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FUND NEWS

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There were also useful discussions with the hospital management on how to further this training programme. Since then we have provided training to two more doctors and a nurse. The three of us are planning to return to Afghanistan in June. Having survived the dangers of Kabul, Professor Williams had a lucky escape in Christchurch. Fortunately he was out of the city at the time of the devastating earthquake but he lost all his luggage in his hotel, which was badly damaged.

Mark Bennett with patients

The 50 kilometre Walk for Women from Coogee to Turramurra (in Sydney) is being held on Saturday 11 June. Registrations have closed but if you would like to encourage the 1,200 women who are walking for the women of Ethiopia, you can make a donation via our website: www.hamlinfistula.org.au or post this slip to us with your cheque or credit card details.
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This girl has shown great courage and determination.

All this made the Chapel look so beautiful for such an important service.

The choir excelled and sang with exuberance; also passages about the resurrection were read from the Bible in both Amharic and English and our speaker of previous years gave a short talk. This was translated into English and we closed our service with prayer. Afterwards we enjoyed a lunch from our kitchen in the garden.

UPDATE FROM MARK BENNETT,
CEO HAMLIN FISTULA ETHIOPIA

The first part of 2011 has kept us extremely busy, as we expanded our activities and take on the challenges these present.

Our new centre at Metu is increasing its case load and starting to have an impact in the far west of the country. We are also seeking to build partnerships with other organizations to assist us in patient identification throughout Ethiopia so that our reach to the general rural population increases further. For months we have been working at a rural health centre at Dangia (in the region around Bahir Dar) to implement comprehensive Emergency Obstetric care. This project is now up and running and in just over 3 months 50 women have had successful Caesarean sections. The lives of a number of women and their babies have been saved and many other mothers have avoided the risk of severe injuries. The staff there are fantastic and the location is also significantly increasing as the community builds confidence in the services there.

We have supported this through supplying equipment and mentors for the newly trained staff. We hope to expand this successful model in the coming year.

Our 11 midwives, who graduated last October, are also now having significant impact in the communities where they are based. I have been overjoyed to visit some of these locations where the number of live and safe births is increasing through the skills and support which our midwives give to expectant mothers.

In March we held a special board workshop to develop our vision and strategy. This outlined the kind of organisation which Dr Hamlin and her late husband had developed and which will assist others to maintain and promote this same ethos in the future. This important matter will be discussed at our International Partners Meeting which will be held at the Hospital in early June. We are looking forward to representatives from our various Partner Funds, including Australia, coming to this meeting. This will also be an opportunity for us to show our Partners the progress we are making on many fronts and to plan for the further expansion of our work so that we are able to help more rural
There is another young woman from Somaliland at the Hospital as well and so they can talk to one another and life is much happier for them both.

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In March we held a special board workshop to develop our strategy for our next phase of work and also to keep everyone informed and update our current donors. Bennett gave an excellent talk in the Chapel, showing pictures of our five regional fistula hospitals and answering many questions.

It was a busy day, but ended delightfully with a reception given by our recently appointed Australian Ambassador, Lisa Fitzjarris. This was held in her lovely new home in the foothills of the Entoto Range, where the lights of the city below vied with the stars for brilliance! Here I met two visiting orthopaedic surgeons from Perth, who had been working at a big government hospital in Addis Ababa and were about to leave. They agreed to see some of our patients and came on the following Monday giving us good advice and promising to come again early next year when they return to work at the Black Lion Hospital.

Naturally I introduced them to Demean, whose story and successful hip surgery in London I wrote about in my last letter to you. Demean is now working full time in our laboratory and is on the pay roll, so she is very happy. We are still searching for nearby accommodation for her, but in the meantime she is staying in the home of a kind Canadian woman – a teacher whom she got to know when a school girl. She now wears specially made shoes with a light splint for her “dropped foot”, caused by the same bullet injury affecting a nerve. One of the Perth doctors has promised to “fix” this on his next visit, as he knows the injury is caused by the same bullet, which caused significant bladder and bowel injuries – with almost total destruction of the bladder and no urethra, and also a rectal fistula.

Our special Easter service

Finally I must mention our inspiring Easter service that we hold every year a few days after Easter – but this year it seemed special! Our Misgana Bet (‘House of Praise’) or chapel was packed. The choir excelled and sang with exuberance; also passages about the resurrection were read from the Bible in both Amharic and English and our speaker of previous years gave a short talk. This was translated into English and we closed our service with prayer. Afterwards we enjoyed a lunch from our kitchen in the garden.

Dr E. Catherine Hamlin AC

UPDATE FROM MARK BENNETT, CEO HAMLIN FISTULA ETHIOPIA

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Please accept the attached donation for the work of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital through the HAMLIN FISTULA RELIEF & AID FUND. Please post to PO Box 965 Wahroonga NSW 2076. (Donations of over $2 are allowable Income Tax Deductions.

June 2011

Visit our website www.hamlinfistula.org.au

Every cent of every dollar donated to the Fund is available to support the work of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital.

Please email your receipt

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Mark Bennett

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Professor Gordon Williams, the Hospital’s Medical Director, spent a few days in Australia in February on his way to a special event in Sydney with Mark Bennett and Annette Bennett, Founding Dean of the Hamlin College of Midwives will be speaking on the progress of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and the Hamlin College of Midwives on Wednesday 17 August 2011 at St Thomas’ Anglican Church corner of Church & McLaren Streets, North Sydney, at 7.30pm. Please contact the Fund’s office to advise if you will be attending on (02) 800 77 435 or emailus@hamlinfistula.org.au

Attendees will be invited to pay a small entry fee to help cover the costs of the evening.

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Lottery News

The 50 kilometre Walk for Women from Coogee to Tamarama (in Sydney) is being held on Saturday 11 June. Registrations have closed but if you would like to encourage the 120 women who are walking for the women of Ethiopia, you can make a donation via our website: www.hamlinfistula.org.au or post this slip to us with your cheque or credit card details.

Lighting a Candle will be screened at Brisbane Girls’ Grammar School on Friday 17 June 2011 at 6.30pm. For further details and to purchase tickets go to www.thegrace.com.au

DR HAMLIN'S LETTER

My Dear Friends in Australia

It is time for another letter to you all. First I want to thank you for your continuing interest in what we do here and for your support and prayers too, which we are all very grateful for, and which so encourage us.

Improving the status of country women

We know now that many in the Western world are aware of the neglect of country women in Ethiopia and in the whole of Africa and beyond, where they have no access to ante-natal care or safe deliveries. But how to address this need and how to do it urgently is another matter! I know that the local people themselves must be the spearhead, but how to motivate them is difficult. Women have for centuries been second class citizens and until they are valued and trusted as equals to men, motivation is almost impossible, and will continue to depend on efforts of the few coming from the wealthy countries of the world to be the spearhead of this task. So hand in hand with medical efforts should be education of men and women, farmers and labourers as well as educated city dwellers to raise the status of women.

But we are seeing hope for this here in Ethiopia – where education is spreading, where more and more of the intelligentsia are now aware of the needs of those in isolated rural communities all across this vast country and the Ministries of Health and Education are working together with a will to improve the status of rural women. We are just a small branch of this national need, but we are so encouraged to be able to witness improvement wherever our midwives are situated, and where we have been able to train a Health Officer to do safe caesarian section operations. Already one of these officers has done over 60 operations safely! Saving these women from an obstructed labour, a dead baby and the life long misery of a vaginal fistula. So now we are motivated to train more of the Health Officers and would welcome Australian obstetricians who would be willing to come for a few months and work in a country hospital to train Health Officers to do safe caesarian section operations. The Ministry of Health would welcome this idea, as we have already spoken to them about this.

Somali and Sudanese patients

In all our five centres and in our main hospital these injured women arrive – some even from neighbouring countries in their poverty, rejection and great need of cure. The Somali patient I mentioned and whose photograph was in my last letter is looking much better and can now he seen in our Physiotherapy Department where she goes every day. She will soon be walking with a frame, I hope!

Special August event in Sydney with Mark and Annette Bennett. See inside for details.
**Women**

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