



2019 Annual Report



Mission Statement

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 help preserve their unique and ancient culture.



From the President and the Executive Director

If you look into a child's eyes, you will often see both their needs and desires. When we look into the eyes of an Ethiopian-Jewish child, we see hunger. If the child is in Ethiopia, it is primarily a hunger for nutritious food. If the child is already in Israel, it is often a hunger for knowledge. One has a desire for the nutrition of food. The other has the desire to learn.

Jews who are stranded in Ethiopia live in deplorable conditions and many go without the necessary food to maintain good health. It is painful to watch children who are fed in our Kaytana (day camp) program divide the meager lunch we are able to provide (a boiled potato, a hard-boiled egg, a piece of fruit and a roll) so that they will have something to eat for dinner. They are grateful for what they get, but they need more.

Ethiopian Jews who have been blessed with the opportunity to live in Israel are often challenged in learning a new language and culture. Many children lack the basic educational tools of their peers who were born in Israel. They hunger for knowledge so that they can reach their God-given potential and become fully contributing members of Israeli society. They are bright and committed, but sorely lack the background and support to reach their full potential.

NACOEJ's mission is to help eradicate both hungers. With your help, we have been contributing to the feeding of children of all ages. Our assistance in providing extra nutrients to nursing mothers is improving the health of their children. Children who have been diagnosed as "malnourished" are receiving supplementary food. This is all possible because you support us!

In Israel, our Limudiah program for elementary children is developing new strategies to enhance the education of our students. After a successful pilot program funded by the Forster Foundation in which students were given iPads to use, the Foundation committed to expand the program to include 100 students this year. With your continued and renewed financial support, we are committed to innovate in order to enrich each child's learning.

NACOEJ joins the Ethiopian Jewish community in thanking you for your support this year. May we be blessed to continue to make a difference!



Rabbi Jerome M. Epstein
President



Barbara Ribakove
Founder and Executive Director

Jerome M. Epstein Barbara Ribakove

NACOEJ/ Limudiah Intensive Education for Ethiopian-Israeli School Children

The Limudiah, which takes place during the school day or after school, provides 10 hours a week of assistance in reading, math, and study skills to Ethiopian-Israeli children in grades 1-6.

The program:

- Begins in first grade so children achieve early academic success.
- Works in the same schools the children attend, so our teachers can work closely with the homeroom teachers.
- Maintains small grade-level groups, ideally of no more than eight students per teacher.
- Hires skilled teachers who are sensitive to cultural and familial issues, as well as to the poverty that challenges many Ethiopian-Israeli children.
- Starts each after-school session with a nourishing hot lunch, crucial for children from impoverished homes.
- Tailors approaches and materials to meet the individual needs of students.



2018-2019 Limudiah Programs:

- 409 students
- 11 schools
- 4 communities

Bat Yam

50 students

Ben Gurion School: 11 (grades 1-2)
Harel School: 29 (grades 2-5)
Yitzhak Sadeh School: 10 (grades 1-2)

Kiryat Ekron

34 students

Ohel Meir School: 34 (grades 1-4)

Lod

208 students

HaMeiri School: 58 (grades 1-3, 5)
HaMa'apilim School: 37 (grades 2-5)
Levi Eshkol School: 40 (grades 1-4)
Rambam School: 73 (grades 1-4)

Rishon Lezion

117 students

Sinai School: 17 (grades 1, 2, 5)
Yeshurun School: 40 (grades 1-5)
Zevulun School: 60 (grades 1-5)

The NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program

High School Sponsorships = Educational Excursions, Enrichment Programs & More...

Since 1997, the NACOEJ High School Sponsorship Program has changed the lives of thousands of Ethiopian-Israeli teens. It is the bridge that enables them to go on from high school to college.

Basic high school tuition is covered by the government, but Israeli schools charge additional fees which many Ethiopian families cannot afford. Sponsorships allow students to go on important educational school trips, have extra study hours, attend special programs, and be able to take advantage of all the school's educational opportunities.

As many students say, a sponsorship lets them be "...just like the other kids". Sponsorships give these teens self-confidence and an education that's key to getting into, and succeeding in, college. And this enables them to go on to successful futures. ■

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

AAS Sponsors = The Keys to Success

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

The Israeli government usually covers tuition, but students must pay for living expenses including rent, food, transport, textbooks and more.

Most of their families can't help. Students must often drop out of school and take low-paying, unskilled jobs to help their families. This program helps students stay in school, earn a degree, enter a profession, and help her/his family break out of poverty. Sponsorships are a wonderful, lifetime investment. ■



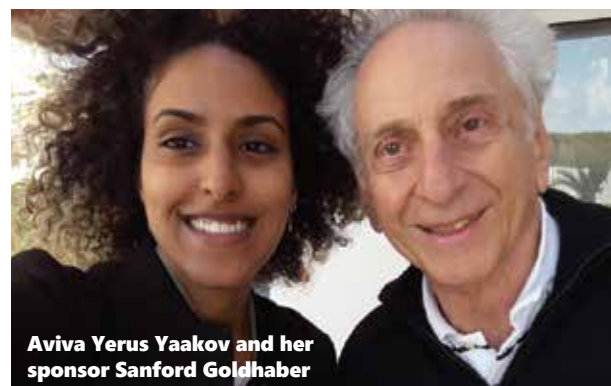
Chen Belai and her sponsor Bernice Boltax

Just the Facts

In the 2018-2019 School Year...

- **170** sponsors participated in the High School program
- **870** students were sponsored
- **51** schools in **15** Israeli cities participated
- **161** of our students graduated

Hundreds of students still need sponsors



Aviva Yerus Yaakov and her sponsor Sanford Goldhaber

Just the Facts

In the 2018-2019 School Year...

- **93** AAS sponsors helped support **344** students in **5** universities, **37** colleges, and **15** nursing schools
- **27** sponsored students graduated in the first semester; **147** in the second semester.
- **42** sponsored students are working on second degrees; **2** on third degrees.
- **6** sponsored students graduated with advanced degrees in the first semester and **21** will graduate soon.



Update from Ethiopia on the Past Year

At the moment, sadly, nothing is happening with the aliyah from Ethiopia to Israel. Only 600 Ethiopian Jews were allowed to come into Israel so far in 2019. Working in close partnership with our sister organization, Struggle to Save Ethiopian Jews (SSEJ), we are funding feeding programs for the neediest remaining Jews.

Participation in the Kaytana, the summer camp in Gondar and Addis Ababa, has increased substantially and was very successful this past summer. The camp provides several weeks of games, Hebrew, and learning, staffed by volunteers from Israel. NACOEJ funds the meals.

In 2019, 2100 children were registered in Kaytana. Between 1500 and 1550 participated in Gondar in the morning program, with 350-400 older children participating in the afternoon. In Addis Ababa, where fewer Jews live, 120 children attended.

Meals for clinically malnourished children under age five are provided twice a day in Gondar and have increased by 25%, with average daily attendance at 340. In addition, another 80 hungry children, siblings of children in the feeding program, also receive some food.

About 100 pregnant and nursing mothers are attending the feeding program, double the number from last year, when only the pregnant women were included. All of these children and mothers were dangerously malnourished until these NACOEJ-funded meals were started.

There is a constant influx of more children as the level of poverty and hunger increases in these destitute Jewish families.

The children's feeding programs include Jewish education. The pregnant and nursing mothers receive instruction in health and hygiene. There are prayer services and classes for hundreds of adults at various times during the day.

There have been no fatalities among children in our feeding program – even from malaria - this year. Compare this with a general death rate of 5.7% in Ethiopia for young children.

Looking ahead, SSEJ is just starting after-school education for Jewish children in another area of Gondar, but has no budget for modest lunches. Will we be able to help? ■

Statement of Financial Position and Activities

COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION: DECEMBER 31, 2018

	Current Funds		Total All Funds
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 1,726,552	\$ 454,148	\$ 2,180,700
Contributions receivable	30,219	54,721	84,940
Prepaid expenses	47,648		47,648
Investments	2,578	1,015,957	1,018,535
Furniture and equipment, net	0		0
Security deposits	15,553		15,553
Total assets	<u>\$ 1,822,550</u>	<u>\$ 1,524,826</u>	<u>\$ 3,347,376</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS			
Liabilities:			
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 161,589		\$ 161,589
Deferred public support	445,575		445,575
Total liabilities	<u>607,164</u>		<u>607,164</u>
Net assets:			
Without donor restrictions	1,215,386		1,215,386
With donor restrictions		1,524,826	1,524,826
Total net assets	<u>1,215,386</u>	<u>1,524,826</u>	<u>2,740,212</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 1,822,550</u>	<u>\$ 1,524,826</u>	<u>\$ 3,347,376</u>

COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES: YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2018

	Current Funds		Total All Funds
	Without Donor Restrictions	With Donor Restrictions	
Revenues and Other Support:			
Public support	\$ 2,285,991	\$ 1,298,189	\$ 3,584,180
Sales (net of cost of goods sold of \$397)	6,195		6,195
Other income	7,389		7,389
Interest and dividend income	1,961	19,422	21,383
Net assets released from restrictions	1,678,725	(1,678,725)	
Total revenues and other support	<u>3,980,261</u>	<u>(361,114)</u>	<u>3,619,147</u>
Expenses:			
Program services:			
Relief in Ethiopia	86,473		86,473
Assistance in Israel	1,526,521		1,526,521
Information and Education - USA	203,164		203,164
Total program services	<u>1,816,158</u>		<u>1,816,158</u>
Supporting services:			
Management and general	174,352		174,352
Fundraising	272,841		272,841
Total supporting services	<u>447,193</u>		<u>447,193</u>
Total expenses	<u>2,263,351</u>		<u>2,263,351</u>
Change in net assets from operations	<u>1,716,910</u>	<u>(361,114)</u>	<u>1,355,796</u>
Nonoperating Activities			
Investment return, net	(841)	6,491	5,650
Total nonoperating activities	<u>(841)</u>	<u>6,491</u>	<u>5,650</u>
Change in net assets	1,716,069	(354,623)	1,361,446
Net assets, beginning of year	(500,683)	1,879,449	1,378,766
Net assets, end of year	<u>\$ 1,215,386</u>	<u>\$ 1,524,826</u>	<u>\$ 2,740,212</u>



▲ Rachel and Barney

A Tribute to a Very Special Donor

Barney Gottstein

On October 21, 2018, NACOEJ lost a very dear friend, Barney Gottstein, z'l. He was a philanthropist whose generosity for Ethiopian Jews was outstanding. But it was his generosity of spirit, his deep involvement, his kindness of heart and his outreach to those in need that made Barney so very special.

Let me tell you a bit about this good man.

Many years ago, we opened an envelope in the NACOEJ office that held a check for a startling sum.

Evelyn Deitchman, a beloved volunteer who ran our college sponsorship program at the U.S. end, read the note that came with it. It said, "I want to adopt 50 college students."

After a moment of shock, Evelyn phoned Barney in Alaska and said, "Mr. Gottstein, this is a very generous gift, but let me suggest you adopt 15 students...this check can cover them all for several years."

Barney's response was, "No, I want 50 students. There will be another check next year."

That was the beginning.

Barney's wife Rachel, his full partner in life and spirit, began writing individual letters to each student. The number increased every year (now over 100) and Rachel still writes to each one. Sometimes Barney would phone a student who had become discouraged and considered dropping out of school. His personal empathy and encouragement kept them in school.

After the death of Vidal Sassoon, the original sponsor of our Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program, the Gottsteins took it on. They also sponsored the Literacy Program in our Limudiah classes.

One day Barney called me. He'd learned that Ethiopian-Israeli families could not afford books for their little children. "I want to provide those books, through NACOEJ," he said. To this day, Barney's Books funds beautiful children's books for the college students he and Rachel sponsor, to take home to read to their little siblings – books the children keep as their own.

For years, Barney and Rachel came to Israel to meet their students and have festive dinners with them. On their way to Israel, when they stopped in New York, we sometimes had dinner together.

In between, we kept in touch, until I got the call I'd been dreading, knowing that Barney's health was failing. He had passed away. I flew to Alaska to say goodbye to one of the kindest men I've ever been privileged to know.

At the graveside, Rachel asked if I wanted to put a traditional shovel of earth on the lowered casket as family and friends do. I did so on behalf of all of their students.

An Alaska newspaper called Barney a great businessman who helped Alaska grow. Everything Barney touched, he helped to grow and thrive. He will be in many hearts forever.

May his memory be for a blessing. ■ *Barbara*

Donors

To our 2018 donors: even though we do not have space to name all of you in this report, please know that each and every one of you is in our hearts and we are so grateful.

\$10,000+

Anonymous (4)	Estate of Beatrice Gindea	Susanna Levin	Elise Pottick
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\$5,000-\$9,999

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We gratefully acknowledge the Isaac and Rose Feiner Fund, established by Samuel Fenner in 1999 for the benefit of the Ethiopian-Jewish community.

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\$1,000-\$2,499

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Bayside Jewish Center

Bayside Jewish Center Congregation sold their building and, as part of their legacy, funded the Kiryat Ekron Ohel Meir Limudiah program for two years. In June 2018, a plaque commemorating the donation was erected at a formal ceremony which included students, teachers, city council members, the mayor of Kiryat Ekron, and others. We want to express our gratitude for their generous support.



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2019 **Annual Report**



**NACOEJ: Providing
Critical Education,
Aid, and Advocacy for
Ethiopian Jews**



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