



*Eritrean Democratic Association, Inc.
4071 San Pablo Dam Road
P.O. Box 207
El Sobrante, CA 94803*

A periodic publication addressing EDA's objectives and activities – EDA is a "voice" for the voiceless.

Voice



Photo courtesy to an EDA member: 2006/2007 school year closing ceremony at EDA sponsored Wad-Sherifey Elementary School (Kindergarten through 8th grade), one of the refugee camps the Sudan.

Inside Stories

	<u>Pages</u>
• 2007 School year closing ceremony at Wad-Sherifey School in the Sudan	Cover
• About EDA	2
• Wad-Sherifey School Remains Open Thanks to the Rescue “Voice”	2 - 3
• Purpose and services of EDA youth centers in Khartoum & Frankfurt	3
• EDA's Festivals and Seminars in the USA and Overseas	3 - 4
• Fundraising Highlights	4 - 5
• Sponsor a Child, an EDA branch to help children in Refugee Camps in the Sudan	6
• Sponsor a Child Enrollment Form	7
• EDA Membership Form	8

About EDA

Eritrean Democratic Association, Inc.

(EDA) is a nonprofit public benefit corporation founded for public and charitable purposes under the California Nonprofit Public Benefit Corporation Law. With 501(c) (3) nonprofit status, EDA has the ability to apply for both federal and state tax-exempt status. Donations made by individuals or entities to EDA are all tax-deductible.

EDA is a voice for the voiceless. EDA supports needy children in refugee camps and war victims and handicaps, advocates for human rights and justice, restores cultural values in Diaspora, provides tutoring and mentoring to youngsters, and aware the community of teenage pregnancy and HIV/AIDS.

EDA is taking root and thriving to achieve the objectives consistent with its mission statement. EDA conducts seminars and festivals worldwide, particularly in the United States of America (USA), Europe and Africa.

EDA is membership based nonprofit organization, and anyone is welcomed to be a member under the rules and bylaws of the organization. For funding resources, it primarily relies on membership fees, fundraising contributions, and donations to serve the underserved communities. EDA needs resources and financial aid to meet its objectives.



Wad-Sherifey School Remains Open Thanks to the Rescue "VOICE"

The Wad-Sherifey school teaches between grades 1 and 6 to Eritrean children in Eritrean curriculum through the medium of Eritrean languages (Arabic and Tigrinya). Grades 7 and 8 are taught in English. Beyond grade 8, children who pass the exams join high schools either in the Senior High School of the Catholic Church in Kassala (formerly the ELF-run and UNHCR supported high school in Kassala) or other Sudanese schools. The school's director Ato Teklehaimanot Elfu (Wedi Elfu)

informed EDA's representative that the school ended the 2006/2007 academic year with 510 students of whom 315 were boys and 195 girls. Over 90% of the children passed their exams and were happily promoted to secondary school for higher education. Please note that this school was on a brink of closure for good in 2003 if it was not for rescue efforts by ELF-RC and EDA members and the unparalleled financial assistance received from Catholic charity.



Wad-Sherifey School in Action: The picture above depicts one of the classes in session at Wad-Sherifey School. EDA, along with other donor organizations, has played part in supporting the school to continue teaching refugee children.

Purpose of EDA's Youth Centers

EDA opened two youth centers in Khartoum, and it provides internet access, training materials, temporary living assistance, and public awareness seminars. Although Eritrea gained its independence from an Ethiopian occupancy, the country is still suffering from home grown tyrant regime. The deteriorating political and security situation in Eritrea evoke real fear of a looming human tragedy. EDA aware the youth and the public at large to reverse the course before it is too late. EDA believes that prospects of change for the better could only be achieved when the people are aware of the multi-faceted problems engulfing them, well informed, and equipped to effectively overcome the challenges.

The population of Eritreans in Diaspora is rising due to continuous exodus of the youth fleeing persecution by the rogue government in the country. The public awareness programs at the youth centers provide proper orientation and training to stand for their rights and contribute

their share in the Eritrean process of democratization.

EDA's Festival and Seminar Activities in the USA and Overseas

EDA's festival and seminar activities mainly focus on justice, human rights, and democratic system of governance in Eritrea and cultural display. Annually, EDA organizes and invites interested Eritreans and the public at large to participate. The events are yearned by Eritreans who oppose the dictatorial regime in Eritrea.

EDA invites scholars, human rights advocates, and leaders of Eritrean opposition organizations and provides them a platform with a purpose to address and openly discuss their views and expertise to share with festival and seminar attendees. The seminars aware the Eritrean people of the plight under the repressive Issayas Afework regime and send a united voice and message.

Festivals call on all supporters of peace and democracy to support the Eritrean people on their struggle for change to justice, reconciliation, human rights, peace and democracy. Cultural artifacts are also displayed for exhibition at the festivals. Such events are prime attraction for Eritrean musicians and artists.

Below are pictures from EDA sponsored festival and seminar activities for social and cultural events.



The picture above is EDA sponsored Second Festival in Seattle, Washington in June 2005

The picture below is one of EDA held seminars in Frankfurt, Germany in August 2006



EDA Fund-Raising Highlights

EDA operates by volunteers without any overhead or salary expenses. Sources of funds are limited to fundraising events and donations from generous individuals and organizations. EDA chapters sponsored fundraising dinner events with a cause to help disabled Eritreans and Wad-Sherifey School, both located in Kassala, Sudan. The specific fundraising dinners are sponsored by two or three families and prepare dinner at their expenses and ask for donations from the invited

guests usually \$25 to \$50 a family. The Bay-Area EDA Chapter held the following successful fundraising events:

- February 26, 2005 in Vacaville & Sacramento, California, a total of \$1,500 was raised;
- November 12, 2005 in Oakland, California, a total of \$2,550 was raised;
- June 24, 2006, in Santa Rosa, California, a total of \$1,600.00 was raised;

- November 11, 2006, Washington D.C., a total of \$3,500 was raised; and,
- May 26, 2007, Rochester, New York, a total of \$1,600 was raised.

EDA sent all the funds to school and veteran center administrators to allocate it as deemed necessary. The purpose of the fundraising drives was to assist schools in refugee camps and support and provide vocational training to disabled war veterans who incapacitated during the 30 years war for independence of Eritrea.



A gathering for fundraising dinner in Oakland California organized by the Bay Area EDA Chapter

Youth and Individual Contributions

Youth and individual contributions worth mentioning include:

- Betial Asmerom, then 9th grader at Head Royce School in Oakland, California, was awarded by her school a scholarship in the amount of \$750 for her leadership and outstanding community services in 2004. Betial, an inspired young student, donated the full amount to EDA.

Betial was so moved by the conditions of school children at refugee camps after she watched a video that showed activities of Wad-Sherifey School with her parents. The video enlightened her with the background history. Betial born and raised in the USA contrasted the students' dress code and school setting to the standard she is

familiar with in the USA. She was very curious and asked her parents "Why are they carrying their books in their hands, don't they have backpacks?" She observed that some of them were walking bare foot, and she was able to read their harsh lives on their faces. Her parents were challenged by her observation and profound questions and critics of the video she watched. From that day on, she doubled her efforts and community services to help others.



The above picture shows Betial Asmerom reading a tribute to Martyr Chairman Seyoum Ogbamichael at a memorial gathering in Oakland in December 30, 2005

- Adiam Woldu is another young Eritrean student from Chicago who learned the plight of the Eritrean refugee children via her EDA member parents. Adiam, who works part time after school, participated in a charity program of her company and was able to raise \$350 for EDA.
- Menghisteab Haile (Mengs) of San Jose, California, an EDA member, participated in the three Bay Area events stated above and donated \$100 each time for a total of \$300. Mengs also donated \$500 in 2005 after his trip to attend the 2005 Seattle USA festival was cancelled due to work schedule conflict. Mengs has also sponsored an Eritrean refugee student residing in Kassala through EDA's "Sponsor a Child" project.

"Sponsor a Child"

EDA launches a sponsorship scheme through its "**Sponsor a Child**" program for Eritrean refugee children living in the Sudan. **Sponsor a Child** will focus to ensure the sponsored child gets the opportunity to go to school and acquires the necessary skills and knowledge for a better future. EDA will strive to help the Eritrean refugee children and their families trapped in the vicious cycle of poverty to overcome difficult circumstances and achieve their dreams of self-sufficiency.

How child sponsorship works?

Sponsorship is the best way to change the life of a poor child in a developing country. Your sponsorship through EDA connects you (the sponsor) with one very real child and his or her family. Your donation can transform the life of a needy child in poverty by providing him or her with some of life's basic needs, education, health care and nutrition.

What does sponsorship cost?

It costs you less than one dollar a day. Each sponsor pays \$20 US dollars a month or \$240 a year, payable in advance quarterly, every six months or annually, whichever is convenient for you. Your sponsorship donations are tax deductible under Section 501(c) (3) nonprofit status since EDA is a tax-exempt nonprofit

organization. No deductions will be made from the sponsor's donations for administrative purposes or overhead costs. EDA volunteers will facilitate the process at no cost. Therefore, all sponsorship payments (100%) will go to the sponsored child or his/her family. If for any reason at any time, you are unable to continue the sponsorship, please remember to inform us three months in advance and within that time we will find a sponsor and ensure the uninterrupted support to the child.

What do you get as a sponsor?

What you get as a sponsor is the great feeling that comes from making a real and lasting difference in the life of a child. You will know you are making a difference through the photos and letters you receive from your sponsored child. You will also receive an annual report from EDA on project reports and how funds were delivered. As a sponsor, you may want to send cards or letters to your child to help build a relationship.

We urge you to seriously consider and commit to be a sponsor.

Contact as at:

EDA, Inc.
4071 San Pablo Dam Road
P.O. Box 207
El Sobrante, CA 94803



“Sponsor a Child” Enrollment Form

First Name _____ MI _____ Last Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State / Country _____ Zip code _____

Tell # _____ E-mail address _____

Yes, I am pleased to sponsor a child living in the refugee camps in the Sudan. With the help of my contributions, I want the displaced child to go to school, enhance his/her human dignity and grow up to a self sufficient adult.

Please sign me up as a sponsor and keep me informed of the progress.

I want to make a monthly contribution of \$20 US dollars payable on:

\$60 ___ Quarterly \$120 ___ Every six months \$240 ___ Annually other \$ _____

Please make your contribution **payable to Eritrean Democratic Association, Inc.** and mail it to:



EDA, Inc.
4071 San Pablo Dam Road
P.O. Box 207
El Sobrante, CA 94803
U.S.A.

EDA Membership Form

Yes!

I want to help displaced Eritrean children go to school, incapacitated veterans receive necessary shelter and vocational training to be self sufficient, and support war victims and displaced people.

Please sign me up as an EDA supporter and keep me informed on important development in your progress.

I want to make a contribution in the amount of: \$25 \$50 \$100

other \$ _____ to help support EDA financially. My Check is enclosed.

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Please make your contribution **payable to Eritrean Democratic Association, Inc.** and mail it to:



EDA, Inc.
4071 San Pablo Dam Road
P.O. Box 207
El Sobrante, CA 94803
U.S.A.