



**BREAKING NEWS – Right now 30 kids in Ghana undergoing spine surgery by Dr. Boachie's FOCOS team. We're not fully funded, and greatly appreciate contributions - from small gifts to full sponsorships of \$13K per child. Detailed information is available on each patient.**

Tax-deductible donations to JDC's spine project via [www.Rickhodes.org](http://www.Rickhodes.org)

Contact us at: [EthiopianSpines@gmail.com](mailto:EthiopianSpines@gmail.com)

Thank you! Rick Hodes, MD and the JDC-Ethiopia spine team



**ABEL**



**ALEMNEH**



**ATSEDEMARIAM**



**CHALTU**



**DAGMAWIT**

**Abel Berhanemeskel** is a small, constantly smiling, 12 year old boy from Mekele 400 miles north of Addis Ababa. He lives with his mom in a small concrete home. His mom is a school janitor. His father lives in Addis Ababa. He is #7 in his class, and wants to be a veterinarian. He loves soccer, and follows his team Barcelona closely. One day they were shopping and ran into a patient of ours, who referred him to us. Abel has a severe scoliosis with a strong angle, a limp, and has lost 61% of his lung function.

**Alemneh Bekele** is a 9 year old from 100 miles north of Addis Ababa. He speaks Oromo and Amharic, and is trying to learn English. He lives with his dad, a farmer and his mom, a housewife, in a mud home. His back started deforming at age 2. Treatment for TB did not stop the deformity. He loves playing soccer and volleyball. He wants to teach Oromo language. He has TB of the spine and has lost 66% of his lung function.

**Atsedemariam Lul** is an 11 year old girl living with her parents. Her dad is a guard, her mom a janitor. They have a 1-room mud home, with a communal latrine for 4 other families. They purchase water. She is in 7th grade and is in the top third of her class. She loves watching Indian movies with her friends. She is very good at jumping rope, despite her deformity. Her parents prayed for her and brought her to holy water without success. A former patient of ours referred her to us. She wants to be an AIDS doctor. She has progressive scoliosis with 67% loss of lung function.

**Chaltu Getachew** is a 15 year old from outside Addis Ababa. She was diagnosed with tuberculosis of the spine at age 6. She moved to Addis Ababa to live with her aunt to get better treatment. She now lives with her aunt's family – a total of 13 people in a small mud house. They share a latrine with 4 other families. She is in the top 5% of her class. Her favorite subject is chemistry and math. Her aspiration? To defend women's rights. Chaltu has a 54% decrease in lung function due to her TB spine, which is sure to progress without surgery.

**Dagmawit Fekadu** is a 9 year old living with her parents and sister in a single room mud house. Her dad is a house guard. They have a light bulb at home but purchase water and share a toilet with 7 other families. She plays with neighboring kids, and they sew clothes for their dolls. She is in the top third of her class, and wants to be a doctor. She had previous spine surgery by a doctor inside Ethiopia, but no rods were placed and her back continues to progress, and she has a 122 degree angle in her back.





**DAGUMA**

**EBISE**

**EFREM**

**ELDA**

**ELSA**

**Daguma Sisay** is a 14 year old boy from Chancho outside Addis Ababa. He speaks Oromo. His dad died 6 years ago, his mom is illiterate. They live in a 2-room mud home without electricity, and support themselves by selling whatever they can grow on their small plot of land. Daguma is in 6th grade and ranks 1-2. He wants to be an English teacher. He is verbally abused by classmates and neighbors who say that he is cursed because he has a stone on his back. His mom told us she would rather die than see this. An American building schools in his area found him and brought him to us. It was his first trip to Addis Ababa. He has lost 57% of his lung function do to his complex scoliosis.

**Ebise Tariku** is a 12 year old from Wellega, 400 miles south of Addis Ababa. Her dad died 5 years ago. Her mom is a day laborer. She lives with her brother and sister and mom in a 1 room mud hut. A local latrine is used by 18 families. They purchase water from neighbors. She is in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and ranks among the top third of her class. She loves helping her relatives with chores, and she wants to be a doctor. Her mom took her to several doctors who said there is no treatment. However a person in the waiting room referred her to us. She has severe scoliosis and underlying neurofibromatosis.

**Efrem Abebe** is a 14 year old boy from Addis Ababa. His dad had to quit his job as a guard due to poor health. His mom is a kindergarten teacher. They live in a 2 room mud hut. They have water and electricity, share a latrine with 9 families. At school he was verbally abused by his teachers, not his classmates, causing him to change schools. He loves visiting a nearby youth center to work on their computers. Quiet and obedient and wise beyond his years, he shares the burden of his parents in any way that he can. He is in the top 20% of his class, loves biology, and wants to be a software engineer. His mom was told by local doctors that his condition is untreatable, but at his youth center someone referred him to us. He has lost 54% of his lung function due to his scoliosis.

**Elda Biruk** is a 2 ½ year old girl who lives in a mud home in Arat Kilo. Her dad is a bus driver, her mom is at home with her. She has 3 friends that she frequently plays with. Her mom notices that adults look at her with pity, and older kids make fun of her. This makes the mom overprotective. We asked Elda what she wants to be when she grows up: "a lady with a purse," she replied. Her mom has taken her to several doctors, and one referred her to us. She has very early congenital scoliosis. Without the placement of "growing rods," she will have a very short lifespan. She is accompanied by her mom in Ghana.

**Elsa Debebe** is a 13 year old girl from Addis Ababa. She lives with her parents and 2 sibs. They live in a cement home and have electricity, they share a communal latrine with 9 families. She is in 6th grade and loves math, and she wants to be a doctor. Socially, life is difficult. Though she has 3 friends at school, there are others who constantly tease her, making fun of her deformity. Her teachers sometimes intervene, but their efforts are half-hearted. After school she goes to a well to bring home water for her family. Elsa has a complex deformity from scoliosis, causing her to loose 1/3 of her lung function.





**EMEBET**



**FERDOS**



**HAWI**



**HAYMANOT**



**KEBEDE**



**MEKDES**

**Emebet Tesfa** is a 16 year old orphan from Asco, outside Addis Ababa. She lives with a woman who took her in who works as a day laborer. She is in 9th grade and ranks around the top 1/3 of her class. She gets some teasing, but has trained herself to not respond. A neighborhood computer center allows her to practice there for free. Emebet wants to be a doctor. Emebet has a 90 degree angle from tuberculosis of the spine, and has lost 25% of her lung function.

**Ferdos Bushira** is a 4 year old girl from Gondar. Her dad is a tailor. Her back has been getting bad for 2 years. Her mom has taken her to several doctors, and states that she would sell everything she owns to heal her daughter. She was crying in a hospital cafeteria when a man approached her and told her about us. Ferdos has lost 58% of her lung function due to her progressive scoliosis.

**Hawi Zewdie** is an 11 year old girl from Bedele, 250 miles south of Addis Ababa. Her dad is a retired soldier, her mom a housewife. They live in a 2 room mud house, without electricity. Her 2 older brothers are both in college. She is in 8th grade and ranks in the top third of her class. She wants to be an archeologist and is fascinated by the story of "Lucy," the first human. She has 5 best friends since first grade and they spend all their free time together. She loves volunteering in her church. She has her own sheep, which recently gave birth to 2 babies. Hawi has severe scoliosis. She was accepted into an earlier round of patients, but then broke her leg and her surgery had to be put off. She has lost 69% of her lung function.

**Haymanot Teshome** is an 11 year old who lives with her parents, 2 brothers, and twin sister in Addis Ababa in a 2 room mud home. Her dad is a water technician. She is in 7th grade in the top 15% of her class. She loves biology and learning about the complexities of the human body. She has not been teased. Her problem started as a young child, and her mom brought her to the only medical care she trusts – holy water. There was no change, but an elderly man approached her in the street and told them to come to see us. She has opposite curves in her upper and lower spine from scoliosis, and has lost 57% of her lung function.

**Kebede Gudissa** is a 13 year old from Akaki, outside Addis Ababa. His dad is a retired guard, his mom is a housewife. An older brother is in teacher's college. He is in 7th grade and is in the top 15% of his class. He loves social studies and wants to be an engineer. He lives in a 1-room mud house. He has a light bulb at home, but 50 people share the latrine. He is not teased. He loves going to church, and studies the bible every day. A neighbor referred him to us. Kebede says with a smile that if he had not come to us, he would have no other option but to pray daily that God would somehow cure him. Kebede has a very significant curve from scoliosis and has lost 57% of his lung function.

**Mekdes Alemu** is a 15 year old who lives with her older sister in a rented room that they share with 3 unrelated people. They sleep together on a mattress on the floor and lean it against the wall during daytime. Their mom, 300 miles away in Wellega, occasionally sends them money. She is in 5th grade and is in the top half of her class. She loves math. She has had some teasing, and in a previous neighborhood, she was not allowed to play with other kids because of her bad back. She wants to be a doctor to help kids like her. Mekdes has very significant scoliosis, and has lost 63% of her lung function.





**MENBERE      RAHEL K.      RAHEL A.      ROMADAN      SAMRAWIT      SELAMAWIT      SKINDER**

**Menbere Samson** is a 15 year old girl from Addis Ababa. Her dad is a fireman, her mom is a hospital janitor. She is in the top 10% of her class and wants to be a doctor. They live in a mud hut with 1 room. They have no toilet. Her twisted spine started at age 2. After several hospital visits, she was referred to us. Menbere is quiet and mature and her family has given her a lot of moral help and her mom tells us that she wants to make sure that Menbere grows up with confidence, despite her problems. She has a very severe scoliosis and has lost over 70% of her lung function.

**Rahel Kedir** is a 10 year old girl who lives with her dad in Addis Ababa. Her mother died 10 months ago. Her back has been twisting since she was a baby. She is in 2nd grade, is #1 in her class of 63, and wants to be a doctor. She has severe scoliosis and has lost over 70% of her lung function.

**Rahel Ayalew** is a 15 year old girl in 8th grade who ranks in the top quarter of her class. She lives with her widowed mom and 2 older sisters in a 3 room mud home. She loves her English class, and dreams of being a nurse. Her mom believed for years that this was due to the poor nutrition she had while she was pregnant, but was later told that this was no known cause. Eventually, her mom took her to a doctor, who referred her to us. Rahel has a severe scoliosis, and has lost 60% of her lung function.

**Romadan Haji** is an 8 year old boy from South Ethiopia. Romadan's mom died several years ago and his dad refused to care for him, and he ended up in an orphanage. His mother tongue is Oromo, and now that he is in Addis Ababa, he is learning Amharic. He has not yet started school because of his back, but he is bright and funny and has good potential in the future. He has a longstanding deformity from tuberculosis with a 120-degree angle at the top of his back.

**Samrawit Mekonnen** is a 12 year old girl who lives with her dad, sisters, and grandmother. Her deformity started at age 5. Her dad was hopeful that the local hospital, which gave her pills and injections, would cure her. Not possible. She is a 4th grade student and loves math. She has a few close friends and has not experienced teasing. She loves math, and wants to be a geologist. She has a broad scoliotic curve and has lost 38% of her lung function.

**Selamawit Binyam** is a 13 year old girl who lives with her widowed mom in a 2 room mud house. They have a light bulb at home but share a latrine with 10 other families. She is in 7th grade and ranks in the top 20% of her class. She is frequently insulted at school, and had to stop wearing a back brace due to frequent taunts. Her mother prayed for miraculous healing every night until she ran into a former patient of ours who brought her to our clinic. Her goal: to be a doctor and treat her countrymen. Selamawit has progressive, congenital scoliosis, and has lost 45% of her lung function.

**Skinder Getachew** is a 15 year old who lives with his widowed mom and 4 sibs. His mom noticed his abnormal back when he was a few months old. The university hospital told her to feed him fish oil. His mom works as a day laborer to support the family. He was frequently teased when he was younger, and he worries about his short stature. He is in 7th grade and is in the top half of his class. His goal? To become an AIDS doctor. Skinder has moderate scoliosis and has lost 40% of his lung function at this time.





**SOSENA**

**TADESSE**

**WONDIMENEH**

**WORKSEW**

**YARED**

**YETNAYET**

**ZELELEM**

**Sosena Fekadu** is a 13-year-old girl who was raised by her grandmother for the first 7 years of her life due to financial problems. When she moved in with her mom, they found she had a bad back. This started a search for hospitals, doctors, and NGOs which might help her. She dropped out of school at one point due to bullying from other kids about her back, and lack of help from her teachers. Despite this, she is in the top half of her class, has 3 close girlfriends, and loves to read and watch movies. Sosena has severe scoliosis and has lost 67% of her lung function.

**Tadesse Abebe** is an 8 year old from outside Debrezeit. His dad is a farmer, his mom sells homemade beer from his home. They live in a mud home with no electricity. They use the meadow as an outhouse, and draw water from a nearby river. Tadesse has never been to school, though his dad says that he has a plan to educate him. He was treated for TB of the spine several years ago, but now has a significant deformity. His 90-degree angle is bound to get worse without surgery, leading to paralysis.

**Wondimeneh Yibeltal** is a 5-year-old boy who lives with his mom and sister. His mom supports her family by washing clothes and collecting garbage. They live in a 1-room mud home without water or a toilet. He says that all 28 of his kindergarten classmates are his best friends, and he does not experience teasing. His favorite subject is English. His back has been bending for several years and there was no hope until a woman his mom met at church directed him to our clinic. He has congenital, progressive scoliosis, and without surgery he would not live long.

**Worksew Kebede** is a 16 year old girl who lives in a 1-room mud home in the Gerji area of Addis Ababa. Her dad is a day laborer. She is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and is in the top third of her class. After many trips to traditional healers, she went to an orthopedist who referred her to us. She wants to be a doctor. Worksew has severe scoliosis and has lost 57% of her lung function.

**Yared Lakew** is a 9 year old boy from about 80 miles outside Addis Ababa where he lives with his parents. He has a moderate scoliosis and has lost 43% of his lung function.

**Yetnayet Girma** is a 13 year old girl living with her parents in a 1-room mud house. The community toilet is outside. Her dad is a day laborer, her mom sells groceries on the street. She is in 7th grade and ranks in the top 1/3 of her class. She has a severe scoliosis and has lost 60% of her lung function. A stranger in the street noticed her bad back and referred them to our spine program. Her goal is to become a doctor.

**Zelalem Gabriel** is a 16 year old boy in 8th grade. He is in the middle of his class. He has had a progressive spine deformity, which did not improve after his family took him to holy water. He has lost just over half of his lung function. His mom is a housewife, his dad is an Amharic language teacher in a high school. He thinks that his dad, who is blind from birth, is the most courageous man in the world – his dad is his hero. Zelalem wants to be an astronaut! Zelalem has a progressive scoliosis and has lost 51% of his lung function.

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