

# ECMAA Newsletter

MAY 2022



## Mother's Day Takeover

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## From the Board

On behalf of ECMAA's board, **Happy Mother's Day Weekend!**

We are excited to share this special edition of our newsletter - a **Mother's Day takeover**, which pays homage to all the mothers. Members of our board, and members within our community, have come together to share how their relationships with their mothers have impacted them.

- Adey Abebe, from New Jersey, pens a special article, looking back on her relationship with her mother, an ECMAA member, throughout the years and how it has gotten stronger.
- Our very own Tiberah Berhanu, who serves as an ECMAA board member, shares leadership lessons her mother has taught her, which she applies in the workplace.
- Aida Meskel, also from New Jersey and very active in ECMAA, recounts how life was like as an adventurous child with a supportive mom.
- Mahlet Retta, New York native, shares the importance of hope with us, which is what her mother taught her.
- We are also getting to know Lili Wondwossen, ECMAA's VP, and the role her mother played in Lili being of service to others.

We hope that all the moms take the time to relax and enjoy doing the things they love to do - maybe it's breakfast in bed, a spa day, or a night on the town - whatever it is, take that much needed time to unwind.

Our thoughts are also with those who have lost their moms. We know how difficult of a time this can be - know that you are not alone. You can always reach out to us if you need to talk. Message us on our social media channels, or email us at **ecmaany@gmail.com**.

Lastly, we have some **exciting events** lined up and hope to see you soon in person!

Until then - be well!

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# Reflections of A Mother's Love

*Adey Abebe is a Freshman in College, majoring in Biology. Following is Adey's testament of the bond that she shares with her mother, Selam Melaku, and how that has deepened throughout the years.*



**By Adey Abebe**

The partitioned windows sneak through some sunshine, the rising light peeking and glistening throughout the room. The room is filled with the loud sounds of the air conditioner from the hallway, muffled music playing from below. While the blankets are strewn about the bed, I choose to ignore the early rays of the morning, covering my eyes with the closest pillow. Early mornings remind me of home, nostalgic memories of being awoken to the smell of etan from the living room, bursts of conversation reaching from the kitchen to the living room. There goes my mother, starting the morning with breakfast on one side, charcoal burning on the other. The coffee pot whistles loudly and proudly, while the frother hums quietly. As I descend downstairs, I try to remain as quiet as possible, but the stairs are no friend of mine. The loud creaks turn against me, making my presence well known.

Taking small steps to the kitchen, my mother is first to greet me good morning, her energetic smile lights up the room. Coming closer, I greet her back and try to sneak a look at what was being prepared. "A surprise" is what she would say before pushing me out of the kitchen, nudging me to complete my morning workout. In the living room, I lay on the scratchy carpet looking at the ceiling, pretending to bend the jist of smoke pooling in the air. Running my hands through the growing atmosphere, I was an Airbender like in the cartoons by day, a practicing doctor by night. Clearing my schedule for an important surgery, I would prepare myself for emergency care. Uttering the words "Clear!" before removing my hands from my patient's stuffed chest waiting for the imaginary EKG mackine to go off, and thrusting the studded animal into the air.



**My favorite part of the day was mimicking my mother as she stuck her nose into her books. I crept behind her to read alongside her, blissfully wishing I could understand what she read.**

The dining room became my new favorite place, as she would sit idly with practice problems on one side, and a large glass of coffee on the other. Facing across from her, I'd lay down my own share of practice problems, although far less complicated. These were quiet moments in which the clock continuously ticked while the inside of our brains racked with definitions and word problems. The walls bounced with mumbles of confusion, and the table was covered with scrap papers and eraser shavings. The moments of sitting and asking for help on a difficult math problem are long over, no longer having to stare blankly at her when she tried her hardest to get her points across. Clutching to my pencil as hard as possible, those days are over. From being a naïve child to a still-learning teenager, I've come to greatly appreciate my mother and all the sacrifices that she has made. The conversations in the dining room soon became dissipated, less time was set there. The lectures and overly-exaggerated stories were minimized, it became more lively and heartfelt. The connection grew stronger with time, the bond even tighter. My mom became my best friend over the years, someone to go to when I needed to talk or even ask for advice, sometimes outdated advice. When I struggled with juggling school and home during a crucial period of my life, it was my mom who talked me through it all, continuously telling me that things will only get better. Through every milestone, big or small, my mother always stood proud basking in the moment, providing a great smile and sincere words of encouragement. Through every dark tunnel comes the light, some good in the long run.

# Reflections of A Mother's Love (Cont'd)



In those moments as a child watching my mother work harder than ever to become a better person for herself and those around her, all I could imagine was being like my mother, making changes both big and small and transforming lives each day. Putting on my scrubs and tag, I imagined myself proudly beaming my title on the hospital floors, knowing that I would make her proud. As cliché as it sounds, mothers do indeed know best.

**Alas, I would like to say thank you to my mother for all that she does, and I hope she knows that her hard work and determination never goes unnoticed. With a heart of pure gold, I wish you nothing but the absolute best. Happy Mother's Day!**



## Leadership Lessons from My Habesha Mom

**By: Tiberah Berhanu, MPA**

My mother **Shetaye Nigussie** – better known as Aty – has taught me many lessons in life. She taught me how to be a good mom – patience is the key, and a whole lot of love. She taught me how to have a happy marriage – listen intently and support one another, in good times and bad. She also taught me how to make it in Corporate America and I apply these lessons each day.



**Here are the top 5 leadership lessons I learned from my habesha mom:**

1. **Always be punctual.** Aty gets to work at least one hour before her shift starts. She uses that time to sit down, have a cup of tea, and prepare herself mentally for the day. While I don't get to work an hour early, I do show up on time, and I have never been late to an interview.
2. **Take risks.** When I became a new mom and I found an opportunity where I would grow in my career, Aty was there to encourage me. She showed up at my doorstep at 5 a.m. so that she could watch my son until my husband came home. That gave me enough time to make the commute into New York City and be there by 8 a.m.
3. **Take the high road.** Aty taught me that there will be times when your character will be tested, especially in the workplace. The trick is not to take things personally and never sweat the small stuff. Always give people the benefit of the doubt.
4. **Dress for success.** We have all heard this saying before, Aty lives this expression and passed it down to me. I think I will now finally give her a pass for having me wear a dress for my kindergarten trip to the Zoo! I remember vividly how Aty packed enough snacks and juice in a cooler and passed it to my classmates.
5. **Find work doing something you're passionate about.** Aty is passionate about caring for people and it shows in the added care she gives to her patients. When you do something, you are passionate about, work becomes something you look forward to.

***Thank you, Aty, for always being there for me and helping me to make it in life! I value the way you raised me, and I just hope that I am half the mom to my boys, that you were to me. Happy Mother's Day!***





# Life Skills My Mom Taught Me

*Aida Meskel reminds us of the side eye that habesha moms are notorious for, but also the power that comes from our strong mothers. Following is Aida's recounts of growing up with a supportive mother, who accepted her for who she was: a fearless adventurer seeker.*

**By: Aida Meskel, MPH**



My bond with my mom and her influence on my life is in large part due to her side eye and its evolution throughout the years. Most are familiar with the **Habesha Mom Side Eye (HMSE)** and how it has the power to put the fear of God in you with one glance or telepathically communicate the need for you to *be better and do better*, in a way that words could never. HMSE is a unique characteristic that seems is bestowed upon habesha moms instantly when they become a mother. However, my mom's side eye has always been special. Growing up, I was not your typical girl. For Christmas, I asked for presents like a toolbox with real tools and an electric pencil sharpener.

I was fearless, curious, and extremely energetic which meant many trips to the emergency room, no matter how much time my mom spent with me or activities she signed me up for. One particular curiosity that consumed me was flying, particularly how to make humans fly and the only thing I wanted to do was design experiments and test human flight. My mother never judged me or discouraged me in my design phases or when I repeatedly tried to fly (at least, that I can remember). I made several failed attempts jumping off walls in the park and couches in our home that resulted in injuries. When I cried because I failed, she always reminded me I could do anything if I learned from my mistakes and kept working at it. She probably privately cried fearful of my fearlessness, but she never discouraged me.

As her side eye caught each fall and my frustration she looked at me and expressed her support and desire to protect me and brilliantly decided to sign me up for gymnastics.



**As my mother put it, "If you are going to fall a lot, you are going to learn how to fall safely, with grace, and maybe learn to be better."**

As I got older I was still really into my pencils, art, making everything myself, and expressing myself through my fashion. She embraced my creativity and love of crafts, which I inherited from her, as she made every Halloween costume for me until I turned 10. I got a hot glue gun one Christmas and started designing my own costumes. **When I complained about how ugly our cheerleading team's bows were, she showed me I don't have to accept things that were substandard and that I can set THE standard.** This was when I met the "disgusted *ehay mindenew*" side eye. We went to my dad's factory, picked out some ribbon and made new hair bows for myself and the whole team.



She went on to be the go-to mom for cheerleading bows for years to come from grade school to all-star teams. As I got older, my needs and my relationship with my mom evolved and so did my relationship with her HMSE. I became bolder and more ambitious through sports and laying the groundwork for my career. My mom was there for all of it and so I worked harder to prove her right for believing in me and giving me whatever she could to enable my success. Along the way there was an adult or two that discouraged me or tried to make me see myself as less than but I paid them no mind and kept on doing the things I loved well.



# Life Skills My Mom Taught Me (Cont'd)

During one of my practices, my mom walked in to drop off something I forgot and witnessed one of those adults discouraging me. For those of you that know **Wzro. Almaz**, you know she is the sweetest woman that smiles through everything and radiates kindness. This practice, I saw a whole other side of Wzro Almaz that showed me another set of skills required in life, called self-respect and standing up for yourself. She unleashed the true authentic patronus HMSE unleashing the fear of God and the gebeto telepathically into everyone's soul when she heard how this woman spoke to me. Like T'challal, she transformed into my personal Black Panther to protect her wakandan cub to let this coach know about herself, my value, and how out of line she was to ever think it was okay to speak to me or any child like that. She then whispered into my ear to pack my things and follow her lead. We walked out of that gym with our heads high, chests up, and then I cried outside. I was so upset about missing practice and being irresponsible.



**She taught me in that moment to know my value and it is my responsibility to never let anyone treat me as less than or make me feel bad for standing up for myself.** I could go on and on about the lessons I learned from my mother, my deep respect for her, her HMSE, and how close we are, which may surprise most because my social media often contains ridiculous moments with my dad and her giving us the traditional HMSE.

**This is where I think it's important to say LOUDLY Thank YOU, Emaye, for everything! I'm sorry we didn't celebrate your efforts as much as we should have and didn't tell you to take more breaks for you and the things you wanted to do for yourself.**

As kids, when your mom shows up to every dance recital, competition, track meet, makes every birthday cake, your costumes, does the laundry, but also works full time, makes breakfast, packs lunch, and makes dinner, it's just something we expect. Doing all of these things and still being functional for conversations with you as their kid is way more than any Avenger or Wizard from Hogwarts could ever do. This is NOT the norm for any human being and we shouldn't continue to expect this. We should celebrate and prioritize support for moms, their dreams, needs, and remind them they are entitled to take time for themselves.



***Thank you for all of the energy and time you invested in me. You Da Best (DJ Khaled Voice). Your Daughter, Aida Meskel***

# The Importance of Hope and Resilience

**By: Mahlet Retta**

There are so many wonderful things that I could say about my mother **Zenebework Zewde**. Her resilience when faced with the most difficult of life situations will always resonate the most to me. My mother's strength has always astonished me. If I am half the woman that she is, I'll consider myself blessed.

Like many immigrants, my mother came to this country with only a dream and high aspirations. From that alone, she was able to build for herself a wonderful life. I am not saying that life has always been rainbows and butterflies. However, even during the hard times she has always found the glimmer of hope with the help of her faith.



**My mother instilled in me the importance of always keeping God first and to seek guidance in my faith always. I always knew that with prayer, all things were possible.**



## Mama is on Vaca

Mamas! This is the masterclass you have been waiting for. Join ECMAA's own **Tez Roro** **this Tuesday, May 10 at 7pm via zoom** to talk about:

- Why take a solo trip?
- Fundamental systems
- The "mom guilt"
- Strategies and tools you can use right away

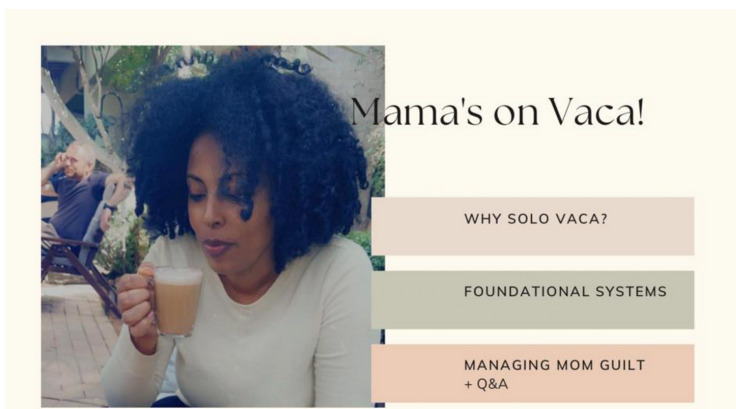
Invest in yourself. Drop this on your calendar. Grab your favorite drink and snacks and join us at the [link here!](#)

## Mother's Day Playlist

If you are looking for the right songs to play on Mother's Day, look no further - we have you covered! From all-time favorites like "Dear Mama" and "I Look to You" play these hits on mom's day and always - she will appreciate them!

1. **"Dear Mama"** by 2Pac
2. **"Mother's Day Song for Mother"** by Danielle Livingston feat. Terence Davis
3. **"My Girl"** by The Temptations
4. **"A Song for Mama"** by Boyz II Men
5. **"The Best Day"** by Taylor Swift
6. **"I Look to You"** by Whitney Houston
7. **"Hey Mama"** by Kanye West
8. **"Because You Loved Me"** by Celine Dion
9. **"Mama Knew Love"** by Anthony Hamilton
10. **"Isn't She Lovely"** by Stevie Wonder

***For more songs, [click here.](#)***





# Getting to Know ECMAA'S Board

ECMAA'S Board is made of passionate individuals volunteering their time with the goal of supporting the organization in its efforts to serve the needs of the Ethiopian community in the NY tri-state area. Each month, we will highlight a member of our Board so that you can get to know us better. When you see us in one of our upcoming in-person events, please feel free to give us a shout out by name!

*"I have always admired my mother's tenacity and drive to make something from nothing. Through her example, I have learned to become independent, hardworking and most importantly, be of service to others."*

**-Lili Wondwossen, Vice President, ECMAA**

## Lili Wondwossen

**Role:** Vice President

**Born:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (lived in Boston for 18 years)

**Occupation:** Manager, Global Health & Social Impact at Pfizer

**Hobbies:** Dancing, fashion, running, content creating



Lili first heard of ECMAA from friends and by attending one of our events. She is currently serving her first year as a member of the Executive Board. "As an only child it was not easy growing up with a mom who had very high expectations. However, her relentless pursuit to get me the best education, interactive afterschool programs and tutors have all contributed to the person I am today."



*From (L): Lili in her younger days with her mother, Wagaye Tamire; Lili and her mother in Addis Ababa; Lili with her mother and friends in Massachusetts.*



# AMHARIC CORNER: POETRY

## ደኅና ዋይ እማማ

አዬ : እማማዬ : ደኅና ዋይ

ያሳወረሽ አሳወረኝ : ቀን የተጣባብን ሥራይ፤

ዓይኔ ዓይንሽንም አያይ . . . .

ያለ ጠር መጣረር ዕዳ : ወይ ያለባላንጣ ግዳይ

አቆላልፎን : አቆራርጦን : በዕንባ በትካዜ ብካይ

ዘመን የተፋው ሾተላይ :

አዬ : በቃሽኝ : በቃሁሽ : ዓይኔሽ ዓይንሽንም አያይ . . . .

በቃ እማማ እናት ዓለም : እማትነፋገ እማታቅማማ

እማታሳጨ እማታማ

እኔን በራበኝ : በጠማኝ : እንዲያ አብረሽኝ በትጠማ

ምነው ወተቱን ከጡትሽ : በጊዜ-ገፊ ታስቀማ ?

አንጀቱ ያንጀትሽ ቀራጭ :

አጥንቱ ያጥንትሽ ፍላጭ

ሕይወትሽ የሕይወቱ ምንጭ : ወዜ የፍቅርሽ ወዝ ምጣጭ

ማግፀንሽ የፍጥረቱ አማጭ . . . .

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ይበጠስ ውልሽ ከውሌ : ቃሌ ከቃልሽ ይፈለጥ

ዓይንሽ ባይኔ ትል ዘንበ : በቃኝ : የኔው ብሌን ይፍረጥ

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ይቆረጥ እንበል : ይገርሰስ ?

ይረሳ : ይሙት : ይደምሰስ ?

እርም አፈር እንበል ይበጠስ ?

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ጡትሽ የደም ወተት ዘንቦ

ሆድሽ የቁስል ምጥ ታልቦ

ባዳ ቅረት ተመትሮብሽ : የእንብርቱ እልባት ተሰብሮ

ደሜ በፋፋብት እትብት : ገፊ ዲቃላ ተቋጥሮ :

በቃ እማማ : እማማዬ

መቀነቱ : ገበናዬ

በቃሁሽ አድባሬ : መቅኔ

ከእንግዲህህ ላንቺ መጥኔ

አዬ ላንቺ አዬ ለኔ . . . .

ጫቅላዬን ባዘለ እቅፍሽ

ገፊ ጉግ ማንጉግ መፅነስሽ

ጐምቱ ሾተላይ ማብቀልሽ . . . .

አይሆንም እንጂ ከሆነሽ : ካለልሽ ካዘለቀልሽ

እግዚአብሔር ያሳድግልሽ፤

አዎን : ቃል ለምድር ለሰማይ

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ዓይኔ ዓይንሽንም አያይ፤

ከፋም በጐም አናሰማ

የሕይወቱ ወዝ የዓይኔ ማማ

እማትነፋገ እማታቅማማ

እማታሳጨ እማታማ

እኔን በራበኝ በጠማኝ : አብረሽኝ እምትጠማ

ጥቃቱን እምትጠቁ : ቁስሌን እምትታመማ

ፍሥሃዬን : ፈገግታዬን : ሳቁን ብቻ እምታልማ

አንቺ እማማ

አንቺ የነፍሴ ልብ ዓልማ

የዓይኔ ማማ . . . .

ምነው ጡትሽ ተጣረረኝ ?

በጊዜ-ገፊ ለወጠኝ ?

እንዴት ይንጠቀኝ ሾተላይ ?

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ያለኝታ ጎብስተ-መና : የወገን የአጥንቱን ሣላይ

የደሜን ምንጭ የሕይወቱን ማይ

የማግፀን የእትብቱን አዋይ ? . . . .

አዎን : ይብቃን እናት ዓለም : አንጀቱ ባንጀቱ ይቆረጥ

አጥንቱም በአጥንቱ ይድፈጥፈጥ

ቀሌም ከቃልሽ ይፈለጥ

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እናት ዓለም የሰሜ አርማ

፪፮

ሰማዬን ቁልቁል ዘንጥፎ

በብብቱ ጐም ታቅፎ

የአድማሳቱን ፍንጣቂ : ለእግሩ መርገጫ አርከፍከፎ :

እንደፍካሬ ኢየሱስ ቃል : እንደሙታን የግዞት ሕግ

ተውተብትቦ ተጥለፍልፎ : ተቆላልፎ እንደዛር ድግ

በምድር በሰማይ ዳር ድንበር : በሕዋው ዓለም ክልል ጥግ

በሲኦል ጠፍር መሰላል : የብስ ከጠፈር ታድሞ

ጥጉን እንደራእዩ እውታር : ከነአከፍፋ ቁልቁል ዘሞ

እንደእንጦርጦስ በር አጥር : በአለት ፍጻ ተረምርሞ

የጐም ክፍዱን እንደጣር : ወደ ምድር ማግፀን ቆልምሞ

እንደባቢሎን ግንብ አጥር : ቋንቋ ለቋንቋ አሳድሞ

አልበገር አልደፈር : አልሰበር ያለን ከርሞ

ሊማ-ሊሞ የቁም-እርሙ : ጠፈር-አዘል ሊማ-ሊሞ

ዛሬ እንደሰለት ሃጅ ፈለግ : በግብረ ጉንዳን ተተልሞ

ሰማይ ከምድር ተደላድሎ : ተኮትኩቶ ተከርከሞ

በዲማሚት ተፈልፍሎ : ድልድይ ይሁን ሊማ-ሊሞ ?

እሳት ወይ አበባ

ከጸጋዬ ገብረ መድኅን

ሥነ ግጥም የተወሰደ

# Upcoming Events & Internship



## Wegen Le Wegen Launch Phase 2

**Date:** May 11, 7 PM (Facebook Live)

**Join:** [Wegen Le Wegen NY-TriState on Facebook](#)



## ECMAA'S Soccer and Fitness Day

**Date:** May 28, 2 PM

**Location:** Riverside Dr. & W. 101 St.,  
Riverside Park, New York, NY, 10025

**Register:** [here](#)

**ECMAA & ETHIOPIAN EDIR MUTUAL  
ASSISTANCE ASSOCIATION IN NY  
PRESENTS**

## YOUR HEALTH AND WEALTH

**Building a Strong Financial Foundation and  
Having Proper Protection**

**Financial Health Workshop in  
Collaboration with Ethiopian Edir  
Mutual Assistance Association (EEMAA)**

**Date:** May 21, 4-6 PM (Zoom)

**Meeting ID:** 457 852 1248

**Passcode:** 618515



## ECMAA'S Summer Kick-Off

**Date:** June 11, 12 PM

**Location:** Sakura Park, 121st & Riverside Drive

**Description:** Activities for all! Tug of war, sack  
races, eskista. Bring a picnic blanket.



ECMAA Internship Application

## ECMAA Summer 2022 Internship

**Description:** For high school or college students, graduates or people in the workforce interested in helping the Ethiopian community in the Tri-state area. Interns will work on ECMAA projects that align with their interests, develop marketing, web design, and database management skills while connecting with community members.

**Apply:** complete [this form](#) and send resume to [ecmaany@gmail.com](mailto:ecmaany@gmail.com).

***Need assistance with your resume? Let us know and we can help.***

# Helpful Links & Resources

## COVID-19 Helpful Links

### NYC Links

[NYC Testing Location](#)

[Vaccinations](#)

- At-home
- Walk-up vaccination sites
- NYC Mobile & Pop-Up Vaccine Sites

[Vaccine Finder](#)

[Latest Data](#)

### NJ Links

[Information Hub](#)

[Testing](#)

- Test finder
- Free at-home testing
- Free public testing

[Re-opening](#)

## Summer Camp & Seasonal Activity Resources

[NY Metro Parents](#)

[Growing Up NYC](#)

[COVID-19 Resource Center for Camps](#)