

Problems to be Solved

My father once told me, "If you want to grab the attention of the poor, feed them first, then explain what you have been taught. Then they have the energy to understand what is being said." I will never forget this advice because we live in a world where one has to choose between learning and eating. The moment when people do not have to choose between learning and eating, the world will be filled with dynamic heroes and heroines.

I saw this power of overcoming challenges when I came to this country from Ethiopia. I grew up in a country that didn't have welfare for the poor; there were no organizations like *Goodwill* or *Free Store Food Bank*. If those from a lower class wanted to eat they had to beg with their children, or actually sell their kids to ungodly places or people. I didn't understand why I wasn't like that. What made me different from those kids? As I got older, the difference became more apparent. I spoke two languages fluently and knew a little bit of French at the age of seven while other kids couldn't even speak the common language accurately because they were too busy begging.

My plan to help those who have been discarded by society, resurfaced during my junior year when I was told of an eighth grader in Ethiopia who started a library in her community. I was inspired to search for ways to help her, but I couldn't find a contact for her. I admired this courageous girl and with her inspiration, I looked up organizations that dealt with education and child welfare in Ethiopia. I came across ,Ethiopia Tommorow Inc., an organization that gives school materials, clothing, and other necessities to an orphanage and school. I identified with their mission and their way of operating. I called one of the founders, told her my story and expressed my interest in her work and the possibilities of joining with her on a project. She was excited that I was willing to engage with her and her organization.

When I first contacted the founder of the organization, we were unsure of each other. Once we understood the passion that drove both of us, it was easier to talk with one another. She suggested ways I could help and I was comfortable enough to give her my own ideas that would simplify the fundraising process. After two years of planning my project, I was able to present my idea, promote it, and, with the aid of my school community, organize a breakfast with Santa. Through these fundraising efforts, enough money was collected to buy Kindles for the students of this organization. This event was implemented with the help of our vice-principal, coaches, and staff. It brought many of the community members together to help my efforts to fundraise for this project. The most surprising moment was after the event was over, many people, not associated with the fundraiser, were more than willing to donate to this cause. My fundraising project will provide over 20 Kindles to children, enabling them to pursue the dream of a good education. My school and community are responsible for providing the opportunity of an