



## Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation

### AGMF Newsletter

March 2009 Vol. I No. 1

The AGMF Newsletter is the official publication of the Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation and is published periodically to inform supporters and the public of the Foundation's work and progress.

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**National Geographic**  
 Tune in on April 3, 2009  
 at 9:00 p.m. United  
 States Central Time to  
 watch the half-hour  
 National Geographic  
 documentary on the  
 Amsale Gessesse  
 Memorial Foundation  
 rescue and adoption of  
 two dogs from the Gido  
 Cave in Ethiopia  
 mentioned in the article  
 A Helping Hand To Man's  
 Best Friends.

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#### A Beautiful Baby



He was a beautiful baby boy. He was born in October of 2008 at Yekatit 12 Hospital in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Unfortunately, I had to stand by and watch him die due to a lack of basic medical equipment. I watched as he lay helplessly gasping for air every minute of every second for 4 days. He died not because he had an incurable disease, but because the hospital lacked a simple respirator that would have saved his life. During birth, he had ingested amniotic fluid into his lungs and required intubation to eliminate the fluid. As the hospital did not have the necessary equipment for this simple procedure, this

beautiful child died. I shall carry the image of that helpless child and the feelings of helplessness, sadness, and anger with me the rest of my life. I encountered this child while on a trip there to assess the benefits of an initial donation of medical equipment from the Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation, of which I am the founding president. This equipment was the first installment in the establishment of a neonatology unit at the hospital.

The donation included incubators, phototherapy equipment, beds, intravenous cannulas, suction machines, oxygen concentrators, pulse oxy-meters, a cardiopulmonary monitor, glucometers, and an ECG machine. As a result, the mortality of newborns, especially premature births, at the hospital has, according to unofficial estimates, decreased from approximately 12% to 8%. Unfortunately, only one hospital in all of Ethiopia has any of these machines, and, unfortunately, they are too few and of poor quality. As a result, admission at the hospital's neonatal unit has doubled from approximately 200 patients in June 2007 to nearly 400 in June 2008. But this equipment, as beneficial as it has been for other babies, was not enough to prevent this beautiful child from dying.

The Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation is working to provide the state-of-the-art medical equipment needed to complete the establishment of a Neonatology Intensive Care Unit at Yekatit 12 Hospital. We are also seeking assistance to equip other hospitals with pediatric and neonatal ICU's as well. Although this partially equipped unit at Yekatit 12 Hospital unit has been a boon, it is not yet nearly sufficient enough to treat newborns and children seriously ill with such maladies as Meningitis, Sepsis, Pneumonia, etc. Children are still dying because the hospital does not have neonatal and pediatric ICU's to fend off severe diseases. Mechanical ventilators, portable x-ray machines, and wall-mounted cardiopulmonary monitors, are just some of the equipment needed to equip a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

#### A Dog Named Cupcake



Dodee met Cupcake (that's what she eventually named her) in early October 2008. Dodee, an animal rescuer in the Houston, Texas area founded PAC, Princess Annie's Clan rescue group



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and safehouse. Dodee was called by a local public animal impound about a pit bull that was pregnant and scheduled to be euthanized. Dodee made the decision to rescue Cupcake into the group to have her puppies. The next morning, Cupcake was taken to the vet who determined that she was not pregnant but suffering from a very severe case of heartworm disease which accounted for the bloated abdomen, huge spleen and fluid retention. The vet didn't give her a good chance of surviving but, on Dodee's insistence, put her on meds to alleviate some of immediate symptoms and to possibly work on a treatment for the heartworm in the future. Dodee took her home and continued giving her the medications. Cupcake settled down and her condition improved but the distended stomach did not go down completely.

One evening in late November, Dodee went to check that Cupcake was in her bed, a crate that had been fixed up with a liner and blanket. She looked in and saw Cupcake and a newborn puppy. An hour-and-a-half later there was a second pup. This was quite a surprise as the vet had said that the medications would terminate any pregnancy, should there have been one too early to determine. By morning there were still only two puppies, but it was clear there were more to come. So, it was back to the vet for an emergency c-section resulting in a total of eight puppies: six healthy, one deformed, and one runt that died that night. Dodee took mom and her puppies home. But now, sick as she was from having a severe case of heartworm (the vet said that she was one of the worst cases he had seen) and recovering from the c-section and a variety of other ailments, Cupcake nursed her new litter. She was so weak from her ordeals that she had to nurse them sitting up just to catch her breath.

Shortly thereafter, Animal Control delivered another pregnant dog to Dodee just as she was giving birth. Dodee made up a crate for her in a comfortable spot in the garage. Cupcake paced back and forth in front of the garage door and tried to get Dodee to go out there. She wouldn't give up. When Dodee checked on the new puppies, she discovered that the new mother had moved her litter to the back of the garage and left them to die. She collected the new puppies and took them inside. Cupcake was excited and led her to her own puppies in the bedroom. She adopted these new puppies as her own. She licked them clean and nursed them together with her own litter which was two-and-a-half weeks older. Somehow she must have known that the new puppies would not be safe with their own mom. Despite her own poor health, Cupcake was willing to take on more.

All of this took its toll on Cupcake. She became even weaker and her lungs began filling with fluid causing her to gasp for air. Her health deteriorated so quickly and so drastically that Dodee was certain that she was going to die. In a panic she called Dr. Anteneh Roba of the Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation to ask for help. The AGMF is a partner of Princess Annie's Clan and has assisted with various rescues from time to time. Dr. Roba told her to meet him at a specialty veterinary hospital where Cupcake was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit. When finally released, Dodee was told that Cupcake could no longer nurse the puppies. Dodee brought Cupcake home and put the puppies in her bathroom and made a bed for Cupcake in another part of the house. Dodee had to go out for an hour, and, when she returned, found that Cupcake had broken down the baby gate confining her to her room and the baby gate in the doorway of Dodee's room. She managed to open the bathroom door and drag the crate with the puppies out of the bathroom, tearing up the carpet to get the crate over the door ledge. Cupcake then turned the crate over and pulled out the liner and blanket through the holes in the bottom. She carefully got the babies out through the same large holes in the bottom of the crate and dragged them over to a corner of the bedroom. When Dodee came home that is where she found Cupcake nursing the puppies. She gently took them away and separated them again. PAC's rescue and adoptions coordinator, Julie Anna R. took half of the puppies and they shared the responsibility of bottle feeding the lucky puppies. The puppies are healthy and growing and have been adopted out to loving homes. Cupcake is also doing well, and we are proud and honored to be a part of her life.

### **A Helping Hand To Man's Best friends**

The Amsale Gessesse Memorial Fondation first foray into animal rescue was in July of 2007 when it worked with the Homeless Animal Society of Ethiopia (HAPS) to rescue four dogs that had been thrown into the infamous Gido Cave and left to die of starvation and dehydration. The Foundation subsequently petitioned the government and the cave was closed to prevent its further use for the abandonment of dogs to a hideous death. The government closed a week later.

That was the beginning of AGMF's involvement in saving homeless dogs from euthanization

and call attention to the plight of homeless animals in Addis Ababa and, indeed, of much of Africa. The four dogs rescued from the cave were subsequently brought to the United States for adoption to call attention to the desperate problem of homeless dogs in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and, indeed, throughout many parts of Africa. At this time they have all been placed in good homes, and National Geographic will be airing a half-hour documentary on the rescue and adoption of two of these dogs on April 3, 2009 at 9:00 p.m. Central Time.

Moving forward, the Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation put together a coalition with Best Friends of the United States and the Humane Society International. Working together, the coalition recently signed an agreement with the City of Addis Ababa to begin to deal with the over 100,000 to 150,000 homeless dogs that roam throughout the city. As a result of no one caring for these animals, they are left on their own to forage and often fight for their food and existence. Many of them carry rabies and pose a serious threat to the population, especially the children who often innocently attempt to play with them. The agreement establishes a pilot project to humanely spay/neuter and vaccinate 1,200 homeless dogs in a sub city of Addis Ababa for 9 months thus reducing the stray population and reducing the incidence of rabies in the human population-saving not only the animals' lives but also human lives. Best Friends/USA is providing 4 professionals, and HIS is providing 7 from India to train and assist 6-10 Ethiopian vets and 10 dog catchers. The project began on March 16, 2009 and, when successful, will eventually be extended to include the whole city. More detailed information on the spay/neuter program may be found at [www.amsalefoundation.org](http://www.amsalefoundation.org).

### **The Birth of a Foundation**

In July of 2006, Dr. Anteneh Roba and Seble Nebiyeloul founded the Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation and named it in memory of Amsale Gessesse, their beloved mother and aunt, respectively. They assembled an impressive Board of Directors that shared their belief that all living things share the same life force from single-cell organisms to highly developed, complex human beings and inherently entitled to respect and compassion. The Foundation is dedicated to preventing, alleviating, and abolishing the suffering of human and non-human animals. Currently, the foundation is engaged in a variety of projects in Ethiopia and the U.S. More detailed information about the Board of Directors and mission of the Amsale Gessesse Memorial Foundation and the various projects and their progress can be found on the Foundation website at [www.amsalefoundation.org](http://www.amsalefoundation.org).

**Donations:** It is no news that great work such as the Foundation and its partners are engaged in requires money to bring it to fruition. We need as many partners such as yourself to accomplish the goals of the foundation. Please consider making a donation because there are many less fortunate in the world in need of your help. If not you, then who will help them. Please consider becoming a Friend of the Foundation by pledging a monthly donation to these good works. Simply click on Donation and filling out the brief form and e-mailing it to donation [www.amsalefoundation.org](http://www.amsalefoundation.org). Any amount you are able to give or pledge is greatly appreciated.