



It's all about people!



The African Connection

A quarterly publication of East African Village Outreach

Spring
2026



From the Director's Desk:

Dear friends,
Thank you for coming to celebrate our 20th anniversary. It was wonderful to see you in

person. Some of you drove a long distance for which we are so grateful. Thank you! More on the celebration in our updates below.

Meet Our New Board Member:

We are excited to introduce you to our new board member, Mesaly Neway, who is the granddaughter of Hailu Ibssa. Hailu (Seifu's brother) played a significant role in our Education program in Ethiopia before he went to the Lord.

From a young age, Mesaly Neway has been guided by a deep commitment to service and uplifting others. She holds a master's degree in Clinical Psychology from Pepperdine University and has channeled that training into a career rooted in community impact — first as a Marriage and Family Therapist, and now as Program Manager at BeyGOOD Foundation, the 501(c)3 public charity founded by Beyoncé Knowles-Carter. Over the past two years at BeyGOOD, she has helped oversee the disbursement of



more than \$5 million in grants, cultivated meaningful relationships with grantees, and developed programs rooted in equity and empowerment. Inspired by the legacy and community that shaped her, said “she is honored to volunteer her time and expertise to EAVO”. We are honored to have you, Mesaly.

EAVO Celebrated its 20th Anniversary:

EAVO celebrated its 20th anniversary with over 120 friends and family of EAVO in attendance. Rob Colvin presented our Financial reports followed by activity report right after a delicious Ethiopian



dinner was served. Reflecting on his trip to Ethiopia and telling a few funny stories, Pastor Jack McNary offered honest encouragements to all of us about serving the Lord by helping the vulnerable.

Many supporters of EAVO from both Ethiopian and American Christian communities came to celebrate our anniversary and donated more than \$20,000.





It's all about people!



The African Connection

A quarterly publication of East African Village Outreach

Spring
2026



The event was accompanied by a soothing Ethiopian style piano, played by our good friend Mr. Fesseha Atlaw. Known for his invention of digital Ethiopic scripts, Fesseha is also engaged in helping students in Ethiopia improve their software engineering skills.

Awards were presented by our Board Chair, Dr. Olana Aberra, to a few major contributors during the celebration.



Jim Reese gave it all he had to serve poor communities in Ethiopia and Kenya. He was one of the first four founders of EAVO and travelled to Ethiopia and Kenya many times.



Green coffee was roasted and served in Ethiopian Coffee Ceremony style by Mrs. Betty Aberra, Dr. Olana Aberra's wife.



As a cofounder of EAVO, Lana Reese (top left corner of the picture above) labored with her husband Jim traveling to our project sites and helping people. Many of EAVO's programs were the result of her far-sighted visions. Lana is with the Lord, and accepting a trophy on her behalf is Traci Price, Jim and Lana's daughter.



It's all about people!



The African Connection

A quarterly publication of East African Village Outreach

Spring
2026



Skip and Adele served as board members for over 12 years. They both donated considerable amount and talked about our efforts to many of their friends, including Denny and Judy Smith of Paraklete Foundation.



We are so grateful to Denny and Judy Smith who donated tens of thousands of dollars through their Foundation. Each time we needed to add a classroom here or repair a school there or buy desks for children, they were by our sides. A deep appreciation from all of us and the students they touched with their love. Thank you!

Others recognized for their huge contributions but unable to attend were:



Mary Staples: Mary is one of the four founders of our organization. Mary and her husband, Mike, have been donating to our organization for the entire 20 years. I will

never forget them trusting me and gave me \$4,500 during my 2nd trip to Ethiopia to build a school. Mary has also been sending those 'thank you' letters you, our donors receive for the entire 20 years. It is quite a dedication amplified by her deep affection for the people of Ethiopia and Kenya.

Clayton Lee: A dedicated Rotary Club member, Clayton travels the world helping communities gain access to clean water. He was instrumental in securing more than \$50,000 to support clean water access in Acheber for over 10,000 villagers. He was recognized that evening for his contributions to EAVO. Thank you!





It's all about people!



The African Connection

A quarterly publication of East African Village Outreach

Spring
2026

Latrine Construction Update:

The construction of Edoy Primary school latrine is making progress. There were a few unexpected hiccups due to the war in the Middle East which required additional funding. Our board quickly approved \$4,498 and wired the fund to address the gap. Construction should be completed by mid-June, and we will give you a final update in our summer newsletter. Here is the progress in pictures:

Phase 1: Construct a large hole for storage



Phase 2: Cover the hole with rebar and cement



Phase 3: Build the restrooms.



Board Members:

- Dr. Olana Aberra, Chairman
- Rev. Jack McNary, Secretary
- Rob Colvin, Treasurer
- Mary Staples, Cofounder / Member
- Aberra Damessa, Member
- Mesaly Neway, Assoc. Exec. Director / Member
- Seifu Ibssa, Cofounder, Exec Director / Member

Mail your gifts to:

East African Village Outreach
9688 Ashstone Way
Elk Grove, CA 95624

Donate online at

www.eavo.org

(click **Donate Now** link top right – rectangled in red below, and follow the steps).

