

# THE FORSAKEN CHILDREN

Christ's Agents of Hope to Ethiopia's Children at Risk

2008 Annual Report

## From the Director - Looking Back



Joe Bridges with wife and TFC Co-Founder, Karyn, and their children, Jack and McLaine. The Bridges family will move to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January, 2009 to work with TFC partner projects

by Joe Bridges, TFC Director

2008 has been a year of change for The Forsaken Children. After operating under the umbrella of The Congressional District Program for approximately two years, The Forsaken Children Board of Directors decided to seek incorporation as an independent entity. We have therefore taken steps throughout 2008 to guarantee our successful operation as The Forsaken Children, Incorporated. A series of strategic planning meetings followed by many sub-committee meetings has shored up our organizational structure and given us the

ability to go forward with confidence. On the cusp of a new year, I stand amazed at how far God has brought The Forsaken Children. Four years ago during my first trip to Ethiopia I would have never imagined I would be the Director of an organization that was helping run three Ethiopian projects impacting over 90 at risk children. God has given me His grace and the help of an excellent team of Directors and volunteers to make The Forsaken Children into an organization that is effectively bringing Christ's hope to Ethiopian children.

In this, The Forsaken Children's 2008 Annual Report, I hope you will get a glimpse of how God is moving through The Forsaken Children's strategy of evangelism. This strategy is to provide for the tangible needs of the children and communities we work with so they will be receptive to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I invite you to sit back, read, and learn how our projects are representing the love of Christ to children and communities in Ethiopia.

## Children's Home Ethiopia - Drop-In Center Opens

by Michael Granger, TFC Co-Founder

On May 19, 2008 The Forsaken Children's Co-Founder, Michael Granger, was present for the opening of Children's Home Ethiopia's Drop-In Center for full-time street children. Here are his thoughts about this huge step for both The Forsaken Children and its partner project, Children's Home Ethiopia...

It had been almost three and a half years since Joe Bridges, Nega Meaza, and I had first knelt down to pray for what we all hoped to see take place in the lives of the street children of Addis Ababa. As I stood in the midst of children laughing and playing I thought, *This is it, the fruit of our labor. We now have a Drop-In Center!* We had known the road would be difficult, but none of us knew the uphill battle we would fight to bring hope to the children God placed in our care. But now I could look around, see children's faces, and call them by name, Desse, Edalawit, Melle, Nibiyu, Niberite, Meaza... These were our children laughing, playing, learning, and eating safely. At that moment, all the memories of struggles diminished as I saw first-hand how far God had brought us and now I trust he will carry us much further.



Michael Granger (right) at the Drop-In Center with CHE staff member, Bizrat and CHE Beneficiary, Meaza

### Our Mission

The Forsaken Children (TFC) exists as an advocate for Ethiopia's children at risk by building sustainable financial support for Christ-centered Ethiopian projects working with children at risk, and helping these projects to develop into strategic, long-lasting interventions.

### TFC's Partner Projects

Children's Home Ethiopia

SAFE Project

Kota Ganate Ag Project

### Board of Directors

Joe Bridges, President, Memphis, TN

Randall Johnson, Chairman, Memphis, TN

Kara Moses, Secretary, Memphis, TN

Karyn Bridges, Memphis, TN

Ed Gillentine, Memphis, TN

Elizabeth Gillentine, Memphis, TN

Michael Granger, Indianapolis, IN

Jordan Granger, Indianapolis, IN

## The Kota Ganate Ag Project - Land Acquisition

by Jonathan Bridges, TFC Agriculture Specialist



Jonathan Bridges (right) and Nega Meaza, Children's Home Ethiopia Director, at the Kota Ganate project site

I know now what those first disciples must have felt when Jesus walked by and said those two simple words, "follow Me". When I boarded a plane bound for Ethiopia on January 7, 2008 Kota Ganate was little more than an idea. I didn't know what God had in store as I left the familiar comforts of home, family, and a job; I just had a compelling sense that I must go and see. Just like those first disciples, once I made that step of faith my wife, Jessica, and I have been swept up in the Lord's work like never before.

What started as an idea has now become a tangible reality. God granted us favor with the Ethiopian government, prepared a place, and set the timing just right. We were only in Chencha, the small town in southern Ethiopia where the Kota Ganate Agriculture Project is located, for just over three weeks. Upon submitting the Kota Ganate project proposal, it

took just one week for the government, which is known for its bureaucracy and slowness, to grant us 25 acres of gently sloping land with deep fertile soil. Through this project God has prepared a way to sustain Children's Home Ethiopia and to impact a whole community for Him.

## A Prayer for Desse - TFC Beneficiary

by Jessica Bridges, TFC Volunteer

When Nega Meaza, Director of The Forsaken Children's partner project, Children's Home Ethiopia (CHE), first found Desse he was nine years old and spending the majority of his time on the streets of the Capital of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. With help from Nega, Desse was able to move to the countryside and live with his grandmother and other relatives. Desse's future looked stable.

Unfortunately, after being threatened by a family member, Desse ran to where he was most comfortable, the streets of Addis Ababa. When Nega found him, he asked Desse to live at CHE's Drop-In Center. Despite a safe home, the draw of the street was too much for Desse and he left.

Understanding the unconditional love of Jesus, Nega searched for Desse on the streets of Addis Ababa. Once found, Desse came back to the Drop-In Center with Nega where he stayed for a few days and then left again. Again, Nega searched for him. Nega has continued to go out and find Desse fifteen times in 2008. Currently, Desse is choosing to stay on the streets, but the fifteenth time Nega found Desse he invited him to come back to the CHE Drop-In Center. Pray that Desse will come and eventually, like others, will choose a life apart from the streets and one dedicated to Jesus.



Desse on Addis Ababa streets

### 2008 Financial Highlights

#### Revenues

Previous Balance:	\$7,778
Donations:	\$29,080
Fundraisers:	\$11,500
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$48,358</b>

#### Expenses

Children's Home Ethiopia:	\$30,462
SAFE Project:	\$3,462
Admin / Marketing:	\$7,490
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$41,414</b>

## SAFE Project - New Addition

The Student and Family Education (SAFE) Project began September, 2008. There are 80 children involved in the SAFE Project. In addition to assisting these children's families pay for school, the project also provides home visitation by a social worker as well as Saturday programs hosted at Children's Home Ethiopia's Drop-In Center. During the Saturday programs students participate in tutoring, learn about Jesus, play games, and enjoy tea time. Home visitations encourage families to stay together in the midst of many obstacles such as poverty, terminal illness, and close proximity to the street culture.

The Forsaken Children partnered with the SAFE Project to prevent more children from ending up on the streets. It is our hope that this project will grow and eventually be able to produce micro-enterprise solutions to the families' economic crises.