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ART FOR ETHIOPIA

The Hamlin Fistula® Relief and Aid Fund is delighted that this exciting, eclectic and colourful exhibition of well priced works by a variety of artists will be held at the Red Door Gallery, 24 Morris Street, Summer Hill NSW on Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd and Friday 9th to Sunday 10th April 2011. There will also be a small selection of crafts, including items from Ethiopia, for sale.

The proceeds will go towards the cost of operating the Fistula Hospital which is being built by the Hamlin Fistula Relief and Aid Fund. The Hospital will provide care for thousands of women with obstetric fistula, a devastating condition which leaves women isolated, ostracised and in pain for life.

FUND ACTIVITIES

Walk for Women

A Walk for Women is being organised by women at the St James Anglican Church in Turramurra, NSW. This is to raise awareness about obstetric fistula and to support the work of the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and the Hamlin College of Midwives. It is to be held on Saturday 11 June 2011. For further details go to www.hamlinfistula.org.au/events.html.

WALK FOR WOMEN

At present our Hospital is overflowing with many patients and in our waiting ward of 20 beds there are two women in many of the beds. After several fairly quiet months we are very busy. This may be because harvesting is now over and the men folk are able to travel with their women in search of a cure for their tragic injuries.
War II to free the country from the Italian occupation, some of whom are buried here in a special cemetery.

Family Day
A few Saturdays ago we had our annual Family Day for the hospital staff and their families. We held it at Desta Mender, an ideal place for such an outing. It was greatly enjoyed by everyone – starting at 10am with a few speeches in an area decorated with balloons, flowers and streamers and loud speakers. We had a small choir and band, including a huge Ethiopian drum and a drummer! There were small children running and thither and yon. Entertainment! Medals were given out for long service, lunch served on the lawn and games organized by our Sister Ruth. I watched the always popular 3-legged race, which ended hilariously! This enjoyable day was organized so efficiently by our Administrative Staff and ended with a bus ride back to the city.

US Visit
A few weeks ago I was in America with Mark Bennett, Jacqueline Bernhard, the Dean of our Midwifery College and Dr Fekade Ayenachew, the senior fistula surgeon running our Yegalem Fistula Hospital. We went to launch our new Hamlin Fistula USA Trust and meet our three Trustees and our talented and charming Secretary and Executive Officer, Sarah Klotz, who will be in charge of our small office. They are all wonderfully dedicated people and so enthusiastic about our aims.

In Washington we saw snow everywhere, in front of the White House it was indeed a picture. We attended two Prayer Breakfasts soon after we arrived – the first for Africa, where we met the Ethiopian Ambassador and many Ethiopians we knew. Breakfasts soon after we arrived – the first for Africa, where we met the Ethiopian Ambassador and many Ethiopians we knew. At the National Prayer Breakfast next morning we saw and heard the President of America make a great speech, followed by other speeches, Bible readings and prayers. It was a most moving experience. I was indeed touched especially hearing a number of the wonderful prayers of past Presidents. These two breakfasts were a great start to our visit – which from them on we had a great day in New Jersey with ‘Johnson and Johnson’. They gave us a plaque to give friends there who have been in Ethiopia. We spoke at a bigger gathering of staff and had a TV interview. They have been interested in our work for many years and help us.

Mark and I, with Brett O’Donnell (the Chairman of our new US Trust) flew to Chicago and back to New York in the one day. A brief interview, or rather a friendly talk, with Oprah Winfrey in Chicago made our short trip to that city of snow worth the visit. Oprah was interested in all our regional Hospitals, particularly the Midwifery College’s prevention work.

Medical news
Mark Bennett and some of our senior staff and doctors, spent time in West Africa in early December for meetings with the UNFPA and the ISOFS (International Society of Fistula Surgeons). At these meetings papers were read and discussions held about the problems we all face in Africa helping fistula sufferers, and the prevention and eventual eradication of obstetric fistula.

A part time laboratory technician, Demem Bekele returned from Cairo! We had a great day in New Jersey with ‘Johnson and Johnson’ . It was such a pleasure to see friends there who have been in Ethiopia. We spoke at a bigger gathering of staff and had a TV interview. They have been interested in our work for many years and help us.

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Dr Hamlin with Oprah Winfrey, Mark Bennett and Brett O’Donnell

I have just been seeing four new patients in Outpatients with some of the 3rd year midwifery students and teaching them how to examine a fistula patient. They are a most delightful and enthusiastic set of pupils. One day soon they will be out helping women in the remote countryside.

Now I send my love, my thanks for your interest and concern for us and for those we treat.

Dr E. Catherine Hamlin AC

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 963 Wahroonga NSW 2076 (Donations of over $2 are allowable Income Tax Deductions).

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*Three digit security code on the signature strip of your credit card
Name on card
Signatory

Visit our website www.hamlinfistula.org.au

March 2011

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March 2011

More parts of the Hospital have had no quiet time, especially our Public Relations Officer, with so many visitors, some perhaps escaping from the cold weather in Europe and the USA. We have just featured a big group of Swedish Parliamentarians and this included some of our Swedish Trustees. They visited the Hospital one day and then to Desta Mender and the Midwifery College. Mark Bennett, our CEO, then took them all up to Bahir Dar to our Centre but mainly to see the new maternity wing at the General Hospital which they have financed. We have all been worried about the slow progress of this renovation and a little embarrassed that it has taken so long. However, all was well and even the equipment was there in the operating theatre and the delivery room. This will be the referral hospital for our midwives. In this large populous Province, the midwives will send to this new facility women who possibly will need a caesarean section, thus preventing a long labour, a still born baby and a vaginal fistula.

Mr Rudd's visit

Another visitor I must mention who honoured us by a visit was Mr Kevin Rudd, the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the Australian Government. He spent many hours with us and showed enormous interest in all he saw. He went to the Midwifery College which has received so much support from the Government of Australia and the Australian community. He also visited our Desta Mender village project.

We now have our own Australian Embassy here in Addis Ababa and I was privileged to sit next to Mr Rudd at a dinner our new Ambassador, Ms Lisa Filipetto gave one evening. We knew her well from her previous visits to Ethiopia when she was in Kenya. It is great to at last have an Ambassador from Australia in Ethiopia where many Australian soldiers fought in World War II to free the country from the Italian occupation, some of whom are buried here in a special cemetery.

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In New York we met some old friends including the chief reporter for the New York Times – Nicholas Kristof, just back from Carol! We had a great day in New Jersey with ‘Johnson and Johnson’. It was wonderful to see friends there who have been in Ethiopia. We spoke at a big gathering of staff and had a TV interview. They have been interested in our work for many years and help us.

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She was treated freely by a hospital in North London and the orthopaedic surgeon (who has given me two new hips) charged no fee, nor did the anaesthetist. So when the airlines heard about this generosity they gave Demen a free return air ticket!

Demen convalesced with my family in England and arrived back at the Hospital a few days ago. She now walks with 2 legs the same length and free of pain. We are delighted and she is so grateful.

I also want to tell you about a Somali patient who came to us one month after her traumatic delivery with some of the worst fistula injuries I have seen. The whole of her bladder was destroyed because there was no one to help when she was in obstructed childbirth. Her rectum was also damaged, making her plight even worse. We have one Somali speaking Nurse Aide, so we can communicate through her. At last our patient is beginning to smile and to eat the Hospital’s Ethiopian food which she finds rather strange compared to the food she is used to. She is slowly returning to some degree of happiness with all the loving care she receives from our staff. It is too soon to do any surgery for her but I will keep you informed.

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Appeal
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The Fund is happy to continue to mail out paper receipts to donors who prefer to receive receipts in this way.

Would you like an email receipt?
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Some weeks later, we picked more flowers and set off to visit again. This time we entered the large ward with many beds and wondered where Tirualem was. Suddenly a head popped up with a smiling face. There she was! She had recognised us. She was recovering well and once again she could only nod her head to express her joy.

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**LOVE, RAE**

As we left Addis Ababa and made the long journey back home I began to think about Tirualem and what had happened for her. It needs a lot of support by people like the Fund to keep the Fistula Hospital working, and it is effective in bringing hope to many women suffering and being treated.

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Cash and cheque payments only.

Gallery hours: 10am to 4pm or by appointment.

Enquiries: Juls Francesco 9799 7830.

All proceeds from the Exhibition will assist the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and the Hamlin College of Midwives.

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**Would you like an email receipt?**

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**Lighting a Candle**

The Fund is very grateful to a number of supporters who have recently organised several very successful community screenings of *Lighting a Candle*, the new documentary about the work of Dr Catherine Hamlin AC, the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital and the Hamlin College of Midwives. Recent screenings have been held at Avoca Beach, and in Canberra, Adelaide, Port Lincoln and Victor Harbour.

If you would like to organise a screening in your local area please contact the Fund’s office so that we can assist you with preparing for the event.

Screenings of *Lighting a Candle* are currently being planned in Melbourne, Brisbane and Wangaratta. Details of these screenings will be posted on our website as arrangements are finalised.

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**Lighting a Candle - on sale now!**

Copies of the documentary in DVD format can now be purchased via our website or by completing and returning the detachable slip with your payment.