

-Inspiration School Project of Transformation (ISPOT) Ethiopia

~~ISPOT Ethiopia is an organization that I have launched as a Bat Mitzvah project.~~ My name is Emma Nitkin, and ~~As~~ the occasion of my Bat Mitzvah approaches, I have begun to think about my responsibilities as a young adult and how I could ~~to~~ contribute to my community ~~in some way.~~ I have decided to launch ISPOT Ethiopia, an organization to bring education to a rural Ethiopian village where schools do not exist.

I am passionate about helping others, and I became involved in charitable causes at a young age. ~~At the age of~~ When I was only two, I ~~accompanied~~ started going with my family each month to Sophia House Women's Shelter, in Rockville, MD, to provide meals for homeless women. ~~Later, I also participated, worked~~ with the Potomac-Bethesda Rotary Club, ~~in packaging food~~ at the Manna Food Center, in Rockville, MD, ~~in order~~ to provide non-perishable food items for low-income families in Montgomery County. ~~Also, I have learned about many of the places where my father travels for his humanitarian work~~ In addition, my father has shared his experiences doing humanitarian work in other countries with me. I have seen pictures of the places he works and the people that he serves in Liberia, Sudan, Uganda, Haiti, Myanmar, Cambodia, and many others, and through this have learned about human suffering and need. However, my perspective ~~was~~ completely changed two summers ago; when I was fortunate enough to travel with my family to my mother's homeland, Ethiopia.

~~Traveling to Ethiopia was an eye opening experience for me, because u~~ Until that moment ~~time~~, even though I knew I was fortunate to live in an affluent area and attend the private Jewish Day School, I never ~~actually~~ experienced in any real way how privileged I actually am. ~~Until I saw it~~ the situation there with

Comment [M1]: If this project is going to extend beyond your bat mitzvah, you will need to rephrase this.

my own eyes, I never fully understood the impact that your place of birth has on the outcome of your life.

We travelled several hours to ~~a small village named~~ Wadeye (pronounced: Waa de yee), a beautiful rural village nestled in the majestic green mountains of ~~S~~southwest Ethiopia. Despite its outward beauty, my heart broke when I saw the living conditions ~~present~~ within the village itself. There is no electricity, no running water, and no proper sanitation.

~~While visiting the village, I quickly became friends with the children that I met there.~~ Despite our differences, I quickly became friends with the village children - we bonded instantly and became connected. The children are so loving and kind, ~~but even though they~~ have no shoes and very little clothing to cover their bodies.

~~Upon spending time with them, What impacted me the most was~~ I learned that they do not have a proper kindergarten or primary school, despite the fact that there are approximately 400 children in the village, ~~and~~ ~~the little schooling that they do provide they do receive~~ at the primary school level does not begin until at least the age of ~~8~~eight. So, from birth to ~~7~~seven years old, they do not have any exposure to reading, writing, or literature of any kind. In addition to this, the ~~schooling that they do provide~~school is in a poor setting that does not have enough room, has only wooden slats for walls, no real seating areas, a mud floor, and no bathroom facilities or water available. There are no trained teachers, ~~no library or science center,~~ and there is a severe lack of ~~the necessary educational materials, and no library or science center.~~ Because it is not possible for most children to attend school, and because the schooling that is available is not of high quality, many families ~~do not have the culture of sending their children to school early, and~~ become discouraged, and instead

send their children to Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia, to live. However, this means they are separated from their families. In addition, they and often end up being exploited for child labor, never making it to the school they were promised. While spending time with my new friends, I began to really imagine what it would be like to be sent away from my parents as a young child, and it broke my heart.

Thinking about all of this, it seemed to me that this is clearly the purpose for which I am meant to work at this time in my life, and therefore, I decided that this should be my Bat Mitzvah project. I recognize that the key to helping the children and families in this village is to build a functional primary school, which begins at the age of five, to introduce these children to reading and writing so they have the opportunity to become lifelong learners and become prepared to succeed in their future studies and lives. Evidence supports that children who are exposed to early reading, writing, and literature at an early age do better throughout their schooling, and therefore succeed more frequently in life. Children in this village, though, do not have the opportunity to use their God-given potential to learn, are not succeeding, and their graduation rates from primary and secondary school is are very low, and they are not succeeding fully in their lives.

A primary school that provides trained teachers, suitable infrastructure including classrooms, desks and chairs, teaching materials, access to water and sanitation, a science center, a library, access to water and sanitation, and a playground, will not only help the children become more successful, it will also change the culture in the area to ensure that education is valued and this important window of opportunity is not missed. I have become deeply and personally committed to this project, and my vision for the school would be a building that accommodates 100-150 children, along with the furniture, supplies, and necessary

Comment [M2]: Redundant

Comment [M3]: Where does this evidence come from? Can you name a study or a researcher or an institution? Otherwise, it's just your word that it is so.

materials needed to provide a sustainable learning environment. The Ethiopian government provides teachers for approved schools. We would partner with the government to ensure that the teachers are qualified, ~~of high quality,~~ and ~~that they~~ receive continuing education and the resources they require to teach at a high standard. A village committee has been selected by the community to partner with us in ensuring that the project is sustainable. ~~The village committee, and it~~ would oversee construction at the community level and verify that the teachers provided by the government ~~remain are~~ certified and have continuing education to provide excellent education to the children. The village committee ~~will also form~~ a Parent Teacher Association in the village so that parents become engaged and empowered regarding their children's education and their children's future. In this way, the project will be directed by the community members themselves, ~~who have a deep and personal vested interest in the project.~~ ~~Tand~~ this will allow the children to acquire a solid educational foundation, and a love of learning.

Comment [M4]: You indicate on your home page that the PTA has already been formed. Which is it?

~~In closing,~~ I ~~want to take this opportunity to~~ invite my fellow "kids," along with their parents, the Jewish community, the Ethiopian community, philanthropic organizations, and ~~members of the Maryland, DC, and Virginia communities-region~~ to help launch this initiative with me. We are off to a wonderful beginning. We have already acquired the land for the building, along with permission from the government to build the school. ~~With the help of my friends and community,~~ I am confident that we can make this dream a reality. Please join me, with your donation, ~~to;~~ ~~together we can~~ begin to change the world, one student at a time!

Comment [M5]: Not necessary.

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