



## **UPDATE #1**

The team arrived safely and after a rendezvous with Brian from Uganda (a Children of Grace beneficiary) we caught a quick overnight rest at a hotel near the airport, then boarded our short flight to Hawassa. We will stay in a Hotel in Hawassa as we travel by bus each day to Sintaro. Day 1, however we are resting in Hawassa. The drive from the small airport in Hawassa around the lake was a beautiful introduction to the scenery in this area- round grass huts with small farms, a herd of cattle watering themselves at the side of the lake, lovely lake views. The new road was much appreciated!

After getting settled at the hotel we visited the St. Gabriel Ethiopian Orthodox Church. While there a wedding procession passed by in cars with the wedding party hanging out the windows, honking and celebrating. We clapped and they seemed amused by these "firenges" (foreigners). We then walked through a market- blankets strewn on the ground covered with all types of local produce- tomatoes, ginger, potatoes, cabbage, carrots, large baskets full of green coffee beans (this area is the cradle of coffee!) and basket platters full of colorful spices. A true farmers market. After a much needed rest at the hotel, we took a walk along Lake Hawassa on our way to a dinner spot alongside the lake. Huge storklike birds met us along the path, fishermen in woven boats in the grassy waters at the edge of the lake catching tilapia, many small lakeside cafes with locals enjoying the sunset. We had a good Italian dinner (the Italians occupied Ethiopia for 6 years in the 1930's and thankfully, left their legacy of good food!) and headed home to the hotel for an early-to-bed.

All are excited to visit Sintaro for church tomorrow!

Your Sintaro Team

## UPDATE #2



(I, Deana, am sending these updates on behalf of our team currently in Sintaro, Ethiopia)

### **Dear Sintaro Family,**

What a way to kick off the week! We had such an incredible first day, when we arrived to the village we split up into three groups and visited three different churches. We were all welcomed so warmly and truly felt God so strongly when the church choir sang. Gary, Pattie and Rachel were able to see God's true healing when a woman stood up with her small child and proclaimed that God does heal. She went on to say that her child was very ill last week and she thought he was close to death. She asked God that if He would heal her baby that she would proclaim His name to her church. Hallelujah!

The whole team met back up at the school and we were welcomed with TWO huge banners saying "Welcome our guests from CPC"! We were also quite thrilled with the changes that the school grounds have had, new paintings on the classroom walls, new painted fencing and new tables and chairs for the first graders. Hope School is under a new management and his name is Elias. We can already tell he will be a huge blessing for the school.

After our delicious lunch we split up again and visited three sponsored children's homes. Pattie and Skyler both had a wonderful visit with each of their children and both families were very committed to education. Jan also met with her sponsored son and had a special treat in meeting the father.

We are so thrilled with how this week has kicked off and would love the continuation of prayers! Please pray for the success of the English camp we are starting tomorrow and that our team would be nothing short of a blessing.

Rachel Rodrigue (Team Member)







## UPDATE #3



**Kids watching "Joshua and the Big Wall"**

(I wish I was there but I, Deana, am simply sending updates on behalf of team currently in Sintaro. Hope you are enjoying the brief updates and photos. Thanks for the partnership!)

### **Dear Sintaro Family,**

New week and a new idea for an english camp! Jan, Kacie and Pattie had put together a wonderful lesson plan for the 4th and 5th graders before we arrived. Today we jumped right in and we were blown away at how intelligent these children are. They are so enthusiastic about learning and crave to know more English.

Skyler and Pattie had a sweet surprise as they walked into the classroom. They were greeted by a welcome song and were so moved by the children singing their little hearts out. Right before lunchtime we showed the children a Bible story video of Joshua and The Big Wall. They were captivated by it, so we will definitely be continuing with that throughout the week.

During lunch the team and The Hope School staff had a wonderful conversation on what we could improve on in our english lessons. They were offering many suggestions to really challenge the children. We loved that they were helping us.

Joy and Rachel had a wonderful home visit with their sponsored daughters. Joy had an

excellent conversation with the family and we so blessed that their daughter was attending school. They also expressed that they were disappointed when the adult classes ceased, they would love the opportunity to learn how to read and write. Rachel's sponsored daughter is excelling in school and looks so incredibly healthy. One thing that the whole team found very exciting was the mother of Rachel's sponsored child actually gave birth in the health post rather than at home. She stated that she experienced a quicker healing process and was far more healthier then other mothers who birthed at home. Very exciting about the health post!

Please continue with prayers. Pray that we are successful with our English camp and that the children leave everyday knowing more english. Also pray for health and safety of the team.

Blessings

The Sintaro Team

Author: Rachel Rodrigue

***Sponsor letters being read to the kids! Thank you CPC Child Sponsors!!***





*Home visits and walks around Sintaro*





**Church a few days ago. Isn't this great!**



**Kids at one of the well access points**





## UPDATE #4



### **Dear Sintaro Family,**

Everyday keeps getting better and better. We kicked off our day with a flat tire but thankfully we were stopped at a gas station! Praise Jesus! After a quick tire change we were off to the village. We made it there in record time and jumped right in to our english teaching. We played a Bible story video and they were so mesmerized by it. We then had them answer questions about what they learned from the video and to draw a picture. We were all impressed by the students reading today, they are so receptive and excited to learn english and it appears to be every students favorite subject!

While the ladies were in the classroom Gary Taggart and Mike Park had a men's/elders meeting. They expressed interest sending a couple men to have proper training to become a pastor. The team found that so amazing because that is one of our goals for spiritual growth for the village.

Each day the children grow more and more comfortable with our presence. We each have a very large group of children around us at lunchtime. After lunch we finished up 1st grade and K2 sponsor letters and were so happy at how excited they were about getting a letter from their sponsor!

Rachel Rodrigue (Team Member)



## Hope School photos









**Lunchtime!**



***Lunch with the teachers and staff***



***Additional photos with the kids and school***







**Gary Taggart and Mike Park men's/elders meeting**



**Laura organizing!**







## UPDATE #5



Taking this photo is Brian Mboni. He's Ugandan, a "Children of Grace" sponsored graduate (Children of Grace is another Mission Partner of CPC)! Love that he has joined our team in Ethiopia.

**Dear Sintaro Family,**

We are feeling more and more confident in what we have to accomplish each day. We started our day in the classroom and really are quite pleased with how well the students are doing with the english lessons. We had the students read us a paragraph of a story and they all did wonderfully.

We had a PTA meeting and all of the parents were so grateful for the school and the sponsors. One father shared that he is so impressed with how well his fourth grader is doing that **he actually tutors his older siblings from the government school.** Another father shared something that brought tears to everyone's eyes. **He said that if the school and water well were not there the children would not survive. What a powerful testimony to the bigger picture!** Other good news is that the government committed to putting in next year's budget the land costs for a field!

We continued to read the sponsored letters to the 4th and KG1's today. **Skyler asked a 4th grader if he could read his letter to her and he did it without a problem!** We are so thrilled that so many of the older children can read english. Everyone had the opportunity to read

their sponsored letter to their child and that is something we all will hold on to for the rest of our lives.

Some of the team visited the health center in the nearby town and the center expressed a great need for 15 medical beds. We found out through the home visits that most women in Sintaro give birth at home in their huts without assistance. This made us quite uneasy. The beds would benefit the wider region and be provided by Rotary International but we need further review of this idea.

Kristen, Mike, Fasil (translator) and a Sintaro teacher had quite the adventure today. They went to a home visit that was quite a ways away, to be exact 3 miles of straight downhill. Unfortunately the bus could not take them due to the steep grade. After their wonderful home visit, they were making their way back to the school and realized they could not get back up the hill. So they decided to make their way to the nearest town and have the bus pick them up. Well the walk was longer then expected and then decided to hitch-hike to the nearest town. Mike called this long treacherous walk, Mount KilaSintaro. Now that's something they will never forget!

Tomorrow is our second to last day in the village and we still have a full list of things to do! So please pray for patience and continue your prayers for health and wellness for the team! Much appreciated!

The Sintaro Team  
Rachel Rodrigue



## UPDATE #6



***What a privilege it is to pray with every single child! They are so loved and precious.***

### **Dear Sintaro Family,**

What a special day! Our last day of English camp and the students are feeling much more comfortable with English and eager to practice conversation. The fifth grade students were able to read their own letters in English!

Brian has spent quite a bit of time with the school nurse, Dawit, seeing sick children, providing training and supplying him with adequate medications.

Laura and Joy met with some women of the village and were encouraged to hear one woman is providing education to other women about harmful traditional practices that are common here. They also have home gardens growing cabbage, beans, and other vegetables and when Joy shared about her home garden they felt an instant connection to her. They are also very grateful for the education their children are receiving. They asked about their dear friend, Kindri, and were relieved to hear she is improving.

Gary and Mike stayed back in Hawassa today and they were able to visit Shiloh College where we hope to send the church elders in the village for bible training. They were very impressed!

The highlight of the day was the "teacher appreciation" dinner held at a lovely local hotel. Our new project manager, Elias, gave an inspiring talk (he is such an answer to our prayers!) We showered the teachers with our gratitude and the gift of a windbreaker. It was a very sweet time of fellowship and encouragement- two of our core goals of this trip! Tomorrow is our last day in the village. It will be hard to say, "keerunee" (goodbye).

Thank you for your continued prayers! We have felt their impact!

Your Sintaro Team

## UPDATE #7



**(The team will be landing back at SFO sometime this evening, March 3rd)**

### **Dear Sintaro Family,**

Yesterday we began our last journey to Sintaro Village. We still had a little bit to do (sponsor letters and photos) but we knew that saying a proper goodbye was at the top of our list. After we finished with what we needed to do we went around to each classroom and said how much we loved the children and how much fun we had with them this week. The thing that really got us was when we entered the 5th grade and started our goodbyes a good half of the class was in tears. At that moment every reservation we had about not connecting or impacting the children flew out the window. What a privilege it is to love and know them. The whole school came out of the classrooms and was waving goodbye. We were all in tears and the bus ride was a very quiet one.

Gary, Laura, Mike and Jan stayed in Hawassa to meet with our new Project Manager, Elias, and new school Principal, Menitsinot, to discuss the future of our project. They were incredibly encouraged by the vision of these two men and



their practical and detailed plan for the betterment of the school and community. Elias is a very experienced and inspirational leader. We can see he has already won the respect of teachers and staff and cares deeply that the children receive the best education and Christian nurture possible.

It has been a truly incredible week and although leaving is a sweet sorrow, more than ever we know we are leaving the children in very good hands.

We deeply appreciate your prayers that have clearly impacted our week.

In our faithful God,

Your Sintaro Team







