

**Ethiopian Community Association of Chicago**  
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February 2011

MAHEBER Newsletter

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Dear Community members, partners, and friends,

2010 has been a year of outstanding accomplishments for the Ethiopian Community Association. We celebrated the 25th anniversary of the founding of our organization; we acquired and currently occupy a new 19,375 sq. ft. facility, for which Perkins + Will, a Chicago-based architectural firm, have kindly provided an exciting probono renovation plan; we implemented the new Electromechanical Assembly Training program, and extremely successful several employment programs; the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity restored funds for our computer training program, which works to provide our clientele with basic computer knowledge and skills, as well as develop resumes and aid with job searches; and over 1,000 priceless artifacts were donated by renowned Ethiopian composer and artist Tesfaye Lemma.

Over the past three years, ECAC has been working on an aggressive fundraising campaign for our Cultural Center, and have thus far raised over \$200,000. These funds have enabled us to acquire our magnificent new space in Rogers Park. The new building has incredible potential to develop programs to address emerging needs both within our organization and throughout our neighborhood community. I would like to extend a gracious thanks to Perkins + Will and their Social Responsibility Initiative, for providing a complete architectural plan and cost estimates for the plan, and enabling us to concretely realize the amazing possibilities of ECAC's new home.

ECAC is slated to implement a capital campaign in early 2011, in order to raise the funds necessary to renovate and live up to the potential recognized by Perkins + Will. In preparation for this campaign an honorary advisory board has been formed and includes elected officials, business leaders, community members, friends of ECAC, and distinguished Ethiopians. We are working to identify potential donors and volunteers, and are currently in the process of developing advertising and promotional materials to spread awareness of our work, cause, and campaign. We are planning a fundraising event for the spring, which will kick off the campaign, and celebrate past accomplishments and commitment to future campaign plans. Specific dates and locations will be announced soon.

I would like to take a moment to recognize our dedicated staff and board, supportive community, committed and resourceful supporters, and their hard work and sacrifice, without which our accomplishments would have been impossible. As we start the new year, I wish to thank everyone who has assisted the ECAC in working toward our mission of celebrating the past, and building the future. We are hopeful that all the generous support and encouragement that you have so kindly provided will be continued into the coming years.

Sincerely,

Erku Yimer  
Executive Director

**Annual Fundraising Dinner**  
May 7, 2011  
**White Eagle Banquets**  
Niles, Illinois

As of this moment, we are continuing to raise funds in prospect of renovating the agency to better serve our community and clients. Our Annual Fundraising Dinner is planned to be held on May 7 at the White Eagle Banquets in Niles, IL.

In past years, the event included a formal sit-down dinner accompanied by a variety of activities, such as cultural performances by children, musicians, and a raffle. But we will keep you informed as the event draws closer. We look forward to seeing all of you there to share in the meals and festivities of the night.

**New Learning  
Experience**

DeVry University Open  
House  
Saturday, February 12

A great learning experience has fallen upon our laps. On January 27, 2011, DeVry University visited the ECAC and held a presentation on financial aid for our clients. Because the ten or so clients who were present at the seminar expressed deep interest for further information as well as a chance to pursue this opportunity to study at DeVry University, the University will hold an open house for all clients and students

**Electromechanical Assembly  
Training Program**

Our Electromechanical Assembly Training Program was established in 2008 and has been giving our clients more opportunities to gain employment since its founding. The EMAT program was designed for job-seeking clients by the ECAC and its collaborations with S&C Electric Co.

**About the EMAT Classes**

The EMAT program's main function is to provide our clients with additional training to gain better job opportunities as well as achieve an independent economic lifestyle. Yohannes Tegegne is the main instructor of the EMAT program and Zelalem Berhanu assists in providing additional English instruction to the applicants. Upon graduation of the program, applications will have learned the technical training of the program, basic math skills, and gain better English skills from VESL, the occupational element of the English as a Second Language program.

Applicants will be asked to take a basic math test so that our instructors can accurately produce a

**Winter  
Clothing  
Drive**

Winter Clothing  
Drive  
Donation News

Because winter is upon us and many of our clients are ill-prepared for the frosty weather, our volunteer and donations coordinator has been working on the clothing drive, specifically targeting winter clothing. In addition to independent donations, we have been receiving coats and winter

who wish to tour or are interested in enrolling at DeVry on Saturday, February 12.

In addition to the University tour at the open house, the clients and students can also attend presentations about financial aid, graduate school, or seek assistance for high-school students as well as ask representatives from all schools any questions they may have. DeVry University has arranged for a bus to pick up clients and students from the ECAC at 10 a.m on Saturday, February 12 to attend the open house at the DeVry University Chicago Campus.

The event is free and will last from 10:30 a.m to 12:30 p.m. Please click on the link: [www.devry.edu](http://www.devry.edu) for more information pertaining to DeVry University and if you are interested in attending the free University tour and information seminar on Saturday, February 12 at DeVry University, please come to the ECAC at 10 a.m. Because the bus arranged from DeVry

curriculum that will tailor to each applicant's skill level. Applicants must also prove that they are of a low income level and under the HUD guidelines which are: 18-65-years old, have a social security card and/or work permit, and have reached at least level III English.

The training sessions run for 10-week periods and they require a heavy time commitment. There are usually 20-25 students in each session. The first six weeks require the applicant to attend three hour classes for five days a week at the ECAC. For the last four weeks, students will meet for four hours every day, and the applicants will then intern at the workplaces of prospective employers. After the program is completed, the ECAC will continue to aid the applicants in job placements.

#### Upcoming Session

If you are interested in enrolling in our EMAT program or would like additional information about it, please contact Yohannes Tegegne at (773) 508-030, ext. 122, or visit [http://www.ecachicago.org/TEMAT\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.ecachicago.org/TEMAT_Brochure.pdf).

accessories from Loyola University students, faculty, and staff as well as from the Lincoln Park Zoo. The Winter Clothing Drive has procured an upward of 400 coats in addition to other winter accessories.

On December 4, 2010, the ECAC held a free market from 10 a.m to 1 p.m and distributed a significant amount of donations to our clients. We are very happy to say that many of our clients came with their families to choose from a wide variety of coats, sweaters, pants/jeans, shoes, and other winter gear such as socks, scarves, and mittens for this freezing season. And because we have received a large amount of donations this season, our next effort is to arrange our basement for a

University has limited seating, please arrive early to ensure a seat.

more effective shelving and hanging space.

*Contact Us*

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Mailing List!**

We hoped you have enjoyed this edition of the MAHEBER Newsletter. Thank you for your time and we look forward to sharing our upcoming news and events with you.

Sincerely,

Erku  
Yimer  
Executive Director

Fasikia Alem  
President