

# THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

For Projects Abroad Ethiopia



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# VOLUNTEER STORY

*A 17 year old High school student from France used her summer break to volunteer in Ethiopia*

“My name is Otilie Morel, I am 17 years old and French. I always wanted to do humanitarian work ever since I was a little girl. When I finally got the chance, I decided to use it by volunteering. I was searching for organizations to volunteer through and my dad suggested that I look at the Projects Abroad website; which I found to be the best. After we got enough information, my friend Alma Galland and I decided to come to Ethiopia and volunteer joining the 2 week special care and community Project.”

Otilie was placed at Selam Children's Village in a group with the other volunteers who were responsible for more than fifty children between the ages of 3 and 15 years old for two weeks. “A typical day would start at 9:00 am and we mostly started off with indoor activities such as drawing pictures and doing arts and crafts with the assistance of staff members. Usually after lunch we engaged in outdoor activities and games. Painting the walls of the children's game room was also part of what we did as a group.”

“Volunteering in a group was so interesting. I made friends from different countries. It was also advantageous because you always have someone to share your ideas and do things with. During my stay I understood that the more you work together, the more effective you will be even in a short period of time.”

Projects Abroad organized a weekend trip to the Rift Valley and other social events for the fully dedicated two weeks special group volunteers. “The weekend trip to Adama was so exciting. I even celebrated my 17th birthday there. Climbing Mount Entoto and the social dinner in the cultural restaurant were also amazing.”

As this was her first time volunteering while traveling, Otilie explains that the project was a life changing experience for her. “Spending time with the children taught me to be more responsible, patient and cooperative.”

“People here in Ethiopia are very friendly and easy to socialize with. My host family was great. They made me feel like I was at home. I learnt how to make the typical Ethiopian foods like ‘Injera’ and also made coffee in the traditional Ethiopian way. I even learnt some basic Amharic (the working language of Ethiopia) which was fun. More than anything, the time I spent with the children at Selam Village was exceptional. I will never forget the cute faces of the little ones and the family spirit I saw in all the children. One can't stay away for long after experiencing such beautiful love; that is why I have decided to come back again next year.”

“I recommend anyone who is interested to come to Ethiopia and volunteer. It is a place which is worthy to spend your time in.”





## 'Buhe' Celebration



Buhe (Ge'ez: ቡዔ) is a holiday in Ethiopia and Eritrea, held on August, the 19th (according to the Gregorian calendar and Nāhase 13 Ethiopian calendar). On this date, the church celebrates the Transfiguration of Jesus on Mount Tabor. People of the neighbourhood tie a bundle of sticks together to make a chibo' and set it on fire while singing songs. The main song is called "Hoya Hoya"; with one singer singing while the others follow in a rhythmic way. This involves young boys singing songs of praise outside of people's homes, in exchange for fresh dough (called buhe).

Volunteers got the chance to celebrate this holiday, which has both religious and cultural implications, with their host families burning Chibo at dusk and eating the fresh dough, buhedabo. Pietro, a volunteer from Switzerland explained that it was such a unique way of celebrating a holiday. "The way all the family gather together surrounding the flames and singing was so exiting, the buhedabo was also very tasty".

Ethiopia is a country of various religions, tribes and cultures, if you come and experience it, you will surely come frequently or maybe even come for good!

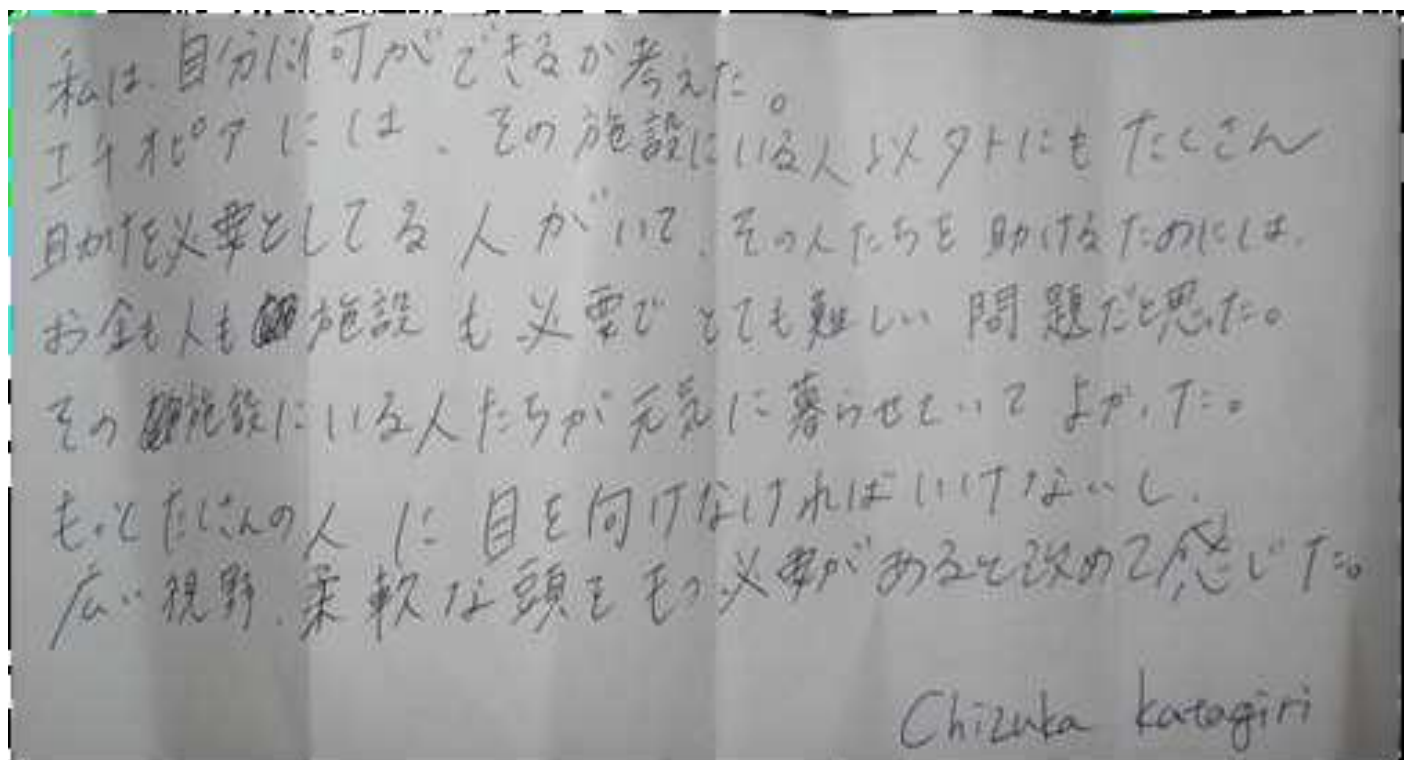


## Mekedonia Humanitarian Association

The Mekedonians Humanitarian Association (MHA) is an indigenous non-governmental, non-profit and organization, founded on 7th January 2010. The purpose of MHA is to support elderly people and people with disabilities, who otherwise have no means of survival, by providing them with shelter, clothing, food, and other basic services. There are about 600 elderly people and mentally disabled people being helped in the organization.

Projects Abroad Ethiopia organized an event for all volunteers to visit and spend time with the elderly as well as with those who have mental disabilities. After spending quality time there, volunteers explained they were so touched by what they saw. "The founder is a wonderful person as is everyone who works there; there should be more organizations working towards this unnoticed community crisis", said Julia, a volunteer from Germany. Chizuka, a volunteer from Japan expressed her reaction in her own mother tongue like this

Projects Abroad Ethiopia is working on organizing such events and other social events to increase volunteers' interaction, which surely will result successful project attainment and exciting experience for volunteers.



## Editor's Note:



Greetings! Welcome to the August newsletter. As the rainy season continues, Projects Abroad volunteers and staff are still on the go with the work and excitement that each day brings. It was a pleasure to have ten new volunteers in Addis Ababa with the rest of the volunteers, though it was sad as we had to say goodbye to some who finished their projects in this month.

I hope you found something that would grab your attention as you go through the newsletter. I would like to thank all volunteers from the past and present for sacrificing your valuable time, money and knowledge to make a difference at our projects. Big thanks to volunteers who have shared their stories and photos with us. We encourage everyone to join us in making the newsletter more interesting and exciting. You are welcome to send your own written articles and pictures. This will help others to understand and learn more contribute, suggest, or comment on, please contact: [-berekettesema@projects-abroad.org](mailto:berekettesema@projects-abroad.org)

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