

SELMTA
FAMILY PROJECT

2021 REPORT





Dear Selamta Family,

When there is so much uncertainty around us, having each other to lean into, trust, and believe in has been a blessing beyond what we could have possibly imagined at the start of 2021. With a new year came hope that the pandemic would fade and life would return to normal. Funny thing about life...normal isn't really a thing. We grow on the journey. We change as we experience ups and downs. The truth we discovered this year is that our individual dignity and worth is not determined by our circumstances. If anything, shifting circumstances give us the opportunity to discover and reveal the unique power and strength God gives each of us. Those unique gifts come together in the power of family. And that power, that love for each other, can overcome any circumstance. We believe, in the pages that follow, you will see the beauty of family, the strength of dignity, and the never ending supply of hope that fuels our families.

Marisa Stam
Executive Director

Tamrat Kebede
Ethiopian Director

Jim Wasz
Board Chair



MISSION & VISION

Coming out of 2020, Selamta's leadership team knew it was time to examine our way forward and intentionally prepare for what we're being called to do in Ethiopia and beyond. It started with updating our mission and vision language to make sure we would not drift, but rather stay on a specific course.

MISSION

Selamta brings hope and healing to orphaned and abandoned children by recreating and empowering families.

VISION

Children growing up knowing their God-given dignity and worth through the love of a healthy family.

CORE COMPETENCIES

Wrap-Around
Care

Community
Integration

Permanency

WRAP-AROUND CARE

For the last fifteen years, Selamta has been building up and refining wrap-around care for our families. There are four cornerstones we build on:



EDUCATION



PSYCHOSOCIAL



HEALTH



SPIRITUAL

This holistic approach takes into consideration all aspects of an individual: mind, body, and spirit. We are interconnected. Our beings, like our families, are made up of many parts that come together, creating extraordinary possibilities. Wrapping around each individual and family provides the structure and support necessary to grow and negotiate needs. Advocacy, empowerment, and encouragement are central to Selamta's wrap-around care.

We look through every situation with a trauma-informed lens, knowing there is always a need behind the behavior. A balance of structure and nurture are necessary for healing and learning to take place. From there, extraordinary opportunities exist for our children and families.





COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

We were created to live in community. Every community has resources and specialists with expertise specific to that geographic area and culture. Too often, children who have been orphaned or abandoned are placed in institutions, away from the general public, with little access to the world around them. How is a person supposed to function successfully in society when they haven't grown up in that world? It's simple, they can't. This is why Selamta is dedicated to leveraging the systems and resources of our local communities to meet the needs of our families. Whether it's local schools, churches, community programs, or medical resources, we work with local experts to find the right resources for our families. If the right resources aren't available, we reach out beyond those geographical boundaries to get what's needed.

PERMANENCY

Felt-safety is more than the intellectual knowledge of being safe from harm, it's a feeling of security. It's knowing you belong. It's knowing you can trust and rely on the people and place you come home to at the end of the day. In Selamta's Forever Family Program, family is more than the years of childhood, it's forever. There is no end date for Selamta's wrap-around support either. A family's ability to access the network of professional support provided through Selamta's Community Center is also forever. Life is a journey with ups and downs. Selamta is committed to being available to the families we serve throughout their lifespan.





VISION FORWARD

As our leadership team updated our mission, vision, and core competencies, we had to be intentional about strategic planning. Since 2006, we have witnessed the effectiveness of our Forever Family model. We knew we needed to repeat it, which we did in 2019 and 2020. We are dedicated to growing our Forever Family Program for as long as it's necessary in Ethiopia. At the same time, we recognize that the wrap-around care we give our Forever Families is the same kind of support separated biological families, kinship care families, foster families, and adoptive families need to thrive. This is why we believe the Selamta Community Center - which has been a beacon of light and hope in our Alem Bank community for over a decade - needs to be replicated in another neighborhood in the greater Addis Ababa area.

But that's just the beginning...

For years, people have asked whether Selamta could work in the United States. While we don't believe our Forever Family program is necessary due to the US systems of foster care and domestic adoption, we have learned that our Community Center programs may have practical applications that could significantly benefit children and families. With wrap-around care, community integration, and permanency, we believe it's possible to increase the rate of reunification of separated children back to their parents, reduce the rate of children returning to foster care, and increase the number of foster families ready and willing to meet the specialized needs of children. So could Selamta work in the US? We're exploring all the possibilities now and we'll keep you posted!

COMMUNITY CENTER

This is where family and community come together. This is where children are seen, heard, and valued. This is where parents learn skills they didn't get growing up. This is where family, dignity, and hope thrive.



"I felt valued the day I joined my new family at Selamta. The warm smiles on their faces, their hugs, and the way they accepted me makes me feel I am worthy of love and respect."

Senayet, Forever Family Youth

"Before I joined Selamta, I couldn't imagine my future being successful, but now, being surrounded with people who love and care for me, this feeling has changed and I can sense the bright future."

Mekdes, Forever Family Youth



"I have a great relationship with all the Selamta team, they are like my family. I discuss everything with them and they have a great impact on my life."

Mulu, Launched Selamta Youth

"The family is the main advocate for themselves. They know how to negotiate their needs, where to go for services, represent themselves in the community gathering and are involved proactively. Living in a family setting and within the community helps each person to learn from others and become a helping hand whenever needed."

Etsegenet, Psychosocial Team Leader

FOREVER FAMILY

We unite 8-10 children into a healthy family structure with a Selamta-trained mother in their own home, integrated into their local community.

Children grow up together as a family over a 10-20 year period before launching from Selamta's care into independence.

Our professional staff serve each family with an emphasis on Education, Health & Wellness, Psychosocial Support, and Spiritual Development.

Growing up in a stable family, surrounded by the love of Christ, gives children a strong sense of belonging.



95 Children in Forever Family

5 Youth launched to independence

Forever Families

8 **2**

1st Generation 2nd Generation

Mulu was the very first child to come into Selamta in 2006. She grew up in Haile Selassie House for almost 15 years with 9 brothers and sisters. Mulu completed her studies and went on to earn her bachelor's degree in management from Hope University before starting her career as a human resources professional for the Addis Ababa-Djibouti Railway. Earlier this year, her Selamta family had the honor to serve as her elders when her now husband sent his elders to ask for her hand in marriage.

"Family is family. Now I am launched but I am always with them in my thoughts. I don't have any words to express my love for my family members. They are so special. I started my own personal life but every weekend and at holiday time I visit them. My mom is a great mother; I always miss her and call her every single day."

Mulu, Launched Selamta Youth

18 NEW KIDS

Selamta is committed to bringing children out of institutions and into families. In August, 18 children joined our Selamta Family and moved into the Selamta Kids' Center. These children come from a variety of backgrounds, many of whom were living far too long in government institutions. They are now part of a large, extended family. Over the coming months, two new family homes will form and these children will experience the power of family, dignity, and hope.



"I feel really good that Selamta is bringing in new kids. Because other kids as well are having the opportunity to grow up in Selamta's care."
Senayit, Forever Family Youth

"Before I joined Selamta I used to wonder how many places I would be placed before I have a settled and stable life, but now that changed and I feel like I am staying here forever."
Senayet, Forever Family Youth

"After the establishment of two family homes last year, I am so proud to see how each member of the homes starts feeling as a loved family member, safe in each other's company, showing respect and feeling belongingness."
Etsegenet, Psychosocial Team Leader



WRAP-AROUND CARE - 4 CORNERSTONES

Two and a half year old Liya* came to Selamta's Community Center from the government orphanage with her slightly older brother to be reunited with their two older sisters. They hadn't seen each other in several months after local authorities discovered they were living alone in a single room. Liya wasn't speaking. She wasn't walking unassisted. She had yet to achieve many developmental milestones typical of a child her age. She had experienced more trauma and loss in her brief life than many experience in a lifetime. But there was a light in her eyes and a smile on her face that cut through the darkness. There was little documented medical information to understand Liya's developmental history. The siblings became part of a new Selamta Forever Family.

Trust and felt-safety would be essential for Selamta's team to effectively help these children heal; but these are not built overnight. They take time, consistency, patience, and connection for real relationships to develop. Liya's oldest sister was fiercely protective and their Selamta Mom had to carefully negotiate how to help her release the responsibility of being a caregiver and embrace the idea of being a kid again.

To address her developmental issues, Liya was taken to several pediatricians, a pediatric neurologist, and therapists. A child who experiences early complex trauma can show symptoms and behaviors mirroring those of various developmental or mental disorders, making it difficult to receive concrete answers. Liya started speech and occupational therapy with a specialized doctor. This level of care is not commonly available in Ethiopia.



After 6 months of treatment, Liya was running, jumping, using her words, and learning to negotiate her needs without a meltdown. At a follow-up appointment, Liya's pediatric neurologist was blown away by her progress.

"Meredith, one of our volunteers who visited us in July, is a speech pathologist and helped us much in supporting Liya to obey directions, negotiate her needs, and be able to accept 'No'. Now Liya is about to register for school for the coming academic year. She will be engaged in school, our sweet youngest kid, Liya."
Megdelawit, Social Worker

Consistent prayers have been prayed around the world for the healing of these children physically, mentally, and emotionally. Realizing that Liya will start Kindergarten (KG1) this fall, like her other Selamta brothers and sisters, is a massive answer to prayer. Liya is growing and thriving because she is seen, heard, and valued by consistent and connected caregivers.

*Name changed for child protection.



EDUCATION

After being out of school for eight months, getting back in the classroom couldn't come soon enough. Starting in January 2020, our students went back to school. The school week was abbreviated to start, but they took advantage of every opportunity to learn. The virtual programs developed through 2020 continued throughout 2021 and combined with specialized tutoring to meet the needs of each student. Although our 2020 high school graduates couldn't start university on time, we're so proud of their commitment and look forward to the class of 2021 starting their university studies soon.

- Basic IT Skills
- Critical Thinking Workshops
- Financial Literacy & Economics
- In-person Tutoring
- Virtual Mentorship - Career & College Readiness
- Virtual Tutoring
- Sports, Arts, and Crafts
- Study Skills & Time Management



"More technological platforms were introduced last year. As a result, we had to adapt by teaching our kids to be familiar with the platforms."

Yimima, Social Worker

"Last year I needed support that was related to my education, and I got everything I needed from the Selamta team and also from my family."

Mulu, Launched Selamta Youth

"Mekdes, my sister, inspired me to do well in school by encouraging me to be confident."

Mekdes E., Forever Family Youth

HEALTH

We hoped COVID-19 would come to an end in 2021, but instead it continued to complicate every aspect of life. Thankfully, our nurse, Tigist, was relentless in training and equipping our families and team with everything they needed to stay safe, care for each other, and recover from illness. She helped our families navigate testing and vaccines, not only for COVID-19, but for any and all medical conditions our families faced.

- Blood Donations
- COVID-19 Testing & Prevention
- Health Visits
- Reproductive Health Training
- Sanitation & Hygiene Training



"We are also allowed to be checked when necessary, even on weekends. We contact Tigist on the phone for any required advice. At one time I remember when one of our kids from Harar house was sick and he had a cough and abdominal pain; we felt it was an emergency and took him to a private clinic found nearby the house. We called Tigist and discussed every step we took and he was treated well."

Enatehun, Forever Family Aunt

"I have been sick in the last year. Tigist helped me very much. She chose the best place for my treatment and took me there. I got the necessary checkup and appropriate treatment. I am now feeling much better, thanks to God."

Tiruye, Forever Family Mom

PSYCHOSOCIAL

As daily life took interesting turns in the last year, anxiety and depression were on the rise globally. When COVID-19 is coupled with extreme trauma and loss, the need for quality interventions becomes even more important. Selamta's psychosocial team was committed to delivering exceptional care and continued to build capacity with programs like Making Sense of Your Worth and Parenting for Positive Self-Worth. Every person desires to be seen, heard, and valued. At Selamta, we make those desires a priority.

- Burnout, Stress Management, and Self Care for Caregivers
- Child Development Training
- Emotional Intelligence
- Making Sense of Your Worth
- Trauma Healing for Teens
- Trauma Informed Care & TBRI Training



"The training that impacted me so far was the one about emotions and how to express them. Before the training, I didn't have a clear understanding about my emotions and sometimes I don't realize what is going on inside me. But now I am able to identify my emotions and know how to communicate them in a healthy way."

Senayet, Forever Family Youth

"The TBRI training has helped me heal from my personal wounds. In the past, when I thought I couldn't fix issues with the kids, I would pass it over to others so they could fix them. But now, through discussions we can find solutions and correct the behavior, which helps me keep positive connections with my kids."

Wude, Forever Family Mom

"As a person who has gone through trauma I need to have a way to cope with it and the training helps me to know how to be resilient and survive with that pain."

Mekdes M., Forever Family Youth

SPIRITUAL

Hope is not wishful wishes. It's an innate belief that there is more to life than what we see with our eyes. Hope drives us forward when our circumstances tell us to give up. Hope comforts the grieving and empowers the beaten down. We support children and families from all faith traditions and walks of life. We honor their chosen paths. Our hope comes from faith that Jesus died and rose from the grave so everyone on earth could be in a personal relationship with God. That relationship is available to everyone who chooses to believe.

- Bible Studies
- Prayer Meetings with Moms
- Staff Devotions
- Virtual Prayer Calls
- Young Life Camp



"We have lost our biological family and God gave us all a second family that is Selamta. This is how I've come to know I have my God-given dignity and worth."
Tesfu, Forever Family Youth

"Every road I take is with God beside me, helping me to live a full life and a great one."
Senayit, Forever Family Youth

"The fellowship we have with Selamta moms and aunts on a weekly basis helped me strengthen my faith. The word of God we share releases me from stress and the Holy Spirit restores my heart in every session we have."
Menbere, Forever Family Mom

HEART & HOME

Heart & Home Monthly Partners provide the sustainability Selamta families need to thrive. Your monthly gift brings children out of institutions and into Forever Families.

"Selamta Family's love and care helps me to live happily. It also helps me to be a good person, respect others, and be loved by others. I learned a lot of different good things that will help me for the rest of my life. I feel blessed to be part of it."

Wondimagegn, Launched Selamta Youth

\$25/mo or more

Neighbor

\$125/mo **\$250/mo**

Mentor

Family

\$9000/yr

Legacy

**SCAN
QR CODE
TO JOIN**





LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

Circles are a fascinating shape, used in a variety of ways. They can represent community and interconnectedness. They can be a defensive stance of strength and security. They can also bring a variety of people together to strategize or heal. Selamta's Leadership Circle exists to encompass all of the above. By providing the core mission support necessary to take Selamta into the future, Leadership Circle is a way for your family foundation, business, or church to invest in the longevity of Selamta's programs. Children and families will be served year after year. The strategic plan of Selamta stretches beyond our current Alem Bank neighborhood, bringing our Community Center model to other villages around Addis and beyond. As we expand into Florida in 2022, this core mission support will build the infrastructure necessary to take every lesson we've learned in Ethiopia and apply it to our wrap-around care domestically. Will you stand hand-in-hand with us as a Values, Mission, Vision, or Core Partner this year?

\$50k CORE PARTNER

\$25k VISION PARTNER

\$10k MISSION PARTNER

\$5k VALUES PARTNER



VOLUNTEERS

The willingness to give time and talent is a treasure we can't fully quantify. In the last year, people all over the world have poured into our children and families as virtual mentors, YouTube teachers, in-person therapists and close, personal friends. A network of committed and talented people encourage and bolster the services available to our families, letting our children know they are worthy and known.

"After visiting Ethiopia in 2015, I was forever changed by this place and these families. It inspired me and led me to realize my own calling and mission in this world. As a middle school administrator, I love that I get the privilege of supporting an organization so dedicated to making the lives of children better."

Angie, Heart & Home Partner



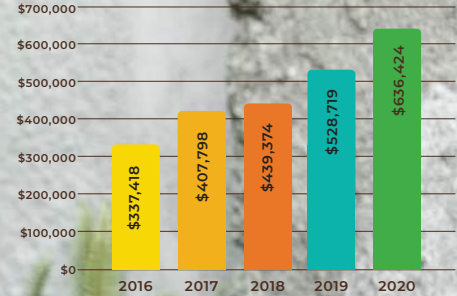
FINANCIALS

We've seen steady, incremental, financial growth year over year. The vision we've been given for the years to come is big, maybe even bigger than we realize.

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."
Ephesians 3:20-21



REVENUE GROWTH



Will you help Selamta achieve a major financial milestone?

\$1 Million in 2021



DONATE NOW





"Orphans do not need someone simply doing good deeds to them or for them; they need people to live life with them, giving sacrificially of their time, energy, input, discipline, prayer, and encouragement."

In Pursuit of Orphan Excellence by Philip Darke and Keith McFarland

"Selamta has a positive influence on my attitude towards orphans and vulnerable children. I understood that providing a little support can make a difference in the life of others. Also, my kids tell me that they want to help others in the future as a result of Selamta's work."

Abeba, Forever Family Neighbor

"Selamta's work has changed my understanding, that it is possible to be a mother for a child or children who lost their biological parents and come from different places."

Wubayehu, Forever Family Neighbor



Selamta Family Project



SelamtaFamilyProject.org



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