



2020

Degrees OF Success

The NACOEJ/Barney & Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program (AAS)



The Best Ambassadors!

As we all know, this is such a different world we are living in today. We're so proud of what our students have been able to achieve even during the Covid-19 crisis.

None of this would be possible without your ongoing commitment to their success. Thank you. Without you, many would not be able to complete their degrees. You have a great share in their successes.

Have news to share about your own student/s?

Call Karen Gens, our U.S. Director of High School and College Sponsorship Programs at 212-233-5200, ext. 230, or email: education@nacoiej.org.

And please pass on our material to family and friends who may want to help an Ethiopian-Israeli college student. Call or email if you need more copies of Degrees. You're the best ambassadors for these young adults. Thank you.

The 2019/2020 School Year has Been Like No Other in History...



In Israel, our Ethiopian college students - just as all students in Israel and everywhere around the world - went from their classrooms to online learning.

The coronavirus changed the world as we knew it.

Some Ethiopian-Israeli families have computers and internet access, but many don't. So, it has been a challenge for our students.



This is our 13th year bringing you Degrees, but this year is so different. Because the schools have been closed for so long, and our students have been deeply impacted, we do not have the success stories and photos we usually have.



But we want you to know how deeply grateful our students are for your sponsorships. They would not be able to stay in college without your essential support, even in lock-down.

We hope that as research progresses on a vaccine for Covid-19, sooner, rather than later, our students will be back in the classrooms with your sponsorships enabling them to make the most of their learning experiences.



We hope you will tell your friends and family about this important program and encourage them to become sponsors as well.

Most importantly, we pray that you and your loved ones stay safe and healthy during this challenging time. With best wishes, *Karen Gens*

AAS Sponsors = The Keys to Success

Since 1987, the NACOEJ/Barney & Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program (AAS) (originally named for Vidal Sassoon) has given thousands of Ethiopian-Israeli college students the financial support needed so they can complete their degrees.

The Israeli government covers tuition, but students must pay for living expenses like rent, food, transport, textbooks and more. Most of their families can't help. Too often students must drop out of school and take low-paying, unskilled jobs to help their families. Your sponsorship helps your student stay in school, earn a degree, enter a profession, and break out of poverty. You're making a wonderful, lifetime investment in their futures.



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The Coronavirus Changed Their World

The coronavirus has changed the world in so many ways. Here are some letters from students to their sponsors telling them how they are coping with this new reality.

From: Eden Malesa
To: My Sponsors

We are all in such a strange situation, with the coronavirus, but I still would love to open my letter with a big thank you.

I don't know how this situation has affected you, and I hope it didn't, but if it did - I want to thank you again from the bottom of my heart for still supporting us.

We, the students, are still studying from afar with the Zoom application that I am sure you have heard of. It's kind of nice, I still can't get over the idea that I can take a shower between lessons, lol.

It's interesting to see where it will lead us...maybe we won't go back to university even though the corona will be gone and Amen it will be gone soon...

How are you? How has the situation affected you? I hope you are fine and that you are not very bored or worried. I hope to hear from you soon! **Eden Malesa**

From: Aviva Likhaunt
To: My Sponsor

Hi. First, how are you? How are you handling the "Corona Crisis?" I really hope you're not alone, and that you have friends and family looking after you. Don't stay by yourself.

May G'd help you as you help others.

Right now, in Israel, there is a lockdown, and we practically can't leave the house. We study online courses from home. The upside of the situation is that we get to discover what's really important in life - family and interpersonal communications.

I wanted to tell you that I was very moved by your warm words in your letter, and that you brought a smile to my face.

G'd willing, this period will pass without too much loss of life. I'm empowering you from afar, via a warm hug.

Blessing, **Aviva Likhaunt**

From: Danyo Chana
To: My Sponsors

How are you? How has the Coronavirus era affected you? I hope you are well.

The first semester passed successfully, and the exam season passed very well—thank G'd.

In light of the current crisis, the second semester began with remote study.

In Israel, as in most countries, there has been a quarantine. The demographic most affected has been the elderly, for which a rehabilitation center was set up in my neighborhood - with help from the Office of Welfare. We purchase and deliver the elderly their groceries, and for cases in which they cannot afford groceries, the center takes on the expense as well.

Despite all of the difficulties and challenges, I have observed a lot of unity and support within the Jewish People - and that motivates me and gives me hope.

I wish you health and good tidings, **Danyo Chana**

From: Yerus Asres
To: My Sponsor

Hello, I hope you feel good and are staying safe during this time.

The corona virus has changed my life so much. Usually I am a very friendly person with a lot of friends around me, so it is quite difficult for me.

I live alone, so I feel a bit lonely at times. All my classes became online, and I was even fired from work.

But despite all the changes, I remain optimistic and have a lot of video chats with friends and family.

I hope you feel good and take care of yourself. I wish you a lot of health, and hope we get back to our lives very soon...**Yerus Asres**



Alan, of blessed memory, and Jane with some of their students.

I so appreciated Alan and I had a very hard time hearing about his passing...

Alan and Jane Cornell have sponsored countless college students in the NACOEJ AAS Sponsorship Program. Sadly, Alan passed away not too long ago. Here are two condolence letters sent to Jane by two of their students. In them you will see how much sponsors mean to their students.

Dear Jane,

From the depths of the heart, and with great sorrow for the death of your husband Alan. In my acquaintance with you over the years, I see how good you are and an amazing couple. I wish you would never know grief again, I so appreciated Alan and I had a very hard time hearing about his passing.

Although I strengthen from afar, my heart is with you. Comforting you and wishing you again you will never know sorrow.

Alan was a person who is a role model, a person who contributes to and awakens others. He has left so good values in the world, and that is why I know he is in a good place right now.

I would like to hear how you are.

Lilach Belayneh

Hello Jane,

How are you? Hope you are doing fine in this crazy corona days. In Israel, the corona is still here, everything has changed so much.

We study almost everything online...I don't know if you remember that I am a nursing student at the Hebrew University at Jerusalem.

During this last month I completed my second internship in the oncology department at Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital. This week we start the test period, I hope to pass all the exams the first time.

Dear Jane, it is hard to believe that we almost got to the end of this year. So many things happened. **I am sure there is a great emptiness left by Alan's passing, but I am certain that the strength of the love that you and your family share for each other and for Alan will get you through this time.**

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for what you are doing, you and Alan have given me support, and thanks to you I could focus on my studies without worrying about anything.

Thank you so much for that! Jane, I will always remember your kindness, you are in my thoughts... I wish I could give you back in the future. Wishing you and your family all the best. Take care.

Yours truly,
Tigist Avera

Introducing Oreet Schreiber-Shata...

Oreet Schreiber-Shata has taken the reins of the college sponsorship program as well as the high school sponsorship program at the Israel end.

We welcome Oreet who jumped right into the position only to find herself – as all of us – with the schools closing due to Covid-19. Oreet's work has been wonderful and we look forward to our partnership with her going forward.

Just one example: Last winter she conceived of and coordinated the highly successful AAS event attended by current and former students that honored the memory of sponsor, Barney Gottstein, of blessed memory.

Oreet has come to NACOEJ with advanced degrees from Bar-Ilan University and the Open University in Israel as well and has a great deal of experience working with young people.





“Your Mother’s Help is a Lifelong Lesson...”

Tamar Wase attends the Jerusalem College of Technology. She was sponsored by Alma Elias who passed away recently. Below is the progression of Tamar’s story as she applied for a sponsorship, wrote to her sponsor, and then sent a letter of condolence to the family. How sponsorships deeply impact students and sponsors is often in a very personal way!

Tamar's application for a sponsorship:

My name is Tamar Wase and I am in my second year at the Bioinformatics Department of the Tal Institute, a branch of the Jerusalem Institute of Technology.

I was born in Israel. My family came here in 1991, in Operation Solomon. My extended family had come prior, via Sudan, though some were lost on the way.

In Ethiopia, my family lived in strict accordance with Jewish practices and suffered extensively at the hands of the non-Jews in the area.

My father passed away when I was a baby. Though she raised us alone, my mother is my role model. In hard times she encourages me to have Faith in G’d.

After high school, I did a year of community service and then began in the pre-med program. My goal is to complete this degree with honors, G’d willing. I want to make my mother happy and proud. I would be honored if you would assist me as I continue down this path.

Tamar's letter to her sponsor, Alma Elias:

Hello, My name is Tamar Wase. My family immigrated from Ethiopia in 1991.

This year I start my third year in the degree Bioinformatica at Jerusalem College of Technology (JCT). I was so happy to receive your assistance; thank you for your help and support. It is a huge help for me.

I am on the pre-medical track and after completing my degree, I will start medical studies in a 4-year program. My family supports me in education and my mother taught me to invest and persevere. My learning is important for her.

I thank you for your sponsorship that allows me to concentrate on studying without worrying about the finances. I appreciate this help. It is heart-warming to know there are Jews like you in the world who care for and support their sisters and brothers in Israel.

With great appreciation, *Tamar Wase*

Tamar's letter of condolence to her sponsor’s family:

Dear Elias family,

First of all, I’m so sorry for your loss. I want to say that your mother was an amazing woman and I enjoyed talking to her in our letters. It made me so happy to think that there are such good people with big hearts.

It warms my heart that there are Jews in the world who care about other Jews. I thank G’d that I had the honor to know your mother.

Your mother’s help is a lifelong lesson, opening your heart and passing on the good. It helped me this year. For that I thank her with all my heart!

Elias family, I bless you that G’d will strengthen you and enable you to continue to do good in the world because you are very good people.

With great appreciation, *Tamar*

Just the Facts

2019-2020 School Year

- **79** AAS sponsors helped support **287** students in **8** universities, **28** colleges, and **5** nursing schools. **28** additional students were sponsored together by **2** donors and **2** Israeli foundations = a total of **315** AAS students altogether.
- **27** sponsored students graduated during the first semester. **83** graduated during the second semester this summer.
- **45** sponsored students are working on advanced degrees, **42** on second degrees and **3** on third degrees.
- **2** sponsored students graduated with advanced degrees during the first semester and **11** graduated this summer (**12** finished their MA and **1** finished her Phd).

38 Years and Counting...

Since 1982, NACOEJ has provided humanitarian and educational aid to the Ethiopian-Jewish community. NACOEJ is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.