



# Connecting Hearts

## CELEBRATING CANADA DAY

In addition to the monthly birthday celebrations, there was a very special Canada Day party at Tesfa's Shelter this summer. It was a huge hit with the children.

PAGE 2

## TEAM TESFA AWARDS

The Team Tesfa Awards are held annually, and there were two new categories added this year! Shelley was there for the ceremony this summer.

PAGE 3

## NEWS, NEWS, NEWS

Read the latest news from our organization, including an important announcement about a brand-new fundraiser we're launching!

PAGE 10



PAGE 2 | CELEBRATING CANADA DAY



PAGE 6 | FUN & GAMES



PAGE 3 | AWARDS

## A Walk in Their Shoes

PAGE 9 | NEWS, NEWS, NEWS



# DIRECT FROM HARAR: NEWS FROM TESFA'S SHELTER

## UPDATES FROM A SUMMER TRIP TO ETHIOPIA

Welcome back to Connecting Hearts, a quarterly newsletter for Team Tesfa Sponsors!

We're so grateful for your sponsorship. You are truly changing lives by providing all the necessities for the children at the shelter and reminding them that people halfway across the world care about them. We hope this newsletter will help you feel connected and give you a deeper look into life at Tesfa's Shelter.

This issue we have some very special updates!

Shelley visited Tesfa's Shelter this summer and spent time with the 94 children in the Team Tesfa family. We are so excited to share the latest awards, celebrations and milestones reached at the shelter. From school success to taste-testing special Canadian treats, there's lots to report!

Thank you so much for choosing to give so these sweet kids can build better lives.

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# CELEBRATING A NEW HOLIDAY

## CANADA DAY PARTY

The children at Tesfa’s Shelter know about their Canadian friends who support them from thousands of kilometres away - they love learning about our country!

What better tradition to share than a Canada Day celebration?

Shelley brought temporary tattoos, buttons, stickers, and a few treats, including Smarties and Jakeman’s Maple Candy, right from Oxford County! The kids had an absolute blast.



Between the songs, games, new Canada T-Shirts (read more about our Oh Canada Worn with Pride campaign on Page 4!), songs and traditional Canadian burgers and fries, there was laughter heard throughout the shelter all day long.

What a special celebration. It may not have been July 1, but it was the best Canada Day party ever.

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# 3As: Awards, Accomplishments & Accolades

## TEAM TESFA AWARDS

Once a year, Tesfa and the children at the shelter choose the most deserving candidates in categories such as Best Behaviour, Best Effort in School, Volunteer Service, Top Male and Female Athlete, and many more. Two new awards were introduced this year for volunteerism and Hero of the Year.

Shelley and Tesfa presented the awards and then enjoyed watching the children have special treats including cake, candies, and fruit. The celebration went until well after dark with a dance party!



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## OH CANADA: WORN WITH PRIDE

For Canada Day 2023, we launched a campaign to gift each child at Tesfa’s Shelter their own Canada T-shirt. Oh Canada . . . Worn with Pride was a HUGE success!

- The goal: **94 T-shirts**
- The cost: **\$1,410**
- The end result: **\$3,030**

The response was so amazing that every child received their own Canada T-shirt as well as one other piece of clothing. The children who needed more clothing received additional items.

Each shirt came with a tag that included a photo of the person who donated it. It was such a touching and personal way to share our gratitude for this country with the children.



## REPORT CARDS

Shelley was at the shelter when final report cards were issued. School performance, including grades, is very important in Ethiopia.

At the school, many other students had a parent with them to pick-up their final marks. Before long, a group of children from Tesfa’s Shelter found Shelley in the schoolyard. They ran over to chat and give hugs until it was time to pick up their final marks.



Shelley realized then she was family for the children and she was so happy to be there representing all of our sponsors and volunteers who care for these children.

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### TESFA'S TEACHINGS

Earlier this summer, Tesfa was asked to host 46 service providers from many regions and city governments across Ethiopia to learn about the strategy and methods he uses at his shelter in Harar.

What an accomplishment! We are so pleased that others are seeing the incredible example set at Tesfa's Shelter and hoping to emulate it to serve more children with this community-based model of care.

Tesfa said the visitors came to learn from his experiences caring for vulnerable children. The teaching sessions at the shelter were part of development opportunities organized by UNICEF, the World Bank and USAID.



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# HELP FOR NIGUS

## EMERGENCY CARE FUNDED IN A MOMENT OF NEED

Nigus was attacked and badly injured by a hyena two years ago. Local doctors did their best to put him back together, but Nigus was still complaining of facial pain. Tesfa's wife Kal, who is a doctor, investigated specialized surgical teams coming to Ethiopia and found a team of Canadian facial surgeons. They accepted Nigus as a patient in their program! The doctors donated their time and expertise to perform the surgery for free. Our organization paid all other expenses.



Until recently, Nigus had been living with his mother and sister. Then, Tesfa learned his father, who was in the military, had been killed in service. Nigus is now living at the shelter - where he can receive support from a psychologist, Tesfa, and Kal, who can keep a close eye on his physical condition - while seeing his mother regularly. We are waiting to learn more about the costs associated with a donor eye.

This little boy has gone through the unimaginable. He even stopped going to school because he was being teased. But since the children at the shelter have been taking him to the playground, other schoolkids started to see Nigus as one of "Tesfa's children." He is now back at school and being treated much better. Tesfa introduced a new Team Tesfa Award - Hero of the Year - to acknowledge Nigus and all he has been through.

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# FUN & GAMES

## NEW ADDITIONS A BIG HIT

New games, puzzles, balls, sports equipment, skipping ropes, dolls and other fun toys were eagerly embraced by children of all ages at the shelter.

Shelley was able to bring a variety of toys and games donated by our supporters or purchased by our organization.

Don't those smiles just say it all??



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# Friends Ink

## CHECK IN WITH OUR VOLUNTEER WRITING TEAM

Over the summer, Friends Ink - the group of volunteer writers who draft letters to all the children at Tesfa's Shelter - continued sending monthly letters. Our organization decided on this innovative strategy to ensure none of the children at the shelter would feel left out if letters were written to their peers but not to them.

The Friends Ink team shared stories about everything from summer produce and holidays to animals to wildfires to a scone-making business (can you guess who that was?) in their monthly letters. When Shelley was in Ethiopia in July, she was even able to bring and read that month's letter to the children in person (with some translating help, of course)! It was so wonderful to deliver those greetings face to face. The collage of pictures below is an example of images the Friends Ink team sends with its letters.

**READ OUR LETTERS**

Click below for the Friends Ink letters:

[June 2023](#)

[July 2023](#)

[July letter from the children](#)

[August 2023](#)



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# HEAR FROM OUR FOUNDER

## SEEING THE IMPACT OF TEAM TESFA

You've been able to see the absolute joy I experienced while visiting Tesfa's Shelter this summer! I was able to see your sponsored children, as well as all the children at the shelter and, of course, Tesfa. I really felt I was our organization's "Love Ambassador," which was an absolute privilege.

My trips to Ethiopia serve many purposes. It gives us eyes and ears on the ground to ensure the money we send is used for its intended purposes. It allows us to build and strengthen relationships with project partners as well as demonstrate our care and commitment. It's an opportunity to learn more about the needs, realities, and where we can help drive change. This last trip - like all of our trips - checked those boxes!

Not long ago, it occurred to me that many of the children at the shelter would not have living grandparents. I asked Tesfa if it would be appropriate for the children to call me grandma (in Amharic). Tesfa told me they already were calling me Grand Ma :) Talk about a gift!

Each day I was at the shelter, I let the kids know I was giving hugs and cuddles. Many of the children came running. One day, I noticed a 16-year-old was sitting nearby as the younger children got hugs. I didn't want to embarrass him, but I knew there was a chance he wanted his turn. When I motioned to ask if he wanted to come over, he quickly joined. He clearly wanted a cuddle. That really touched my heart. I have seen how loving Tesfa is with the children - how playful, kind and tender - but he is only one person! My hope is to be able to spend more time at the shelter next summer and, in a few years, at least one month each year to play, do crafts and provide lots and lots of cuddles.

I asked three of the older girls, who helped organize the clothing we brought for the children, about the happiest time for them this past year. Two of the girls said it was at their birthday party (you - our sponsors - make it possible to host a monthly birthday party. Almost all of the children have never been celebrated ever in their lives before) and one of the girls said when she started to volunteer. Those answers almost had me in tears.

The children feel a strong connection to Canada and to the people who truly care about them. What you are doing as a sponsor is absolutely life-changing in many ways. You provide the funds to cover all basic needs. Most importantly, the children all know they have a huge group of people who see them, value them and want the best for their futures. You are a gift - a gift that is priceless for the child or children you sponsor. Thank you!!

*- Shelley Green*

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# NEWS, NEWS, NEWS

## JOIN US AT OUR BRAND-NEW FUNDRAISER

We have an important update to share this issue: We are running a new fundraiser called **A Walk in Their Shoes** on Oct. 14.

[CLICK HERE TO JOIN US.](#) Enjoy a lovely fall walk in Southside Park, at your own pace, alone or with friends! The Walk is a great chance to raise money for women and children in Ethiopia. Your participation can help change lives, just as you do through Team Tesfa sponsorship.



PROUDLY PRESENT

# A Walk in Their Shoes

**WHERE:** Southside Park and South Gate Centre, Woodstock

**WHEN:** Oct. 14, 2023, 2 to 4 p.m. (Registration begins at 1 p.m.)

**WHY:** To raise money and change lives in Ethiopia! Fundraise alone or with a team to reach incentive levels such as sponsoring a surgery to correct a prolapsed uterus or sponsoring a child at Tesfa's Shelter for one year.

**ENJOY:** An Ethiopian Marketplace (shopping), an Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony, the "Discover Ethiopia Contest," refreshments, story boards along the walking route, the closing ceremony and knowledge that you have been a part of something meaningful . . . something special.

To learn more, please visit [www.motherswithaheartforethiopia.com/a-walk-in-their-shoes](http://www.motherswithaheartforethiopia.com/a-walk-in-their-shoes).

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# GET IN TOUCH

## QUESTIONS, IDEAS, WANT TO HELP?

If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter, additional Team Tesfa sponsorships or if you are interested in volunteering with us, please reach out!

**Shelley Green, Founder**, can be contacted via email at [shelley@moms4ethiopia.ca](mailto:shelley@moms4ethiopia.ca).

To learn more about our organization, follow along with our stories and successes:



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