

# ECMAA ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021

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## MISSION

As an independent not-for-profit association with no political or religious affiliation, ECMAA is committed to serving the needs of the Ethiopian community in the NY tri-state area. ECMAA does this through the coordination of cultural and educational activities and by leveraging the experience of its membership base to share knowledge, skills, and resources with those in need of assistance.



## OVERVIEW

Immediately after ECMAA's annual meeting in 2020, in addition to the worldwide COVID pandemic, Ethiopia entered a period of turmoil. The year continued to be filled with challenges, beyond our expectations.

ECMAA's Strategic Plan continues to inform our work. ECMAA will share information that will be of value to the community and keep our activities free from politics, religion and ethnicity and work on what brings us together here as a community.

Our hearts are with all who are suffering, displaced and in-place in need of support. Though as individuals we may engage in activities that address and alleviate these struggles, as an organization we remain committed and focused on the needs of the NY Tri-State area.

This year, we continued our programming virtually, until the Summer. We invested in our newsletter, social media and our online communication. We focused on promoting members of our community and being a resource where possible. By Summer time, we had to meet again. We started with fitness days and capped our year with our annual Ethiopian Day Picnic where we celebrated 40 years of ECMAA. We'll continue to celebrate this for the year.

We are stronger together. የፌዴራል እንበት የሰር, we're thankful to Tigist Kelkay who created a design the commemorating ECMAA's 40th anniversary. Tshirts will be available for sale shortly. We're also grateful to Layla Ashe who took time from her studies to fully capture the spirit of the Ethiopian Day picnic. ECMAA is stronger as a result of these generous contributions.



# OBJECTIVES

ECMAA's strategic objectives are enabling greater active membership, creating a system for sharing resources and opportunities and promoting our rich shared heritage. We continue to measure our strength by your engagement, we've seen it take multiple forms. Beyond our incomparable Board of Trustees, members of the community have joined together to keep ECMAA going this year.

It's been particularly hard to be connected this year. From limited in person Board meetings to limited activities we've had to recalibrate. We relied more heavily on the board to get done what needed to be done. We built on the energy that the newly elected Board members brought. Hanna Yesuf, Rediate Derebe, Tegest Hailu and Amanuel Lemineh who each took us to another level of expanded impact through more Amharic programming, more formalized finances, our newsletter and our Amharic classes respectively, they've each been transformational. We relied on existing members like Abeba Negatu, Adem Ali, Dinsiri Fikru, Rahel Getachew, Tezeta Roro and Yishak Desta. This group kept us steady and going, planning our annual picnic, soccer games, organizing, keeping our meetings documented, being the mistress of ceremony and strengthening our website respectively.

Finally, our advisory council, newly created last year was instrumental in keeping us going. Assefash Mekonen, Bethlehem Bekele, Berhane Tadesse, Kassahun Negash and Fana Said openly explored a new way of participating. Each found a way to give back in their own way, expanding our social media presence, bringing spirited guidance to meetings, ensuring our heritage celebrated and by offering behind the scenes support. We looked inward for the programming for the year and are grateful we had a committed Board and Advisory Council to help us continue.

Several Board members are moving or stepping into Advisory Council roles and we're grateful for their work. Hanna Yesuf, Yishak Desta and Rahel Getachew fit that role. We're excited that we have a long slate of candidates to take on Board responsibilities. This helps us comfortably look ahead to a more thriving community organization for the NY Tristate area. We're grateful to keep moving forward in meeting our goals. Forty years and counting...



# Promote Active Membership

Benefits of membership are expanding. It can result in discounted prices for some of ECMAA's paid events and activities. Our goal is establishing a membership base that is diverse in age, education, employment status, religion, cultural background and length of stay in the country.

Thanksgiving was complicated this past year, we kept it small in our own homes but found a way to connect with international students in the area. When we asked the community who would like help and who can offer help, as usual, there were many more people who offered to help. Members of the Board were able to organize and make connections to provide a Thanksgiving meal (Ethiopian style from Lalibela Restaurant) to a group of international students who were isolated in their college dorms. Some of these same students were giving back at our Annual picnic greeting many of you this September.

Members, through their engagement, help build up an organization more effective at celebrating Ethiopian culture and history and one that is a rich with resources to the community.

We're grateful to the many partners who promote our work and membership, we've had new members because restaurants like Benyam, Buna and Lalibela have promoted our events - these are only the ones members mentioned - it includes many more..



## Share Resources

Through its more formal monthly newsletter and ongoing communication with members, ECMAA offers resources. Kept from in-person contact, we relied significantly on our newsletter. New members of our Board and Advisory Council (Tegest, Assefash and Hanna) took on publication of the newsletter and added a corner for promoting small Ethiopian owned businesses, arts and an Amharic corner based on a suggestion from last year's annual meeting. Through these corners the work of entrepreneurs was promoted for all to appreciate and engage. We've also featured the work of Ethiopians in the area who're doing good in Ethiopia, including founders of Haile Manas Academy in Ethiopia.

Our social media presence helped us significantly improve our ability to promote activities and share resources this year. On Instagram and Facebook, we published all that happened between newsletters and emails. Follow us on Instagram and Facebook for the most up to date information on what is going on in the community and to celebrate the successes of members of our community. We, for example, featured Ezra Wube whose art work was on display on the bill boards of Times Square. During women's history month, every few days we were able to feature a different woman who has or is influencing history.

We've maintained a COVID-19 page of our newsletter to keep everyone informed of the latest information on vaccinations, local rules and resources including housing related assistance. We received detailed information from African Communities Together about assistance made available to undocumented immigrants and participated in an African stories podcast. From in-person events, to virtual meetings... we kept up with the times to find as many platforms as possible to effectively share what we know. We ask you to follow us





## Create Opportunities

ECMAA strives to find new ways to create connections while building on successes from the past. Our fitness days continued to be popular as it brought together old friends with new ones in person for the first time in about 16 months. Immediately people wanted more games, we obliged and had three games with groups of people of different ages who joined our games. We will continue in the Fall.

For the third year, we also had our college planning workshop with both students and parents. We emphasized it was the students' experience, provided information and best practices and the opportunity for everyone to put their best foot forward while getting ready from the start of high school.

We are continuing to plan for our popular Singles Mixer, Enetewawek. After two successful events, we're learning more and though we were thwarted from a Fall event, we're still working on scheduling in an open space soon. We were forced to postpone last year's Teen Experience but are planning to relaunch next year. The teens, 10 to 20 broken up into two groups by age really appreciated having the space that was just theirs. We'll offer it again.



## Promote Heritage



We're excited to invite the Taitu Cultural Center to help recognize Yekatit 12 in the coming year. This will help us return to our previous year when we were able to watch Petros at the Hour by Poet Laureate Tsegaye Gebremedhin. This past year did not keep us from recognizing the day. ECMAA invited Jeff Pearce to discuss his new book *Prevail* along with Nicola DeMarco.

We built on the work that Betty Tesfaye completed with Amale our tireless Amharic teacher. Students worked hard in class and at home to master the language. Students were eager to continue onto the next level and we will offer level 2 classes this Fall. It'll be a 10-week session for \$100, virtually held twice a week. We're exploring programming for younger members of our community, for dance, heritage and language. We're looking for volunteers to build the programming, all interested can contact ECMAA at [ecmaany@gmail.com](mailto:ecmaany@gmail.com)

After our very first in person board meeting in August, we went to a free outdoor concert of Anbessa Orchestra. It's Ethiopian influenced, three of us from the Board went and joined with about twenty others we either knew from before or those we met for the first time. We finished the night dancing in the rain together. We were showing off our Ethiopianess but were happy to just be with each other. It was a brief reprieve from the worries we face both here and Ethiopia.



# PARTNERSHIP

ECMAA is part of a larger community. We complement and partner with other groups that serve the Ethiopian community. This has included collaboration with others in the region. We were lucky to have members of the Ethiopian Community Association of Connecticut (ECAC) at our annual picnic and have them consistently promote our events and posts. We were also able to attend the annual picnic of the Massachusetts Ethiopian Community Association (MESA).

Building on the work with COVID-19, several members of ECMAA continued their work with Wegen Le Wegen. ECMAA previously chaired Wegen Le Wegen: NY Tri-State Inc. This group has recently become incorporated and will focus on work that helps Ethiopians in Ethiopia. It is intended for future knowledge and resource transfer to Ethiopia. Members include the Professional Ethiopian Network, Emmanuel Worship Center, the NY/NJ Task Force, Ammanuel Church and Mariam Church. It's been a good opportunity to be connected with others in the community.

Finally, we celebrate the successes of our community members and promote their businesses in our newsletter and on social media. Restaurants, other small businesses, artists, events and social and financial assistance efforts were promoted to amplify attention. We were honored to be invited to collaborate in bringing a united African voice to have an impact in the mayoral elections. We welcome all opportunities to support and work with other members of the Ethiopian and wider African community.



**Wegen Le Wegen  
NY Tristate**

Medical Professionals in Ethiopia have expressed an urgent need for medical supplies. These supplies are cheap here but can save a significant number of lives all over Ethiopia. Here's how you can help:

**1 Purchase Supplies**

These three medical supplies are available at amazon and at local drug stores. There's significant shortage, purchase as much as you can.

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  <b>Blood pressure monitors</b> \$23.99 |  <b>Pulse Oximeter</b> \$19.95. |
|  <b>Forehead Thermometer</b> \$8.79.  |  |

# FOUNDATION

We rely on members of our community to meet our goals. Our thanks begin with our Board Members and their family. Spouses and children have been patient, accommodating and pitched in their talents. Along with this Board and its family, volunteers, interns, ECMAA members and general members of the community shared their talents, resources and time to help achieve great feats during the 2020/2021 fiscal year.



ECMAA 2020 STRATEGY SUMMARY

Mission

**Vision**

To build a thriving, empowered and fully integrated community that has the capacity to share its culture and values while taking full advantage of the socio-economic and educational opportunities available in the larger society

## Objectives

Active Membership      Share Resources      Create Opportunities

Share Resources Create Opportunities Promote Heritage

Target audience



New York City  
New Jersey  
Connecticut

Geography

New York City  
New Jersey  
Connecticut

Demographic

Drivers



Education

Foundation

Event Planning

Heritage



Social Services

Community Outreach

Volunteering

Networking



Fundraising

# 2021 HIGHLIGHTS



## ECMAA 2021 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events and Other Highlights from the Year

| Month         | Events  |
|---------------|---|
| February '21  | <b>Feb. 21<sup>st</sup>:</b> Yekatit 12   |
| March '21     | <b>March 3rd:</b> Home Sellers Information Session<br>Women's History Series<br>African Community Mayoral Candidate Consultations<br>March 23: Amharic Class Begins |
| April '21     | <b>April:</b> Summer Youth and Scholarship Opportunities  |
| May '21       | <b>May:</b> College Planning Workshop<br>Amharic Corner of Newsletter Launched  |
| June '21      | <b>June 18:</b> ECMAA Fitness Day 1   |
| July '21      | <b>July 31:</b> ECMAA Fitness Day 2<br>Funding Opportunities for Startup and Small Businesses Shared  |
| August '21    | <b>August:</b> ECMAA Fitness Day 3  |
| September '21 | <b>September 19:</b> ECMAA Ethiopian Day Picnic   |
| October '21   | <b>October 17:</b> General Membership Meeting   |
| November '21  | <b>November:</b> Amharic Class Level 2 begins.  |

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ECMAA's activities are only possible because of the generosity of everyone who engages and gives what they can. Below is a non-comprehensive list of those who've gone beyond expectations to help ECMAA meet its goals. Many more have made financial contributions beyond their membership fee. We are grateful to you all.



Adem Ali  
Layla Ashe  
Abaynesh Asrat  
Michael Ayele  
Bethlehem Bekele  
Zeleke Dasho  
Madelyn DePrey  
Rediate Derebe  
Amele Desta  
Yishak Desta  
Nicola DiMarco  
Ambia Elias  
Solomon Elias  
Mahadere Endale  
Fitsum Ermias  
Shuba Fikru  
Dawit Fikru  
Dinsiri Fikru  
Rahel Getachew  
Michel Girma  
Marina Godina  
Richelle Gomez  
Deneke Haile Mariam  
Mimi Hailemariam

Tegest Hailu  
Elsie Hailu  
Amaha Kassa  
Mohammed Mardah  
Assefash Makonnen  
Amanuel Leminih  
Jeffrey Pearce  
Desta Mutisya  
Karen Mutisya  
Kassahun Negash  
Abeba Negatu  
Selamawit Nigussie  
Janan Rajalingam  
Helena Rajalingam  
Hanna Rajalingam  
Selam Retta  
Tezeta Roro  
Muna Said  
Bukola Shonuga  
Berhane Tadese  
Betelihem Tesfaye  
Hanna Yesuf  
Sofie Zewdu