



PAAV Perspectives

December 2021

From Dr. Frew Tegene

It is an honor and a privilege writing you this letter of gratitude once again at this time of the year. Your kind donations and gifts of love have done wonders to lots of needy people and children. I haven't got enough words to express my gratitude nor the gratitude of those whom you have supported and helped change their lives.

Life has been very hard and unbearable to most people living in Sendafa, especially to those living in poverty. Your kind gifts have helped many of those people and some are alive because of the help they got from your gifts and donations. For those of us who always have daily food on our tables and who are able to change clothes, the depth and cruelty of poverty that many have to live in and pass through might seem incomprehensible. These days, there are terms used to explain the lives of such poor people. We use terms like "the poorest of the poor" or "people living below poverty". It is easy to coin words and terms to explain the lives of others who are forced to accept whatever we call them, since they have no choice and can do nothing about it. These people, "the poorest of the poor" or "those living below poverty," wouldn't complain of what we call them since they don't want the rest of us to turn our faces and hands away from them. It greatly pains me to see a person accept and endure everything as long as he or she is dependent on others. Poverty is a cruel thing. It doesn't just rob a person from physical things but also robs a person's dignity and freedom.

I have been asked by some people "why do you help such people, why not open your own clinic and make lots of money treating rich patients?" I have been asked "Is it worth it?" And my answer is always "Yes, it is worth it". I love helping others and seeing their lives changed. I love seeing a sick, bedridden person get out of bed and start earning his or her daily bread. I loving seeing a person who used to be dependent on others become self-sufficient. I have encountered many people, like Serkalem whose story I shared on the next page, whom we helped years back, who used to be dependent on others now becoming not only self-sufficient but who are glad to help others. It isn't just the physical changes that these people have experienced but just seeing them smile, seeing their faces shine with joy makes it all worthwhile. Please never forget that you are part of the reason behind all this, the ones who aren't present visibly like PAAV but who are responsible for helping these people rise out of poverty and become self-sufficient. You're the reason behind the smiles and joy of these people.

The past year, PAAV was able to help many poor people create their own small business, and we were able to provide supplementary diets fortified with vitamins and minerals to children. We were able to provide nutritional aid to sick HIV patients and also give medical help to many. We have provided health education regarding hygiene, washing hands, proper disposal of waste, how to prevent the transmission of HIV and COVID-19. COVID-19 is another scourge that has left its mark on our society, especially on the poor during the last two years. It has been extremely hard for many to keep healthy,

let alone work and support themselves or their families. With the help of your donations and gifts we have been able to help some of those impacted by COVID, while repairing and fixing some of the poorest homes.

My friends, Christmas is the time when angels visit us, it is the time when children and adults are filled with joy, the time every person young and old smiles, every home small or big is filled with smiles and laughter. But there are some who are labeled “people living below poverty” and “the poorest of the poor” who weep because of loneliness, who are anxious and full of worries because they can’t feed their children, who always fight with their spouses because they have nothing in their homes, who wet their pillows with their tears because life has always been cruel to them, whose life doesn’t make sense, who are always filled with questions nobody seems to know the answer for and who never know how to laugh or smile. They don’t need a lot to make them laugh; just a few basic necessities coming their way into their homes can change their situation. Just a visit from an angel!

You have been the angels for years and have been instrumental in changing the lives of many. Please continue the kind and good work. I and my team are eternally grateful for all the things that Friends of PAAV have been doing during the last few years. Your contributions and donations have helped lots and lots of people. Thank you very much and please continue being angels.

Dr. Frew



Serkalem's Story

My name is Serkalem, and I am 33 years old. I am the mother of 3 beautiful girls. My eldest is 10 years old and the twins are almost three now.

I contracted HIV/AIDS when I was a student. I remember being very sick in 2007 and going to the Sendafa clinic for a medical examination, where I was first told I had HIV in my blood. I was put on ART medication and follow up, which was how I got introduced to the PAAV team. They helped me recover well, which let me resume the education that was halted because of my illness.

When I completed grade 10, I was informed that there was an open spot at the Sendafa Health Center. I applied and got the job that year because I desperately needed work at that time. My job entails following up the progress of HIV patients under the clinic’s ART program. The PAAV team was an inspiration and I learned a lot from them on how to lovingly care for HIV patients and poor people.

Over the years, Dr. Frew and the PAAV team have been my closest supporters. They consulted me, cared for me, and ensured that all my needs were met, even after two failed marriages. Of all the things that PAAV did for me, the one that will forever remain in my heart is the psychological support and words of encouragement I received from them. They gave me a new purpose and enabled me to live out that purpose. I am now able to reach out to people in dire need while I joyfully raise my children.