

**2006 AYC YEAR-IN-REVIEW**  
**Performances, Youth Programs and**  
**New Construction on the Way**

By John McKay, AYC Coordinator

At this time last year the Awassa Youth Campus (AYC) was little more than a pipe dream. We sought to establish a place for youth in Awassa to express, create and participate. Thanks to your support, one year later, AYC is a reality for youth in Awassa. This brief summary will provide a glimpse of both what has happened in the past year and where we are going.

All AYC activities and programs promote a sense of freedom; the freedom to think, create, share, grow and learn. From the past year our efforts have been mainly focused on developing an organizational framework that is grounded in this freedom while also maintaining a safe, encouraging and productive workspace for youth in Awassa.

In addition to providing free activities, such as art, music, dance, theater, gymnastics, aikido, ping-pong, basketball and library services, AYC

also supports community-outreach forums. Outreach forums give youth the opportunity to participate while utilizing their talents to both give back to the community and raise awareness in regards to HIV/AIDS, ecological degradation and other harmful social issues. The foundation of AYC outreach forums is One Love (HIV/AIDS Awareness) Theater (OLT), formerly known as the Debut Nigat Circus.

This year was a breakthrough year for One Love Theater, performing over 25 shows for over 10,000 people! Including a sold-out show at the Ethiopian National Theater and the North Tour, a two-week series of shows bringing One Love and their unique brand of HIV/AIDS awareness messaging across much of Ethiopia (see article on The North Tour for more information). In December 2006, One Love will showcase the community theater extravaganza entitled Our World, an hour-plus theater show in Awassa incorporating original music, dance, gymnastics and theater.

In addition to (OLT) performances, this year's outreach forums also included children's workshops and the first annual AYC art contest/exhibition. Children's workshops are facilitated by AYC youth volunteers and bring music, physical education, art and tutorial education to community schools/organizations during the summer months.

AYC received over 30 original artwork submissions and awarded over 1000 Ethiopian Birr in prizes for the first annual art contest/exhibition. The theme of this year's art contest/exhibition was a "youth perspective on HIV/AIDS in Ethiopia" (artwork will be posted on the website in the near future).

AYC programs also got a boost this year from the numerous volunteers who gave their time and energy. In particular, Mark Walsh stayed with us for three months, laying the foundation for Ethiopia's, and Africa's, first aikido dojo located at AYC. Also, the Dutch performance group ISH joined us for an invaluable 4-day workshop. If you are interested in volunteering with AYC, or ACC, please visit [www.awassachildrensproject.org](http://www.awassachildrensproject.org).

Finally, in 2007 AYC plans to construct the permanent Campus. The proposed facilities include a library, music/art classrooms, a computer lab and an indoor gym/meeting hall. The permanent AYC will be a resource for youth in Awassa for generations to come, we look forward to making this dream a reality. As always thank you for your past, present and future support none of this would be possible without you. Viva la Campust!

AYC's largest outlays included \$8,970\* for AYC employee salaries, \$6,600\* for operating costs associated with OLT and \$4,725\* covering rent and various OLT expenses,

**Collective Efforts Further ACP**  
**Growth, Missions and Programs**

We successfully worked towards minimizing amounts spent on overhead and items other than directly supporting ACC and AYC missions and programs. (N.B. \$2,850 was spent on overhead amounting to 4% of our total expenditures).

While we are proud of our work so far this year, the ACC continues to grow, and help more children. In addition, the AYC's impact on the youth of Awassa and Ethiopia has been astonishing, and it continues to expand as a vital place to help thousands of children. However, there are thousands upon thousands more. Thus, your help to support our children and community outreach programs is still desperately needed for the remainder of 2006 and beyond!

(\*Note: ACC and AYC figures assume an exchange rate of USD 1 = EBIRR 8.65)

**THE ACP BALANCE SHEET**  
**Greater Hope Ahead With More**  
**Hard Work and Your Donations**

By Ed Hussey, Treasurer

We're proud to report, The Awassa Children's Project (ACP), has grown to support two distinct entities, the Awassa Children's Center (ACC) and the Awassa Youth Campus (AYC). Through October 15, 2006, ACP has raised \$34,000 towards our goal of \$60,000. So far this year, through support of ACC and AYC, we have been able to send \$66,028 to further their critical missions and programs.

Specifically, we have provided \$36,728 in support of ACC, to provide food, clothing, education and shelter for 60 wonderful children, and in support of the Green Awassa Atelier. Through September, the biggest outlays of money by ACC included \$10,800\* covering food for the children and their housing costs (including rent). Also, \$9,350\* was allocated for utilities and furniture. Lastly \$4,030\* was stretched to cover educational expenses, tuition, uniforms, tutors, books and materials as well as summer camp and uniforms for the children.



Ed Hussey in Awassa taking a break from the books to accompany the children on a field trip.

The ACP also provided \$29,300 in support of the dynamic and robust growth of AYC programs including One Love (HIV/AIDS Education) Theater (OLT), the growing community library, children's art, gymnastics and Aikido education classes, community outreach and health awareness programs.

**A Very Special Thanks to Our Donors for Making All This Happen!**



**TUKOL VOICE**

**AWASSA CHILDREN'S**  
**PROJECT**  
**HELPING CHILDREN**  
**FIGHTING AIDS**

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**Awassa Children's Project Newsletter**

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**AWASSA CHILDREN'S CENTER**  
**3 YEAR GROWTH PLAN INKED**

**Progress Trumps Problems in 2006**

By Girma Melese, ACC Director



I am pleased to announce that the new Awassa Children's Center (ACC) project agreement for the coming three years (2006-2008) was approved and signed by the Finance and Economic Development Office of the Southern Nation, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) and the Awassa City Administration. As part of its ongoing development, the ACC acquired additional land adjacent to the center from the city of Awassa City to build another home for the children. This makes the total area of the ACC properties nearly 26,000 square feet.

New bylaws for the ACC were approved by and registered with the SNNPR Justice Bureau, as was the name Awassa Children's Center. All property and assets have been transferred to the legal ownership of the now fully registered ACC. Quarterly financial and physical activity reports were also delivered to Government signatory offices and donor organizations.

As its main purpose, the ACC provides basic necessities to 60 children (food, shelter, education, tuition, clothing, counseling, medical care, gymnastics and sports) on an ongoing basis. Continued financial support is granted to six ACC young adults to supplement their education in private colleges and the state university. The summer camp program continued during the school holiday from July through August 2006. To further prepare the ACC students for their future 10 children are receiving computer training and this number will hopefully grow as ACC does.

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**ON THE ROAD WITH THE NORTH TOUR**  
**One Love Theater Goes National With a Smash Hit Summer Show**

By John McKay, AYC Coordinator



Another day, another town as the troupe off loads for the next show.

Two weeks of performing, 14 performers with limitless hopes hitting the road and facing sleep deprivation, endless driving and more driving earned the name, The North Tour for the southern region's One Love (HIV/AIDS Awareness) Theater (OLT) of Awassa. This proved the longest and most meaningful period this troupe has been on the road, marking a professional and creative leap forward for the OLT. A drastic deviation from the norm here in Ethiopia, the OLT journey to the north achieved its mission. The goal? Provide images and sounds that hopefully trigger HIV/AIDS awareness in a moment that could potentially mean life or death. The venues? The streets of Ethiopia.

**Fresh from their performance at**  
**the National Theater in Addis Ababa,**  
**AYC brings HIV/AIDS Awareness to**  
**Northern Ethiopia.**

Kick off date for the tour was 3am, August 12, 2006, a departure time that would, unfortunately, become all too familiar. Over the course of two weeks we visited 12 cities traveling over 6000 kilometers. Note: traveling means 16 individuals and equipment crammed into a mini-bus designed to comfortably seat 10.

The North Tour began on a road to the ancient city of Gondar then crisscrossing to the spellbinding city of Haerer in the East, with a stop in Addis Ababa along the way. In addition to performing in the major cities, One Love also took the show to the smaller roadside towns and villages along the way. In the end, the troupe delivered 10 performances for over 5500 people!

of well over 500 were captivated and silent, with the exception of the occasional jaws dropping and laughter, for the entire drama.

In short, the North Tour provided the rare opportunity for 14 kids to see their country as well as providing entertainment and education for thousands of Ethiopians. It was raw, hard-hitting, radical, fun and accessible HIV/AIDS awareness-theater performed on the streets of Ethiopia. In an age of international aid that usually entails purchasing land cruisers, funding conferences, soliciting experts, and doling out per-diems, the North Tour was truly refreshing, intense and successful. Thanks for making it happen!



One Love Theater sets up in a flash knowing the clock is ticking in the fight against HIV/AIDS.



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## GREEN AWASSA UPDATE The Arts Remain the Best Conduit For Positive Social Change In Ethiopia

By David Schein, ACP Founder



David Schein collaborates with Awassa youth creating a show to save the environment.

This past June, during my sixth trip to Awassa in as many years, I was amazed at the changes. From feeding 35 street kids in a tent in the backyard of a private house in 2001, the Awassa Children's Center (ACC) now provides for 60 children and has completed the building of a vocational training center. The Awassa Youth Campus (AYC), formed last year, has its own compound in the middle of town.

However the effects of overpopulation and poverty in the country have, in the same time period, have taken their toll in the form of deforestation. Nearly all Ethiopians cook with wood and are consuming the trees at an alarming rate. Every day, Ethiopian women scour the countryside for fuel and walk miles with bundles of twigs. Erosion, flooding and drought are major consequences, which in turn increase the environmental degradation and further contribute to the risk of famine.

I saw the creep of deforestation for myself—since I began visiting Awassa, the trees have been vanishing from the hills around the Awassa Children's Center. Thus, the Awassa Children's Project (ACP) jumped at the opportunity to foster a collaboration between the Gund Institute for Ecological Economics at the University of Vermont (UVM), local officials and business people, and key stakeholders from government and the academic sector at the



The show, "Green Awassa," combats deforestation by promoting the use of wood efficient stoves and alternative fuels. Photo by Alison Murphy.

Awassa Children's Center. In June, seven UVM graduate students and three faculty members met with American and African ecologists in an ecological focus group to discuss solutions to deforestation in the Lake Awassa basin as part of the Green Awassa Project. In addition to examining the problem of deforestation, the Green Awassa study group proposed solutions to make Awassa green and more energy efficient. The One Love Theater (OLT) was chosen as the main vector for educating the people of Awassa about the use of sustainable fuels.

While the study group meetings took place, I worked with OLT to create a pilot Green Awassa show to serve as a template for additional shows about sustainable fuels to be developed by OLT on an ongoing basis for the coming years. After seven years of constantly performing and creating shows, the members of the OLT have become proficient, accomplished artists. We worked fast, while having fun, and in four days, we came up with material that we performed in a soccer field for the audience of Gund experts and townsfolk from Awassa.

The show incorporated mime performance by the troupe, and was full of comedy and pathos in a Brechtian tradition. The action was driven by two charcoal sellers as well as two women who staggered under incredible burdens of wood. The climax was when the performers burned down their twig house because they had run out of cooking wood, while they sang, "we can't go on like this, how will we live?" At the end, the charcoal sellers went green, selling competing stove-ones that uses wood more efficiently, and one that uses biogas, a gaseous fuel produced by the fermentation of organic matter. As they tried to outdo each other, they were interrupted by a cow, that barges in to sell dung, competing with the stove sellers.

It was a great beginning. We hope that our Green show will lay the groundwork for a whole campaign of popular education on environmental issues throughout Ethiopia.

While we worked on the show, the environmental expert focus group developed plans to further the Green Awassa Project. A committee was formed in Awassa to coordinate green programs, and this fall, a team of graduate students and faculty at UVM are writing grants to a variety of foundations to implement the ideas generated during the meetings in June, including:

- A grant for the Awassa Children's Center to build and subsidize the purchase of fuel-efficient wood stoves for the people of Awassa
- A grant to convert cow and human waste at the Center to electricity
- A grant to bring qualified college graduates from Awassa to study Public Administration at the University of Vermont
- A grant to fund the Green Awassa Steering Committee, a step toward the formation of a new NGO in Awassa: Green Awassa, Inc.

- An application to the World Bank for carbon credits that will pay for the reforestation of the Lake Awassa basin
- A grant for the OLT to create and deliver shows about sustainable fuels on an ongoing basis.

ACP's German partners have also joined the effort by supporting programs that promote tree planting and stove production. We are incredibly encouraged by the synergy taking place in all of these efforts regarding the environment in Awassa. Through the collaboration with the Gund Institute to energize the Green Awassa movement, we see confirmation that the Arts are a marvelous conduit for positive social change.

Thank you for your support of the Awassa Children's Project that allows us to strive for a Green Awassa and Ethiopia. ♡

## MORE ACC GROWTH...cont. from page 1

A modern vocational workshop has been built and provides apprenticeship preparation in metalworking, woodworking, carpentry, and electronics. Workshop curriculum for formal and informal trainees developed by ACC with approval from the SNNPR Education Bureau offers skill development for employment in professional shops and businesses. One headmaster along with three trained and experienced workshop instructors were placed in the program and equipment and materials were purchased. The Vocational Workshop recruited 26 trainees using relevant criteria designed to produce motivated, successful trade employment candidates. A program and course time schedule was established and the trainees have started manufacturing tables, chairs, shelves and other trade products.

*Your gifts to the Awassa Children's Project are used with fiscal responsibility while promoting an environment of dignity, respect and love.*

The ACC hosted an environmental atelier in Awassa, which was a collaborative effort between the ACC, the Gund Institute at the University of Vermont, and the City of Awassa. The product of the atelier was the Green Awassa Project, an ongoing project of the Gund Institute of Ecological Economics to be implemented in Awassa. Its vision is to create an ecologically sustainable and economically viable community. The ACC participates in community activities to protect the environment by planting trees and to address erosion control. On the hillside of Mount Tabor, ACC planted 4000 eucalyptus and acacia trees, donated by our German partners, to prevent soil erosion on nearly 50,000 square feet of land.

Like any social service organization, ACC faces problems yet to be solved. Our biggest setback in 2006 was the halt of planned construction of multiple children's homes due to severe financial shortages. The center pays 100,000 Birr (\$11,422.00) in annual rent for housing of the children of ACC. The purchase of property and homes for the children would significantly reduce this annual amount and save the lives of more children. We continue to put our greatest efforts forward to address this situation. Creating more homes for the children of Awassa continues to be one of our most important goals in the coming year. ♡



Progress in action as seeds of knowledge are planted in the classrooms thanks to the 3-year plan.

## AIDING CHILDREN FIGHTING AIDS

### A Better Future for Vulnerable Children and Orphans of HIV

By Pual Chaddha, President ACP Board of Directors

Children orphaned by AIDS in Africa continue to desperately need support in the fight against AIDS, and in parts of Ethiopia the need is particularly urgent. According to the 2006 United Nations Report on the global AIDS epidemic, it is estimated that less than 4% of the Ethiopian households caring for AIDS orphans receive free basic external support in caring for the child.

In the immediate sense, these unsupported orphaned children are not getting the basics they need



Atenafu (12 yrs., ACC)

## I LEFT MY HEART IN AWASSA

### As a Volunteer, You Get What You Give

By Alison Lloyd Williams, ACP Volunteer

Arriving in Ethiopia recently as an Awassa Children's Project (ACP) volunteer, my background in drama and traveling theater in no way prepared me for what I experienced first hand. The mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety, not knowing the geography, natural history of the people and country, made it clear to me. Ethiopia was completely unknown to me. The experience proved challenging and moving, exhilarating and exhausting, and one I will never forget.

My interest in volunteering with the ACP was sparked when I first read about the work of the One Love Theater (OLT). I was about to begin a Master's course in Theater and Development and keen to see the work of such an organization first-hand. I was fortunate during my stay in Awassa, that the OLT was finalizing its latest show about HIV/AIDS. Watching rehearsals in the yard of the recently opened Awassa Youth Campus (AYC), the energy and skill of the theater group was amazing.

Beginning with an extended acrobatic warm-up, I witnessed some of the founding members who shaped the style and themes of the performance passing on their experience to the troupe. One of the newest members, Baby, was fearless and positively revelled in being thrown about at dizzying heights as the audience of young locals gaped in appreciation.

A similar reaction from audiences was elicited when the group took a short weekend tour to Arba Minch. The sharp presentation and often humorous performance

Country	GE-81 Support for Children affected by HIV and AIDS					
	2005					
	Percentage of orphans and vulnerable children whose households received free basic external support in caring for the child					
	Rural		Urban		All	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	All	All
Sub-Saharan Africa	-	-	-	-	-	-
Congo	-	2.8	2.5	7.1	5.8	6.4
Ethiopia	2.9	6.4	6.5	10.3	18.1	14.0
Kenya	6.6	6.4	6.5	10.3	18.1	14.0
Lesotho	-	-	-	-	-	25.0
Madagascar	-	-	-	-	-	7.4
Mali	-	-	-	-	-	-
Togo	-	-	-	-	-	9.7
Zambia	-	-	-	-	-	13.4
(N = 8)						(N = 8)

\*Report data is 2005, but data collection can vary from 2003 to 2005  
(-) = No data available at the time of printing

to work through the challenges of day-to-day life. Also, this paucity of aid carries with it the greater threat of exacerbating the AIDS epidemic.

To support a whole society's fight against AIDS we first must ensure that affected children receive a wide spectrum of support: medical care, education, food housing and counseling.

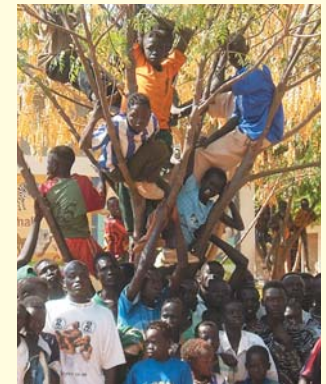
Our commitment is to the future, which means...the children. The Awassa Children's Project (ACP) embodies the phrase "Aiding Children - Fighting AIDS" by housing, educating and caring for approximately 60 children, and growing, orphaned by AIDS. Also, in 2006, ACP has expanded its assistance by opening the doors to the first of its kind: the Awassa Youth Campus, which is focused on HIV/AIDS education and providing educational and sports outlets to vulnerable children in Awassa, Ethiopia.

Through our AIDS education, and the strong work at the Youth Campus we continue to take AIDS education to the general public, through entertaining and engaging theater.

*Over 100 children on our waiting list need your donation to get off the streets and into the ACC*

Increasingly, we depend on a network of volunteers to help us provide support and create opportunities for the children of our project. We need assistance at every level. If you have an interest in volunteering your time or resources, please contact Mr. Ronald Wietecha, at volunteer@awassachildrenproject.org. ♡

who are housed at the orphanage and attend the Children's Center, benefit hugely from the commitment of those who work with them. In fact, the generosity of the people has become my most abiding memory of Ethiopia. On my last day in Awassa, as I staggered home after being treated to three coffee ceremonies in a row, I felt humbled by the kindness extended to me during my time there. Simply put, there are some people in Awassa who enriched my life more than they will ever know. ♡



Drawn to the show, our audiences discover there isn't a bad seat in the house.