

# ECMAA Newsletter

NOVEMBER 2020



Wegen Le Wegen Walk - Photo Credit to Naomi Gobena

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Status Update  
Permanent Mission of  
Ethiopian Mission to the  
United Nations  
Sunday, 11/15, 3pm**

**Ambassador Taye Atseke  
Selassie Amde will provide  
an update on the current  
situation in Ethiopia.**

**The meeting will be held  
virtually on Zoom.  
Meeting ID: 893 3443 8679  
Passcode: 915495  
Dial In: (929) 436-2866**

**Africa Future Summit  
November 19, 2020,  
9 am to 3pm**

**A virtual conference on how  
to accelerate developments  
within Africa's tech  
ecosystem, the 3rd annual  
Africa Future Summit. Hosted  
by the Global Startup  
Ecosystem in partnership  
with Google Cloud, AWS, IBM  
Cloud, Hubspot, Sendgrid,  
PointGlobal & More.  
You can find out more and  
RSVP [here](#).**

## From the Board

It's been a busy. We had national elections, we had ECMAA elections, COVID cases seem to be increasing nationwide and there is conflict unfolding in Ethiopia. It can be overwhelming keeping up with what's going on. ECMAA and its Board continue to think of and pray for those who're suffering at this time. We are staying focused on the long-term and continuing to build up so we can be a resource to the community during and beyond crisis. We urge you to continue to take care of yourself in these trying times so you can be your best self when challenged by what you're seeing and reading.

Routine and consistency can be the bedrock for surviving challenging times. ECMAA is maintaining its routines. We held our annual meeting on October 25. Though we experienced our very first zoom bombing experience, we saw the resilience and resourcefulness of the community as many patiently stayed and others helped us troubleshoot. We presented the activities for the year and sought feedback. We're editing that video and will make it available on [ECMAA's YouTube Channel](#) for those who are interested. You can check other recorded programs from the past there as well.

We held elections for the Board soon after the meeting. We'll get into the details in the following pages. We have an 11-member Board of Trustees (The Board) and ten seats were up for election. To ensure continuity, five existing board members have been re-elected and will serve one year terms. Their positions will be up for election next year so that only half of the board is up for election at any given time. This means that five Board members will leave the Board this year and will be replaced by five new members elected onto the Board.



The Board at the Annual Picnic

## ECMAA Annual Meeting Update

We're excited about the entering Board. It's a great opportunity to be there for the full community and provide diverse representation on the Board. To further diversify the voice of who shapes ECMAA, we have created an Advisory Council who do not have voting privileges as Board Members but who provide guidance to ECMAA and future programming. We're thankful for this group as well.

Finally, as much as we want to report on what we've done and where we're going, the Annual Meeting provides us the opportunity to listen to suggestions from members and the community overall. We appreciate the encouragement we received, we also highly value the suggestions for improvement. We will work on what we've heard: provide Amharic content and programming, plan health fair related activity for the community and continue to ensure everyone knows about membership and the process for renewals. These suggestions don't take away from the work we do, they help us grow stronger, thank you and keep them coming.

## Wegen Le Wegen Updates

As you know, based on a call to action from the Permanent Mission of Ethiopia to the UN, Wegen Le Wegen was launched with a goal of raising \$100,000 to help Ethiopia fight COVID-19. The group is made up of members of 14 Ethiopian organizations serving the Ethiopian community in the NY tristate area. It is \$22,000 away from achieving its goal.

On October 31, Dr. Lia Tadese Ethiopia's Health Minister joined us along with Tesfaye Sima, Teodros Tadese, Alemshay Wedajo, Marcus Samuelson, Maya Haile and Eden Mikael in an online auction.

**Webinar: The Beta Israel and Ethiopian Christian Views of Jews and Judaism**  
**November 17, 2020, 12pm**

**A Webinar with Steven Kaplan and Sophia Dege-Müller addressing the Beta Israel and their origins, Marcia Kupfer and Aaron Butts will explore how Ethiopian Christians have viewed Jews and Judaism in art and text. You can register to attend here.**

## GET INVOLVED

**Visit our website**  
[www.ecmaany.org](http://www.ecmaany.org) for ongoing updates and to [become a member](#). Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [instagram](#) for the most up to date information on what's going on.

**Finally, if you or those you know need immediate food and other assistance click on the links based on where you live [New York](#), [New Jersey](#). For more general COVID related assistance, go to [ACCESS NYC](#).**





Berhane Tadese



Betty Testfaye



Meseret Gebru

Thanks to all of you who have contributed! The group is looking to achieve its goal by the end of the year. You can help by going to [www.ecmaany.org/wegenlewegen](http://www.ecmaany.org/wegenlewegen) to donate.

In addition to money, the task force is coordinating in-kind contributions of medical supplies to Ethiopia. If you have information about how to do this or if you're interested in joining this sub-committee of the COVID-19 Relief Fund, please send an email to [ethiopiatristate2020@gmail.com](mailto:ethiopiatristate2020@gmail.com). We're looking for information and your skills.

Wegen Le Wegen is intended to be a standing group to help find ways to help Ethiopia. A new working group has formed to tackle the issue of the Grand Renaissance Dam. This group is working in multiple ways to ensure that the NY Tristate area is represented in the global diaspora efforts to support Ethiopia in its development and energy creation activities. It's intended to provide long-term and substantial benefits to the country. Please send an email to [ethiopiatristate2020@gmail.com](mailto:ethiopiatristate2020@gmail.com) if you'd like to work with this group. More details to come.

## Our Thanks to the Board

The first Sunday of every month, the ECMAA Board meets to plan programming and resources for the community. Each exiting Board member has been critical in moving our agenda forward.

We act as one large group, but as five of our members exist the Board we highlight how each has contributed to ECMAA and the community. We are grateful for whatever each brought to the table.

Berhane Tadese has served in many capacities on the Board in the past including as President. He's been a tireless leader who's helped ECMAA regain strength, in his most recent stint since 2013. The autism walk, book reviews, our annual Yekatit 12 commemoration and human rights related activities have been his passion and ECMAA and the community as a whole the beneficiary. He connected ECMAA to professionals and historians who could share their thoughts and expertise with us all. He was also incredibly valuable as our pro-youth "referee" at our Youth Vs. Experience games. His dedication has been an inspiration to the Board. He brought with him the tireless support of his lovely and dedicated wife, Genet.



Muna Said



Selam Retta

Betty Tesfaye joined ECMAA's Board a year ago and expressed two interests when she was nominated. She wanted to help make sure Amharic classes were formalized and made consistent to ensure commitment from attendees and she wanted to make sure that those who are new to the NY Tri-state Area are aware of the resources available to them. She wasted no time and started interviewing teachers, to have now completed a system with a multi-level formal class for adults and teenagers. The Welcome Guide is now also available on our [www.ecmaany.org/resources2](http://www.ecmaany.org/resources2).

Muna Said ensured we had a regularly staffed office hour for all who needed to ask questions at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Spring of 2019. She researched all questions to be an informed resource. You have likely met Muna if you joined us at our picnics, she signed you up, helped you become a member and then ensured we had a system for tracking and monitoring your membership. She gave a fantastic presentation in the autism segment of our Yelugnta and Gemena event where she offered guidance on how to support families. She brought her very talented daughter Layla to ECMAA. Layla is the talented photographer behind many of the photos you see from our activities.

Meseret Gebru was part of an advisory group who ensured that ECMAA remained strong and continued in the last transition in 2018. She was an optimistic, persistent and self-less advocate for investing in the organization in the face of significant challenges. She ensures her calm and strong voice were backed

by time and research while juggling multiple responsibilities outside ECMAA. She prepared for and hosted the last College Planning Workshop and was a co-planner of the Teen Experience, giving young people in our community a platform to explore and talk about their identity, challenges and questions. Finally, at our Yelugnta event, Meseret was a speaker who was able to share her valuable thoughts on mental health.

Selam Retta is part of the team of Board members who revived ECMAA and kept it going to where it is now. He managed the website and helped with the design of the public face of the organization. If you had snacks and drinks at any of our events, you can thank him for the coordination of that work. It included Tejj and Kolo at Petros at the Hour. To ensure continuity, he agreed to stay on two years ago so that the new Board had enough guidance and resources from the past, this helped us stay focused on the longterm. Finally, he was the competitive drive behind our soccer games and the voice behind ensuring they continue and remain steady.

Thank you to this exiting group. We look forward to introducing you to the new Board members in our next newsletter. We will also introduce our Advisory Council. We will take the rest of 2020 to take stock and plan 2021. The incoming Board (Hanna Yesfu (VP), Rediate Deber (Treasurer), Tegest Hailu, Michael Ayele and Ammanuel Leminih) will take on their full responsibilities in January 2021.