



January 28th – Celebrating 20 graduates from our Family Empowerment Program.



## SEEING CHANGE TAKE ROOT

— by Eve Pohl

During my recent trip to Ethiopia, it was clear how HFK's three programs work together in a powerful, integrated way. Each program strengthens the others. Visiting families who had joined four months earlier, I was deeply moved to see the hope in their eyes and witness the real change even a few months can make.

One mother I met, Etalem, arrived in Addis Ababa at 14 seeking medical care and had spent much of her life in unsafe, abusive conditions. When she joined HFK with her young son, they were hungry, homeless, and struggling to survive (above left). Despite overwhelming challenges, Etalem was determined to give her son a better future.

Since joining HFK, she has moved into her own home. Etalem was very timid during my visit but thrilled to finally have a place of her own. Often apologizing that speaking with people is so difficult for her, she shared that what she valued most at HFK was being with other women who understand her struggles. She's now building relationships, learning important communication skills and gaining confidence (above right - filled with joy as she looks at a photo we gave her of herself and her son).

Her three-year-old son is in our daycare. Early trauma had made him withdrawn and hesitant to trust others, but with proper care, nutrition, and stimulation, he's now expressing himself, interacting with other children, and making remarkable progress (above - receiving new shoes at the daycare).

I also visited Zenebech, a widow raising four young children who has faced tremendous hardship. After fleeing an arranged marriage and later losing her husband to illness, she was left to provide for her family alone. Her eldest son, Abraham, had to quit school and work at the trash dump to help provide food, but since joining HFK, he has returned to school, catching up through tutoring and even joining the drama club, all the while helping care for his younger siblings. During my time with them, it was clear the family is still deeply grieving the loss of their father, yet beginning to rebuild hope and stability. (Below social worker is translating letter from Zenebech's sponsor.)

Although these home visits can be difficult, they are deeply moving. I see hope taking root and know the life-changing transformation ahead for these families, having witnessed it over and over with our graduates.



## EMPOWERING FAMILIES FOR LASTING CHANGE

At the heart of HFK's work is our Family Empowerment Program, a holistic approach developed over years of working closely with families to break the cycle of extreme poverty. Our three core program areas work together to address the significant challenges our families face, offering practical support, hope, and opportunities for a brighter future.

### Socio-Economic Empowerment Program

HFK's three-year program guides families through stabilization, personal growth, education, training, and income-generating opportunities, ultimately helping them achieve economic self-sufficiency. A key support is our daycare, providing children a safe, nurturing environment, so mothers can fully engage in the program and build the confidence and skills they need to provide for their families.



Recent Trauma Healing Training sessions.

### Education and Youth Empowerment Program

Breaking the cycle of poverty requires long-term investment in the next generation. Our program helps children develop self-reliance, positive relationships, leadership skills, strong social connections and faith in God, while supporting their physical and emotional health. HFK's academic supports, youth clubs, sports programs, and trainings fill gaps that often limit children's ability to learn and reach their full potential.



In February, our nursing team dewormed 488 children.

### Health and Nutrition Services

Good health is essential for families to work, learn, and thrive. HFK provides preventative health education, access to care for acute and chronic illnesses, medication, and nutrition support for those who need it. Through our Berta Breakfast Program, 550 children receive a nutrient-enriched breakfast every morning before school.



At the start of this year, we opened the doors to our new Education and Youth Empowerment Centre, a bright and welcoming space where youth can feel safe, loved, and supported. The larger, better-equipped building includes a wonderful outdoor space, classrooms for each grade in our tutoring program, a music room, art room, computer lab, offices, and even a room perfectly suited for our growing library.

In Korah, students struggle to find a proper place to study. Most families live in crowded, poorly lit, one-room homes, where every activity takes place—making it hard for students to concentrate on homework. Books are hard to come by. A thoughtfully designed library now gives students a dedicated place to study, explore ideas, spark imagination, and grow a love for learning.



Last month, we had the privilege of inaugurating our new library, celebrating with our donors, and adding 1,000 beautiful Ethiopian books to its collection. We are especially grateful to the Rotary Clubs of Addis Ababa West, Ethiopia, and Seattle 4, U.S.A., as well as the Open Hearts Big Dreams Fund, for their vision, partnership, and commitment to investing in the lives of students in Korah.

We are deeply thankful for this beautiful new compound, especially the library. The joy it brings to the children of Korah is already evident. This room is more than just a space; it is an invitation for children to dream, to learn, and to discover new possibilities.

## THE KEY TO EMPOWERMENT

When people think about working with the poor in Korah, they often picture the practical supports we provide: food, housing, medical care, and other material resources. These are essential, helping to stabilize families and meet urgent needs, but they are not what ultimately change lives.

True transformation comes through God, and He works through people. They are the greatest resource He has given HFK; the dedicated staff who walk alongside our families and students every day. This is how lives are truly changed.

Empowerment does not happen by chance. It takes intentional training, guidance, and skillful support, enabling those who have experienced trauma, victimization, or years of living in survival mode to recognize their value, identify their strengths, and uncover the assets they already possess. It is about transforming a poverty mindset, building confidence, and equipping individuals to take meaningful steps toward change—and follow through.



*At our new Education & Youth Empowerment Centre celebrating our new library with HFK staff and members from several Addis Ababa Rotary Clubs.*

Each day, more than 70 HFK staff members stand with the children and families we serve. Across our programs, social workers, counselors, nurses, tutors, and many others invest deeply in people. Building trust and offering intentional and skillful guidance, they help individuals navigate complex challenges, strengthen skills, and develop self-sufficiency while discovering their own resilience and potential.

In February, while in Ethiopia, we had the joy of celebrating our remarkable staff at a special Staff Appreciation Dinner. Everyone came dressed in traditional Ethiopian attire, each department was honored, major accomplishments were shared, food enjoyed, and the evening closed with a beautiful time of worship and shared gratitude. Through the staff's investment in people, children gain confidence, parents grow stronger, and families move toward greater stability and hope. They are the heart of this work—the reason empowerment is possible.

*Staff Appreciation Dinner: HFK Canada with HFK Ethiopia Health & Nutrition Services Team*



## EMPOWER A CHILD. STRENGTHEN A FAMILY. TRANSFORM A COMMUNITY.

Join us in making a difference. Your gift supports education, health, and socio-economic programs that equip families to build skills, grow in confidence, and create lasting change.



**DONATE TODAY**  
and be part of  
the transformation  
in Korah.

