During the long summer months, elementary school children everywhere tend to forget much of what they learned over the school year. If their parents encourage reading and educational experiences at home, or can afford to send them to good camps, much can be salvaged. But Ethiopian children often come from poverty-stricken, illiterate homes. They live in poor neighborhoods with little to offer during the summer.



Robert Croland

For these Ethiopian-Israeli children, who already have many disadvantages to overcome, summer on the streets can be a disaster. Many forget so much of what they learned the previous school year that they increase educational gaps between them and other Israeli children.

In addition to several hours spent studying every day, the Back-to-School Program includes fun activities such as sports, arts, and music, led by professional teachers who creatively develop these subjects for learning crucial language skills.

The summer 2012 Back-to-School Program was generously underwritten by the Croland family and friends, in memory of Robert Croland.



Bar/Bat Mitzvah Twinning Program

Bar/Bat Mitzvah students in the US, UK and Canada develop friendships with, and learn about, their Ethiopian-Israeli twins who are NACOEJ students in Israel.

Ethiopian-Israeli twins enjoy having pen pals in another country. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students also provide needed financial assistance to Ethiopian students' classrooms in Israel.

American twins and their families visiting Israel can meet their Ethiopian-Israeli twins (arrangements are made by our Jerusalem office).

This past summer Ella Musher-Eizenman and her family from Ohio visited the Rambam School in Lod, Israel. Ella twinned with Vered Lakatsau. The two girls met and it was a meaningful experience for both.

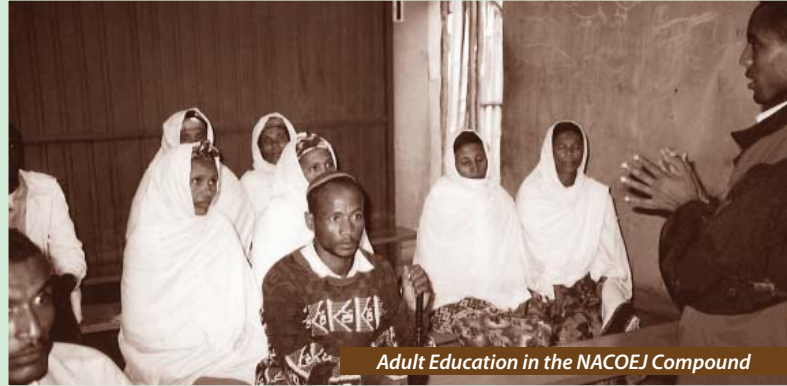
Please see Messages from the President and Executive Director for information about NACOEJ Advocacy Efforts.



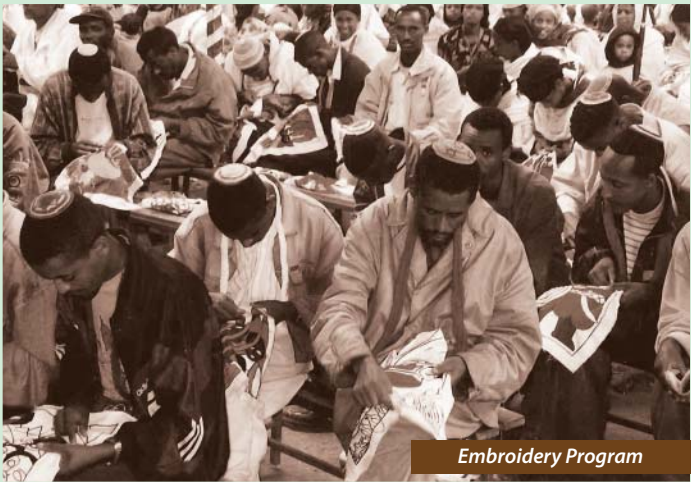
NACOEJ IN ETHIOPIA: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE



A Village Home



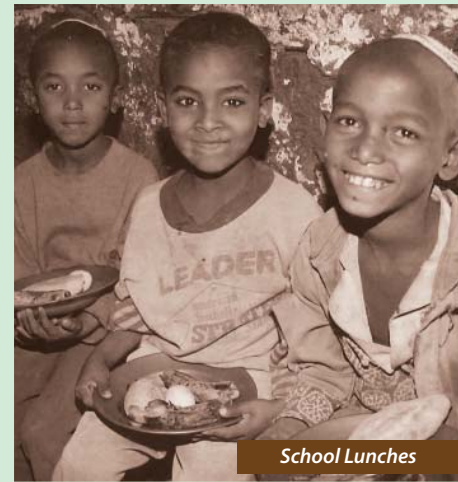
Adult Education in the NACOEJ Compound



Embroidery Program



Providing Eggs to Children in NACOEJ School



School Lunches



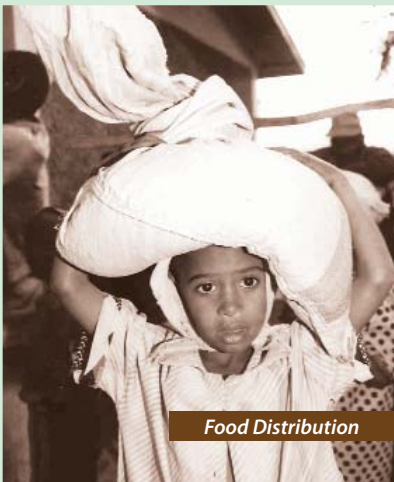
Barbara Giving Tallit to Elderly Man



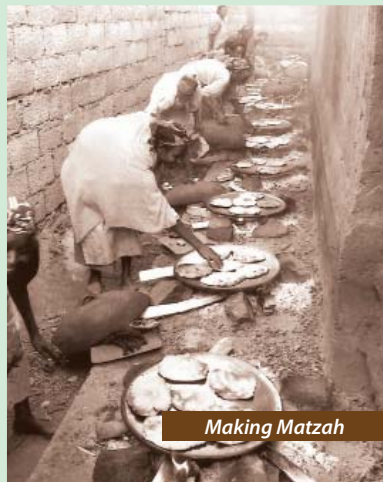
NACOEJ Synagogue



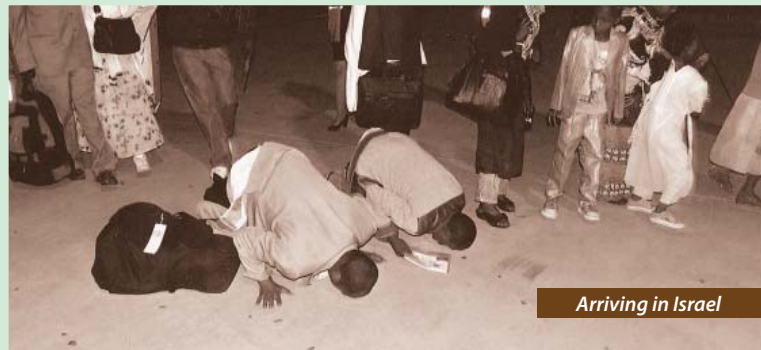
NACOEJ School



Food Distribution



Making Matzah



Arriving in Israel

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY, INC. AND AFFILIATES COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION DECEMBER 31, 2012

	<u>Current Funds</u>		<u>Total</u>
	<u>Unrestricted</u>	<u>Temporarily Restricted</u>	<u>All Funds</u>
<u>ASSETS</u>			
Current assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 420,217	\$ 56,475	\$ 476,692
Investment in marketable securities	14,781	1,071,038	1,085,819
Contributions receivable	27,571	141,884	169,455
Prepaid expenses	10,117		10,117
Loans and exchanges			0
Total current assets	<u>472,686</u>	<u>1,269,397</u>	<u>1,742,083</u>
Furniture and equipment, net of accumulated depreciation of \$52,703	2,706		2,706
Security deposits	<u>12,500</u>		<u>12,500</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 487,892</u>	<u>\$ 1,269,397</u>	<u>\$ 1,757,289</u>
<u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u>			
Current liabilities:			
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 258,703		\$ 258,703
Deferred public support	<u>338,735</u>		<u>338,735</u>
Total liabilities	<u>597,438</u>		<u>597,438</u>
Commitments			
Net assets:			
Unrestricted	(109,546)		(109,546)
Temporarily restricted		1,269,397	1,269,397
Total net assets	<u>(109,546)</u>	<u>1,269,397</u>	<u>1,159,851</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 487,892</u>	<u>\$ 1,269,397</u>	<u>\$ 1,757,289</u>

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

NORTH AMERICAN CONFERENCE ON ETHIOPIAN JEWRY, INC. AND AFFILIATES COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2012

	Current Funds		Total All Funds
	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	
Support and revenue:			
Public support	\$ 867,395	\$ 1,371,062	\$ 2,238,457
Sales (net of cost of goods sold of \$947)	6,763		6,763
Other income	17,924		17,924
Interest income		8,630	8,630
Dividend income	41	15,068	15,109
Net realized and unrealized gain/(loss) on securities	2,543	123,850	126,393
Net assets released from restrictions - satisfaction of program restrictions	1,441,506	(1,441,506)	
Total support and revenue	2,336,172	77,104	2,413,276
Expenses:			
Program services:			
Relief in Ethiopia	14,723		14,723
Assistance in Israel	1,853,525		1,853,525
Information and Education - USA	233,840		233,840
Total program services	2,102,088		2,102,088
Supporting services:			
Management and general	140,160		140,160
Fundraising	328,016		328,016
Total supporting services	468,176		468,176
Total expenses	2,570,264		2,570,264
Change in net assets	(234,092)	77,104	(156,988)
Net assets, beginning of year	124,546	1,192,293	1,316,839
Net assets, end of year	\$ (109,546)	\$ 1,269,397	\$ 1,159,851

DONORS

Thank You to the World's Best Supporters!

Donors large and small, individual and institutional, you've stuck with us through good times and bad, when Ethiopian Jews were in the news – and when they were forgotten by everybody else – you've always been there. You've rallied in times of crisis, gone with us to Ethiopia and Israel, made special friends in the community, rejoiced in successes and refused to be daunted by challenges not yet met. We could not do without a single one of you, even though we don't have room to list everyone. Every gift has made a difference. Bless you all.

\$10,000+

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MISSION STATEMENT

Our Mission

The North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ) is a non-profit organization founded in 1982 with four mandates:

- To help Ethiopian Jews survive in Ethiopia.
- To assist them in reaching Israel.
- To aid in the absorption of Ethiopian Jews into Israeli society.
- To preserve their unique and ancient culture.



