

Berhan wants to become a teacher



Berhan at the WellWishers well in Amdi Weyane district, Samre, Tigray, northern Ethiopia

Berhan tells us her story after the well in her village was damaged during the 2020-22 conflict but has now been restored by REST.

Berhan is a 14 year-old fifth grade girl who now walks a ten-minute round trip daily to fetch clean and safe water. “We use 4-6 jerry cans daily for cooking and cleaning,” she says. **Berhan Berhe**, an Amdi Weyane district resident, shares her experience: “When this water source was damaged in the conflict, I had to walk 80 minutes round trip. The other source of water was unsecured and open.” “After 5 months of a broken well, I am overjoyed that the water point is functioning again.

I want to become a teacher to guide and shape my community’s future. Having a nearby water source is beneficial so that I may spend more time studying. Thank you for assisting us, REST.” At **REST** and **WellWishers**, we are committed to empowering dreams and ensuring access to clean water, enabling individuals like Berhan to pursue their aspirations and contribute to their community’s future.

Our Program for 2025

WellWishers will contribute a minimum of \$320,000 this year for the construction and rehabilitation of 40 wells in 37 communities and 3 schools (total 8450 users). We are very hopeful that we can add to this commitment before the end of 2025. Your generous ongoing support will greatly assist us to expand to many more than 40 wells.

WHAT A NIGHT!

Many thanks to the 77 Victorian friends of WellWishers who attended our fundraising dinner at **Nyala African Restaurant** in Fitzroy on April 12 and supported some rapid bidding on auction items. Thanks to the families who offered a great range of prizes, and to our fabulous auctioneer and MC Steve Arthurson who also interviewed Graham, one of four WellWishers Trustees, on his 40-year long relationship with Tigray and our wells program. We are grateful to Paul and Jennie Carney and Ivon and Tanya Lacy who did so much to make the dinner happen, our special guest musician Valanga Khosa, and to Yonas and his staff at Nyala Restaurant in Fitzroy who provided the venue and delicious Ethiopian food.

Special thanks to WellWishers Founder Ross Allan who offered to match any and all donations of \$5000 on the night. His offer was taken up by eight attendees! The final fundraising result? **A staggering \$102,000 was raised – funds for wells in 13 Ethiopian villages – permanent clean accessible water for 2,340 villagers!!**

The spirit of optimism, joy and generosity was just so evident as the group opened their hearts and wallets for 2,340 people in northern Ethiopia. A wonderful night, and a wonderful outcome. THANKS!



Aregay Gebremedhin, one of REST's hydrogeologists



My name is Aregay, and I am a Hydrogeologist for The Relief Society of Tigray (REST). I survey the areas in which we implement wells within the rural regions of Tigray to ensure the well will produce water for many years to come! I am very proud and honored to be a part of such an amazing organization!

I grew up in a rural community in Tigray, so I know firsthand what life without clean water access is like. I spent many years facing the hardships and dangers of walking for water. I remember waking up very early in the morning to collect water with the other young girls in my village before heading off to school. Sometimes, there would be hyenas at our local water source, and so we would have to hide and wait for them to leave before we could safely gather water for our families. This caused us to be tardy for class which was unavoidable. Unfortunately, we would be punished for our tardiness, resulting in hours of physical labour. This involved collecting rocks to assist with the school building repairs. We would spend all day after school enduring our punishment. After this we often needed, once more, to collect water. This had to be done before sundown when the hyenas and other dangerous wild animals would arrive at the water source.

I consider myself lucky because I know many young girls and women in other regions have endured a lot of sexual harassment and abduction during their long walks for water. For me it was more of an issue of physical safety from the wild animals and the exhaustion of enduring long labouring hours of punishment from being tardy for class.

Despite my adversity and struggles, I studied hard and earned good grades, allowing me to be accepted into a university! With the chance at a higher education, I knew I wanted to one day give back to my home community. I often thought of the young girls gathering water daily, risking their lives for their families as I did. I was determined to provide a better life for them and future generations. Once I began working for REST, I was able to take on my first project, a well for my home community! This was extremely exciting for me, and I was overcome with immense joy. The women and girls of my town are now able to enjoy a life of blessings thanks to the generous donors of Water to Thrive and the passionate support of REST. Together we are accomplishing such great things, and I am beyond grateful and honored to be a part of such meaningful transformations.

Article with thanks to www.watertothrive.org another great partner of REST.

The end of the Financial Year is nigh!

With our support in Australia, and the support of similar groups in Europe and North America, our partner REST continues to do amazing life-saving work - in 2024 maintaining and rehabilitating water schemes across Tigray region, including 98 hand-dug wells and 185 boreholes. We are proud to be part of their work, the communities they support, and in particular the women and girls whose lives are transformed.

Thank you for the important part you play in changing lives for the better. We can always do more, so please remember WellWishers before June 30.

All donations over \$2 to WellWishers are tax-deductible.

WellWishers: Bank of Queensland BSB 124048 or 124001 (either are OK) and Account no. 21658949

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