



Dr. Carrie Bessnette and I visited this site in Adwa, Ethiopia in Nov. 2007. The site is famous because it was here that the Ethiopian army led by Emperor Menelik II defeated the Italian army in 1896, becoming the first African country to have defeated a European colonial army. In 1935/36, Mussolini invaded Ethiopia to avenge the defeat.



Carrie and I happened to chance upon this structure. Upon approaching it, we discovered that it was a school where one dedicated teacher was teaching about fifty children, all sitting on rocky ground. The teacher asked us if we could help build a small one-room school.

Carrie and I made a commitment that we would try. Upon returning to Denver, we put together a group to raise funds. With generous donations from MSU Denver community and the Western Union Foundation, we raised about \$35k, enough to build a school.



Construction phase. We
collaborated with our partner,
Aksum University.





The school building - 4 classrooms as per Ethiopian Ministry of Education requirements. Was completed in summer 2011 and ribbon was cut by Dr. Jordan and Dr. Mebrahtom, President of Aksum Univ.



The building of the Gesseso Elementary School has been made possible by the generous financial contribution of the

Western Union Foundation

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Noel and Tammy Cunningham

Dr. Elizabeth Friot in honor of her father, Dr. Maurice E. Friot Dr. Vicki Golich and her husband, Dr. Douglas Carlsen Dr. Mary Ann Watson Denver-Axum Sister Cities Committee

Aksum University Metro State Ethiopia

Partnership Support Committee Gesseso Village Community Rural Adwa Education Office The Gesseso Elementary School building was formally inaugurated by Dr. Stephen M. Jordan President of Metropolitan State College of Denver, and by Dr. Mebrahtom Mesfin, President of Aksum University

July 29, 2011









Now, the school serves over
200 students.