

Newsletter

ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF CHARLOTTE & SURROUNDING AREAS

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September 2022 / Vol 1

Welcome to the ECAC Newsletter!

Welcome to the inaugural newsletter for the Ethiopian Community Association of Charlotte ("ECAC").

Each quarter we will use this format to highlight community services, events and other content we hope you will find helpful. Sharing information and resources is essential to building and sustaining a strong community.

This has been a busy year for many as things 'normalize' from the COVID-era interruptions and we all seek a return to past routines. For some that was a return to in-person work, vacations and travel and around the corner back-to-school time. For ECAC, we hope that also means a return to past in-person programming and the introduction of new events as well. The goal of the newsletter is for the benefit of you, the Charlotte Ethiopian community, so please feel free to reach out with any suggested topics as we move forward.

Upcoming Events

Ethiopian New Year Celebration

Date: Saturday, September 10, 2022

Time: 2-6PM

Address: Midwood International and Cultural Center

1817 Central Ave #215, Charlotte, NC 28205

Community Highlight- Ashu Ebsa

ECAC spoke with Ashu Ebsa, a Charlotte native who spoke about what ECAC means to him



Q: To start, maybe share your name and what you are currently up to?

Hey, I'm Ashu Ebsa, and I am a graduate of Providence Day School and am currently a rising senior enrolled at Wake Forest University, majoring in Economics. I am currently an investment banking intern at Wells Fargo. *[Editor's note: Since our interview, Ashu accepted an offer from Wells Fargo to join the bank as an Investment Banking Analyst after graduating next summer. Congratulations Ashu!]*

Q: Tell me how you were first introduced to Providence Day ("PDS") and what grade you started there?

Our family first learned about PDS through an information session hosted by ECAC. My parents were very interested in having me and my siblings attend the school and went through the application process.

I successfully enrolled in the school as a 2nd grader and subsequently, my younger brother started in TK and my youngest sister started in Kindergarten after him.

Q: How do you think your experience at Providence Day has shaped your collegiate, and soon to be post-undergrad, career?

I think PDS has played a tremendous role in my upbringing and significantly impacted my collegiate and career trajectory.

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Community Highlight- Ashu Ebsa (Continued)

Transitioning from my previous school to PDS, I immediately noticed a significantly higher academic rigor, even as a 2nd grader. My assignments were more difficult and required more studying. My parents were spending more time with me going over my daily assignments which wasn't really the case in my prior school. Second grade proved to be a year of a big learning curve as I realized I was a bit behind my classmates in terms of grammar and reading skills. I spent more time after school to sharpen my skills in second and third grade, and I caught up and excelled academically. This enabled me to take on harder courses in my later years and ultimately college preparatory courses in high school. The increased workload and rigor opened the door for me to aim for more prestigious universities. Aside from the curriculum, I learned more about career fields via my participation ECAC's Ethiopian Youth Group (EYG), where Ethiopian professionals came and gave talks on their career paths. Many of them were successful in their respective careers. I also learned about different professions through many conversations in high school with parents of peers. I became familiar with a variety of professions that I otherwise wouldn't have known.

Q: The PDS connection was one example, but curious if there are other ways in which the local Ethiopian Community has contributed to or influenced your pathway?

EYG was a big resource for me and other Ethiopian youth. We had great mentors who helped us develop leadership skills and a service mindset through many volunteer events. I also made a lot of friends growing up in the community and have seen many of them become successful. I attended many graduation parties throughout the years, and I listened intently to the graduates, as they gave their speeches. It was inspiring to see them come back to the community successful after they graduating from high school and then college. It reinforced to me that if I work hard that any career was possible for me.

Q: As someone I view as a successful young member of our community, what advice would you share with high school / new college entrants coming up behind you?

I would let people know that although many of us might have a disadvantage compared to our classmates, we should use the resources available to us such as ECAC, EYG and other connections or opportunities our institutions provide to us. For many of us in the Ethiopian community, our folks may not have knowledge about how to navigate educational and professional areas. To make up for this gap, we should first make the effort to connect with Ethiopian professionals that work in careers that interest us and actually research the careers. The final step is to seek work experience to stay competitive with our peers.

Get in Touch

704-286-1332



contact@ethiopian
communityofcharlotte.com



www.ethiopiancommunity
ofcharlotte.com



www.instagram.com/ECAC_CLT



www.facebook.com/ECACLT



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Charlotte Ethiopian Community and Providence Day School

ECAC established a relationship with Providence Day School, one of Charlotte's preeminent independent schools, in 2004 with the aim of expanding educational opportunities for local Ethiopian youth. Since that time, many Ethiopian families have become members of the PDS school community, including several graduates, who have since gone on to successful college and post-college careers. Mr. Michael Magno, Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs at Providence Day School shares his thoughts on the importance of the relationship with ECAC.



Q: Can you describe in a few words your perspective on the relationship between the Ethiopian community and PDS?

Providence Day School has a longstanding relationship with many members of the Charlotte Ethiopian community. We are proud to have families from Ethiopia as current parents and students, alumni parents and students, faculty members, staff members and various parent volunteers!

Q: What are some memorable contributions of Ethiopian-American students and/or families to PDS?

It would be difficult to single out specific students and families due to the numerous contributions. Among these are many students who have and continue to excel academically, several of whom have earned recognition in academic and athletic competitions. Many of these students have also earned college scholarships to various universities and have won state championships in sports such as soccer, basketball, tennis, cross country, and track. Ethiopian students have been active in the arts, including many school plays as well as performing in the orchestra, band and choir. They have served as campus leaders in several clubs and organizations, including our Black Student Union. Additionally, Ethiopian parents have contributed significantly to our school through a variety of impactful volunteer activities, including active roles in the Parents Association as well as various multicultural activities and groups promoting PD's value of Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging. Lastly, Ethiopian staff and faculty members are an important part of the PD community, and loved and admired by many students, fellow staff and faculty, and parents.

Q: Are there any upcoming events featuring Ethiopian culture or history at PDS?

Two of my favorite programs include the annual Ethiopian New Year celebration that takes place on the PD campus and the various faculty and staff global cafe appreciation events. The global cafe events feature coffee specialties from different cultures around the world and we always have a representative from the Ethiopian community. We do these events several times during the school year and our faculty and staff always look forward to them. PD and ECAC are partnering on a couple of upcoming events that I'm excited about. First, the Parents Association and ECAC are planning a celebration of the Ethiopian New Year in September 2022. In March 2023, PD will also host a celebration of the Battle of Adwa, a globally historically significant event.

Q: Anything additional you'd like to mention?

We believe that our relationship with many members of the Ethiopian community is indicative of our school's mission and our commitment to being a national leader in global studies and developing global citizens.

