



**MEDICAL
PROGRAM**
DECEMBER 2021



GREETINGS

Dear friends and supporters:

2020 was a rough year around the world. 2021 was even rougher for Ethiopia, because we had the ongoing COVID pandemic, combined with the civil war. Some patients could not reach us. At least 2 patients lost mothers to COVID, and 1 patient died in the unrest.

Despite these challenges, we started a new program - spine outreach! We go to smaller towns and evaluate patients with potential spinal deformities. We can examine over 100 patients in a single weekend.

Months ago I returned to Ethiopia, fully vaccinated and delighted to restart work. My first weekend in Ethiopia we had our Ghanaian partners visit, we evaluated over 100 post-op patients, and performed 16 surgeries and rod lengthenings. I spent the next weekend in the Silte region where we screened 100+ community members and found many potential surgical candidates.

I stepped out to attend the SRS spine meetings in America, planning to return in a few weeks. War erupted, and the US government advised Americans to leave Ethiopia

Despite this, our program is advancing. We operated on 77 patients in Ghana and Ethiopia in the past year. And now we are also sending Ethiopian surgeons for training as well. We arranged several spine training events and planned a major event for December, 2021 which circumstances forced us to put off.

We wish you all strength and blessings for a good year!

With appreciation,

Rick Hodes, MD, MACP and the JDC-Ethiopia Spine and Heart team

SUCCESS THIS YEAR!



Ethiopian doctors traveled with 17 patients to FOCOS hospital in Ghana to learn surgical skills they can implement back home in Addis Ababa. Previously, there had been little hands-on surgical training, and Ethiopian surgeons were not able to perform scoliosis surgery unassisted.



Under the guidance of expert surgeons from FOCOS Hospital in Ghana, our Ethiopian spine surgeons-in-training lengthened magnetic growing rods and operated on 16 Ethiopian youths with spine deformities from age 8-14.



We officially launched the Spine Capacity Building and Training Program with officials from the Ethiopian Ministry of Health, patients' families, and medical professionals. After the launch event, 12 nurses from 6 government hospitals were trained in the evaluation and care of spine deformities by the JDC team.



We sent 20 patients to FOCOS Hospital in Ghana. Despite obstacles due to Covid and requirements for precise testing, the group did well. Many were going for their final fusion surgery after years with "growing rods," some went for their first procedure.



After advertising on local FM radio and by megaphone throughout the city, the JDC spine team traveled to Debre Berhan. Our team evaluated 129 people with a variety of deformities, identifying 64 patients in need of further treatment. Some need surgical intervention in Addis Ababa or Ghana.



JDC hired 2 Ethiopian surgeons, orthopedist Dr. Eskinder Kebede and neurosurgeon Dr. Abraham Tadele to move our program forward. Both have had training at FOCOS Hospital in Accra, Ghana.



MEET OUR PATIENTS

Meet Yordanos, age 19. Here is her story:

"I grew up in Addisu Gebeya, a neighborhood in Addis Ababa. I live with my parents in a small mud house. My dad is a guard at the phone company, my mom runs our home.

My family noted my bad back when I was a baby. I had frequent follow-up at Black Lion University Hospital, but the pediatricians could do nothing. My family was increasingly distraught and hopeless, watching my deformity progress. I was shy and lonely, and in school kids called me "gobata," (an insult meaning hunchback).

One day while we were walking, a stranger approached and told me about Dr Rick Hodes - a spine doctor. The next day my parents took me to Dr. Rick at Mother Teresa's Mission. He evaluated me and took 25 photos. I officially became his patient and started my follow up. He diagnosed 'severe congenital scoliosis' and told me I had lost over half my lung capacity.

On April 2012, I flew to FOCOS Hospital in Accra, Ghana with 11 other patients like me. Soon I had successful surgery and came back to Ethiopia with new personality - straight, hopeful, and confident.

I'm now a 2nd year nursing student at Alkan Health Science College in Addis Ababa.

I'd like to pass my deepest gratitude to Dr Rick, his wonderful team and the donors who made my surgery possible. If it wasn't for you all, I'd not have been me now. You made me become a normal person just like my friends.



Read more success stories at www.rickhodes.org/blogs

WAITING FOR SURGERY

Hundreds of our patients need surgery the soonest possible so they can breath better and live longer. Meet some of our patients.



Abute



Fenet



Mebtu



Abel



Maereg



Getacher



Abi



Leul



Sisay



Yared



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Birtukan



Sofia



Emnet



Abdulreshid



Aynalem



Nuhamin



Hamsa



Kirby



Sharbena



Gizaw



Samuel

ABOUT

Dr. Rick Hodes:

After graduating from University of Rochester Medical School and training in internal medicine at Johns Hopkins University, Dr. Rick first travelled to Ethiopia as a relief worker during the famine of 1984. A Fulbright Fellowship brought him to Addis Ababa University Medical School to teach and practice in 1985. In 1990, he was hired by JDC to care for 25,000 displaced Ethiopians seeking to immigrate to Israel.

Dr. Hodes opened JDC's medical program in 2006 at Mother Teresa's Mission. He now runs the clinic from the basement of a crowded public hospital, treating patients, mostly youths, with spinal deformities, congenital heart disease, and rare medical issues.

On a personal note, Dr. Hodes met his first two children, abandoned orphans with TB of the spine (Pott's Disease) at Mother Teresa's Mission in 1999. He adopted them and brought them to Dallas for complex surgery and rehabilitation.

Dr. Hodes is a CNN Hero, holds five honorary doctorates, and was awarded Mastership by the American College of Physicians. He is the subject of four documentary films, including HBO's "Making the Crooked Straight" and "Zemene," as well as Marilyn Berger's book "[This is a Soul: The Mission of Rick Hodes.](#)"

www.rickhodes.org



JDC is the world's leading Jewish humanitarian assistance organization, impacting millions of lives in more than 70 countries today. JDC leverages a century of experience confronting poverty and crisis around the world to make the world a better place for all.

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**Our
Main
partners:**





WE SEEK TO RAISE \$26,000 PER PATIENT

I am composing this from a farmhouse in Springfield, Illinois. Why Springfield? Over 2 decades ago, I had a 15 year old patient named Mesfin at Mother Teresa's Mission who came to us from Sidamo to die in peace. He was in terrible heart failure from rheumatic heart disease.

I treated Mesfin's heart failure with a combination of meds, and he felt much better. Then I sent him to Atlanta, twice, for open heart surgery. Fast forward: Mesfin is now a perfusionist at a hospital here in Springfield, running heart-lung machines during open heart surgery and ECMO machines for critically ill patients (they put the lungs on vacation). When I told Mesfin that I was not comfortable returning to Ethiopia at this moment, he said "Rick, I lived in your home in Addis Ababa for 2 years. It's your turn to stay with my family."

My amazing team and I send our warmest greetings for happy holidays and a far better new year for us all.

With thanks!

Rick Hodes, MD, MACP
and the JDC-Ethiopia Medical Team



Please help us! Money is our limiting factor in saving lives.

Gifts are tax-deductible. Contact us about wire transfers, planned giving, bequests, stock transfer and corporate matching gifts. JDC is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization for tax purposes.

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