



imagine

ETHIOPIA

October 23 - November 5, 2011



DEBREWEHABIT, ABI ADI,
SEE YOU SOON, ETHIOPIA
PARTICIPANT NEWSLETTER NO. 5
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imagine1day™



Summing It All Up

I find myself just looking at things in wonder and I'm seeing an opportunity to recommit to that in life in general, wherever I am. There are always moments of wonder; there are moments of wonder everywhere.

I'm committing to seeing them, taking them in, and being open to them.

Andi McLeish, IE2011 Participant

Celebration Abi Adi



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This is ETHIOPIA

The Jupiter International Hotel is a crossroads for world travellers who happen through Addis Ababa, in search of a comfortable room, reliable wifi, and sometimes just a cold St. George Lager. Following visits to the remarkable community of Debrewehabit and the Imagine Ethiopia 2011 team's beneficiary community of Abi Adi, participants reflected on the whole experience and on saying goodbye (or see you later).

Mary Anna: I remember sitting outside of (Aregash) Lodge, watching the second coffee ceremony of the day and, in the background, they were feeding the hyenas and the vultures and Andi was in a

tree. We were talking to the owner of the lodge and hearing his whole history and then talking to a Canadian couple and it was just this collective sharing over coffee, with the hyenas and the vultures, and it was amazing.

We didn't need to lock our windows (that night) because a human might come in, we had to lock our windows because a monkey might come in and mess with all of our stuff.

Andi: The tree had to be climbed.

Mary Anna: During my conversation with the couple (from Canada), they were

talking about how crazy their friends thought they were for going to Ethiopia. Like, how could they go to Ethiopia? It's a famine there; it's whatever. And I was saying that my family really got stirred up over this one too. We were just in awe how one place, for whatever reason – how wrong people have it.

Andi: I find myself just looking at things in wonder and I'm seeing an opportunity to recommit to that in life in general, wherever I am. There are always moments of wonder; there are moments of wonder everywhere. I'm committing to seeing them, taking them in, and being open to them.

1. The crowd at Abi Adi reacts to the IE2011 team's cultural exchange dance
2. Ted McDonald and Michael Millard yuk it up with imagine1day's Daniel Ataklti and Gebre, Abi Adi's Principal
3. The IE2011 team's Edge of Glory dance for the Abi Adi community

Our Experience



Katie: Just over all, in general, I'm feeling so grateful everywhere we've gone. A big part of that is the people here and how they come running out of their huts, and running out of corners you didn't know existed to say hi and smile bigger smiles than I have ever seen down my neighborhood streets and so there's a lot of conversation to be had around that.

Brittany: One thing that has stuck with me, and that I am sure will stay with me even after I leave, is something Teddy (our lead driver) said. We were in a hut in Yirgalem watching women make coffee, even though they weren't expecting us, they said, "sure, come in, we'll do this for you." That would never happen where we live. That's their culture and they are so welcoming. Teddy said we have so many things in our life and so many opportunities and luxuries and when you look at these people who have so much less, they still smile bigger than we do. That has been something that, throughout every day, has stuck with me. The landscape is beautiful but I think what has stuck with me the most is the people and being able to think about how I'm going to go home and be more like that back where I live.



1. Brittany Wood makes friends in Abi Adi
 2. Michelle Lazar and Sapna Dayal put finishing touches on flags of Africa
 3. Katie Thurmes catches a contagious smile
 4. The children of Debrewehabit

"We have so many things in our life and so many opportunities and luxuries and when you look at these people who have so much less, they still smile bigger than we do."

Brittany Wood, IE2011 Participant



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Katie: I had the, "Aha!" moment of, "I am that person you see doing these things and those smiling kids are not just pictures." From a photographic perspective, I see that all the time and I always thought, "that must have been a really magical person taking that picture, to get such smiles from those kids." And I just noticed in general the joyful demeanor of everyone.

Nancy: I have raised two boys and I'm finished with that, in terms of the nitty gritty and one is out of university and one is in university and they're both well on their way. I'm in transition to being back on my own. I've not had a partner or partners, per se, through the duration of the rearing of my children. The family's still intact and it's all good but now the boys are gone and it's time for me to grow on so many different levels. The whole trip for me is about finding a whole new life for myself and doing it in a way that is courageous, and it's about partnership, maybe. And if that doesn't happen it's about, wow, how am I going to dig in and really live hard. So transition and emptiness and fullness. I'm in a big wave.

5. imagine1day Communication Officer, Leigh Boyle, Majka Burhardt, Dani Ataklti, Ted McDonald, and Michael Millard at the Abi Adi celebration
 6. imagine1day's Community Team, Kahsay Sheferaw (left) and Halefom Gezaei (centre), watch as Sapna Dayal loses herself in the music
 7. Brittany Wood shows that American girls can dance
 8. Michelle Lazar shows off her Tigrignian shoulder shake
 9. The IE2011 team leaves their mark at the Abi Adi school that they have worked so hard to make a reality

The Last Page



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