

# HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY

REPORT FROM AFRICA 2017



**Celebrating 25 years  
of helping in Africa**

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## What have we accomplished in 25 years?

IN Africa, perhaps because of the crushing burdens many people bear in their daily lives, they look forward to days when they can celebrate—a birth, a marriage, an anniversary, a religious feast. They celebrate with great gusto. We are sometimes amazed at how people with so little can show so much joy. It's a lesson we can learn from them.

Now it is time for us to express some joyfulness. In March 2017, it is 25 years since Stephanie and I first visited Eritrea. Out of that visit, hundreds of people in North America, Africa and elsewhere have been linked in efforts that have touched the lives of thousands. It is also a time to examine and take stock of what all of us have managed to do over the past quarter century.

First, let's face it. We weren't going to change the world. We're just a couple of people with generous supporters trying to do a little bit of good in some places where there are plenty of needs.

There have been positive results. The 83 war orphans we began supporting in Eritrea in 1992 are adults now, many with families and children. We are as proud as their parents would have been of the accomplishments of many of them.

In both Eritrea and South Sudan, thousands of children from poor families have been able to go to school and some have gone on to make remarkable achievements. People's lives have been saved and improved at clinics we have sup-

ported. People have homes and have started small businesses that they would not have been able to do otherwise. We have been fortunate enough to meet some of the people whose lives have been touched, and we've heard stories of others. There are no doubt many more we will never know about. Anonymous giving—not a bad idea.

There have been failures too—things that could have been done or that we wanted to do, but didn't. There are times when we feel that we let people down. I had this grand dream of financing an underground dam in Eritrea. It didn't happen. I learned that we should concentrate on the smaller, simpler things, like providing hoes, seeds and treadle pumps to village women in South Sudan. They are the ones making a success of it.

Overall, have our efforts been worthwhile? I do know that our lives have been enriched immeasurably by meeting wonderful, generous people who chose to support the work. And we have been able to meet remarkable people in Africa who took our small gifts and turned them into something beautiful and life giving. If we had to do it all over again, we definitely would. I hope you feel the same way.

On pages 4 and 5, we summarize projects in Eritrea and South Sudan in 2016. On pages 6-9 you will find some highlights from each of the previous 24 years. ♦

*Dennis Schroeder*

## Who we are; what we are trying to do

It all started in 1992, when we, Stephanie and Dennis Schroeder, visited Eritrea, a land in the Horn of Africa devastated by three decades of war and frequent droughts. Fighting had ended just a few months before we arrived there.

Our initial search was for a small orphanage where we could sponsor all of the children. We found it at St. Joseph's School in Keren. We also found people in Canada who shared our interest in developing friendships with Eritreans and assisting them in their struggle to create better lives for themselves and their children.

Our group began as the B.C. branch of the *Eritrean Relief Association in Canada* in 1992. Two years later, we reorganized as the *Eritrean Relief and Rehabilitation Association of British Columbia (ERRA-BC)*, a non-profit society incorporated in B.C. and registered with the Canada Revenue

**HANTI SIDRA means "One Family" in the Tigrinya language of Eritrea. It was the name given to a group of orphans we supported there. Since our supporters and beneficiaries of support live in many countries around the world, we are now truly "One Global Family".**

Agency as a charitable organization. In 2008, we changed our name to *Hanti Sidra One Global Family*.

During our 25 years of operation, we have spent more than \$1.6 million (see back page) on a variety of projects in Eritrea, South Sudan and elsewhere in the Horn of Africa. A summary of projects appears on these pages.

All of the above mentioned funds have been contributed by people who believe in the value of the work being done. None is from governments. All of the money donated goes directly to our colleagues who do the work we support in Eritrea and South Sudan.

We continue to visit Africa as often as possible to strengthen our ties of friendship and to observe the programs and projects we are supporting.

In Canada, we have been blessed to have committed support from many people. They volunteer their time and talents for fundraisers; they make generous financial contributions; they hold prayer sessions in times of crisis. Thank you. This work would not have been possible without your support. ♦

### **HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY**

#### **Board of Directors**

Ghebremedhin Abbai  
Gary Koett  
Lynn Koett  
Patricia Gale-MacDonald  
Dennis Schroeder  
Stephanie Schroeder

#### **Active Volunteers**

Dozens

#### **Contributors**

Hundreds

**Email:** [hantisidra@gmail.com](mailto:hantisidra@gmail.com)

*In 2016, Hanti Sidra was able to provide \$18,785.70 to the De la Salle Brothers and four orders of Catholic Sisters. A brief summary of how the funds were used appears below.*

### **Hagaz Agro-Tech School**

Operated by De la Salle Brothers. Br. Esayas Tsegay, Headmaster. Funding of \$2,683.67 (US\$2,000) used for teachers' capacity building efforts and for materials needed by the students in the women's residence hall on the campus.

### **St. Joseph's School**

Operated in Keren by De la Salle Brothers. Br. Awate Fisseha, Headmaster. Funding of \$2,683.67 (US\$2,000) used to cover school fees for 40 students from poor families.

### **IRS Study Centre**

Institute for Religious Studies (post-secondary college) operated in Asmara by De la Salle Brothers. Br. Weldehawariat Haile, Director. Funding of \$1,341.85 (US\$1,000) used to support study centre for students not able to study at home. Also available to elementary and secondary students in the surrounding neighborhood of Villaggio.

### **Nativity School**

Operated by De la Salle Brothers in Shinnara village outside of Keren. Br. Mengistu Ukbamichael, Headmaster. Funding of \$1,341.85 (US\$1,000) for rehabilitation of Kindergarten, and for purchase of mats, small balls, jump ropes, learning game materials. Also for minor maintenance.

### **Comboni Sisters**

Recipient: Sister Thomas. Funding of \$2,012.75 (US\$1,500) used at Comboni Community in Afabet to expand skills of local women--how to preserve food and use economical ways of cooking.

### **Santa Anna School**

Operated in Keren by Santa Anna Sisters. Sr. Yodit Tesfagabir, Headmistress. Funding of \$2,012.75 (US\$1,500) used for teacher training and for learning aid materials in the elementary school grades.

### **Feledareb Clinic**

Operated by Capuchin Sisters in village near Keren. Recipient: Sr. Pasqualina. Funding of \$2,012.75 (US\$1,500) used to assist needy families in Feledareb and surrounding villages.

### **Daughters of Charity**

Recipient: Sr. Lettemariam Mogos. Funding of \$2,012.75 (US\$1,500) used for teaching materials at Kindergarten operated by Daughters of Charity in Dekemhare and for a teachers' workshop.

### **De la Salle Brothers, Nairobi**

Recipient: Br. Ghebreyesus Habte, head of De la Salle Brothers in Africa. Funding of \$2,683.67 (US\$2,000) to support Eritrean students at Tangaza College in Nairobi. ♦

## Keeping the peace and promoting peace

FOR South Sudan, which has been wracked by violence almost continuously for more than three decades, the obvious remedy is for peace to prevail. Pan Aweil Development Agency (PADA), our partner in South Sudan, is trying to bring this about in two ways.

First, Managing Director William Kolong Pioth is co-ordinator of the Joint Border Peace Committee, which is tasked with keeping the peace and facilitating trade along a stretch of the border between South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan. The committee has been remarkably successful in minimizing violence during the annual cattle migrations across the border.

Second, several years ago, Kolong initiated a program called Sport for Peace. Youths, both boys and girls, gathered in Aweil for basketball, soccer, volleyball and track competitions. The idea was to bring together local youths with ethnic southerners expelled from the north and people displaced following the outbreak of internal violence in 2013. This event has grown in popularity and is now being copied elsewhere in South Sudan.

In 2016, Kolong took top performers in the soccer competition, regardless of ethnic background, and formed a club called Pan Aweil United FC. The team climbed to the top of the standings in the local football league. *Hanti Sidra* collected soccer uniforms in Canada and sent them to the team. ◆



**Pan Aweil United FC pose in their new uniforms.**

### Seeds for survival

DISRUPTIONS caused by political instability made 2016 a year of severe food shortages in South Sudan. PADA did its part to help alleviate the problem. It acquired access to unused land near Aweil and grew 38 metric tonnes of sorghum, as well as several other crops there.

In early 2017, it planned to sell seeds to the World Food Program and FAO for distribution to internally displaced persons and returnees from northern Sudan. The balance would be sold in the market. *Hanti Sidra* provided PADA with \$5,500 to get the project started. ◆

### Livelihood, other projects

OUR women's livelihood project expanded to two new villages, Mabiior and Wungiir. We spent almost \$12,000 supplying hoes, watering cans and seeds. We also had expenses repairing the roof of Majok Adim School (\$9,400) and one of our wells (\$5,800). Total spending in South Sudan was about \$35,300. ◆

## TIMELINE 1992-1997

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*Hanti Sidra began its support of projects in Eritrea in 1992. Since then, a total of \$970,000, plus untold hours of volunteer labour, have been spent. Our work in South Sudan began in 2008, and our contributions there have totalled about \$630,000 to date. Some highlights from each year appear on the following four pages.*

### 1992

IN MARCH, Stephanie and Dennis travelled to Eritrea for a short visit. We went to several government and private orphanages with the intention of sponsoring all the children in one of them. We met government officials, private citizens and members of the Catholic Church community. After returning to Canada, we joined a group of Eritreans and Canadians to form a B.C. branch of the Eritrean Relief Association (ERA). We held our first fundraisers.

### 1993

ERITREA gained its independence. ERA became a government agency. We returned to Eritrea to do volunteer work. Stephanie provided training for Kindergarten teachers and Dennis conducted workshops on textbook production. We began supporting 83 orphans at St. Joseph's School in Keren.

### 1994

ERRA-BC was registered as a charitable organization. We continued fundraising at home and doing training workshops in Eritrea. Our support for the orphans increased and we also supported schools and new small businesses. We made our first container shipment to Eritrea, with books for the University of Asmara, and clothing, medicine, etc.

### 1995

WE continued to raise funds in Canada and volunteer in Eritrea. Our work there was now focused on St. Joseph's School and Catholic schools in the Keren area. We made a second container shipment, this time with books, clothing, sports equipment and medical supplies intended for St. Joseph's School and Catholic schools and clinics.

### 1996

WE returned to Eritrea, this time for a stay of six months at St. Joseph's School. Previous visits had been only for several weeks. We were accompanied by our three daughters, aged 15, 13, and 11. We volunteered as teachers, and the girls studied by correspondence. Our orphan group adopted the name "Hanti Sidra", meaning "One Family".

### 1997

OUR family's stay in Eritrea continued until April. Almost half of the orphans left St. Joseph's as the government tried to integrate them with families. We committed to continue supporting those at St. Joseph's. Many returning refugees were being resettled in Hagaz, near Keren. We paid for new homes for some of them. Tensions between Eritrea and Ethiopia were growing.

## TIMELINE 1998-2003

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### 1998

WAR broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in May. That, combined with a government directive effectively taking over all schools, clinics and social programs of religious organizations, seemed to indicate that we would no longer be able to support projects in Eritrea. However, in a visit to the country in November, we discovered that all the work by our contacts was continuing, so we recommitted to assist them. Virtually all of our Hanti Sidra orphans were gone from St. Joseph's School.

### 1999

THE border war with Ethiopia resumed with the "second offensive" in May. Stephanie visited Eritrea. Two of our supporters, Char and Bob Deslippe, went to work at St. Joseph's School for a year. The president of our board, Ghebremedin Abbai, suffered a severe stroke that left half his body paralyzed.

### 2000

THE "third offensive" of the border war began in May. Most of western Eritrea was occupied by Ethiopian troops. The Deslippes were evacuated with many foreigners. ERRA-BC raised \$10,000 to assist people forced into refugee camps. Dennis travelled to Eritrea in October, and visited several of the largest refugee camps and damaged towns. He volunteered at the newly opened Hagaz Agro-Technical School. A peace agreement signed in December ended the fighting but tensions continue to the present.

### 2001

THE border war had ended, but there was a severe crackdown on all political dissent in Eritrea. Our colleagues were able to resume their normal activities and we continued to support them. We became more involved in the programs at Hagaz. Stephanie and our daughter Sarah travelled to Eritrea just weeks after 9/11, passing through Yemen on the way. They completed their journey safely.

### 2002

IN March, ERRA-BC celebrated the 10th anniversary of our first visit to Eritrea. In that time, with no government or outside help, we received \$400,000 in donations, bequests, fundraisers, and organization contributions. We made our final support payments to the Hanti Sidra orphans. We replaced it with a revolving loan fund to help them start small businesses.

### 2003

SEVERAL members of Hanti Sidra have borrowed funds from the revolving fund. One of the most successful was Selemawit, who started two businesses. One was a concrete brick making operation for home construction, and the second was a shop operated out of a converted container. Her husband also bought and operated a small bus.

We also began a second revolving fund, operated through Hagaz Agro-Tech School. Local farmers could borrow to dig wells and build irrigation systems.

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## TIMELINE 2004-2009

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### 2004

THE revolving loan program for Hanti Sidra continued, with more than 20 members receiving loans. A new project was support for a very poor parish school in Faraleba. With funding for schools in danger of being cancelled, this school would have closed. We also supported the Comboni Sisters' work in Afabet, a predominantly Muslim town in the north, and a clinic run by the Capuchin Sisters in Feledareb.

### 2005

The first spring fundraising concert performed by the Arbutus Singers was a big success. ERRA-BC continued its support for Faraleba School and funded renovations upgrading the school building. We also supported the building of study centres by the Santa Anna Sisters in Adi Teklezan and Halibmentel. In Dekemhare, we funded the Daughters of Charity to improve a very poor Kindergarten. In Asmara, we paid for staff of a study centre at the Institute for Religious Studies.

### 2006

WE were noticing that more young people were leaving Eritrea, partly because of perceived limitations in their prospects. We assisted three members of Hanti Sidra in a UN-HCR camp in Ethiopia.

To support a large water development program at Hagaz, we donated electro-magnetic geological survey instruments valued at more than \$20,000. We also supported another very poor village school at Shaqloti, near Hagaz.

### 2007

A large bequest resulted in ERRA-BC revenues reaching about \$190,000, far above what had ever been received. Because spending is usually based on the previous year's revenue, this left a large reserve.

Our support for projects in Eritrea remained much the same. We were unable to visit Afabet because of travel restrictions.

### 2008

AT the April board meeting, the name of the charity was officially changed from ERRA-BC to *Hanti Sidra One Global Family*.

We introduced a new fundraising tradition, selling gift cards just before Christmas.

We began an involvement with South Sudan. Dennis, together with William Kolong Pioth, went to a training workshop at CAWST in Calgary, learning how to produce biosand water filters.

### 2009

BROTHER Amilcare left Eritrea after making great contributions for many years, including creation of Hagaz Agro-Tech School in 1999.

We sponsored two of our Hanti Sidra orphans, twins Fethi and Ghinbar, to come to Canada from a camp in Ethiopia. They arrived in Sidney in December.

Dennis travelled to South Sudan for the first time. Hanti Sidra supported three new projects: the drilling of a well, the construction of a clinic building, and the beginning of a biosand filter production project.

## TIMELINE 2010-2015

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### 2010

WE learned of the tragic death of our friend, Tesfaldet Andemariam, a hydrogeologist murdered by terrorists near a mine site in Eritrea. We began supporting his family.

We began to support Santa Anna School in Keren. We helped them start a library.

In South Sudan, we financed construction of a 9-room school and drilling of a well, our fourth. Villagers provided labor and supplied bricks in our Bricks for Filters program. The clinic began operation.

### 2011

IN Eritrea, our revolving loan program for Hanti Sidra orphans came to an end. We financed a study of irrigation systems and rainwater harvesting at Hagaz.

South Sudan became independent in July. Work on Maluil School was completed and a fifth well was installed. Malaria Consortium was using our clinic building. We began assisting Ayuen, a young girl suffering from elephantiasis.

### 2012

HANTI Sidra revenue was \$122,000, the most in a year with no bequests. We sponsored Mihret Abraham, one of our Hanti Sidra orphans, to come to Canada with her twin sons. Sister Thomas left Afabet, but we continued to support work there. In South Sudan, we financed construction of a 5-room school, our second. We also began support of the women's livelihood project, helping them start vegetable gardens.

### 2013

STEPHANIE and Dennis were unable to travel to Africa. War broke out in South Sudan just days before we were scheduled to go there. For the fifth consecutive year, our expenditures were higher than revenues. It was our plan to reduce a large reserve fund built up during years of high revenues. In South Sudan, construction began on the 4-room Mabior School, our third. We also financed the drilling of two more wells.

### 2014

BROTHER Ghebreyesus Habte, our primary contact in Eritrea for many years, was transferred to Nairobi, where he became the new head of the De la Salle Brothers in English speaking Africa. We continued to channel support through him.

Reduced revenues meant we had to limit contributions. In South Sudan our partner, Pan Aweil Development Agency, was getting more contract work with the UN and other agencies. So we concentrated our support on the seven villages of Majok Adim district.

### 2015

A large gift of stocks put our revenue over \$100,000 for the year. The funds from the sale of the stocks will be used for special projects in Eritrea. Remaining funds were divided between projects we continued to support in Eritrea and South Sudan. In Majok Adim, our support of the women's livelihood project expanded with the introduction of a seed bank scheme. ♦

## DONATIONS

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### Five ways you can make a donation

- Write a cheque or money order made out to *HANTI SIDRA FUND* and mail it to our address shown on the back page. You will receive an official tax receipt for any donation of \$20.00 or more. You can designate a specific project or direct your donation to Eritrea or South Sudan.
- Make a cash donation. Tax receipts are not normally issued. But if you put \$20.00 or more into one of our cash donation envelopes and fill out the required information on the envelope, you will be issued a tax receipt.
- Arrange with us to have monthly, quarterly or other regular contributions of a specified amount debited from your bank account. Provide us with a void cheque with your banking information and instructions on the amount and frequency of debits you would like us to make. You will receive one tax receipt at year-end for your total donations during the year.
- Make an electronic payment by setting up an Interac E-Transfer through your bank with an email notification sent to us at [hantisidra@gmail.com](mailto:hantisidra@gmail.com). In a separate email, let us know the answer to your security question, as well as your mailing address, so we can mail your tax receipt to you.
- Make a donation by credit card through [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org). Search for "Hanti Sidra" and you will find a page with information about us and a place to make a donation. After you make your online donation, a cheque is forwarded to us. A tax receipt for the full amount of your donation is issued to you by CanadaHelps. Please be aware that they hold back a fee of about 5% of your donation from the amount remitted to us. ♦

### Make a special event more special

Have you ever tried to find a gift for a person who doesn't need anything? Why not buy a Hanti Sidra Gift Card? We offer a group of themed cards that allow you to make a donation of \$20.00 or a larger amount of your choice to one of our projects in Africa in the name of a friend or loved one. Since the time and materials for the production of the cards are donated, you receive a tax receipt for the full amount of your contribution. Most of the cards are made available at Christmas, but they can be used, and customized if necessary, for any occasion--birthdays, graduations, weddings, memoriams, etc. Contact us at [hantisidra@gmail.com](mailto:hantisidra@gmail.com) for more information or to order cards. ♦

## ABOUT ERITREA AND SOUTH SUDAN

### ERITREA AT A GLANCE

**Location:** Northeastern Africa.  
**Boundaries:** Red Sea to the east, Sudan to the northwest, Ethiopia to the south, Djibouti to the southeast.  
**Total land area:** 121,320 sq. km., roughly the size of England.  
**Coastline:** 1,094 km. along Red Sea.  
**Climate:** Hot and dry, especially in lowland areas. Frequent droughts.  
**Political history:** Former Italian colony, federated with Ethiopia in 1952, and forcefully annexed by Ethiopia in 1962. Liberated from Ethiopia in 1991 after 30-year struggle. Renewed war with Ethiopia in 1998-2000. Issues not resolved.  
**Independence:** May 24, 1993.  
**Population:** About 5 million, 75% in rural areas. Many others abroad.  
**Religions:** Most Orthodox Christian or Muslim. Some Catholics, Protestants, animists.  
**Languages:** Tigrinya and Tigre (80%), and 7 other minorities.

### SOUTH SUDAN AT A GLANCE

**Location:** Northeastern Africa.  
**Boundaries:** Republic of Sudan to the north, Ethiopia to the east, Kenya, Uganda, Congo to the south, Central African Republic to the southwest.  
**Total land area:** 620,000 sq. km., a bit smaller than Alberta or Texas.  
**Coastline:** None.  
**Climate:** Hot and humid, especially near rivers and marshlands. Plentiful rainfall, frequent flooding.  
**Political history:** Former Anglo-Egyptian colony. Peace agreement with northern Sudan after 22-year civil war. Large scale internal fighting broke out in late 2013.  
**Independence:** July 9, 2011.  
**Population:** Over 10 million, 90% in rural areas. Up to 2 million displaced by recent fighting.  
**Religions:** Mostly Christians and traditional African beliefs.  
**Languages:** multiple ethnic groups. Official language English.



## **How your contributions were used**

### **ACCUMULATED REVENUES, EXPENDITURES & RESERVES SINCE OUR ESTABLISHMENT IN 1992 (\$C)**

	2016	1992-2016
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Fundraisers	3,220.00	98,985.43
Charitable donations	40,015.00	1,021,650.18
Charitable bequests	-----	217,914.71
Gifts from organizations	2,500.00	278,504.14
Interest/other income	5,919.32	90,203.41
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,654.32</b>	<b>1,707,257.87</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Eritrea		
One Family orphans	-----	223,461.38
Schools/Kindergartens	10,734.68	327,741.28
Comboni Community	2,012.75	100,597.00
Study centres/Students	1,341.85	68,741.35
Poor families/refugees/women	2,683.67	102,259.08
Clinics	2,012.75	63,035.02
Water development	-----	65,565.25
Container shipments	-----	18,323.50
South Sudan		
Water development	5,812.20	141,572.62
Schools, infrastructure	9,390.26	340,663.97
Health care, women, peace	11,867.94	118,724.58
Local partner support	8,216.94	28,477.65
Promotions/ Administration	925.04	23,070.96
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>54,998.08</b>	<b>1,622,233.64</b>
<b>RESERVES--FUTURE PROJECTS</b>	<b>(3,343.76)</b>	<b>85,024.23</b>

## **JOIN THE FAMILY!**

*If you would like to support the good work being done in Eritrea or South Sudan, send a donation for any amount to:*

**HANTI SIDRA ONE GLOBAL FAMILY  
PO Box 20004, Sidney, BC V8L 5C9**

*See page 10 for more information about making a contribution.  
Canada Revenue Agency registration #89016 9063 RR0001*