



TWINNING

LASALLIANS OF NORTH AMERICA & AFRICA

Walking Together in Solidarity



NATIVITY SCHOOL

SHINARA VILLAGE, ERITREA



ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Nativity School in Shinara Village, Eritrea was founded in 1961, and the Brothers took responsibility for the school in 1982 when it was solely an elementary school. They expanded it to a junior secondary school in 1993. For the 2018-2019 academic year, the school has a total of 415 students with a staff of two Brothers, one priest, 16 lay teachers (nine men and seven women), two cleaners and one guard. The student-teacher ratio is 38:1. Nativity School is located nine kilometers from Keren in the middle of Blin and Tigre pastoral communities. As the only school in the village, it continues to provide a warm and personal setting that allows young men and women of varied backgrounds to develop their skills and talents academically. The school has been very successful in the national grade eight exams, which has created the challenge of not having enough space to accommodate more students and programs as the demand increases.



ABOUT THE STUDENTS

Students at Nativity School strive to achieve high standards through their abilities and motivation. Most students live in huts in villages far from the main city of Keren and have to travel long distances to and from school. They lack sufficient clothing for the hot and cold seasons. After classes, students rush home to complete other tasks, such as looking after livestock, fetching water if they are able to get it, collecting firewood, etc. All students come from financially poor families with an average of six children. Typically only two or three of the six children have the opportunity to attend school because parents cannot afford the school fees, uniforms, books and other expenses. Approximately 70-85 percent of Nativity students are the first in their families to reach this level of education. Almost all students are from farming families who depend on small farms that they own. At times when rainfall is insufficient, families have nothing to harvest and no income. Poor living standards and unemployment make the situation worse. This leads to little household food and poor sanitation practices, which results in inadequate care and illnesses like bilharzia and tapeworm, waterborne diseases caused by a shortage of water.



USE OF PREVIOUS DONATIONS AND CURRENT NEEDS

Nativity School has used twinning donations for scholarships for students in need, books and other school supplies, sports uniforms and needs for the facilities. The school hopes to use future donations for a sports field for football, basketball and volleyball, a library where students can have space to study, and computers and other teaching tools.



Q&A with Tiqua Brhan

Tiqua, 15, is in sixth grade at Nativity School. Her dream is to work in development for her country, especially serving vulnerable people.



BROTHER MENGISTU'S INTERVIEW WITH TIQUA

Q: Could you tell us something about you?

A: I started school way before the standard age. I study with a great passion and enthusiasm. My parents are not educated, but they understand the importance of education.

Q: Describe a pleasant day at school and what you do after school.

A: School days are always pleasant for me, and I enjoy very much listening to my teachers in the classroom and sharing ideas and discussions with my peers. After school, I rush home to help my mom in the house. Collect water for myself to get a bath and wash my clothes. After that, I look after my mom if she has anything to be done. If not, after having my lunch, I do a little siesta (45 minutes) and review what I learned in school. I don't focus on quantity of time that I spend on studying, but on the efficiency of my studying.



Q: Can you tell us something from your own point of view about Lasallian education?

A: It is committed to faith through service. The school is an educational environment committed to excellence, and the school is a community of teachers and learners. Overall, I can say ours is one of the best schools in our region. One of the things that makes me happy is that there is no distinction of race, ethnicity or religion.

Q: Anything you want to say to your peers?

A: Schooling is a development building to our country, which is on our shoulders. Our country means a lot to us. Therefore, I say to my peers, we should study very hard and help each other to achieve our dreams. Life is easier when you help each other, especially our parents. Although vulnerable, they are trying very hard for our education and well-being. Also, look forward, that in the future we will be leaders of the country.

Q: Any last words?

A: I would like to thank all the students of the twin schools in RELAN for their concerns. I thank all my teachers for helping me to reach the stage that I am now at and encouraging me to express my wishes and dreams.

RELAN TWINNED SCHOOLS

- Christian Brothers Academy, Lincroft, NJ, Tim Sewnig, tsewnig@cbalincroftnj.org
- De La Salle Academy, Concord, CA, Marilyn Paquette, paquettem@dls-academy.org
- De La Salle High School, Concord, CA, Roger Hassett, hassettr@dlschools.org
- La Salle High School, Cincinnati, OH, Aaron Hampel, ahampel@lasallehs.net, Chris Winiarski, cwiniarski@lasallehs.net
- San Miguel Middle School, Tulsa, OK, Kathleen Brulc, kathleenbrulc@sanmigueltulsa.org
- San Miguel School, Chicago, IL, Brother Mark Snodgrass, FSC, msnodgrass@sanmiguelchicago.org
- San Miguel School, Washington, DC, Jon Vanegas, jvanegas@sanmigueldc.org
- The San Miguel School of Providence, RI, Maddi Larsen, mlarsen@sanmiguelprov.org



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