



2019 Degrees of Success

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



The Best Ambassadors!

We're delighted to bring you the 12th issue of "Degrees of Success".

We're proud of our students' achievements.

They're made possible because you've chosen to support these deserving young people.

Without you, many could not 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@nacoelj.org. We'd love to hear your stories.

And please pass our material to family and friends who may want to help an Ethiopian-Israeli college student. (Let us know if you want more copies of Degrees.)

You're the best ambassadors for these young adults. Your endorsement makes a huge difference! Thank you.

Our Talented Graduates!

So many of our AAS graduates have gone on to brilliant careers. In this issue of Degrees, we want to introduce you to two of them. Because it is sponsors like you who've helped them reach for the stars!

"...excellent scholarship." A Very Important Book

Shelly Engedaw-Wonde, a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Social Work and Social Welfare at Hebrew University, (she's graduating this year) who is sponsored in the NACOEJ AAS program by multi-sponsors, David and Aviva Rubin, has written a very important book, "Resilience in Immigration", about the Ethiopian-Israeli experience.

She sent a copy to her sponsors, and we want to share their glowing words with you:



Shelly...Thank you very much for sending me your recent book - a truly wonderful achievement for which I congratulate you and wish you Yasher Koach! It is very interesting to understand the experience of the Ethiopian-Jewish community in Israel intertwined with the actual journey from Ethiopia to Israel. Thank you as well for your most kind inscription. It has been our great honor and privilege to work with NACOEJ and the Ethiopian-Jewish community in Israel for the past several years.

I look forward to continuing to make my way through your book and its excellent scholarship. I wish you continued success in all your undertakings.

Kol tuv, David Rubin

Shelly's book has enabled the Israeli public to become more deeply acquainted with the Ethiopian community.

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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. Your sponsorship helps your student stay in school, earn a degree, enter a profession, and help her/his family break out of poverty. You're making a wonderful, lifetime investment.



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“Our Talented Graduates!” CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The book is based on research into the experiences and memories of young Ethiopians who were children during their journey to Israel - what they remember, and how they perceive their integration into Israel, the Ethiopian-Israeli community, absorption policies, and their identities as adults.

Dozens of people were interviewed: students, graduates, business people, blue-collar workers and housewives, men and women equally.

Among other issues, the author investigates the daily lives of Ethiopian Israelis in 2019.

The goal is to illustrate the absorption and integration of these Zionist immigrants who demonstrated strength and courage during their journey to Israel.

This journey came at a high price, with about 4000 Ethiopian-Jewish lives lost.

The book also deals with the question of who is a Jew in Israel and who decides who is a Jew.

This book should help the Israeli public become better acquainted with the complexity of the Ethiopian community and the challenges it faces in Israel.

This is a momentous achievement.

First Male Ethiopian to Become a Judge in Israel

Bialin Elazar is a newly appointed judge to the Israeli Jerusalem Magistrate's Court.

He is the first male Ethiopian to become a judge (two female Ethiopian judges were appointed two years ago).

Bialin was sponsored in our NACOEJ/Barney & Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program (AAS) from 1999 to 2003. He was studying law at Bar-Ilan University.

His wife, Merav Gedamu, was also an AAS-sponsored student. She now holds a doctorate in biology and works at the Volcanic Institute.

This highly successful Ethiopian-Israeli couple have five children. Their AAS sponsorships along the way helped both of them to achieve their tremendous accomplishments.



Scan this QR code or go to www.nacoej.org/llo1-67 to hear directly the gratitude of several sponsored students.



A Barney's Books event in Hadera. The children clearly love hearing the stories and taking the books home to read over and over again. Here they are holding up their favorite book, "Almaz Walks on the Path of her Childhood", written by Dr. Wuvit Mengistu, who was sponsored in the AAS program by Barney and Rachel Gottstein.

Yehudit Abramson has been the Israel Coordinator of the NACOEJ/Barney & Rachel Landau Gottstein Adopt-A-Student College Sponsorship Program since 1997. As she retires, she shares some thoughts with you who've been part of her life. And we want to share Barbara Ribakove's thoughts on Yehudit's retirement.

From Yehudit Abramson



Yehudit at a Barney's Books event

Dear Sponsors...In 1997, I started my job in NACOEJ.

At first, we had 70 students. Most of them were directed to the field of sociology studies, in order to guide them to be able to give services to the Ethiopian community.

Today, 22 years later, we have over 340 supported students. They choose their own way, their own direction for their individual futures.

We oversee Medical, Engineering, Law, Computer, and Nursing students and others in many additional fields.

I would say this is huge progress. A lot has been accomplished. It wouldn't have happened without your generous donations and your tremendous and reliable support along the way.

It has been a long journey together. I felt your warm intentions and goodwill every time I needed you.

My experience at NACOEJ has been very rewarding. I feel very lucky that I could meet and know some of you.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness and support. I hope this connection you share with NACOEJ continues into the future.

I would like also to thank all NACOEJ's staff members in New York who worked together with me.

Thank You, Yehudit

From Barbara Ribakove

Dear Sponsors,

I first met Yehudit when she became the coordinator of our College Sponsorship Program (AAS) in 1997.

Not only did she administer the program in the Israel office, but every month she traveled to each campus where we had sponsored students. She personally delivered their checks from you, their sponsors. Checks which enabled them to stay in college.

But she gave even more. She was also there to listen to them, to hear their concerns, to celebrate their successes with them. I went with her on one of her visits and saw for myself the delightful relationship she had with the students – they loved her, she loved them.

And there was even more...she gave them her personal cell phone number so they could call her whenever they had questions that could not wait. Or when they needed a listening ear. It was like the relationship many of you sponsors have with your students, but right on site in Israel.

She made sure the students were surrounded by love – from her and from you, their sponsors.

When Yehudit's husband recently retired, she decided that, although she would miss her students dearly, the time had come for her to retire too.

All of us wish Yehudit a well-deserved rest and more time for her husband and family.

Best wishes and thanks to all of you for everything you do for our students, Barbara

Long-time Board member and sponsors, Sandy and Miriam Goldhaber, met with their student, Aviva Yerus Yaakov, in Israel. She's studying law at the prestigious IDC (Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya).

Sandy said: "We spent an enjoyable few hours talking with Aviva in a mix of Hebrew and English. We were very impressed with her. Miriam and I look forward to sponsoring this charming young woman for the next two years."



Just the Facts

2018-2019 School Year

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

“I Always Wanted a Daughter...” A Student and Her Sponsor



Israela

Here are excerpts from AAS Sponsor Joyce Fulps' letter to her student, and her student Israela Kabada's response. But before you read the letters, we want to share Joyce's recent email because it touched our hearts:

This picture is with two of my past students (right) ...I believe in them and what education can do for them. No one can ever take that away from them. All I ever ask from them is that when they can, they help someone else. I am so proud of them. Even with all their struggles, they overcome and succeed. I appreciate them and their families for letting me be a small part of their lives. **I always wanted a daughter and now I have seven!**

- Joyce Fulps



Joyce and two former students

Shalom Israela,

Thank you for your lovely letter. It's so wonderful to begin to get to know you and your family.

I hope to return to Israel next year and get to see you with my other six students...I hope you will not mind if I consider you my daughter.

I am committed to be your sponsor if you decide to continue your studies for advanced degrees... Someone helped me and now it is time for me to pay back by helping others.

I was the first in my family to go to college. I'm so grateful for those who gave me a scholarship, and the opportunities it opened to me.

I graduated from university in 1966 with a BSN, and an MSN in 1970, and an MBA in 1979....all with scholarships.

I served 28 years in the US Army Nurse Corp and achieved the rank of Colonel. I am retired and volunteer with children and animals...

I'm very involved in politics and I have strong opinions. Do you? You can always tell me what you think.

I belong to many organizations...our group, Daughters of Abraham, consisting of Jews, Moslems and Christians...works with immigrant families helping them settle into homes, school, jobs, community, and learning English.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Shalom to you and your family, Joyce Fulps

Hi Joyce,

I had fun reading your letter.

I would love to meet you when you come to Israel. I hope I will improve my English so I will be able to have good and deep conversations with you.

I am happy to be part of the small family that you established. I feel lucky. I hope in the future I will be lucky and have the ability to give to others just as I receive from you today.

I've always wanted to study and be like my sister Sarah. She has a degree in Economics and is my personal role model...I hope I will continue on to even higher degrees. I read your impressive resume...You've done a lot and gone very far.

I'm waiting until I finish my studies to get married to my partner, Chen...He is also a student, studying towards an MA in Organizational Development and Consulting. We like to study together.

I am studying at Emek Yezreel College in the north of Israel. The number of Arab students - Christian and Muslim - here is big.

I have met them and come to know them personally. I do not see any difference between us - there are those I connect to and those that I don't - just like everything else in life.

I think that you do amazing work. If only the world looked different than it does today.

I believe in love and peace.

Thank you, Israela

37 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.