



Imagine Ethiopia

October 23 - November 5, 2011

HIKING, ABUNA YEMATA,
OVERNIGHT IN ABADA
PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER NO.4
OCT 29 - NOV 1



imagine1day™



Getting Out There

The thing I will remember the most was the big hike up to 2600 metres. We could hear the community waiting for us as we approached; we heard drums and singing. It was powerful to know the welcome party was there just for us. The moment when Sapna told me to turn around and look, I saw hundreds of people lined along the mountain. It was very emotional.

Brittany Wood, IE2011 Participant

Party in Abada



3



1



2

This is ETHIOPIA

After visiting the rock-hewn churches of Abuna Yemata and camping at Abada, Imagine Ethiopia 2011 participants Michelle Lazar, Mary Anna Noveck, and Ted McDonald share their experiences over coffee.

Michelle: I loved it. It started with a power hike up the mountain, under the hot African sun. We got a glimpse of our final destination and I thought, "I can't believe we are actually going up there." I had to wrap my head around the six obstacles we had to overcome. The first part was easy. For safety reasons, we were harnessed up; prepared to overcome the obstacles safely. We proceeded with caution and had moments

of extreme fear, and exhilaration at the same time. Once we navigated through most of the obstacles, our last quest was to edge along a narrow walkway; a grand traverse with high stakes. That was the last moment of surrealism. I was in shock. It was incredible that anyone had decided to build a church in that location in the 4th century and that it was rediscovered by Abuna Yemata in the 6th century. The most incredible part, aside from the location of the church, was the painting that withstood the test of time and had been preserved and protected from the elements.

Mary Anna: The awareness and strength

of the faith of people is astounding. To think that people battled all the elements to create a place of worship and to preserve it is incredible.

Michael: It was the most spectacular trip to a church I have ever had. I got to hike up there with all my friends. It was amazing to see that they carved this church on the side of the mountain and it's amazing how well it's preserved. It's almost as though the sacred space itself has preserved that. I was impressed with the entire team for getting up there. Nancy and Mary Anna really put aside their fears and accomplished a huge goal.

1. The welcoming committee at Abada
2. imagine1day's Community Mobilizing Officer, Halefom Gezaei, drumming with the priests upon arrival
3. Katie keeps the beat for a flock of new fans

Our Experience



Michelle: My favorite part of our overnight stay at Abada was the photo scavenger hunt. It was neat to come together as a team regardless of the fact we didn't speak the same language. It was a unique opportunity to explore the community in an authentic way. There were a few challenges that required us to go into people's homes and they welcomed us without hesitation. The highlight was riding a donkey!

Brittany: The thing I will remember the most was the big hike up a 2600 metre incline. We could hear the community waiting for us as we approached; we heard drums and singing. It was powerful to know the welcome party was there just for us. The moment when Sapna told me to turn around and look, I saw hundreds of people lined along the mountain. It was very emotional.

Ted: I think it was amazing to receive such an incredible welcome from the Abada community and to see how appreciative they are of imagine1day and all the work that's being done in the school and community. It was amazing to learn about the bean field which is used for income generation for the community. It's great to know that alongside education, entrepreneurship is a high priority.



1. Michelle Lazar sports traditional headgear in Abada
2. Nancy Herb finds a new friend during the photo scavenger hunt
3. Michael Millard learns to make injera – a traditional Ethiopian bread
4. Sapna Dayal leads the team out of Abuna Yemata

To be immersed into a community and really interacting with them is refreshing. As tourists, we are usually looking at locals with curiosity and it's interesting waking up and having eyes look at us with curiosity.

Majka Burhardt, IE2011 Leader



5. White boys can jump: Adam Millard's team ticks "play leap frog" off of their photo scavenger hunt list
6. Game on: Michael Millard makes his move in an epic students vs. participants dodgeball match
7. The hydro fan made by Brittany Wood, Sapna Dayal and Abada student Zelale
8. Brittany Wood and the Imagine Ethiopia 2011 team leave their legacy at Abada Grade 5-8 Community School
9. Michelle learns how to weave a traditional basket at Gheralta Lodge

Katie: Per usual in our trip experience, it was nothing like I expected. I am absolutely amazed by how they were able to carve out a church so high in the landscape. I have no idea how the first people got up there. As tourists, it was quite humbling because the local priest scrambled up to the top like it was just another day. Meanwhile, we were geared out and roped up with only the finest hiking shoes and daypacks. The contrast between our experiences getting up and down to the experiences of all of those who, for centuries, have made the weekly trek is amazing. Life on the edge was fun.



Follow us on

web: www.imagine1day.org

twitter: @imagine1day

facebook: imagine1day

