



SELAMTA

FAMILY PROJECT

FOREVER FAMILIES. BRIGHT FUTURES.



2017 REPORT

*Dear Selamta Family,*

This year has proven there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the sun. It's been a time to celebrate and a time to weep. It's been a time of transition and a time of growth, a time to let go and a time to grab on with both hands. Most of all, it's been a year filled with family, dignity and hope.

In these pages, you will catch a glimpse of the journey we are on together. Rooted in Ethiopia and the US, we are sharing the Selamta model with the world so every child can grow up in a loving, stable family. You make this work possible. Your support, donations and prayers give us strength to walk out our mission: restoring family, dignity and hope to vulnerable children and families. You make forever families possible.

With gratitude,



Marisa Stam  
Executive Director



Tamrat Kebede  
Ethiopian Director



Jim Wasz  
Board Chairman





# LET'S CHANGE FOREVER TOGETHER

We believe every child  
deserves to grow up in  
a loving, stable family.

## BROKENNESS AND POVERTY

Millions of children around the world have been orphaned or abandoned and even more families are at risk of breaking apart. Families and children who are left vulnerable end up trapped in poverty, risk being trafficked, and have little hope of a different future. If basic needs aren't met, you can't expect prosperity. However, it's not just a lack of material resources that leave families in poverty and children abandoned. Where there is a breakdown in healthy relationships and a lack of support systems, vulnerable children and families don't have the critical resources necessary to succeed.

## INSTITUTIONS DON'T WORK

Let's be clear, institutions aren't families. Meeting only basic needs is not enough. Caregivers who show up for a job are not the same as those who view their role as a calling. Without the relationships necessary for healthy growth, the cycle of poverty will only continue. Selamta serves orphaned children but we are not an orphanage. We believe the only way forward is through a family-based community integrated model that focuses on each individual and their wholeness, the wholeness that comes through relationships developed in a stable, loving family: a forever family.

*"We have seen the complexity of the orphan crisis worldwide and wholeheartedly believe that Selamta's mission is one of the purest answers in ending this tragedy." - Nick and Whitney Runyon, co-founders of The Archibald Project.*

The Archibald Project is an orphan care advocacy organization that uses media to share inspiring stories to inspire people into action. Photos by TAP throughout unless otherwise noted.

## WE CHOOSE LOVE

We were not meant to go through life alone. In order to love others well, we need to know we are loved. That love is the foundation we build on. Poverty, disease, abuse, neglect - these aren't just the issues of developing countries. When we come together to serve and love the people around us, our neighbors, that's when our communities change. But if we pretend we don't see it, we become the problem. We believe every person is made in the image of God and loved beyond measure. So if we believe that is true, it's our calling to love those around us, to care for orphans and widows in their distress - James 1:27.

## FAMILY. DIGNITY. HOPE.

At every opportunity, keep biological families together. When that is not possible, recreate family for those who have lost their own. Each person, child or adult, deserves to be treated with dignity. Regardless of their situation, everyone comes with assets, gifts and talents and those must be nurtured. Hope in and of itself isn't a strategy, but when families and children know love, have been equipped and feel empowered, they will have hope for a bright future.

Let's change forever together.



# OUTREACH PROGRAM

Across our communities there are families at-risk of breaking apart. In a perfect world, children would grow up with their mom and dad. But we live in a broken world, and circumstances and choices can leave families on the brink of disaster.

Meet Mekdelawit, a single mom of two young girls and caring for her grandmother, but living under a tarp with only a mattress. Her husband had left, because of his untreated mental illness. Holding on as tight as she could to her family, Mekdelawit approached the local authorities.

The people in power told her that abandonment was the answer. They told her to put her girls in an orphanage. Imagine being told to give up your children. Where is the hope in that?

Mekdelawit has assets. She loves her girls, and is capable of caring for them. It wasn't her lack of willingness, but a lack of resources and supportive relationships.

We believe that by strengthening biological families, fewer children will become orphaned or abandoned. We do this by looking at individual assets first. If we're only looking at their deficits, we strip people of their dignity and miss out on what's possible. Everyone in our families comes with innate gifts and talents that can be nurtured and developed. But there is also a willingness that is necessary for parents and caregivers to follow through on their responsibilities.

Selamta's professional staff comes alongside at-risk families to equip and empower them so they will have hope for a brighter future.

Mekdelawit was told to give up before they took the time to assess what was possible. Our team saw her determination and willingness to fight for her family. Slowly and steadily, by walking with this family, things are changing. Her youngest daughter graduated from KG, and both girls are moving on in their education. There is a hope that did not exist before. She was told to give up, and she no longer has to do that.



Mekdelawit and her daughters Sitota and Arsema (SFP)



## FROM CRISIS

Sara and baby Abel recently joined the Selamta Family Program through our Outreach Program. An abandoned single mom now has access to resources and supportive relationships that will help to transform her small family's future.



## INTO EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

Addis and her four children are now receiving the education, health and wellness, psychosocial support, and spiritual and life skills development to build on their existing assets so they can become stable and thrive.



## ONTO SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Lemlem and Dibora are on their way to self-sufficiency. Even though Lemlem is unable to work outside the home, Selamta's support and key relationships within their community have made it possible for her to earn a living.



Prevention is the key to the worldwide orphan crisis. If we strengthen families who are at-risk of breaking apart and provide the resources they need to stabilize, fewer children will become orphaned or abandoned.

Selamta currently serves 20 families in Addis Ababa by equipping and empowering parents to care for their children.

# FOREVER FAMILY PROGRAM



## WHAT DOES A LOVING, STABLE FAMILY LOOK LIKE?

Children need parents, people with wisdom and experience who can guide, love, and show a younger generation how to grow into healthy thriving adults.

Kids will always absorb more from what we do, and not just what we speak. Love requires that we show up every day, bringing truth, encouragement, and honesty into every situation. Love includes kissing a bruised knee, and a warm hug when we're scared. But it's also setting boundaries, having those hard conversations, and course correcting when things go off the rails. Everyone in our Forever Families has experienced some level of trauma in their lives. A stable environment creates the space for healing and restoration. It's never easy, but it's always worth it.

At Selamta, our parents don't have to do this alone. Our Selamta Community Center, the hub for our families to come together, is nestled in the middle of our neighborhood within walking distance from each of our homes. With the support of our Professional Staff, we equip and empower our Forever Family moms and Outreach parents with the tools they need to raise healthy families. This foundation of family is built on four cornerstones: Education, Health & Wellness, Psychosocial Support, and Spiritual & Life Skills Development.

## BUILDING FAMILIES IS A LONG-TERM INVESTMENT AND THE BEST FORM OF DEVELOPMENT

For children who have been orphaned or abandoned, where reunification is simply not possible, Selamta has developed our Forever Family Program.

Eight to 10 children are united with a Selamta-trained Mom to start a new family in their own home. It's not a job to be a Mom, it's a calling. It's 24/7 and permanent.

Moms may or not have their own biological children within the family. We keep biological siblings together within a family, and whenever possible, reunite siblings who have been separated.

Our Forever Family homes are spread across one neighborhood. You can't tell one of our family homes from a traditional home next door, on purpose. Our families are part of their community, no longer orphans, but brothers and sisters, friends, and neighbors.

They become real families, forever.

**"OF COURSE THEY'RE MY CHILDREN, I'VE BEEN CALLED TO BE A SELAMTA MOM."  
- MENBERE**

This spring, we were faced with the challenge of combining two family homes. Love and stability are critical, and it's our responsibility to ensure each family is healthy. When issues can't be resolved within a family home, we have to make a change. The children of Bishangari House were asked who they thought was an excellent example of a Selamta mom. Menbere was identified immediately. Already a Selamta mom of 6 kids, our staff approached Menbere about expanding her family. Her immediate response left us in awe. Two families have become one, rooted in love and stability.

**10 FAMILIES  
90 CHILDREN  
ONE COMMUNITY**



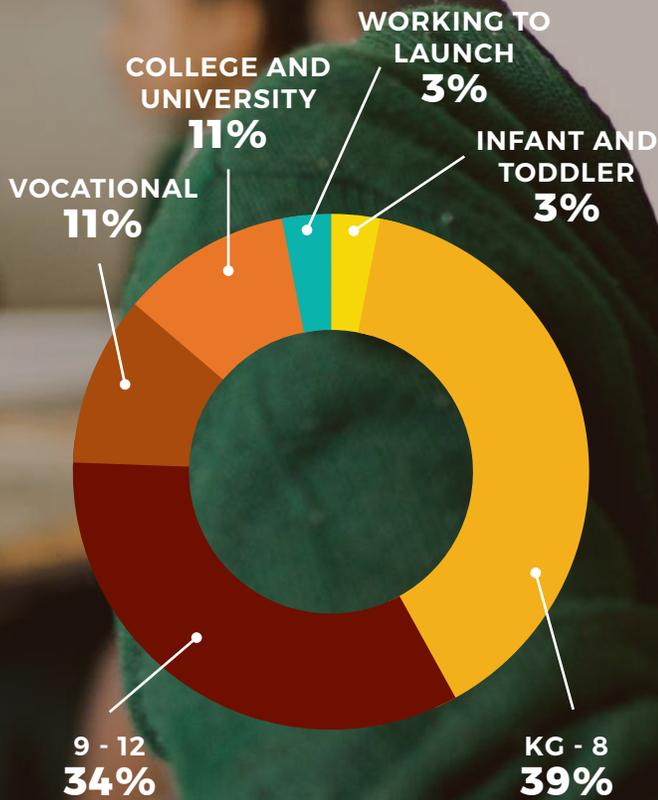
*"My dad died when I was little, so I don't remember much about him. But I, with my two younger brothers, entered Selamta when my mom was bedridden, and she died a few months later. That was the saddest moment, and I was so torn apart and disappointed by the unfairness in the world. Then my Selamta family was with me all the time, supporting me and showing me what I still had in the world. They were all giving me all the love that helped me through the emptiness I felt then. I now feel I have all the things I need. My family."*

*- Belisuma, son of Abay House, a Forever Family*



# EDUCATION

100% OF 8TH GRADERS PASSED NATIONAL EXAM, ENSURING ACCESS TO SECONDARY AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



Yohannes graduated from a photography and videography program giving him the knowledge and skills to enter the production industry. He's been working with Sparks Film Production and is ready to launch into independence later this year.



Bilal achieved the highest grade 12 national exam results in Selamta history. He is attending Kotebe Metropolitan University, located in Addis Ababa, to study business and economics. Bilal has a brilliant mind and a ton of determination.



## IN PURSUIT OF QUALITY EDUCATION

32 secondary students are attending new schools this fall to better meet their needs and prepare them for further education

Thanks to generous donors, every university student is now equipped with a laptop.



*"In this era of technology, I can't think of university without a laptop. It just doesn't work. Words can't express my gratitude!"*

**SELAM, ENGINEERING STUDENT  
ARBAMINCH UNIVERSITY**

## BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

Selamta youth take advantage of opportunities and programs that enrich their education:

- Critical thinking online course and workshops
- Tutoring and national exam test prep
- Information and Communication Technologies Training
- Knowledge sharing events
- English Summer Camp - Thanks to the 14 international volunteers who made camp possible.



Yezena was invited to attend a summer program at Brewster Academy in Wolfboro, NH. She took advantage of every opportunity that came her way and worked hard. Brewster recognized her potential and provided a full scholarship to attend this academic year.

## EDUCATION PARTNERS

She's the *first*



**ONE PACK  
FOR ONE  
CHILD**

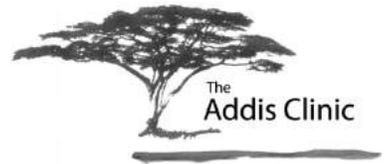




# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Meet Tigist. Tigist joined our team in January as our full-time nurse. Working out of the clinic in Selamta’s Community Center, Tigist follows up on the health & wellness of our families, provides acute care and manages the chronic care of our families. Tigist equips our families to stay healthy through prevention methods like access to clean water and handwashing. Our partner, Splash, provides the resources our families need, including water filtration and WASH materials. By utilizing new systems, Tigist is improving our medical records and reporting to ensure every child and caregiver has access to what they need to be healthy and strong. Selamta forged a new partnership with The Addis Clinic, a US-based program utilizing

telemedicine to connect frontline health workers to a network of physicians who dedicate their expertise to underserved communities around the world. They review medical cases and provide consultation so we are better equipped to pursue what’s needed for healing and health. This partnership is expanding the level of care we can provide to our families.



Oral health is critical to overall physical health. Mama Menbere was having pain and difficulty eating because she needed tooth repair. Our friends at Everglades Pediatric Dentistry stepped up to make sure we could provide Menbere’s with the care she needed.

SFP



After university graduation, Mekides faced debilitating health issues that were not easily diagnosed. After many months, Mekides received a chronic diagnosis requiring ongoing treatment. She is now doing well, employed as a Social Worker and receiving additional support from The Addis Clinic.

SFP

# PSYCHOSOCIAL, SPIRITUAL, LIFE SKILLS

Our children and families come to us from extraordinary trauma and loss. Selamta, which means “be at peace”, strives to create an environment where healing and wholeness can be found. Our Psychosocial team builds relationships, with our families, earning trust so they can provide effective individual and group therapies. Spiritual and life skills development round out our holistic approach to restoring family, dignity and hope to all we serve.

- Weekly/Monthly Workshops
- Communicating Effectively
- Problem Solving
- Personal Responsibility
- Healthy Relationships
- Character Building



“Everyone in the family believes that I am honest. Keeping money and purchasing items is usually left for me.” - Mehari



Nardos noticed someone left a very expensive cell phone in a public taxi. She held onto the phone, so when the owner called she could return it. She said growing up with her Selama Family taught her the value of being an honest, responsible person, considering the needs of others before herself.

SFP

## DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

  
Curtis Lake Church



# HEART & HOME

## NEIGHBOR \$25/MONTH

Neighbors join our community to support the general operations of Selamta so every child, mother and family has the support and resources necessary to thrive.

## FRIEND \$50/MONTH

Friends provide partial support for a Selamta child. Your financial gifts will join with another to ensure your Selamta child receives the cornerstone resources they need to achieve a Bright Future.

## MENTOR \$100/MONTH

Mentors fully invest in and connect with a Selamta child. This full child sponsorship provides room for relationships and the restoration necessary so every child can grow up in a loving, stable family.

## FAMILY \$500/MONTH

Family sponsors provide the support to care for an entire Forever Family home. Rent, utilities, repair & maintenance, food and caregiver expenses are covered through this level of sponsorship.



**THIS YEAR WE ARE  
THANKFUL FOR 19 NEW  
SPONSORSHIPS, JOINING  
OUR INCREDIBLE HEART  
& HOME FAMILY! YOU  
MAKE FOREVER FAMILIES  
POSSIBLE.**



## FOR THE LOVE OF FAMILY

Our sponsors are family. Bonds grow over time and relationships deepen. We've seen our extended family show up in ways that leave us in awe. The Donovan Family, Matt Donovan and Anne Merra of York, ME, have sponsored Lucy House since 2009, journeying together sharing the ups and downs of life. Yezena, 16, of Lucy House, visited the US through our education partners, She's the First. The Donovans were first in line to host Yezena. While in the US, she toured Brewster Academy in Wolfeboro, NH and was offered a spot in their summer program. Once again, the Donovans stepped up to host Yezena. All was going well. The summer program was a great experience and she got to visit NYC with She's the First, but when Yezena returned to Maine, she became very ill. The Donovans didn't hesitate to find her the best care in New England. Over several months of medical procedures, hospital stays and at-home recovery the Donovans cared for Yezena the way they would their own child. In the middle of everything, Yezena was offered a full scholarship to attend Brewster Academy this fall. The visa process was challenging but the Donovans were there every step of the way filing the forms and encouraging Yezena to have hope. We are humbled by their commitment to family and grateful for the love poured out by the Donovans.



## BIRTHDAYS BRING THE BEST GIFTS

Some people go on elaborate vacations for milestone birthdays or throw a big birthday bash but our Heart & Home Sponsor, Bray Mitchell, gave away her birthday and raised \$23,000 to secure a new van for our families in Ethiopia. Bray has been a part of the family since she first visited Selamta in 2008. She's been a dedicated Heart & Home sponsor to several kids, served on our board, and hosted countless porch sales in support of our families. Bray worked with our US staff to build an online fundraising page to make giving easy. She sent out letters, drafted emails and made calls to encourage the people in her life who know and love her like she loves Selamta. Bray understood the need for improved transportation and used an event in her own life to pour into our families. Today, our kids can get to school easily, our staff can visit our Outreach Families more often and we can provide transportation to the families we serve beyond our immediate neighborhood so they can attend more workshops at our Selamta Community Center. Bray's birthday and her life are a blessing to all of us!



## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

It's amazing what can happen in the context of relationships. Curtis Lake Church has supported Selamta since 2011. They host an annual event, Auction for Africa, to support initiatives on the continent. In March, Marisa, was invited to be the keynote speaker. She shared the importance of the ongoing relationship with CLCC, how their volunteer teams and consistent support have encouraged and equipped our team, and the amazing things God is doing in and through Selamta. Our program is evolving and the needs of our families are becoming more clear. To meet those needs, we must expand our team to effectively serve our families. We shared our budget shortfall with their lead pastor, Ryan Howell. At the end of the night, after already exceeding their fundraising goals for the evening, Ryan challenged the the room to come alongside Selamta to bridge the gap. Individual donors came forward and pledged over \$40,000 to launch our new US Operations Monthly Giving Program. Sometimes friends and family know what you need even before you do!



# BOARD AND STAFF



More than a job, it's a calling to lead Selamta Family Project. Tamrat Kebede joined the Selamta Family as our new Ethiopian Director in April. He's a servant leader with brilliant vision. Welcome to the family!



We couldn't be more thankful for the 9 years of service Abel Solomon gave to Selamta. Abel, you will always be family!

## ETHIOPIAN STAFF

- Tamrat Kebede, *Ethiopian Director*
- Habtie Muluye, *Ethiopian Assistant Director*
- Etsegenet Mulugeta, *Psychosocial Team Leader*
- Zelalem Hailu, *Education & Enrichment Team Leader*
- Beaman Teoumelessan, *Enrichment Social Worker*
- Eskedar Sisay, *Head Mother*
- Melat Wandimu, *Finance Manager*
- Selamawit Mohammed, *Outreach Social Worker*
- Tigist Belete, *Nurse*
- Meskerem, *Volunteer Accountant*
- Eden, *Ethiopian Diaspora Fellow*

## US STAFF

- Marisa Stam, *Executive Director*
- Abby Morrow, *Sponsorship & Volunteer Team Leader*
- Whitney Seignious, *Finance & Data Coordinator*
- Tess Lundy, *Social Media & Admin Coordinator*
- Matt Donovan, *International Education Volunteer*
- Maya Cameron-Gilsey, *Social Media Volunteer*
- Cori O'Brien Paluck, *Salesforce Volunteer*



**"THE WHOLE STAFF AT SELAMTA BELIEVES IN ME. THEY ALWAYS TELL ME I CAN BE SOMEBODY I WANT TO BE."  
- SENAYIT**



Selamta's board of directors are more than decision makers, they are family even after they've served their terms. Thank you Bray Mitchell and Carolynne Krusi for your years of service and dedication!

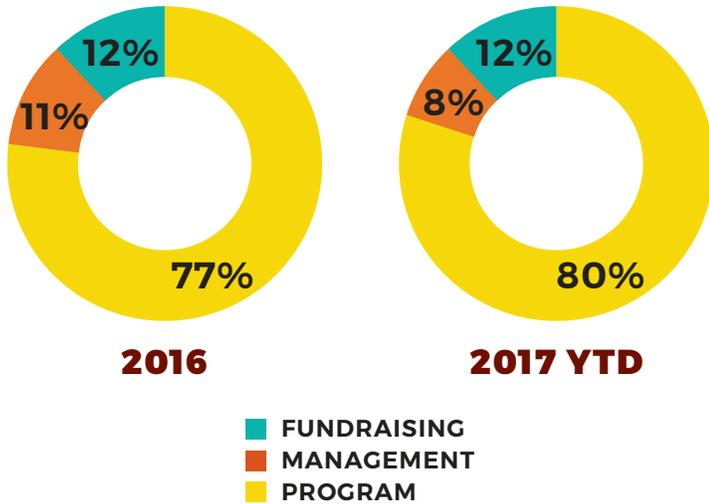


## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

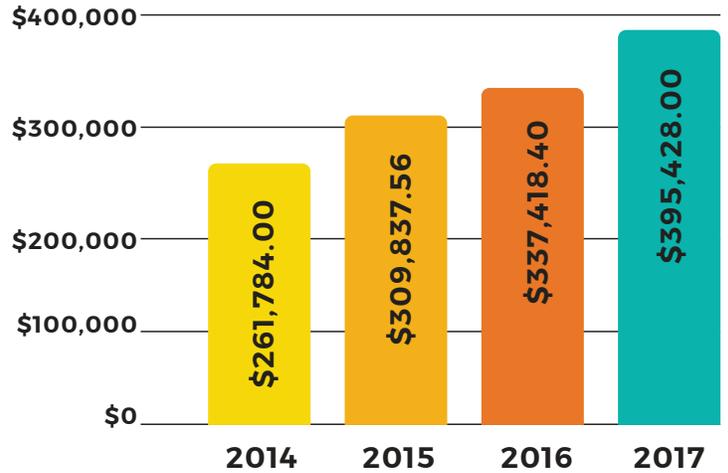
- Jim Wasz, *Board Chairman*
- Benjamin Beisswenger, *Secretary*
- Aidan Barry
- Fana Mersha
- William Nielander

# FINANCIALS

The graphs below show a breakdown of how our funds were allocated in 2016 and year to date in 2017.



## REVENUE GROWTH



\*2017 revenue projected based on YTD results and Q4 budget

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE



## GATHER

**GATHER & GIVE** - Our families gather at Selamta's Community Center. Help us fully fund our Community Center in the spring with online peer to peer fundraising.

**SELAMTA FAMILY DINNERS** - We believe a meal shared around the table has the power to develop family. Host a dinner this fall to support Selamta's families.

**SHARE ON SOCIAL** - Use the power of the interwebs bringing your people together to meet our families through Instagram and Facebook.



## GIVE

**GIVE AWAY YOUR BIRTHDAY** - Inspired by Bray? We are too! We all have a birthday so let's celebrate and do some good.

**GIVE MONTHLY** - Monthly gifts provide consistency so we can meet the needs of our families. Become a monthly donor through Heart & Home or US Ops

**SHOP SELAMTA** - Give the best gifts by checking out our online store. The assortment changes regularly - jewelry, t-shirts, baskets, and soap.



## GO

**VISION TRIPS TO ETHIOPIA** - Experience Ethiopia first-hand. Get to know our staff and share meals with our families.

**ENGLISH SUMMER CAMP** - Are you a native English speaker? Every summer we host an English Summer Camp focusing on conversational English. Volunteer for 2 to 6 weeks.

**AMBASSADORS** - Serve for a month or more as a volunteer staff member bringing your expertise to our team.



PO Box 1857  
Lake Placid, FL 33862  
[www.selamtafamilyproject.org](http://www.selamtafamilyproject.org)

## FAMILY. DIGNITY. HOPE.

Let's change forever together.

It's only with support from our Heart & Home Sponsors, US Ops monthly supporters, and generous annual donors that restoring family, dignity and hope is possible through Selamta.

Let's continue to grow our family in Ethiopia and around the world. It's our goal to have every child and family fully sponsored through Heart & Home before the start of 2018. Who do you know that should be a part of our family? We need:

**39 Friend Level Sponsorships**  
**14 Mentor Level Sponsorships**  
**4 Family Sponsorships**

**Unlimited Neighbor and US Ops sponsorships available**



Selamta Family Project



[SelamtaFamilyProject.org](http://SelamtaFamilyProject.org)



@SelamtaProject