

SUBURBANITE SCHOOLS

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TENAFLY

Education from one school

BY SETH AUGENSTEIN
Staff Writer

Global Care Unlimited, an incorporated before-school group from the Tenafly Middle School, is living up to everything associated with its name.

The group held Nov. 19 kick-off for its latest goal: to raise at least \$30,000 to build a school in the

southern region of Ethiopia torn by years of war, poverty and famine.

The group, founded by reading teacher Mark Hyman, meets three times a week before school. But despite the early start, the students keep their focus enough to visualize and implement the beginnings of change two hemispheres away.

At the kick-off event, Global Care and Yohannes Gebregeorgis,

an Ethiopian-American, presented an ambitious plan to the public for the Ethio-American Friendship School – a new establishment with at least six classrooms in the city of Awassa.

Hyman's group has previously worked for landmine removal in Bosnia, done fundraisers for edu-

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education in Cambodia, and held a concert to buy instruments for those destroyed during the Kampuchea era of the Khmer Rouge. This latest quest, however, is just a continuation of the group's never-ending mission – and it is an equal collaboration between Hyman, the students and the community that helps the mission get accomplished.

“No matter what’s going on in the world, it’s our duty to find where we can help and do it,” he said.

The middle school kids have already done their Ethiopia homework, and they know what is at stake for their counterparts on another continent. Extensive research projects on malnutrition, education, colonialism, war, and ethnic differences have brought the plight of Ethiopia home to them. The lessons have gone beyond the traditional pictures of starving chil-

dren with distended bellies and disease-ravaged bodies.

“To see a picture like this... this is happening to 200 million people in just this area of Africa,” said Isabel Scherl.

“The 32 years of war cost lives over nothing,” added Benjamin Meisel.

“Everything – the poverty, the war, the starvation – definitely makes education suffer,” Brett Sherman said.

They and other Global Care students hope the education they provide might help reverse some alarming trends in Ethiopia. UNICEF estimates that 72 percent of children in the country do not attend school because their families cannot afford to send them. As a consequence, the adult literacy rate hovers at 43 percent. And the result of that is a literal vicious cycle.

Gebregeorgis, a founder of the lauded Ethiopia Reads program that travels the country with its “Donkey-Mobile Library,” is working with Global Care to realize his

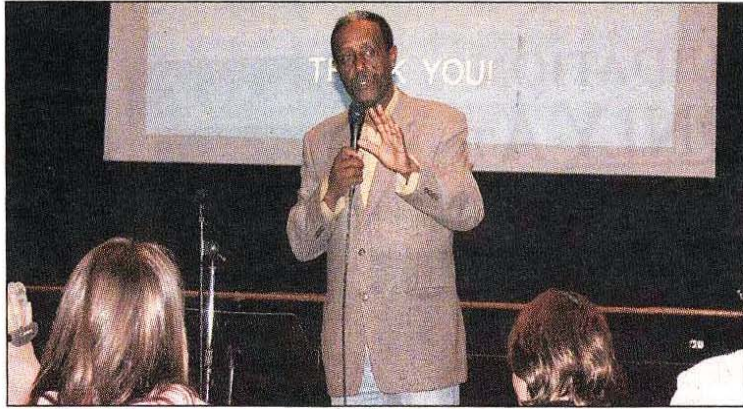
dream. That dream is for the school to hook sponsors into providing scholarships to cover the cost of the education – estimated at running roughly \$12 in U.S. currency per month per student. The Pre-K to 10th grade school is foreseen as a foothold for making a difference in the area. Eventually, that school could become a kind of sister school to TMS – complete with pen pals, e-mail correspondence and otherwise sharing a global experience.

The benefits from the Ethio-American Friendship School are seen as mutual.

“They get to use skills, to research and speak in public,” said parent Mary Ellen Scherl. “But beyond that, they’re becoming people of service.”

Isabel Scherl, her daughter, thinks it’s possible to make a difference – even if it’s only the beginning of a solution to a “huge problem.”

“Just this one little school can change a lot,” she said.



STAFF PHOTO BY JOE CAMPOREALE

Yohannes Gebregeorgis addresses the Global Care Unlimited kick-off event for a fundraiser for a new Ethiopian School.