



2024

ANNUAL
REPORT

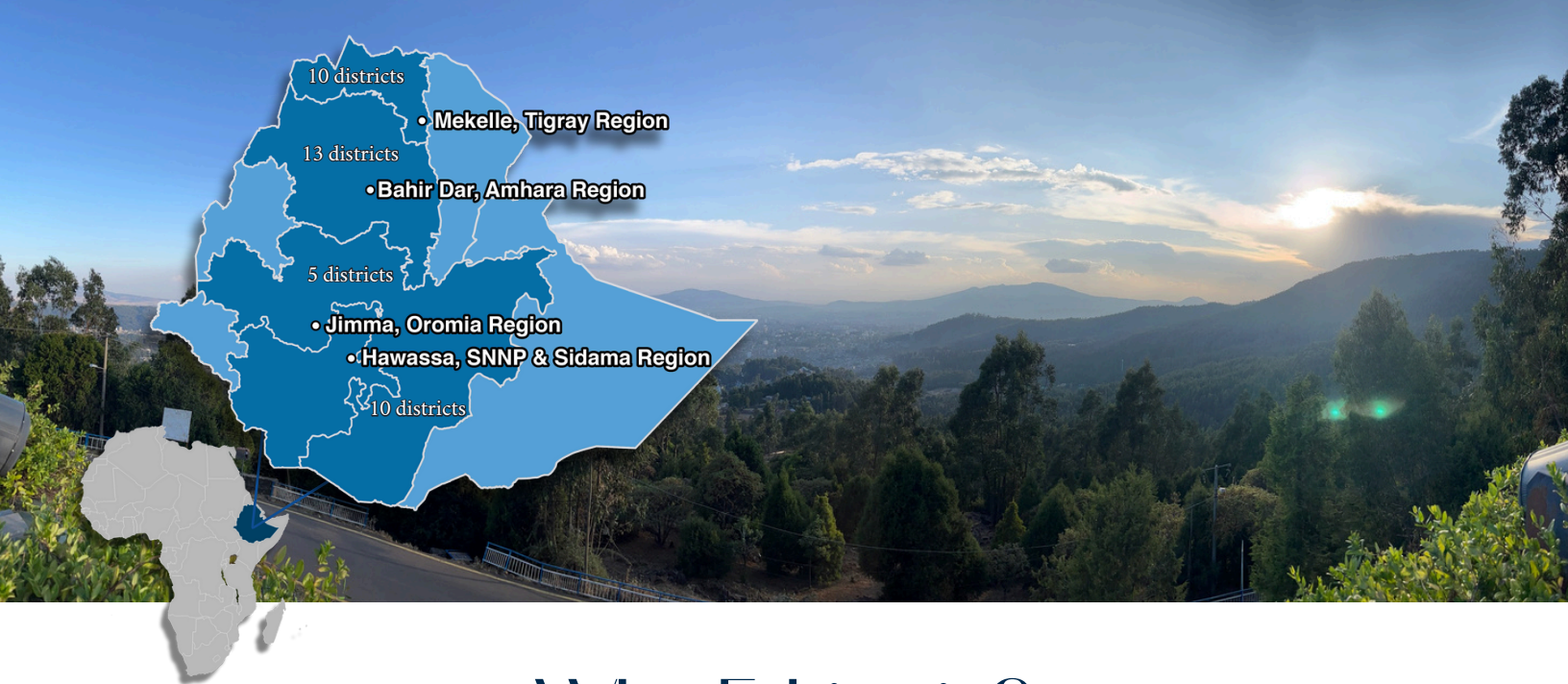


Our *Vision* is to eliminate obstetric fistula in Ethiopia by ensuring all women achieve safe motherhood.

Our *Mission* is to improve maternal child healthcare in Ethiopia to eliminate preventable childbirth injuries including obstetric fistula.

Our *Inspiration* comes from the unconditional love of God and His call to bring healing and joy to those who suffer as exemplified by Jesus Christ. We are committed to working with partners and individuals of all faiths and beliefs.





Why Ethiopia?

Healing Hands of Joy operates in 38 of the most populous rural districts in Ethiopia, and in collaboration with each of the four regions' Health Bureaus.


Ethiopia has one of the highest rates of obstetric fistula in Sub-Saharan Africa. Half of all childbirth deliveries in rural Ethiopia occur at home, and your partnership *will* bring that number down to zero. The goal of zero is absolutely critical for safe motherhood.

Did You Know?

- Ethiopia is the birthplace of Christianity in Africa
- Ethiopia is the second largest country in Africa
- There are up to 86 languages in Ethiopia according to Translators without Borders, while other sources say there may be up to 100
- There are 920 bird species in Ethiopia, 20 of which are endemic to the country



Yellow-fronted Parrot
Stefan Hirsch
2019, Oromia

A young woman with a warm smile is seated in a dark chair. She is wearing a vibrant orange headscarf with a frayed, tassel-like edge. Her dress is a mix of olive green, brown, and yellow patterns. Her hands are clasped in her lap. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“My problem was very complicated and I don’t want anyone to go through what I did. I will work hard as a Safe Motherhood Ambassador so this never happens again.”

SMA Mebret

A Year of Growth

A Message from CEO Allison Shigo

Dear Friends,

Thanks to you, and the tireless work of the Ethiopian team and Safe Motherhood Ambassadors, Healing Hands of Joy is experiencing astounding growth.

In this year's Annual Report, you'll see how HHoJ is operating in 38 rural districts, with over 70 full-time Ethiopian staff, and continues to serve women and communities affected by the civil war in Northern Ethiopia.

The team behind the Emmy-winning film, *A Walk to Beautiful*, reunited to create a powerful new short film, *The Power of Joy*, sharing stories of survival, strength, and hope.

Financially, 2024 was a banner year! Your partnership helped HHoJ secure our largest grant to date, along with two other multi-year gifts. Income grew significantly, allowing services to grow by 11% beyond target.

Healing Hands of Joy is now honored to strategically partner with The Helmsley Charitable Trust. Thanks to a gift from the Pinetops Foundation, we worked with Mission Increase to develop a 4-year strategic plan that strengthens operations and explores new regions for expansion.

To help support this next chapter, Cindy Breilh joined the U.S. leadership team as Operations Director. A longtime supporter and former Board member, Cindy brings decades of leadership and deep commitment to this mission.

None of this work would be possible without the Ethiopian team, whose grassroots work has been recognized by Ethiopia's new Minister of Health, Dr. Mekdes Daba, an OBGYN herself!

Thank you! Together, we're progressing toward the "North Star" of eliminating obstetric fistula in Ethiopia by 2030.

Blessings,



Allison Shigo
Co-Founder, CEO
Healing Hands of Joy



PS: Be sure to read about Hagar, a Safe Motherhood Ambassador whose story shows the impact of your faithful giving.

Picture 1, left to right: Healing Hands of Joy Country Director Meselech Seyoum, Minister of Health Dr. Mekdes Daba, and Allison.

Picture 2: The Healing Hands of Joy team at the annual staff retreat in November 2024

111%

YOUR 2024 IMPACT

11% achievement over original plan!

402

NEW Safe Motherhood Ambassador
(SMA) graduates and 394 male family
member advocates

A Safe Motherhood Ambassador
influences 90 women at risk of
obstetric fistula on average. This
means 2024's new graduates will
reach around 36,180 women!



241

SMA's now have small businesses
to support their families

Aster nourishes her family with the milk produced by her small livestock business. She sells milk and butter at the market, freeing her from concerns about her family's well-being. This stability enables Aster to concentrate on her responsibilities as an SMA, and she was able to identify a hidden case of obstetric fistula in her very own community.





With deep gratitude, we reflect on a year of both challenge and triumph. Despite instability and economic strain, the Healing Hands of Joy team remained unstoppable—traveling by public transport, reaching remote communities, and ensuring pregnant women received lifesaving care. Over 400 women began new chapters, free from the burden of obstetric fistula. Their courage fuels our mission.

While others stepped back, our team pressed on—empowering, educating, and transforming lives. Recognition from regional and national partners affirms our impact, but the greatest reward is restored dignity and reclaimed joy. None of this is possible without you.

Thank you for standing with us. Thank you for believing in this work. Together, we are changing lives and we will continue to bring hope, healing and joy.
 –Meselech Seyoum, Country Director



10,517

pregnant women were inspired by Safe Motherhood Ambassadors advocating for safe practices in pregnancy and childbirth

31,281

school children reached with messages about the importance of girls staying in school and waiting until adulthood to marry

74

health professionals trained in obstetric fistula diagnosis and referral pathways for treatment



6

Maternity Waiting Homes renovated can now annually provide 1,800 rural pregnant women with a place to stay in the weeks before birth, close to a health center. Services include medical care, monitoring, nutritious meals, and quick access to a delivery room.

1,085

religious leaders, voices of great influence, are now advocates for safe motherhood





Thriving in the Face of Adversity

Married at 12, Hager Melkinew endured six pregnancies and suffered an obstetric fistula during her last prolonged labor. She lived with the condition for over a year, isolated and dependent, until she received surgery at Mettu Hamlin Fistula Hospital and was introduced to Healing Hands of Joy.

Through HHoJ's Safe Motherhood Ambassador (SMA) training, Hager gained skills, counseling, and confidence. "I am healed, physically and emotionally," she shared.

"I'm free from the pain and stress of obstetric fistula.
I'm happy and working hard to improve my life. Stay blessed!"

Thanks to iZosh: Women Investing in Women in partnership with Healing Hands of Joy, Hager received four sheep to start a small business. Despite setbacks from disease, she sought help, vaccinated her flock, and rebuilt. She now owns nine sheep and a donkey, which helps her transport goods to market without the risk of injuring herself.

A staff mid-term visit found Hager thriving. She has since sold more sheep, bought a cow, and now has lambs and a calf providing milk for her family.

"I am so thankful to HHoJ. I feel like the staff are my family!
And owning a donkey? For me, it's like having a truck!"

Reunited for THE POWER OF *Joy*



Mary Olive Smith

Allison Shigo

Nigisty

Amy Bucher

Twenty years after *A Walk to Beautiful* brought global attention to obstetric fistula in Ethiopia and helped inspire the founding of Healing Hands of Joy, filmmakers Amy Bucher, Mary Olive “Mo” Smith, and Allison Shigo returned to Tigray to tell the next chapter.

Before the war began in 2020, Healing Hands of Joy was preparing to exit the region. Fistula rates had dropped 80% since 2005. But civil unrest devastated maternal healthcare; forcing many women to give birth in caves increasing the incidence of fistula, and to rely solely on courageous community members like Safe Motherhood Ambassador Nigisty to help save lives.

Now, as the region rebuilds, *The Power of Joy*—an 11-minute film—shares stories of survival and hope. Thanks to partners like Tejemos and The Helmsley Charitable Trust, safe motherhood is once again a priority, bringing healing, dignity, and renewed hope to women and communities in Tigray.

“The Power of Joy was incredibly inspiring and deepened my understanding of the vital work being done to make motherhood safe in Ethiopia. I’m committed to supporting this important cause and will definitely share the film.”

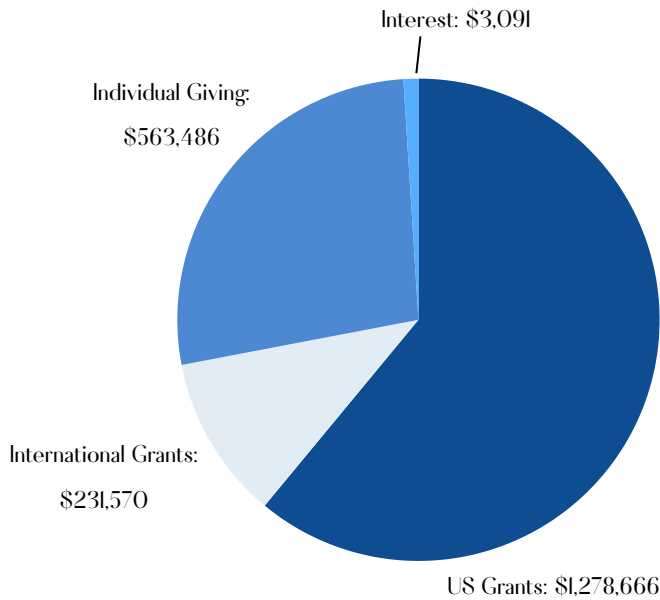
- Maduo Latlhang

Watch “The Power of Joy” now at
<https://www.youtube.com/@HealingHandsofJoy>



2024 Financial Report

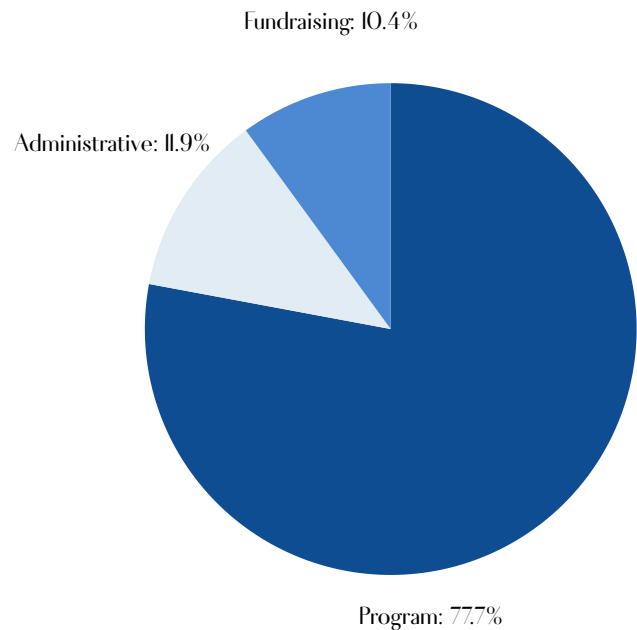
2024 Income: \$2,114,907*



*Income includes a \$250,000 grant restricted for 2025. Financials are unaudited, and the 2024 financial audit will be posted on our website

Each of you are an integral part of the Healing Hands of Joy team. Your involvement has caught the eye of amazing funders, setting up HHoJ for the next level of growth. In just one year, income grew by 31%. Three transformational multi-year gifts (including the largest grant HHoJ ever received), and the growing fundraising capacity by the Ethiopia team are increasing ongoing sustainability.

2024 Expenses: \$1,638,254



New Board Members



Beth Haydon, Director of Partner Engagement at International Justice Mission, felt inspired to join Healing Hands of Joy's Board because of her deep commitment to justice and compassion for vulnerable communities. Beth's career spans continents and causes, and through her global work with World Vision in Africa, Latin America, and Eastern Europe, Beth encountered firsthand the complex challenges facing women and communities in underserved regions.



Janey Pinneo is a retired pediatric oncology nurse with over 40 years of experience, including 30 years at Seattle Children's Hospital and more than a decade serving on medical missions with organizations like Medical Teams International and Haiti Foundation of Hope. Her work establishing a clinic for Dalits in southern India deepened her commitment to reaching marginalized communities. Driven by a passion for serving women and children globally, Janey joins the board of Healing Hands of Joy to help eliminate obstetric fistula in Ethiopia and restore dignity and hope to affected women.



Leah Pedersen-Thomas returns to the Healing Hands of Joy Board! She leads Convergence's Market Acceleration & Design Funding initiative, bringing over 15 years of experience in risk management, structured finance, and international development. She previously advised the White House's Women's Global Development and Prosperity initiative. Leah co-founded NetGuarantee, a blended finance arm of Malaria No More, and held senior roles at AIG focused on emerging markets and micro-insurance.

Board Member Spotlight



Nigest Haile brings to the Healing Hands of Joy Board a deep commitment to advancing the well-being of women in Ethiopia, with a passion for HHoJ's Small Business Support program. With 25 years of experience at Ethiopia's Ministry of Trade and Industry, she has championed women's economic participation at every level. In 2004, she founded CAWEE, a pioneering organization that equips women entrepreneurs and exporters through training and market access.

Board Chair: Dan Ward
Vice Chairs: Amy Olson, Dr. Tim Teusink
Secretary: Kimberly Williams
Treasurer: Keith Hendrix

Members:
Karen Dealey
Susan Goode
Nigest Haile

Beth Haydon
Leah Pedersen-Thomas
Janey Pinneo
Allison Shigo

Thank you for making this life-changing work a reality. Together we can prevent childbirth injuries and eliminate obstetric fistula in Ethiopia for once and for all.



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Thank you for
supporting Healing
Hands of Joy



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