

Back to the Future in Ethiopia

Remember meeting Ashagaree Teka, a college student we introduced to you in last year's "Degrees of Success"?

He had overcome a difficult past as an immigrant child to become a championship runner and an Israel Defense Forces sports trainer for soldiers before becoming an AAS student at the famous Wingate College, working toward a degree in sports.

Since then, an organization called Hatzvi (Gazelle), that

encourages promising young Ethiopians in sports, especially running, sent Ashagaree back to Ethiopia for a month of training in challenging high altitudes.

Ashagaree came back feeling changed by the visit to his past and what he saw as Ethiopia's future.

Comparing the Ethiopia of today to his childhood memories, he was "amazed" at how much some parts of

Ethiopia had developed – and very impressed by what the experience of high altitude running in Ethiopia could mean to his own Israeli future. "High altitude training," he wrote to his sponsors, the multi-sponsor Kaiserman* family of Philadelphia, "improves red blood cell counts, which improves running performance."

Ashagaree now plans to use his improved skills to bring

him closer to realizing his dream: returning to his Israeli home town, Netivot, and establishing a school to train the children of his community in competitive running.

May they all have the pleasure of returning to Ethiopia as Israeli champions!

**Many NACOEJ sponsorships were established by the late, much-loved former NACOEJ president and frequent traveler to Ethiopia, Ken Kaiserman.*



Ashagaree in Israel



Ashagaree in Ethiopia



2013 Degrees of Success

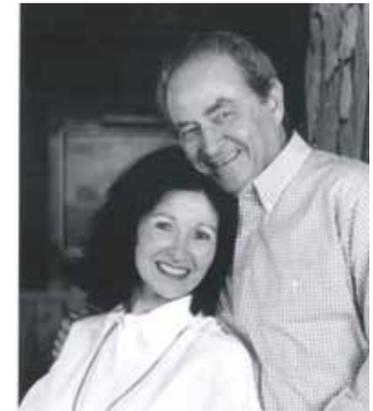
The NACOEJ/Barney and Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program



We are So Proud to Announce New Leadership at AAS

After the death of our beloved Vidal Sassoon, who lovingly guided the NACOEJ Adopt-A-Student Program that bore his name through two decades, we needed another sponsor to lead our oldest educational program in Israel into the decades ahead.

The immediate choice in all our minds was not one, but two sponsors: Barney and Rachel Gottstein, already the sponsors of more than 100 AAS students a year, the originators of Barney's Books as part of the AAS program, the sponsors of the NACOEJ Limudiah Literacy Program — and two of the most caring and committed people we have ever known.



Barney and Rachel Gottstein

The Gottsteins' students receive a personal answer from Rachel to the letters they write — a phone call from Barney if a student's world seems to be crashing — an ever-renewed supply of beautiful children's books to take home to their own children or younger siblings. These generous gestures endear the Gottsteins to their students and all of us at NACOEJ.



Rachel Gottstein with AAS Student and Baby

We had only one question. After all they've already done and were continuing to do, would these two gracious and loving people also agree to formal leadership of the entire AAS program now?

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You Can Be an Ambassador

We are pleased to bring you the sixth issue of Degrees of Success, a newsletter exclusively for you, our deeply-appreciated AAS sponsors.

We are all very proud of our students and the accomplishments they have achieved with the invaluable help of your sponsorships. Without you, many of them would never have been able to complete their degrees. You can feel very good about your role in their success.

If you have news that you would like to share about your student/s, please call Karen Gens, our new Coordinator of High School and College Sponsorship Programs at 212-233-5200, ext. 230 or email her at Education@nacoej.org.

And please pass on our information to your family and friends who you think might be interested in helping deserving Ethiopian college students in Israel. You are an ambassador for these young men and women and your endorsement will go a long way. Thank you so much.

"We are So Proud to Announce..." continued from cover

To our great joy, they said "Yes!" So it is with pride and pleasure that we announce that our AAS Program will now be

known as the NACOEJ/Barney and Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program.

We know that Vidal, of blessed memory, would be so pleased that his program and his students have been passed into such good hands. Thank you,

Rachel and Barney — together may we add more thousands of Ethiopian-Israeli college graduates to the State of Israel all of us love.

Just the Facts

In the 2012-2013 school year...

- 139 AAS sponsorships helped support 396 students in 5 universities and 30 academic colleges, including 15 nursing schools and 11 engineering schools
- 145 sponsored students finished their coursework and graduated in their fields of study.
- 50 sponsored students were studying for advanced degrees.
- 28 sponsored students received Masters degrees.

North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry

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Since 1982, the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ) has provided humanitarian and educational aid to the Ethiopian-Jewish community in Ethiopia and Israel. NACOEJ is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

A Journey from Sponsor to Volunteer to Staff...



Karen Gens

In 1997, when Karen Gens heard Barbara Ribakove Gordon speak at her Hadassah meeting, she felt an instant kinship with Ethiopian Jews. Since then she's been

a sponsor of NACOEJ high school and college students.

Today, we're happy to announce that Karen is the new Coordinator of both our high school and college sponsorship programs.

The most recent student that Karen has personally sponsored is Rivka (Ricki) Goshu whom she sponsored in high school. They kept in touch and after Ricki completed her army service, Karen became her AAS sponsor at Bar-Ilan University!



Ricki Goshu

At the end of 2009 Karen left her job, and her journey took her in a new direction. While looking for a new position, Karen contacted NACOEJ to ask about volunteering. Our

answer was "Yes!" In 2010, she became a volunteer, working with Judy Dick, who then headed the sponsorship programs.

Recently, when Judy took a new position elsewhere, Karen took over as our Coordinator. She's thrilled. We're thrilled. Not all sponsors become NACOEJ staff members. But sponsoring students as Karen has — and you have — can lead to long-lasting bonds that enrich lives on both sides of the Atlantic.

Introducing Yehudit Abramson

Yehudit Abramson is the Israel Coordinator of the NACOEJ/Barney and Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program (AAS). Yehudit was visiting Haifa University with Leah Barkai, Israel Coordinator of the NACOEJ/Edward G. Victor High

School Sponsorship Program, when this photo of Yehudit and an AAS student was taken.

They were there to distribute children's books through the Barney's Books Program created by the Gottsteins. The program provides children's

books for our AAS students to take home to their own children or to young siblings to read and enjoy together.

This wonderful program brings the joy of reading and sharing books with young children who may have their first

experiences with the written word as a result. The books remain with the children after they receive them.



From High School to College with NACOEJ Sponsors



While bringing Barney's Books to Bar-Ilan University, Yehudit Abramson met Tsyona Taganya, who had a NACOEJ sponsor in high school and now has another sponsor through AAS while she attends law school.

Tsyona has very fond memories

of her high school sponsor who sponsored her for several years and stayed in touch with her following high school. Tsyona did a year of volunteer service in the Scouts movement. Then, in the army, she became an officer and team commander

in a communications and engineering unit.

She's now in her second year of law school and doing very well. NACOEJ sponsors have been with her all the way, ensuring that Tsyona can fulfill her great potential.

From Their Letters...

There is so much we can learn about the importance and joy of sponsoring Ethiopian-Israeli college students from the letters they write to their sponsors. Here are just a few examples:

New Message

From: Nursing School Student Almaz Ababa

To: Elinor Crandall



"Because I am studying nursing, I have been sent to different hospitals to gain experience. I was at Rambam Hospital in Haifa...in the urology department. I wore a white uniform like a real nurse...from that moment it was clear that this is the profession I want to practice.

"I would like to thank you again for your sponsorship. For me it is a lot. Thanks to you and others with big hearts, I am succeeding in realizing my dream of becoming a nurse. I don't take your support for granted. It is greatly appreciated...I send you a big hug and wish you much health, happiness, love and an undying smile."

New Message

From: University Student Shoshana Gete

To: Gil and Harriet Rosen



"I hope that you are well. I want to share a bit of what has happened to me since my last letter...I want to tell you about my volunteer project at university. Over the past few months, we taught classes at different schools around Israel...We taught one class on Ethiopian culture in a multicultural school. We used a creative method called 'constructing a dilemma'. We gave the children Ethiopian coffee called buna and while sipping it, discussed various dilemmas like, was there room to celebrate holidays marked by only certain communities in Israel within the wider Israeli context?

"Working with classes with and without Ethiopian-Israeli students was amazing. For the Ethiopian students, there was important added value when they saw university students from our community. This gave them a feeling of 'yes, I can'.

"Many thanks for your support!"

New Message

From: Education Major Ilana Raskay

To: David and Aviva Rubin



"Thank you very much for your letter. It is great to receive a reply and to know a little more about you. Thank you!

"A few weeks ago, we finished the last semester of my degree...I found a new job ahead of graduation. I will start working as a counselor for at-risk 10-year-olds. The school is near Jerusalem and is called Jerusalem Mountain Boarding School.

"I have also just registered for a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education Policy and Management.

"Thank you again for everything! I really appreciate your commitment...you made things a lot easier for me. I hope this won't be our last letter. "

New Message

From: College Student Yenenesh Kasa

To: Barbara Stern



"First of all, I want to wish you well and thank you from my family after they learned of your sponsorship.

"Secondly, I want to thank you personally for your support. I really appreciate it. It is very important for me and helps a lot. As a second year student of early childhood education at Oranim Educational College who lives in the dorms, the scholarship is very important.

"It's nice to know that there are people like you who think about students in my situation. I am moved by your warmth and love and desire to help young people like me advance."