

# Help the work of the Trust

Hamlin Charitable Fistula Hospitals Trust, P.O. Box 6395, Christchurch

Email address [-hamlinht@xtra.co.nz](mailto:-hamlinht@xtra.co.nz)

new website [www.hamlinfistula.org.nz](http://www.hamlinfistula.org.nz)

*N.B. "every cent of every dollar donated is available for the work of the Fistula Hospitals"*

### I would like to help the work of the Trust .

Please send me .....copy/copies of Dr Catherine's book-"Hospital by the River" at \$25. (Cheque with order)

Please send me .....copy/copies of "Catherine's Gift" by John Little at \$35

I wish to make a donation and enclose a cheque for \$.....

I wish to make a regular donation of \$.... to the Trust Account National bank no 060817 0264043 00

I wish to help with the expenses of running the Trust in NZ and donate \$..... to National Bank account No

0608170264043-02

Please debit the sum of \$..... to my Visa or Master credit card no .....Expiry date.....

Please send me brochures so that I can interest others in the work.

Name: .....

Address: .....

Email: .....

*See our new website at [www.hamlinfistula.org.nz](http://www.hamlinfistula.org.nz)*

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# Hamlin Charitable Hospitals Trust

A Quarterly Newsletter

Issue No. 12 Summer edition 2009

## Dr Hamlin wins "Right Livelihood Award" ( Alternate Nobel Prize)

This award was established in 1980 to honour and support those "offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today". Dr Hamlin is one of four recipients this year and will travel to Sweden for the presentation in December. This is a wonderful tribute to Dr Hamlin's pioneering work -"for her 50 years dedicated to treating obstetric fistula patients, thereby restoring the health, hope and dignity of thousands of Africa's poorest women."

### Story of a patient



Meaza Aweke is one of the patients who needs to spend much of her time in physiotherapy to regain her strength. She does not know her age but thinks she may be about 20 years old. She has never been to school. She had been in labour for three days with her first pregnancy. Her Father took her to the nearest health centre. She was advised to go to another health centre. After referral to the fourth Health Centre, her baby had died. Meaza knew when she lost the baby. She says, "I was so sick not even noticing what was happening around me. They pulled out the still born child."

Meaza not only developed an obstetric fistula but also had foot drop from being in labour for days. The last health post visited referred her to the Hamlin Centre in Bahr Dar. She spent more than 2 months there then came to Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital three months ago. She says, "Thanks to God I can take a walk, I can take shower by my own. Before this, I had to be cuddled for a very long time and my Father and Mother take turns to clean me and give me shower. They carry me on their hands and put me in wheelchair and they transported me from Health Centre to Health Centre looking for help to restore my health." Now she encourages other

patients to keep up their exercise by saying, "Exercise is good. See me! From using a wheelchair I am with one stick only. Have faith that you will be cured."

### Dr Hamlin's letter

My dear Friends in New Zealand, I have just returned home to Addis Ababa after a busy and very enjoyable month away visiting family, supporters and friends in Australia and New Zealand. This visit was special as my son, Richard, travelled with me. My heart was

touched by the kindness of our supporters. My travels gave me great encouragement and strengthened my hope that our work will continue well into the future till, at last, the awful blight of obstetric fistula is finally eradicated from the lives of the beautiful women of Ethiopia and throughout the developing world.

Over this past year, many people have said to me what a remarkable thing it is that I have been doing this work for so long. Apart from the fact that I believe Reg and I were led by God to come to do this work, I don't think what we have done is particularly remarkable at all. With each passing year more and more women in developing countries experience the agony of prolonged labour, the grief of producing a still born child then the horror of incontinence and rejection for the rest of their lives. Shut away and spread across many countries, they are victims of a hidden pandemic. Their plight is just as severe and heart wrenching today, as the plight of the first women we saw half a century ago. For this reason, we continue to love and care for them, to alleviate their suffering and to cure their physical and emotional injuries. Increasing public awareness of fistula injuries has led to growing support for our work. A new documentary "Lighting a candle" will be released next year. This will show the plight of the women, the Hospitals' treatment, also education and prevention within the broader

context of improving maternal health in the developing world. Despite our best efforts we know that the obstetric fistula pandemic will go on whilst women in labour are without access to trained medical help and proper facilities. The tragedy of these women is that their suffering is totally preventable.

**"A midwife for every woman"** is the vision of our new Midwifery College and the 20 enthusiastic students who started a few weeks ago are settling in well. They are our third intake and they come from five different areas of Ethiopia. Two students are from the nomadic Afar people whose region is very under developed. Valerie Browning (subject of the book "Malika") is building a hospital there where the students will work when they graduate in three year's time. Next year, it will be exciting to see our graduate midwives employed in their local areas to help their "Ethiopian sisters.". Training rural midwives is the way of the future and my hope and prayer is that other organisations will follow our example so that proper health care services are much more accessible to poor, rural women.

The continued support for us through financial donations, donations of multi-coloured shawls, underwear, dress materials, hospital equipment, and other items has been most encouraging. Without your support the Hospital can do nothing, therefore I want to thank you all, from the bottom of my heart, for your love and support and I wish you all a joyous and blessed Christmas as, once again, we celebrate the birth of our dear Saviour.

With my love,  
Catherine Hamlin



**The Film "Walk to Beautiful"**

was the recipient of the 2009 Emmy Award in the category of Outstanding Informational Programming. The award ceremony took place in New York at the Lincoln Centre. Congratulations to Engel Entertainment!  
If you would like to borrow the DVD of this film to show to friends in your own home, we have copies available for you. They are distributed with a kit, including brochures, showing how you can help the work being done in Ethiopia and other developing countries. Please either put a request in the post to P O Box 6395, Christchurch, or simply call 03 3494498 or 03 3588774.



Dr Catherine and Richard in the dining room of the Hermitage, Mt Cook

**New Zealand Trip**

Dr Hamlin and Richard arrived in Christchurch on Monday, 2nd November. Both spoke to about 150 people at a meeting the next night then, next day, they went on a short tour of the McKenzie country. En

route for Nelson and another speaking engagement, they saw a little of the beauty of our wild West Coast. They enjoyed the opportunity to see the country Reg knew so well. In Nelson, after addressing about 130 people at St Barnabas church, they



enjoyed a delicious paella cooked by the Vicar, Edrick Banks. Next morning they left for Napier to



stay with Cynthea Greene, who is Catherine's niece.

**Cynthea writes**

Catherine has a passion for Hawke's Bay, Uncle Reg's home town of Napier and its hinterland. She accompanied him on regular family visits over the years and has fond memories of this area. On Tuesday, 10th November, Catherine, Richard and I attended an assembly at Napier Girls' High School, where Catherine was presented with a donation of \$1000 - money raised by the School's Key Club inspired by their teacher, Nikol

Stirland, HOD social Studies. Nikol knew of the plight of the Ethiopian girls and, under her guidance, the Key Club fundraised extensively to reach the \$1000 without knowing about Catherine's imminent visit to Napier. I informed Nikol of her visit hence the guest appearance at the school assembly.

Catherine captured the audience of 900 plus girls and staff with her talk and the short DVD. One could have heard a pin drop in the Assembly Hall, and many girls were wiping away a tear.

The School Principal, Mrs Nixon, spoke of the historical significance of Catherine Hamlin's visit, that Reg's three sisters had attended the school, one sister, Lucy, having been Secretary to the Principal many years ago, and that his niece and great niece are "old girls" of the school. Catherine told of her own "soft spot" for the school having heard so much about it over the years, especially the story Reg would tell of the day the earthquake struck in 1931, when he was sent by his mother to run through ruins to the Napier Girls' High School to find his youngest sister, Iris, who had just started at the school that day.

Catherine presented Mrs Nixon two books for the Library "The Hospital



Catherine with Key Club members by the River" and "Catherine's Gift". Nikol and the Key Club then hosted a delicious morning tea, enabling each Key Club girl to meet Catherine and talk to her personally - a rather emotional morning. On Thursday, 12 November, a public meeting hosted by the Hastings

Rotary Club, under the able guidance of Dr David Davidson, was very well attended. Again, Catherine captured her audience with her empathy, reinforced by her power point presentation. Even those who have previously heard Catherine speak of her work, continue to attend and listen intently and enjoy a personal chat with Catherine. Catherine always has time to speak to those who approach her, for these are, to Catherine, very special people. Their genuine interest is so gratifying to her. She was humbled that a car load of interested ladies had travelled, that morning, from the Manawatu, thanks to the information on the website.

Reg would be truly proud that his beloved Hawke's Bay has so much love, appreciation and generosity for the mission he and Catherine embarked upon, fifty years ago.

All who met Catherine while she was here, marvel at her work and her continued ability in this labour of love, at nearly eighty six years of age, with no thought of retirement. She is an absolute inspiration to us all.

**Message from Deb Fabrin**

*It has been a joy to work alongside the Hamlin Charitable Fistula Hospitals Trust over the last few years for the cause of obstetric*

*Fistula and its prevention in Africa. We are a bunch of volunteers based in Auckland, thankful that we live in a country where medical care during and after pregnancy is so easily accessed and therefore anxious to help support the wonderful work of organizations like that of the Hamlins' in Ethiopia. As Dr Catherine Hamlin has often said, "God is truly in this work." Recently, I was delighted to fly to Christchurch to see and hear Dr Catherine and her son Richard, speak about their work.*

*It was evident that the message on Catherine's heart is the need for preventative measures to be put in place; in particular, financial support for their work training local midwives for every village. We are keen to make that a goal over the next while and encourage all to get on board with her vision, using whatever gifts God has empowered us with.*

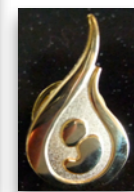
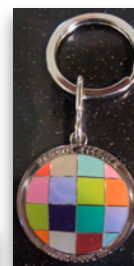
*During Richard's inspiring speech, he urged us all that in order to truly love, we must be able to feel; to 'take the stone out of our heart'. May God continue to work in our hearts by His grace.*

Deb Fabrin  
L Women of Africa

**From the Trustees**

**Merchandise**

Key rings and lapel badges \$5.00  
Calendars \$20  
These items make



good Christmas gifts.

Our friend, Marty van den Berg from "Habitat for Humanity", was able to take 3 big bags of blankets to Ethiopia on his last trip. He hopes to be able to take more in the future. Thankyou Marty and thankyou to all who have sent money and worked so hard to make these blankets and to gather useful things together, for the poor women we help.