

In addition to the above mentioned essentials, Ethiopia's Tomorrow supplies text books, school supplies and, through sponsorships, monthly tuition at a private school near the orphanage.

The conversation I had with Emmebeth centered around this topic as we both agreed that the majority of children in the United States take for granted all that they have in terms of education: book-bag, pens, pencils, paper, books, and now, of course, laptops, tablets and, of course, smartphones. Emmebeth told me that the children at the orphanage have such a deep desire to learn and place such a supreme value on what we take for granted: books and the knowledge contained within them.

She did not ask me to send more books; she asked me to come teach. It was this point which resonated with me as this invitation, and the way it was presented, was the hallmark of a take-charge individual.

It should be obvious that Emmebeth knows that of which she speaks: Emmebeth, at just three days old, was brought to the Abune Andreas Orphanage by

her teenage mother Emmebeth grew up never knowing anything about her parents or her background. Some of the children in the orphanage would get visits from their parents, but not Emmebeth. Even during the holidays when parents would pick up their children at the orphanage, Emmebeth was left behind. The children there told her that she was found along a river and that was why no one visited her – that she was found in the middle nowhere.

Emmebeth, always prayerful, asked God for a family. She writes, "Through prayer, faith and my own strength I was able to persevere through my early years at Abune Andreas." I think those words personify the message of this issue. She persevered.

Much later, Emmebeth, as an adult, did meet her mother who supplied an explanation as to why she was forced to place her daughter in the orphanage. To round out her family, in 2008, Emmebeth and her husband adopted a boy named Jason Belay from Ethiopia.

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Emmebeth and children from the orphanage

with the nuns, Emmebeth was told that she was the only one to return to the orphanage to visit but, while there, she saw that the place in which she grew up was worn and run down: it needed repairs and paint. Instead of feeling sorrowful, Emmebeth wondered how she could help. She used some money she had collected through fundraising and garage sales and donated it to the orphanage.

In the bio on the *Ethiopia's Tomorrow* website, Emmebeth writes that she was involved in a car accident, the result of which, ripped open her arm. While attempting to get care at a clinic, Emmebeth saw children with various deformities: children having just one limb, one eye... Inquiring as to why this was so, Emmebeth was told that because of lack of medication to treat the afflictions, the children wind up losing the limb or the eye. Emmebeth writes, "I was be-

side myself. I was heartbroken. I was very emotional to the point where I didn't care for myself any more if even I had to lose my arm. These kids do not deserve this. They didn't make a choice to come to this world. At that moment I thought about my own family who I left in New Jersey. I reminded myself what it would be like if they were indeed my children. What would I do? What if I was killed in the accident? What would happen to my family? It was that moment God whispered to my ears and said, "If you die your children have a father to take good care of them." However, who will take care of these children who don't have a family?" I thought. Who will provide them with proper medication when they need it? Who will feed them when they are hungry? Who will give them love, hug them, and pay attention to them when their feelings are hurt?