



Ted's Reading Club

June 2006

Dear Friends,

Did anyone notice that there was no May letter? It just didn't get done and I am considering changing to a schedule of four letters a year. If anyone has an opinion on that I'd appreciate hearing from you.

In early April Ted traveled with me to Ethiopia. He hadn't been there for a couple of years and was looking forward to seeing the changes. He started an activity which seems to be taking hold. We called it "Ted's Reading Club." Early each morning, before classes started, he would arrive with bags of books. Kids would bring out chairs and they would sit reading to him or with him reading to them and looking at the pictures in the books. We have had many nice donations of books in recent months. The children have not been taught from young ages to care for books, so staff in Ethiopia was not very free in handing them out. The idea is to put books in the hands of the kids and show them how to take care of them, and eventually to be able to leave books out for the kids to use whenever they have free time. The Reading Club was very popular and others who have visited since then have continued with it.

Another project was started by one of the volunteers who noticed that the guard dog in the compound was penned in a corner and not getting much attention. She gave him a bath and flea treatment, got a collar and leash and began teaching the children how to care for him as a pet. This will be good preparation for kids going into families who have dogs and hopefully the dog will not forget to bark if strangers come near at night, which was his function!!

One special little boy, Baby John, recently joined his family. He weighed only two pounds when admitted into our house. Many people took turns feeding him, drop by drop. The new dad says:

"He is 15 pounds now at 1 year old. He is doing so well! He is crawling and has learned to pull up. He is an extremely happy boy. He laughs and smiles all the time. Our pediatrician is amazed at how well he is doing especially considering his very rough start. We attribute it to the hand of God and the wonderful care he received at Wanna. He was so loved at Wanna and he thrived because of it. We are so blessed to have him as our son."

Returning from Ethiopia, Ted and I escorted 10 year old Rahel. She had been at Layla only a short time but we knew she had some sort of painful medical issues which was making it impossible for her to walk. One of the volunteers located a wheel chair and purchased it for her. We sent her for evaluations with local doctors but they were unable to make a diagnosis and there was a fear that it could be muscular dystrophy. I contacted a group I have worked with in the past. They arranged for orphan children in other countries to come to the U.S. for medical evaluation and treatment. A hospital in Wisconsin agreed to provide the medical services at no charge. And the U.S. Embassy cooperated by issuing a special visa for her. So, Rahel arrived in the U.S. and went to a foster family. Experts diagnosed juvenile arthritis. For this condition ongoing physical therapy is necessary. A family applied to adopt her. The mother works for Shriners Hospital. She approached the hospital and was offered treatment without charge. This family would like to adopt her but they have five children (mostly adopted) so finances are an issue.

Fortunately they will be able to apply to the GRACE fund for help with adoption expenses. The GRACE fund is the major focus of fundraising for AAI this year, and this is just one example of how it is being used. Seven families have been given grants, ranging from \$1100 to \$3000; all awarded since the middle of March. The children include Ethiopian sibling group of four, an Ethiopian baby with blindness, and a 10 year old Chinese girl. If you wish to specify a donation to the GRACE fund, I can assure you that the money will be used to help the kids who need it most.

The Layla quilt for this year, which was created by Barbara Patton, is in the process of being raffled. If you would like to receive a book of tickets to sell, please let me know. We have photos of the quilt which we will send with the ticket booklets along with information on the GRACE fund and I have found that it is very easy to sell the tickets at \$5.00. Last year \$15,000 was raised on this raffle and proceeds were used in construction of the new Layla House. The drawing will be on August 26th in the Seattle area. The quilt is stunning!

I hope you are all ready to enjoy the summer. We are grateful to you, our supporters and friends. By working together, great things are happening for kids.

Merrily and Ted