

Dear Friends and Encouragers of Project Emmanuel!

How are all of you doing? Have you gotten back to your everyday routine after the summer holidays? In the meantime, the summer heat is over in Switzerland and a few weeks ago, we were surprised by the first snowfall! In Ethiopia, all of the turbulence has quieted down and there is much to tell. It seems to me that the terms “jumping for joy”, but also “steps of faith”, “great strides” and “jumping into the deep end” describe the many changes and the growth within Project Emmanuel, the project for the disabled, which is now two and a half years old 😊! We wish you lots of fun reading the news below and thank you very much for all of your encouragement and financial support!

NEWS FROM PROJECT EMMANUEL ETHIOPIA

As mentioned in the previous newsletter, Project Emmanuel has been going through great growth processes and changes.

Melese Eyob Heramo, the original founder and bearer of the vision for work with the disabled, himself disabled due to polio, manager of the project, ended his full-time work as a physiotherapist at the SCH hospital at the end of July 2017 and is now the manager of Project Emmanuel, since August 17. He is supported by a local managing board (5 disabled Ethiopian men) and the cadre of the SCH Hospital (Duane Anderson, surgeon, Gary Vanderkooi, accountant), as well as the 40 project workers at Emmanuel!

This step involved lots of discussions and emails back and forth across the ocean, and means a great leap of courage for us all. But it also means great joy and hope that Project Emmanuel can continue to grow and provide hope, encouragement, mobility aids, work and shelter to the disabled in and around Soddo.

Prior to the trip of the Swiss board to Ethiopia in October 2017, the employment terms for Melese as well as salaries need to be clarified. In the meantime, Project Emmanuel is more or less self-supporting, so that a reasonable financial support for Melese is possible from the income.

The very good cooperation between the Soddo Christian Hospital SCH and Project Emmanuel that has been established for some time now is continuing and being expanded. Some months ago, SCH delegated its entire production of orthopedic materials to Project Emmanuel. The disabled workshop in Soddo Town produces crutches, wheelchairs, bicycles and individually designed mobility aids for the disabled in the city and the surrounding areas, but also for patients of the SCH.

In the summer of 2017, a shop for the mobility aids produced by Project Emmanuel was opened on the grounds of the SCH hospital. Emmanuel staff will take orders for the mobility aids, make adjustments to the delivered aids and teach the patients how to walk with and use them. Normally, the mobility aids are sold at prices to cover the costs, and disabled persons without funds can get them free of charge thanks to donations (Benevol Fund).

The building and the infrastructure were set up in the summer (with financial investment from the friends of SCH and Project Emmanuel in Ethiopia). Currently, the interior furnishings are being completed (desk, accounting). The Emmanuel staff also needs to be trained; the accountants of the SCH hospital will carry out the coaching.

A further jump for joy and leap of courage is the construction of the “Emmanuel Center” that began a few weeks ago. For some time now, Melese, the manager of Emmanuel, had received land for

Emmanuel from the city. Because all of the 40 project workers had been able to be accommodated somewhere (mainly on mattresses in the workshops) there had been no acute need for new sleeping areas and emergency shelters. Because Melese had to relinquish his room after leaving his position in the hospital, we decided together to start construction of the “Emmanuel Center”. There will be space there for Melese and his (mostly) three tenants, a further six rooms that will be rented out (income source) and space for emergency shelters for homeless and disabled people from the city streets until they can finance their own accommodations thanks to mobility aids, work and income at Project Emmanuel. In this way, the “Home for the homeless” that I have personally been dreaming of for a long time will hopefully come true soon! And maybe I can put a few bricks in the wall when we travel to Soddo in October—a great jump for joy for me!

Home for the Homeless – Emergency Shelters for the Homeless

Some information on the construction project: The estimate is about \$15,000 and the planned construction time around 2 months. The construction manager is an experienced architect, who has already built buildings for the SCH and is supportive of the work with the disabled at Emmanuel. Aside from hired construction workers, some students from Soddo University have offered their help during semester vacations. The disabled will help as well, insofar as they can manage with their disabilities.

We from Verein Emmanuel will be happy to receive any dedicated financial support for the “Emmanuel Center” and thank you very much in advance. When enough funds come together, we can prepare more rooms for homeless disabled persons, which is a fundamental goal of Emmanuel. However, renting out rooms should provide a significant amount to the services on site, as a refund for the building costs. If you have any questions or thoughts about this, please contact us.

So much about the great steps and changes for Project Emmanuel in Ethiopia. Aside from that, there are a few smaller items to report ☺:

- We were able to replace the stolen motorcycle. Melese is very thankful that this transportation vehicle, which is very important for the entire work for the disabled, is available again! And it even has a rain roof ☺! The motorcycle was adapted for the disabled at a special mechanical workshop in Awassa, ca. 300 km south of Soddo.

- A further baking machine is needed to expand the food production in the women’s workshop, for production of couscous and bread. This should help expand the range of baked goods and make it possible to serve customers in the city.

- The first contributions from the Benevol Fund were sent to the mobility aid workshop in August. The Emmanuel craftsmen can now produce special crutches and wheelchairs for penniless disabled persons. This a main focus of Project Emmanuel and a great joy; it is often the homeless beggars who can—literally—get back on their feet with a mobility aid that is given to them. They can then find work and are able to handle their life. Otherwise, they have to live on the street as beggars because they lack their own money to buy a wheelchair or crutches.

- Last but not least, Melese, the manager of Emmanuel, is setting up another workshop with a tailor’s and leatherworking section.

NEWS FROM VEREIN EMMANUEL SWITZERLAND

The great steps in Soddo meant quite a lot to discuss for the board of Verein Emmanuel Switzerland, as well as emails to the hospital top brass and Melese in Soddo... as well as many leaps into the air as well as leaps of courage. Intensive connections to other Swiss aid projects were sought and cultivated so we could learn from their experiences (carrying out construction projects, hiring staff, setting up job descriptions, solving salary issues wisely). I am very thankful for these valuable encounters and advice.

On the side, preparations are underway to visit the project in October! Bernard Junod (Treasurer of Verein Emmanuel) and I (Rahel Röthlisberger, President) are planning a 10 to 20-day stay at Project Emmanuel/Soddo (Ethiopia). For weeks now, we have been planning and coordinating travel routes, an agenda and meeting dates with Emmanuel. The flight to Addis was booked a long time ago. We have planned visits to the associated disabled workshop of the MISRACH Center/Mission on the Nile in Addis. During my hiking vacation, I also prepared a teaching for the disabled in Soddo, with documentation from three aid projects on topics such as business management, microcredit projects, marketing and bookkeeping, I will try to provide helpful ideas to our friends at Project Emmanuel to help them set up their own professional existence. A few examples of questions that I would like to discuss are: How do I find work that corresponds to a need in the population (demand, market niche)? How can I start up my small business with inexpensive infrastructure at a low cost, then expand it? How do I handle accounting so that there is more in the bank at the end of the month than what was spent on expenses? How can I market my product or services? As I read and summarized the training documents, I found many new insights and I often was surprised at what the economists were focusing on (many of them probably coming from outside of the medical or humanitarian sector)!

I am mainly happy to visit my disabled friends and Emmanuel project members, but also the different sections of the business, such as the workshop, the taxi service, the shop on the SCH hospital grounds, the emergency shelters, the house being constructed and much, much more. I look forward to the exchanges, looking back and looking forward, answering questions, developing visions for the future and consolidating our cooperation.

Thank you all for your compassion, support, the many screwdrivers, ballpoint pens and much more that is piling up in my room for me to take along. My room looks like creative chaos in person! Thanks for carrying the many developments in your hearts and including them in your prayers that Project Emmanuel can continue to give hope and a future perspective and can be a blessing for the disabled. A good friend of mine made a new start professionally at 50 years of age and stated: I went into the air—and it carried me! I would like to experience that in Emmanuel also 😊.

Thank you also for your previous and future financial contributions, which make the work with the disabled at Project Emmanuel possible. We appreciate all of your donations, especially for

- the Emmanuel Center / Home for the homeless
- Benevol Fund
- and: wherever it is needed the most 😊

At this point, I would again like to mention the link to the website: www.Project-emmanuel.ch. For questions and emails: info@Project-emmanuel.ch. And last but not least: Cheese lovers beware! The last of this year's charity cheese was transported by bicycle from Oey to Bern. I will gladly take your orders!

Rahel Röthlisberger

Verein Emmanuel

So, I have now come to the end of all of the news items from the Emmanuel Project and Association and thank you all once more for helping to carry us, good night!

Attachments:

- Flyer
- pay slip