



NEWSLETTER: ISSUE APRIL 2017



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A story* about an Ethiopian woman

Maria (age 24), mother of one daughter

Women who get support from MCRC are all very special in their own way. Each is different, with different talents and interests. This is what makes working at MCRC so valuable and exciting. Although every woman is unique each has got through a personal life-crisis. Unique though they are, they are, nevertheless connected by the traumatic experiences that have led them to MCRC.

If you met Maria today, you would see a modest and pretty woman. Having successfully completed sewing and embroidery training, she often goes to the market with the other women to sell their dresses and bags. It was nonetheless a long and hard journey to reach this position. As the firstborn of the nine children in her family, Maria could not hope for an education. At the age of 9, she had to collect and carry firewood and walk for an hour to sell it in the market so she could support her family. In the MCRC video that was released last year, the opening scenes show women carrying firewood on their backs down a road. Although these pictures might be difficult to believe at first, Maria collected wood this way for many years. The laborious work and the poor treatment from her family members eventually became too much. When she was 10, she ran away from home and found work as a house maid. At the age of 14, she worked as a daily laborer on a construction site just to get by. While working on the site, she met a man with whom she began a relationship. She and the man rented a house where they began a life together. When she found out she was pregnant the man left her alone with everything. She tried all kinds of traditional abortion methods but none of them worked. Pregnant and helpless she returned to her family only to find her mother pregnant as well and her father suffering from a drinking problem. Not welcome by her father, she was kicked out of the house after just a few days. Her mother took Maria to her friend's house for temporary shelter. When her baby, Yordanos was 14 days old, Maria had to seek support from NGOs. This is how she came to the MCRC.

Despite being in a safe place, Maria initially suffered from the trauma of her past life. She was very fragile and struggled through ups and downs. When her daughter said "Ababa", which is the equivalent of the English word "daddy", she became very upset. Once, she even threatened to kill her daughter because of this.

Nevertheless, after using different therapeutic services she got from the MCRC, Maria stabilized. She received medical care, a safe house, food and transport allowance. Furthermore, after successfully completing her sewing and embroidery training, she is already working with the sewing association and is on her way to becoming fully independent.

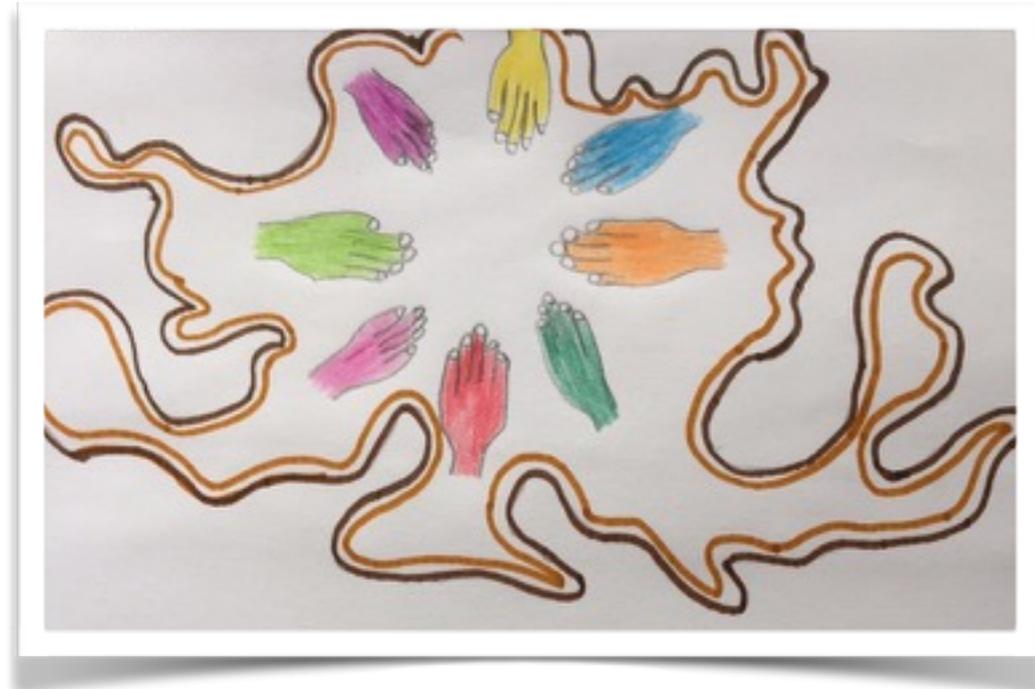


Maria, age 24

* To protect the privacy of our women and mothers, we won't describe in detail their tragic and violent experiences which often implicate physically and emotional injuries. Name is changed

Stronger Together

Young Adults engage with the MCRC



Institutions like the MCRC accept and are thankful for any kind of help. Help can take the form of financial support, donations in kind or even friends who volunteer and lend a hand. The MCRC's international friends and promoters are what make it so special. It is so nice to see how even young people are engaged and want to help other children. Abel, Biruk, Kebron and Tihta attend a private school in Addis Ababa and are in 12th grade. Although they come from loving families and do not need support from the MCRC, they share a history with us. A former teacher at the American International School who values the MCRC's work, suggested that they volunteer at our facility in the summer of 2015. Said and done! Soon thereafter, they supported the MCRC teachers and were especially helpful with teaching our children mathematics.

Depending on their availability, they still regularly visit the center. The youngest ones were particularly happy about their last visit. Although they are still too young to study mathematics, they were ecstatic to receive the knitted jumpers and hats that Abel's mother made for them.

The MCRC also gets support from young people in Germany. 12-year old Emily from Norderstedt presented on the Mother and Child Rehabilitation Center to her class and thereby helped us raise valuable awareness for the center. Moreover, we are always impressed to learn that some of the donations in kind we receive from children were not easily parted with.

The entire MCRC team would like to thank all children, juveniles and young adults from the bottom of our hearts! We are deeply impressed by your engagement at the center and around the world! The desire to help other children at such a young age reveals true strength of character! Thank you!

New Ways

Changes in the MCRC Concept

The Mother and Child Rehabilitation Center works together with officials in Addis Ababa who share the wish to help women and children achieve an independent future. Even though the officials are happy with the work that is done at the center, they are now asking for more support in reuniting families. This is because the MCRC has become a home, not only for orphans, but also for children whose relatives could not take care of them themselves or where the situation at home was so difficult that the MCRC was the only solution. This is driven by a concern about these children not growing up in a traditional family environment. In order to help them with their goal of strengthening family relationships and bring families together, the MCRC must give custody to the relatives.

The children will continue to come to the MCRC after school to do homework, play sports and receive therapy with the only difference being that they will spend their evenings and nights with their relatives. According to Jutta de Muynck, “we have always tried to promote the cohesion of the family and leave the children in their family environment”. She goes on to say that, “this new regulation confronts us with challenges and concerns that we will discuss and solve together with the officials”. Regular meetings will be held to plan the implementation and to negotiate exceptions. Many of the children are orphans and in some cases a return to their original surroundings might threaten a child’s development. The MCRC is confident that solutions in the interests of the children will be found.

Besides reducing the number of children staying at the center, reuniting families entails a lot of effort. The conditions in some households are so poor that the MCRC must organize beds, linen as well as other furniture. In some cases, relatives will not be able to afford having the children at home and so the MCRC will have to subsidize the rent to make sure that the children have a roof over their heads. Furthermore, transport between the families and the center needs to be expanded so that the children can continue to attend. Since these changes can make some of the children anxious, a psychologist has been hired part-time to accompany them during this difficult period.

It is important to emphasize that the changes taking place will only affect accommodation. The values embedded in the MCRC as well as the support it provides in education, sport and therapy will remain unchanged.

Projects and Special Topics

Book Recommendation

The Book of Joy

Books accompany people around the world throughout life. Jutta De Muynck, head of the MCRC, avidly recommends *The Book of Joy*.

Jutta De Muynck: “In my Christmas letter, I spoke of the danger of losing hope in the face of war, violence, terror and corruption. Our children, young adults as well as grownups need strong and charismatic role models. In this book, I found such role models who have given me new courage”

“His holiness the Dalai Lama and Archbishop Desmond Tutu are two of the most important personalities of our time. Although their lives have been hampered with hate and danger, they radiate an indefatigable joy.

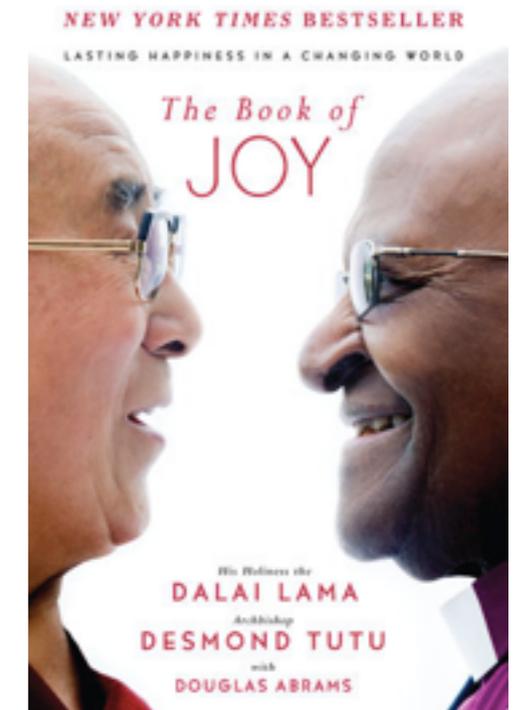
In *The Book of Joy* these two figures unite their experiences and the wisdom of their world religions to a common realization: Only profound joy can positively change the life of an individual as well change our perception of the world. We can develop this energy inside of us and share it with others independent of our daily struggles. As a result, our joy becomes a fuel that not only provides us with love and meaning in our lives but also gives us hope and peace in our insecure world.”

Source: *The Book of Joy*

Would you like to recommend a book to the MCRC community? Which book gives you courage or moves you? Is there a book that took you away from home and brought you into the Ethiopian or African world?

Send us your recommendation with a short personal statement to team.mcrc@icloud.com

We will collect all recommendations and publicize them.



The Book of Joy
Authors: Dalai Lama and
Archbishop Desmond Tutu
with Douglas Abrams

Greetings from the MCRC

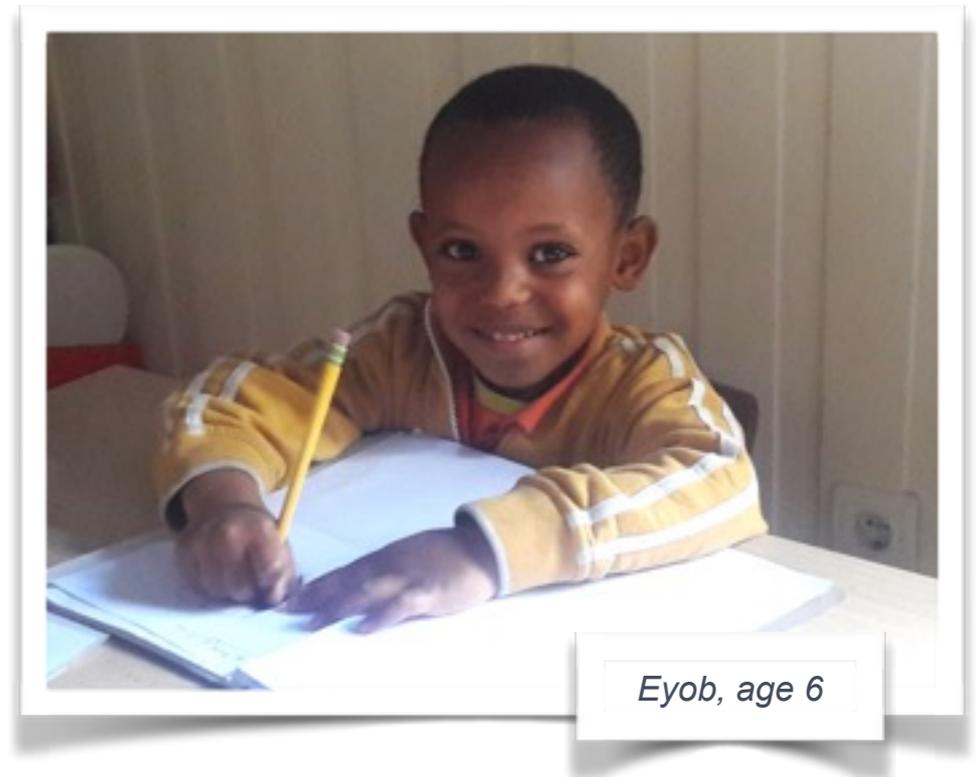
The MCRC is an organization with diverse personalities, talents and characters. We warmly welcome you to look behind the scenes and get to know someone new in every newsletter. Today we are introducing 6-year old Eyob.

Eyob is a healthy and active young boy. His mother left him at the center in 2012 when she left to work in Saudi Arabia. The whereabouts of his father are unknown.

Nonetheless, Eyob is happy and attends pre-school at the MCRC where his teachers enjoy having him in their class. He gets along well with his peers and loves to play during break time. He is particularly interested in sport and self-defense training.

Due to his situation, he is one of the MCRC children who will be affected by the recent restructuring of the Women and Children Affairs Bureau to reunite children with their families.

As soon as relatives are found and the question of accommodation is settled, he will have to move out of the center. To be sure, the MCRC will continue to support Eyob in his education and welcome him to many more afternoons of playing.



Greetings from the MCRC

This page will be shown in every newsletter issue. The children of MCRC shall participate creatively.



My plan of the future

My future plan is to finish school with great success, join university and study to be a laboratory technician. Why I want to be a laboratory technician is because I like the subject biology which studies microorganisms. The other reason is because I think the role of the laboratory technician is very important in treating patients. No matter how smart a doctor is unless he got correct lab results, he will not succeed in treating the patient. I also think about the health problem in our country and the need for more doctors and laboratory technicians.

To achieve my goal, I am properly using the educational support I am getting from MCRC. In this semester, I stood first from my class. Next year, I sit for the national exam. I Work hard to score good results and join preparatory school for university. I strongly hope that MCRC will continue supporting me to achieve my goal.

Information and Contact details



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***„Be the change you wish to
see in the world.“***

Gandhi

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