



Visiting Tiruwork in her home after her most recent surgery.

**GRATEFUL FOR LIFE**

*TIRUWORK'S JOURNEY THROUGH SUFFERING*

In April 2010, we met Tiruwork who was extremely ill, with her baby swaddled to her back. She had tuberculosis and was the first person we ever brought to the hospital for treatment. Tiruwork still remembers that day and how this compassionate interaction was just the beginning of many medical and personal supports she would receive in the years to come.

Since entering HFK's Family Empowerment Program in 2013, Tiruwork's personality has shone, inspiring others with her perseverance, hard work, and warmth. Having had no education prior to HFK's program, the step of launching a small business was incredibly intimidating for Tiruwork. However, she rose above the barriers and began selling fries and doughnuts in 2016. Her business quickly became successful and for several years provided much-needed financial stability for her family. Then illness struck...

2018 was the beginning of several years being plagued with bouts of severe back pain and other concerning symptoms that led to numerous hospital visits and eventual surgery to remove a very large tumor. Not long after, in 2020, Tiruwork was diagnosed with a form of cancer that would require yet another operation. Throughout all this, HFK provided nutritional support which doctors noted was instrumental in helping her maintain the strength needed to survive the surgeries.

In May 2022, after more complications, Tiruwork received news that she would require a third surgery. The day before it was scheduled to take place, she came to the HFK office, crying and despondent. Her daughter's graduation photos were being taken that very day and instead of enjoying the beautiful milestone with her, Tiruwork sat riddled with anxiety, wondering if she would live to see her daughter graduate. HFK staff met Tiruwork's fear with tenderness, gathering around to pray for her. Tiruwork recounts that her spirit was lifted by these prayers, and she even felt some hope going into the operation. As she was being prepped at the hospital, she noticed the doctor talking quietly to himself, and asked if he was praying. "Yes," he said, "I'm praying for you - that this will be the last surgery and that you will no longer require chemotherapy." She was deeply touched by his compassion, along with the exceptional care she received from HFK's nurse Marta.

Tiruwork shared that today she is full of gratitude and prays often. She praises God that she now has the opportunity to see her children graduate, attend their weddings, and watch them grow up to have their own families. (Photo Top R: Tiruwork with her daughter Ayisha after her graduation from college.)

**- NO SAFETY NET WHEN ILLNESS STRIKES -**  
*HOW HFK'S HEALTH SERVICES ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE*

When a breadwinner in Korah becomes ill, or has to stop working due to a sick child, life is altered drastically; food becomes scarce, housing threatened, and children's education is halted for a time, if not permanently. HFK's desire is to use prevention wherever possible and intervention as needed to improve health and to reduce the impact of severe illness, homelessness, malnutrition, and family separation.

**HFK HEALTH SERVICES TEAM**



HFK Nurses Hiwot Birhane, Marta Bonkola & Gerry Amanu with Tammy Brandsma MSN, HFK Medical Advisor/ Board of Directors.

To accomplish this, preventative health education is provided regularly to reduce the amount of illness caused by poor hygiene and sanitation, and to equip families with safe and relevant knowledge on their sexual health and family planning. In addition, HFK's medical program provides health screenings to all our families, identifying acute and chronic illness, referring to local health centers as needed, providing follow up care and monitoring,

as well as nutrition support when ill. HFK also purchases basic medical insurance and medication for all our beneficiaries and when medical costs are not covered by insurance, HFK provides access to life-saving treatments, surgeries, and medical interventions. Mental health supports such as psycho-education and counselling are also embedded into our empowerment program, and referrals to intensive counselling or psychiatric care are coordinated for those with severe trauma or mental health challenges.



HFK Mental Health Social Worker Semaet Getaneh has a critical role on our health team.

**EARLY INTERVENTION MAKES A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE**  
*OUR BERTA BREAKFAST KIDS*



In February, our HFK Canada Team helped to dispense annual deworming medication to 400 children in our Berta Breakfast Program. We also weighed and measured each of these kids using the World Health Organization standards. The data gathered helped our medical staff determine how each child is responding to Berta's extra calories and nutrients, and who requires additional intervention. This nutritional supplementation is of central importance for physical, emotional, and cognitive development from infancy through adulthood.

HFK team member, Dr. Trent Loewen reflected on how much his family "looked forward to their morning trips to the Berta compound, helping hand out warm Berta pancakes filled with nutrients for growing bodies as well as helping with the process of weighing, measuring, and administering deworming medicine". He added that "simple early interventions like this make a world of a difference for a child who has been malnourished, impacting not only their growth but their ability to learn".

## MERON'S PROGRESS

HFK DAYCARE



Meron

FIGHTING STIGMA AND BARRIERS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN



The HFK daycare offers nutritious meals throughout the day and nurturing opportunities for social and physical development to 40 children.

There are tragically few places in Ethiopia for children with disabilities to access the supports and resources they require to thrive. Witnessing the devastating impact of this reality compelled HFK to open our daycare to four beautiful children with various developmental and physical disabilities. Culturally, it is still widely assumed in Ethiopia that having a child with disabilities means you are cursed. So along with economic hardship, mothers with special needs children are frequently abandoned by their husbands and communities, leaving them socially isolated with no support. HFK's medical program is now coming alongside several of these families, offering a support group and intensive training for parents by professionals in this field, as well as ongoing medical assessments to monitor their children's progress.

When Meron first entered our daycare at 3 years old, she could barely grasp objects, was unable to stand or walk on her own, and responded only minimally to verbal communication or eye contact. Now, one year later, with the help of our daycare nannies as well as support from physiotherapists and speech therapy, Meron is standing up and moving herself along furniture. She can even take several steps by herself. She responds with a smile to her name being called, and now has the fine motor skills to build duplo and play with the other daycare children. This developmental progress within just one year is remarkable. Knowing her daughter's needs are being met has also changed everything for Werke, Meron's mother. With this huge burden lifted, Werke was free to attend vocational school and she is now working as a nanny in a private school. Werke sees so much hope for herself and her beautiful daughter.

## MEETING WITH THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR TO ETHIOPIA

FEBRUARY TRIP HIGHLIGHT



Behind Basket: Ambassador to Canada (R), Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco (L) with HFK Board

A highlight from our recent trip was meeting Canadian Ambassador Stephane Jobin and being invited to his home where he surprised us with a visit from the Ambassador to the Kingdom of Morocco, Nezha Alaoui M'hamdi. Both ambassadors have been great supporters of HFK and our basket weavers. We were grateful to spend this time with them and share about our work in Ethiopia.



## BRINGING WATER TO KORAH

THE BASILIOS SCHOOL WELL IS COMPLETE!

We are all very excited to see the Abune Basilius School water well up and running, pumping water to 7000 students. In February, many gathered together to celebrate this achievement and the impact it will have on children's health, hygiene and education.

Due to poor sanitation, lack of resources and intermittent city water service, the need for water continues in other areas of Korah. Currently we are trucking water to four HFK compounds and hope to raise additional funds to cover the inflationary costs that occurred during the building of the Basilius well.



HFK Board and Ethiopian Team at the dedication of the water well

# - CAN YOU HELP US MEET THIS YEAR'S NEEDS? -

### SPONSORS NEEDED:

13 FAMILIES STILL NEED SHARED SPONSORSHIP!



### WHAT REMAINS TO BE RAISED IN OUR HEALTH AND NUTRITION RELATED PROGRAMS:

- HEALTH SERVICES PROGRAM \$34,000
- DAY CARE CENTRE \$83,000
- BERTA BREAKFAST PROGRAM \$65,000
- WATER FOR KORAH \$34,000

SPONSORSHIP: Our newest group of women have eagerly stepped into their first year of transformation with HFK's Family Empowerment Program! Would you consider being a part of their journey to self-sufficiency through sponsorship? We strive to create a positive experience with a lasting impact for all, by fostering a personal connection between sponsors and beneficiaries, sharing progress reports, and celebrating successes together. Family Sponsorship starts at \$65/month.

VIEW AVAILABLE SPONSORSHIPS at <https://www.hopeforkorah.org/sponsor> (or use above QR Code)