

HabenEri

SEMI-ANNUAL
NEWSLETTER

Fall / Winter 2026

A volunteer-led 501(c)3 nonprofit committed to supporting Eritreans with disabilities from war, accidents, or natural causes.

Inclusion Builds Stronger Communities

They stood for Eritrea. Now let us stand with them.



ACCESS



OPPORTUNITY



COMMUNITY



DIGNITY



FOR ALL

A more inclusive Eritrea is a brighter tomorrow for all.



SERVE. SUPPORT. RESTORE DIGNITY.



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*support
empower
include*



HabenEri

HABENERI Inc.

Semi-Annual Newsletter

Fall / Winter 2026 Issue

**RESTORING
DIGNITY
ONE LIFE AT A
TIME**

Disability is not the
end of productivity.

With the right
opportunity and
support, ability finds
another way.

It's not how
much we give but
how much love
we put into
giving.



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Featured Campaign

\$15 MONTHLY GIVING

Become a sustaining HabenEri member for \$15 per month or \$180 per year. Reliable monthly support helps fund mobility, medical, and disability-support projects.

Message From HabenEri President

A brief note to members, donors, volunteers, and supporters

As we approach the end of 2026, I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board of Directors of HabenEri to thank all donors and members of HabenEri for their continued support and commitment to the mission of this organization.

I am happy to report that the tail end of 2025 and first half of 2026 showed meaningful increase in donations to HabenEri. Active campaign by dedicated individual supporters and generous airtime by YouTubers have been extremely valuable in advancing our message and campaign goal of serving the needs of disabled people in Eritrea. It goes without saying, your continued support and partnership will remain vital to the ongoing growth of HabenEri and fulfillment of its mission.

Even though we are happy to celebrate the steady growth of HabenEri in its effort to help disabled people in our country of heritage, there are also some challenges we need to overcome. The less than expected enrollment of active dues-paying membership is a concern. This is despite active drive for membership and advocacy through direct contact and media endorsement from several YouTubers. We need individuals who can take lead in starting HabenEri chapters in their vicinity. We need ambassadors who are willing to make phone calls and small group get-togethers to get the word out on HabenEri and its mission.

Disabled people in Eritrea face challenges of daily living. They need help in meeting challenges related to medical, emotional, social, and economic needs. Similar challenges are commonly seen in addressing the needs of disabled civilians and war veterans even in highly industrialized and wealthy nations like the US. The government of Eritrea has received praise for the exemplary manner it tries to address the needs of its disabled citizens relative to its economic and resource status. That is when not-for-profit organizations like HabenEri come in to fill the gap. We aim to fill this gap by raising awareness and providing focused but impactful support to supplement local support.

Continued reading on page 2



Haile M. Mezgebe, MD

If we all wait for someone else to act, nothing will change. Every one of us can contribute something—our time, our skills, our voice, or our financial support. What matters is that we choose to participate.

2026 - 2027 FOCUS

- Accessible medical transport
- Denden Hospital support
- Modern prosthetic production
- Membership & chapter growth

Message From HabenEri President

A brief note to members, donors, volunteers, and supporters

Since its inception, HabenEri has donated financial and material support to improve the quality of life of disabled communities in Eritrea. We are currently engaged in a campaign to purchase a modern Medical Transportation Vehicle appropriate for the environment. This vehicle will meet the needs of the disabled who lives in the densely populated city of Asmara and its environs. This vehicle will have basic medical equipment and supplies, will have a hydraulic lift and space to handle several wheelchairs patients. This will allow disabled individuals to be transported from their homes and other facilities to appropriate hospitals (for procedures, etc.), clinics and doctors' offices.

The second Medical transportation Vehicle will be equipped with four-wheel drive so that it can travel to remote locations of the country to transport disabled patients from rural clinics to referral centers. Our future goal is to have several of these vehicles for the various regions of the country.

These two initial specialized vehicles will cost approximately \$150,000 to \$175,000 depending on the manufacturer and location of purchase.

We are also considering sponsorship of other projects including motorized wheelchairs, various support devices, medical equipment/supplies to meet the needs of the paralyzed, bed-ridden patients. In the long run, we aim to sponsor the installation of a factory that will manufacture most of the essential items needed to support disabled populations including 3-D printing of artificial limbs. This goal aims to minimize or even eliminate the need to import essential items for this patient population. The space for the manufacture of these products have already been identified. Our goals are lofty, but we have confidence that we and our team of supporters will prevail.

We cannot do any of these without your support.

HabenEri need your continued support, financial support and participation in our campaign to increase membership and secure funding from international organizations, and foundations.

As President of the board, I am encouraged by what we have accomplished so far, but even more encouraged by what we can accomplish together in the months and years to come in our journey to improve quality of life in those less fortunate than us.

We remain committed to strengthen this organization, expand our impact to the community, and improve our effectiveness, and ensure that every contribution of time talent and financial support make meaningful deference by committing our resolve to exercise highest standard of stewardship in handling your generous contributions.

Thank you for standing with us, believing in our mission and being an important part of this organization. Your partnership is deeply valued, and we look forward to continued journey together and support of this organization.

ERITREA VISIT & MEDICAL MISSION

Leadership meetings, partnership-building, and direct service on the ground



Story Summary

HabenEri President Dr. Haile Mezghebe and Vice President Dr. Aron Kefela recently visited Eritrea for meetings and medical mission work. They met with the Eritrean National War-Disabled Veterans Association, relevant government representatives, and local partners.

The visit strengthened relationships, provided a clearer view of current needs, and helped connect HabenEri's fundraising and project planning with conditions on the ground. Recent HabenEri field reporting has highlighted continuing needs for mobility equipment, equipped medical transport, rehabilitation support, wound-care supplies, and trained healthcare professionals.

KEY TAKEAWAY

Partnerships and direct observation help HabenEri focus resources on practical needs that can improve mobility, access to care, and daily quality of life.



[Dive deeper into the full story on page 14](#)

A Brief Conversation with HabenEri VP Dr. Aron Kefela



- Can you share a memorable experience from the medical mission?

The time I have spent at the denden clinic visiting the disabled veterans was most memorable for me. The hope and optimism expressed by these heroes and heroines despite the chronic medical as well as physical challenges is not something I can express in few words. I learned a lesson of a lifetime that one can always rise above any challenges he or she may face.

- What did you learn from Eritrean healthcare professionals and local organizations during the mission?

I have witnessed and learned first hand how to provide good patient care despite significant resource limitations and constraints. The thirst to learn and dedication to serve is unparalleled and has given me a sense of renewal to better as I continue to serve in my local community as well as future mission trips.

- How could Eritrean healthcare professionals living in the diaspora contribute through medical missions, training, consultation, or donated resources?

There is a huge opportunity to exchange experience, teaching opportunities, and provide material support in broad areas of the medical field.

- How does inadequate transportation affect medical appointments, rehabilitation, follow-up care, and patient outcomes?

Inadequate transportation is posing a significant challenge and limiting factor. It poses difficulties including not being able to arrive on a timely manner to appointments, follow-ups, and long term care including rehabilitation centers. This challenge is even many folds higher for individuals with physical disabilities.

- How could Eritrean healthcare professionals living in the diaspora contribute through medical missions, training, consultation, or donated resources?

Medical professionals in the diaspora could collaborate with the health ministries and other relevant bodies to set up targeted medical mission trips, exchanging hands-on experiences, in person teaching, virtual teaching, and by providing material support to areas of critical need.

- What improvements would you recommend for future HabenEri medical missions?

Collaboration of diaspora medical professionals and local medical professionals to identify areas of need ahead of time and planning could result in more impactful medical mission trips.

- What message would you give to young Eritrean professionals who are considering volunteering with HabenEri?

Volunteering provides a sense of living with purpose and provides the opportunity to individuals ors to multiply their set of skills and knowledge. Serving through HabenEri provides an opportunity to serve individuals that made the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of their society and nation which takes this noble task even a much higher level.

ACCESSIBLE MEDICAL TRANSPORT PROJECT

A practical step toward safer mobility, medical access, and dignity



FUNDRAISING PROGRESS

48.%



Target: slightly above \$286K • Goal year: 2027

Why this project matters:

HabenEri is raising funds for two complementary medical transportation vehicles designed to improve access for people with disabilities in Eritrea. The plan includes an accessible passenger vehicle with wheelchair securement and lift capability, plus an ambulance/medical transport vehicle for patients who require higher levels of assistance.

The vehicles are being selected for Eritrean operating conditions, including heat, dust, village roads, mixed road quality, safe wheelchair loading, and practical long-term maintenance.

Accessible Van	1
Ambulance Transport	1
Projected Cost	286K
Target Timeline	2026



ACCESSIBLE MEDICAL TRANSPORT PROJECT



People • Access • Dignity • Healthier Futures

HabenEri 2026 Project
Medical Transportation / Ambulance
 With Wheelchair Access For Eritreans With Disabilities.

TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Mobility Creates Opportunity

HabenEri.org
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NORTH AMERICA SUPPORT GROUP
 ERITREANS WITH DISABILITIES

EQUITY IN TRANSPORTATION
 A STRONGER, MORE INCLUSIVE ERITREA



SAFE & DIGNIFIED

Hydraulic wheelchair lift for easy and respectful patient access.



LIFESAVING CARE

Equipped with stretcher, oxygen, first aid, and emergency equipment.



COMPASSION IN ACTION

Delivering hope, dignity, and care to those who need it most.



DONATE TODAY

YOUR SUPPORT CAN SAVE LIVES AND CHANGE DESTINIES.

Your support helps provide safe stretcher transport, wheelchair access, and emergency care for those in need across Eritrea.

SCAN ME



FOR EASY



Send your donation to HabenEri via

Zelle (470)559-2936.



HabenEri.org

"When we come together with compassion and action, we build a healthier, stronger, and more inclusive Eritrea."



TOGETHER, WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

HABENERI WELCOMES THE NEWLY FORMED DMV AREA CHAPTER

Eight months of organizing culminated in a successful May 16, 2026 fundraiser in Washington, D.C.



BUILDING A NEW CHAPTER

Since its inception, HabenEri has worked to build local chapters in major U.S. cities by encouraging community leaders and volunteers to organize around the mission.

Because the Washington, Maryland and Virginia area is home to a large Eritrean American community, the DMV was seen as an important place for a strong and productive chapter.

A core group of dedicated volunteers spent about eight months laying the groundwork. Their efforts culminated in the official formation of the DMV Area Chapter and a successful fundraising event at ECCC in Washington, D.C., on May 16, 2026.

A STRONG COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Although the event competed with local graduations and weddings, attendance exceeded expectations. The fundraiser generated support for Eritreans with disabilities, but its greatest success was introducing HabenEri and its mission to more people in the community. The event also brought in new dues-paying members.

The audience included young professionals, middle-aged supporters and longtime community activists. Many attendees expressed appreciation for the new chapter and encouraged its leaders to continue building a meaningful local presence.

The event depended on volunteers, local businesses and individual supporters who donated time, talent and resources—some spending days preparing and decorating the hall. HabenEri also thanks the YouTubers and media supporters who used their platforms to promote the May 16 event.

As the new leadership develops its plan of action, HabenEri looks forward to seeing the DMV Chapter grow in the months and years ahead.

Dive deeper into the full story on page 20

Volunteer spotlight

Dr. Yemane Habtu and Abrahazion Habbtu on service, sacrifice, and passing the torch



Dr. Yemane Habtu & Mrs Abrahzion Habtu

WHY THEY SERVE

"We feel a deep responsibility to honor their sacrifices by supporting those who continue to live with disabilities."

FROM COMMITMENT TO ACTION

After their son's wedding in Washington, D.C., they drove to Dallas to volunteer at the Eritrean Festival—raising awareness, recruiting members, and supporting HabenEri's medical transportation initiative.

Dr. Yemane Habtu and Mrs. Abrahazion Habtu describe volunteering with HabenEri as a responsibility rooted in Eritrea's history and their own connection to the struggle for independence. They were introduced to HabenEri by Nurse Aster Mekonen, whose dedication encouraged them to become involved.

At the Dallas festival, they spoke directly with visitors about HabenEri's mission and encouraged people to become sustaining members for \$15 or more per month. Many visitors responded positively and said they wished they had known about HabenEri sooner—an encouraging reminder of how much opportunity remains to expand community awareness and support.

For them, volunteerism means freely giving time, talent, and resources to strengthen the community. Looking ahead, they hope to pass the torch to younger Eritrean Americans—professionals, entrepreneurs, business owners, and future leaders—who can bring new energy, ideas, skills, and resources to HabenEri. Their message is clear: together, the community can honor sacrifice by improving the lives of people with disabilities in Eritrea.

Dive deeper into the full story on page 21

AMPLIFYING THE MISSION

Using Media to Build Awareness, Membership, and Support



HABENERI SAYS THANK YOU

HabenEri is grateful for:

- Biniam Semereab VAYNAK MEDIA
- Daniel Teklai of EritreaNext
- Alem Zemo and his team of DmtsiEritawyan Yttebry
- Solomon Tesfamariam of Solo Media
- Beshir of Eritrean Unity Worldwide EPLF -1
- Akililui Sahle of Zula Eri Media

whose continued support has helped carry our mission to a wider Eritrean audience. By using their platform to share our work, Their helped us for more people to discover HabenEri and understand why supporting Eritreans with disabilities matters.

REACHING NEW PEOPLE

Biniam regularly announces HabenEri events, fundraising campaigns, and community activities on his channel. His efforts have helped bring new members, donors, and supporters to the organization—turning media exposure into meaningful community participation.



COMMUNITY & PROJECT UPDATES

Short updates for members, donors, volunteers, and chapter leaders

Dallas Festival

10,000 attendees, approximately \$18,000 raised in donations, and \$5,000 in sales.

New Chapters

Dallas and Seattle organizing efforts continue as HabenEri works to strengthen its national chapter network.

\$15 Monthly Giving

Recurring donations help create dependable support beyond one-time events.

Young Volunteers Needed

We are looking for Volunteers with the following skills: Grant Writing, Social media, video, photography, Web Disgin/Admin, and outreach help are needed.

Ambassadors

Members can invite friends, family, and local communities to support the mission.

Next Steps

Finalize vehicle specs, continue fundraising, and strengthen partner relationships.

YOUR SUPPORT MOVES PEOPLE FORWARD

They stood for Eritrea. Now let us stand with them.

WE PAID THE PRICE FOR SAFEGUARDING FREEDOM. WILL YOU STAND WITH US?

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GIFT**



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WAYS TO GIVE

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\$180/year

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HabenEri is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

FROM PRESENCE TO PARTNERSHIP: STRENGTHENING HABENERI'S WORK ON THE GROUND IN ASMARA

Reflections from Ghenet Ukbamichael, PA, HabenEri Representative in Eritrea

In July 2026, I had the opportunity to participate in HabenEri's medical team's visit to Asmara and to the Denden Hospital. The experience was professionally meaningful, and emotionally moving. It is also an important step toward strengthening HabenEri's long-term engagement on the ground in Eritrea.

The visiting team included Drs. Sewit Amde, Haile Mezgebe, Aron Kefela, Bahghi Kiflezghi and Feekak Hibtes as well as Nurse Lemlem Ugbe, and myself, Ghenet Ukbamichael, PA. We worked closely with local healthcare professionals, including Dr. Haile Girmatsion (Haile Russia), Dr. Finnan, Nurse Ephrem, Nurse Samuel and Physical Therapist Mr. Rezene Mebrahtu.

ON THE GROUND AT DENDEN HOSPITAL

During clinical rounds, the visiting and local medical team evaluated patients at the Denden Hospital screening patients that are candidates for reconstructive surgery (muscle flaps) to address chronic and complex wounds. Some of these bedridden patients have had prior surgeries that have either failed or recurred.

Dr. Sewit identified patients that will benefit from reconstructive surgery and scheduled them to undergo the procedure at Halibet Hospital. All patients who had surgery recovered and are deemed to have had successful surgery. Seeing the condition of some of these veteran patients was deeply emotional for me. Some of these patients had endured years of disability, medical complications, and hardships. It was a testimonial to their resilience. It reinforced my belief why we have an obligation to help and honor these heroes of Eritrea's long road to independence.

One encounter remains especially meaningful to me. A veteran facing serious medical challenges expressed concern not about himself, but about the physical burden placed on those who daily lifted him from bed, turned him from side to side to minimize skin breakdown and for those who cared for him and for others. This is a powerful reminder of the character and resilience of the people we had come to serve. Continue reading next page



Dr. Ghenet visiting a disabled Veteran at Denden Hospital honoring his sacrifice and reaffirming HabenEri's commitment to dignity and support.

FROM PRESENCE TO PARTNERSHIP: STRENGTHENING HABENERI'S WORK ON THE GROUND IN ASMARA

Reflections from Ghenet Ukbamichael, PA, HabenEri Representative in Eritrea

IDENTIFYING PRACTICAL NEEDS

The mission also gave us an opportunity to meet with members of the Eritrean Veterans Association and with others who advocate for the welfare of people with disabilities. Among the most important issues discussed was reliable and accessible medical transportation when they travel between home, clinics, doctor's offices or from Denden Hospital for appointments, evaluations, treatment, and for surgical and non surgical procedures. For patients who cannot travel independently, appropriate transportation can determine whether needed healthcare is accessible or not. Another important discussion focused on strengthening local surgical/medical care capacity at Denden Hospital by sponsoring some critical renovations of the facility.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS BEYOND THE HOSPITAL

A dinner hosted by the Eritrean Veterans Association brought together HabenEri members, local physicians involved in the care of disabled individuals, and representatives of various European countries who participate in raising awareness and material support on behalf of disabled veterans and civilian communities within Eritrea. The event provided an opportunity to exchange ideas, build relationships, and explore future cooperation. The message was clear: no single organization can meet every need alone.

Dr. Sewit also hosted a gathering with HabenEri members and local physicians to discuss continuing medical education (CME). We explored future professional exchange and learning opportunities that could strengthen local medical capacity long after visiting teams return home.

ESTABLISHING AN ON-THE-GROUND CONNECTION

Before the medical team departed, I hosted a meeting to define and clarify responsibilities of the on-the-ground representative for HabenEri with the goal of streamlining communication between local stakeholders and HabenEri. A clearer communication pathway was established for HabenEri's continued work on the ground. In addition to the successful mission of HabenEri reps, we made a promise indicating relationships do not need to end when the visiting team returned home. That is what makes this a transition from presence to partnership.

Meaningful humanitarian work cannot depend only on occasional visits. It requires communication, follow-up, trust, and a reliable presence on the ground.

On August 12, 2026, I hosted a luncheon at the Denden Hospital for patients and staff, I was joined by members of the Veterans Association and others. It was more than a meal—it was a gesture of appreciation, companionship, and remembrance for the sacrifices they paid on behalf of the people of Eritrea. It was a statement to say we care about you.

Continue reading next page

FROM PRESENCE TO PARTNERSHIP: STRENGTHENING HABENERI'S WORK ON THE GROUND IN ASMARA

Reflections from Ghenet Ukbamichael, PA, HabenEri Representative in Eritrea

The luncheon gave me a chance to spend time with patients outside the clinical setting and continue strengthening relationships with the Denden community.

Sometimes support comes through medical projects, equipment, or transportation. Sometimes it comes through sitting with someone, listening, and showing that someone cares.

Medical missions, addressing clinical and transportation needs, hospital infrastructure improvements, and professional education all matter—but so do lasting relationships.

By continuing to build trust among Denden Hospital patients and others with disabilities, healthcare professionals, HabenEri, and other supporters from abroad, the work begun during this mission can create lasting benefits.

I am grateful for the opportunity to represent HabenEri in Asmara and look forward to continued communication, follow-up, and support.

Above all, I want all people with disabilities and disabled veterans to know:

They are remembered and respected and they are not alone.

Ghenet Ukbamichael, PA

HabenEri Representative — Asmara, Eritrea



Dr. Ghenet in a meeting with local stakeholders in Eritrea.

Medical Mission to Eritrea, Summer of 2026

As part of its commitment and mission to support the medical needs of disabled people in Eritrea, HabenEri partnered with members of the Eritrean American Medical Association to dispatch a team of experts to visit Eritrea in order to assess the needs of the general population with special emphasis on the Disabled population.

In this regard, a team of four specialists visited Eritrea from June 28 to July 20, 2026. The team members included Sewit Amde, MD, a well-respected and renowned plastic surgeon practicing in the state of Indiana, Aron Kefela, MD, also a respected and highly experienced Medical Oncologist practicing in Atlanta, Bahghi Keflezighi, MD, a very experienced clinician with a long-standing dedication to serving the Eritrean community. She specializes in Family Medicine and Internal Medicine practicing in California as well as Haile Mezgebe, MD, a General Surgeon, and Trauma Critical Care specialist with practice in Nashville, Tennessee.

Dr. Aron Kefela spent a great deal of time collaborating with Eritrean oncologists and other support personnel at the Orotta Hospital Cancer center. He was involved in reviewing and giving feedback to the existing protocols of cancer patient care. He and the rest of the team toured the brand new cancer center which includes a radiation oncology facility. Upon completion of the facility (soon), most if not all cancer patients in Eritrea will be treated on site and not need to go abroad for treatment. Money has already been set aside to install the latest equipment, including advanced Radiation treatment equipment, CT scan, and MRI, etc. The current infusion center will be completely renovated and be brought to international standards. There is ongoing training of nurses and appropriate staff. In addition, Dr. Aron joined others to meet with the staff and leadership that deals with disabled people in Eritrea. As a member of HabenEri Board of Directors, he was involved in discussions that involved establishment of treatment and support strategies going forward. Dr. Aron Kefela also made presentations to the faculty, residents and medical students at Orotta Hospital on topics involving advances in medical Oncology.

On the day of her arrival from a long trip, Dr. Sewit Amde spent half a day evaluating the inpatient population of Disabled people at Denden Hospital. The majority of the patients are paralyzed with chronic wounds that require not only intensive daily care but occasional surgical treatments. After evaluating every patient at the facility, she selected a few patients who required immediate surgery. The patients were scheduled for surgery at Halibet Hospital and all pre-selected patients subsequently underwent successful surgical procedures, including muscle flaps (to cover large decubitus ulcers) and wound debridements. She has committed to the patients and hospital leadership that she will return periodically either alone or with other colleagues to continue to evaluate and treat the patients at this facility. Additionally, she worked at the Halibet Hospital's Burn Center with Doctor Fana operating on several burn patient victims with emphasis on extremity contractures. All surgical procedures were successful.

Continued reading next page →

Medical Mission to Eritrea, Summer of 2026

Dr. Bahghi, who is a very active member of the community and one of the founders of the Eritrean American Medical Association in North America visited (with Haile Mezghebe) Orotta and Halibet Hospitals. She spent a great part of her time in the outpatient clinics of Orotta Hospital, guiding and working with the nursing staff and the general practitioners/residents of the Hospital. She also spent time in the emergency room, learning from and evaluating the care at the Emergency Room. Her visit helped her to assess the successes and challenges the staff and the facility face on a daily basis. She will share this information with members of EAMA to help strategize on how EAMA volunteer members can appropriately participate in alleviating some of the challenges being faced by the very dedicated staff at the emergency room and the outpatient facility.

Dr. Haile Mezghebe helped in organizing the mission by EAMA and HabenEri members. He also met (on several occasions) with the leadership of the disabled people's office to discuss priorities in medical and economic needs. Additionally, he met with authorities to campaign on the issue of establishing a dedicated office of the Diaspora. The goal being to take advantage of the untapped potential of interested Eritreans living abroad who are looking for guidance and a path to make meaningful contributions in their areas of interest. There was also discussion about the ongoing campaign by HabenEri members to raise funds for purchasing modern medical transportation vehicles for the disabled population.

Overall, the four individuals who traveled to Eritrea to contribute in their areas of expertise were well received and given encouragement and support from authorities and individual members on the ground. We hope to continue this work at a higher level of intensity and organizational structure. We hope others will join us in this journey.



Medical Mission to Eritrea, Summer of 2026

A Picture Is Worth a Thousand Words



Working With Local Doctors



Dr. Haile Rasha: A Lifetime of Selfless Service



Young Local Medical Professionals at Denden Hospital
Serving Those Who Sacrificed So Much for Eritrea



Meet our youngest Ambassadors



Dr. Samela Zerai led the “Mothers in Support of HabenEri” fundraising booth at the Eritrean Festival in Dallas, where the team sold ice cream and cold drinks and generated \$5,000 in sales for HabenEri. The effort also highlighted four young volunteers who worked more than eight hours a day for three days, helping with sales and explaining HabenEri’s mission to festival visitors. Their dedication, energy, and willingness to serve while many of their peers were enjoying the festival made a strong impression. The HabenEri Board recognized their contribution with a special appreciation brunch and Certificates of Appreciation, celebrating them as an example of the next generation of community service.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The Dallas Festival showed that service has no age limit. Through Dr. Samela’s leadership and the remarkable dedication of three young volunteers, the “Mothers in Support of HabenEri” effort generated \$5,000 in sales while demonstrating the power of passing the spirit of volunteerism to the next generation.

Read the full story on page 18

Meet our youngest Ambassadors

YOUNG HEARTS, BIG COMMITMENT

Among the many volunteers who supported HabenEri at the Dallas Eritrean Festival, Elnata Tewolde, Mielael Tewolde, Gianni Veal and Luliya Zaydet Tewelde stood out for their exceptional dedication, energy, and heart. For three long days, in extremely hot weather, these young volunteers spent more than eight hours each day serving at the booth.

They sold ice cream and cold drinks, welcomed festival visitors, and helped explain HabenEri's mission. While many young people were enjoying the festival, they chose to spend much of their time serving others. Their commitment reminds us that volunteerism has no age limit.

Through their hard work, they helped generate \$5,000 in sales for HabenEri and showed what the next generation of community leadership can look like. In recognition of their service, the HabenEri Board hosted a special appreciation brunch and presented each of them with a Certificate of Appreciation.

To Elnata, Mielael, Gianni and Luliya : thank you for giving your time, energy, and heart to HabenEri. Your service truly made a difference.

The Board also extends heartfelt thanks to their parents for raising young people who understand the value of responsibility, compassion, and service to others.



Meet our youngest Ambassadors

YOUNG HEARTS, BIG COMMITMENT



Dr. Samela with her outstanding team: Nigesty, Sawait, Kidane, and Tekle Sequar.

HABENERI WELCOMES THE NEWLY FORMED DMV AREA CHAPTER

Since its inception, HabenEri has worked to build local chapters in major U.S. cities by encouraging community leaders and volunteers to organize around the mission. Because the Washington, Maryland, and Virginia area is home to a large Eritrean American community, the DMV was identified as an important place for a strong and active chapter.

A core group of volunteers spent approximately eight months laying the groundwork through planning, outreach, and community engagement. Their work culminated in the official formation of the DMV Area Chapter and a successful fundraising event at ECCC in Washington, D.C., on May 16, 2026.

A STRONG COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Although the event took place during a busy season of graduations, weddings, and other community activities, attendance exceeded expectations. The fundraiser generated financial support for Eritreans with disabilities, but one of its greatest accomplishments was introducing HabenEri and its mission to more people in the DMV community. The event also brought new dues-paying members into the organization.

The audience included young professionals, middle-aged supporters, and longtime community activists. Many attendees welcomed the new chapter and encouraged its leaders to continue building a meaningful local presence.

BUILT BY VOLUNTEERS

The event depended on volunteers, local businesses, individual supporters, and organizers who contributed time, talent, and resources. Some spent days preparing the venue and supporting the organizing team. HabenEri also appreciates the YouTubers and media supporters who helped promote the May 16 event and expand community awareness.

The Board extends sincere gratitude to the core group whose months of work made both the DMV Chapter and the fundraiser possible.

LOOKING AHEAD

As the new leadership develops its plan of action, HabenEri looks forward to seeing the DMV Chapter grow in membership, volunteer participation, fundraising, and outreach. The May 16 event demonstrated what can happen when committed people come together around a shared purpose.

The chapter is still young, but its foundation is strong. With continued community support, the DMV Area Chapter can become an important part of HabenEri's national network and help advance the mission of improving the lives of people with disabilities in Eritrea.

WHY WE VOLUNTEER

Dr. Yemane and I are grateful for the opportunity to support HabenEri and its mission to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Eritrea. While we live in the comfort of our homes, we cannot forget those who sacrificed so much for our country. Many Eritreans lost their lives during the struggle for independence, while others were left with lifelong disabilities. More lives were lost and more people were injured during the 1998 war. Their courage and sacrifice helped make Eritrea's independence possible.

We feel a deep responsibility to honor those sacrifices by supporting people who continue to live with disabilities today.

WHY HABENERI MATTERS TO US

We are honored to work alongside the professionals and volunteers who have devoted years to serving and advocating for people with disabilities. Their commitment inspires us to contribute our own time, energy, and resources.

We were introduced to HabenEri by Nurse Aster Mekonen, a dedicated member of the HabenEri Board of Directors. Her service and encouragement helped us become involved and reminded us how much one committed volunteer can influence others.

A PERSONAL CONNECTION TO THE STRUGGLE

Although my husband and I came to the United States through different paths, we remained deeply aware of what was happening in Eritrea. Many young Eritreans, including members of our own families, joined the struggle for independence. Yemane was involved with EPLF mass organizations while living abroad, and our family remained closely connected to the national effort.

Today, supporting HabenEri is one way we can honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice and those who continue to live with disabilities as a result of war and hardship.

FROM WASHINGTON TO DALLAS

After our son's wedding in Washington, D.C., we decided to drive to Dallas to support HabenEri at the Eritrean Festival. We wanted to help our fellow volunteers, raise awareness, recruit members, and support the organization's medical transportation initiative.

One of HabenEri's major goals is to purchase and send two medical transportation vehicles to Eritrea for people with disabilities. At the festival, we encouraged visitors to become sustaining members for \$15 or more per month. Small recurring contributions from many people can create dependable support and help move major projects forward.

As we spoke with festival visitors, many listened carefully and responded with comments such as, "What a great organization. We should have been supporting this organization for many years." Those conversations showed us both the strength of the mission and the opportunity to introduce HabenEri to many more people.

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WHY WE VOLUNTEER

GROWTH AND MOMENTUM

HabenEri has experienced encouraging growth in both membership and financial support over the past several years. Social media and community outreach have also helped more people learn about the organization and its mission.

The Board of Directors has approved the purchase of two medical transportation vehicles, creating considerable excitement around this important project. These vehicles are intended to address one of the major barriers faced by people with disabilities in Eritrea: safe and reliable transportation to medical care and other essential services.

Recruiting members and raising funds remain challenges, but awareness continues to grow. HabenEri is a nonprofit, non-political, and non-religious organization built around service to people with disabilities.

VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

HabenEri depends on volunteers. The Executive Committee meets monthly, while the Board of Directors meets regularly to review priorities, projects, and the organization's future direction.

To us, volunteerism means freely giving time, talent, and resources to help others and strengthen the community. The Golden Rule—"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you"—captures the spirit behind that service.

At HabenEri's inauguration in March 2023, Dr. Eyasu spoke about four important principles of volunteerism: commitment, communication, connection, and contribution. Those principles remain meaningful as the organization continues to grow.

PASSING THE TORCH

HabenEri must also look toward the next generation. We want to reach more young Eritrean Americans, professionals, entrepreneurs, business owners, and future leaders who can bring new energy, ideas, skills, and resources to the organization.

Our hope is to pass the torch so that HabenEri can continue to flourish for many years and remain focused on its mission of improving the lives of people with disabilities in Eritrea.

We are grateful to everyone who has volunteered, donated, recruited members, shared the mission, or supported HabenEri in any way. Every contribution matters.

Together, we can honor those who sacrificed for Eritrea while creating practical support and greater dignity for people living with disabilities.

HabenEri's future depends on all of us—and together, we can make a difference.

AMPLIFYING THE MISSION: THE MEDIA VOICES SUPPORTING HABENERI

Recognizing the Power of Community Media in Helping HabenEri Grow

Community media can do something especially valuable for a volunteer organization: introduce a mission to people who may never encounter it otherwise. For HabenEri, trusted media voices have helped expand awareness throughout the Eritrean diaspora and connect new people with the work of supporting Eritreans with disabilities.

HabenEri gratefully recognizes Biniam of VAYNAK MEDIA, Daniel Teklai of EritreaNext, Aklilu Sahle, and Eritrean Unity Worldwide EPLF 1 for using their platforms to support the mission.

AMPLIFYING THE MISSION

Through event announcements, fundraising promotion, interviews, and community outreach, these media supporters have helped HabenEri reach new audiences. Their visibility has introduced people to the organization, encouraged attendance at events, and created new opportunities for people to become members, donors, volunteers, and advocates.

Biniam of VAYNAK MEDIA has been one of HabenEri's consistent media supporters. His support has included sharing HabenEri activities and campaigns with his audience and helping keep the organization visible within the community.

MORE THAN A VOICE BEHIND THE CAMERA

Biniam's contribution has also extended beyond media promotion. At the Eritrean Festival in Dallas, he volunteered in person alongside HabenEri supporters, helping engage festival visitors and strengthen the organization's presence at the event.

That combination—using a public platform while also showing up personally—demonstrates an important form of community service.

WHY MEDIA SUPPORT MATTERS

Building awareness takes time. A person may hear about HabenEri several times before deciding to learn more, attend an event, become a member, make a donation, or volunteer. Community media helps create those repeated points of connection.

For an all-volunteer nonprofit, every trusted voice that shares the mission expands its reach. One announcement can introduce HabenEri to hundreds or thousands of people, and that awareness can become meaningful action.

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AMPLIFYING THE MISSION: COMMUNITY MEDIA VOICES

Using Media, Community, and Commitment to Help HabenEri Grow

SUPPORT IN DIFFERENT FORMS

HabenEri appreciates that community support does not always look the same. Some people contribute financially. Others volunteer at events, provide professional expertise, recruit members, or use their networks and media platforms to connect people with the mission

FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

Media exposure matters because awareness is often the first step toward participation. A viewer may become a donor. A donor may become a monthly member. A member may volunteer. A volunteer may become a chapter leader or introduce the mission to an entirely new community.

That chain of participation begins when people know the organization exists and understand why its work matters.

HABENERI SAYS THANK YOU TO:

- Biniam Semereab VAYNAK MEDIA
- Daniel Teklai of EritreaNext
- Alem Zemo and his team of DmtsiEritawyan Yttebry
- Solomon Tesfamariam of Solo Media
- Beshir of Eritrean Unity Worldwide EPLF -1
- Akililui Sahle of Zula Eri Media

Thank you for using your voices and platforms to help carry HabenEri's mission to the wider community. Your support has helped strengthen awareness, attract new supporters, and create opportunities for meaningful participation.

When trusted community voices share a humanitarian mission, awareness can become action—and action can improve lives.



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Help Move Dignity Forward

**Support safe, accessible medical
transportation for Eritreans with disabilities.**

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