

# Ethiopian Community Los Angeles

*2020 Annual Report*



**ECLA**

October 31, 2020

## **INTRODUCTION**

Ethiopian Community Los Angeles, was officially formed approximately one year ago by Ethiopians and Ethio-Americans living in Los Angeles and the surrounding areas. The mission and vision of this organization is to create a strong community independent of political affiliation or religious beliefs; to coordinate, unite and expand

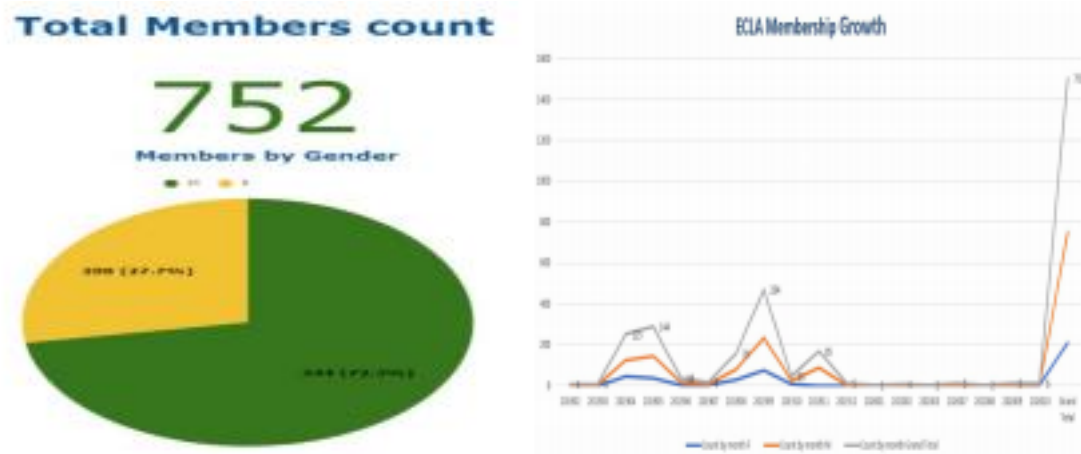
the current services which are held by individuals or organized groups and enhance better results in delivery of service(s) to our community. Further, this organization aims to withstand problems associated with our community in order to preserve our great cultural assets; promote gainful adaptations to our immediate community, ways of life, laws and traditions of our new habitation. By doing so, we believe and know, our unity, strength and commitment will transform the lives of future generations.

## Major Accomplishment

- Supporting Services -COVID-19 Response Teams
  - ECLA subcommittee, Hired Executive Director and secured approximately 50 volunteers
  - ECLA Two year strategic plan
  - Institutionalization
    - (501) (c) (3) Status
    - Bank account
      - Enhanced website with the ability to choose from any of the top payment gateways in business (Stripe and PayPal)
      - Virtual Cloud Phone System with Auto attendant, outbound voice broadcasting , and mass text Messaging capability
      - Virtual Office / digital mailbox service via any computer, tablet, or smartphone
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- Social media platform ( Facebook, twitter, Instagram , and Youtube
    - Repository management -Google Docs (documents and spreadsheets in the formats native to the Google Drive web platform)
    - Cloud-based video communications app -Zoom (Virtual video and audio conferencing, webinars, live chats, screen-sharing, and other collaborative capabilities.)
  - Service to Community

- Coordinated counseling services several residents in the Los Angeles area
- Delivered food, grocery and other necessities to those affected by family loss, isolation, and compromised by the pandemic
- Covered funeral expenses for a fellow Ethiopian that passed away
- Helped community members to celebrate Easter and Ed-al fitr. ○ Contributed towards COVID-19 relief efforts in Ethiopia

## Membership Drive



Over the course of the year, ECLA, through various membership focused outreach and community based drives, ECLA has gained approximately 750 members.

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While this is an impressive increase, the main focus in the upcoming year will be to turn this figure into paid membership. Further, through strategic planning and direction from our Executive Director, the aim for the next year will include securing funding, expanding services, increasing our numbers and building partnerships with various agencies found in our local communities.



## Service to the Community

The pandemic directly or indirectly continues to affect Ethiopians living in and around Los Angeles. As a community established by the Ethiopians for Ethiopians, we believe ECLA has a moral and community obligation to provide resources and support for its own people. At the onset of COVID-19, we realized that our community members, especially our seniors and those in vulnerable conditions (medical, housing, living remotely, emotional well-being) were going to be impacted by the initial restrictions. The organization set up several task forces to tackle the unforeseen challenges that come with isolation, limited contact, and overall social-emotional coping skills. Further, some of our community members experienced unemployment, job insecurity, and health crisis. Our task force went into action addressing issues, resolving problems, and forming partnerships with other nonprofits to meet the immediate needs of our community. Our mental health task force played a critical role reaching out to individuals who were under immense stress, their swift action was pivotal in mitigating their challenges from becoming paramount.

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## Report Highlights



**“Unity is strength; if you create a strong community, we can make a big difference locally, statewide and nationally. Furthermore, we can produce a strong leader”** Alexander Assefa Assemblyman- District 42

*“Resource and Mobilization TaskForce coordinated with local idir Megbare Senai, who supports elderly and handicapped people in our community. With assistance from our extended community supporters Melkam Injera Market and Commissioner Negist, we were able to serve 50 Elderly Ethiopians for Fasika”*

*“ECLA was notified of a father who lost his wife and was also new to Los Angeles. The bereaved family received dinner, water, “care package” which included food, drinks, paper products, and flowers. A follow up from our mental health team and check-in was provided as ongoing support”*

*“ECLA responded to the sudden passing of Ato Alemayehu Ambaye. Our outreach to support his burial services stirred the community to spring into action. The response to our call to help bury his body as he didn’t have friends or family resulted in raising \$2500 to contribute for the burial services”*

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## **Partnership with local organization**

ECLA was contacted by -Spork.la, an organization that supports businesses staying afloat during the pandemic closure. Ermias



Nessibu wanted to help his community while supporting the restaurants in Little Ethiopia. After identifying two restaurants we were able to provide meals for nine families for Ed al-Fitr.



## Panel Discussions

The lockdown allowed ECLA to host a number of webinars related to health, mental well-being, spiritual connection, black lives matter, completing the census, breast cancer awareness, technology safety, education, and supporting remote learning to name a few.

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These mostly-weekly meetings attracted not only local community members but those from around the globe. Our panelists consisted of experts in fields across disciplines from nurses, doctors, lawyers, community activists, elders, councilmen educators, and religious leaders. The discussion helped attendees gain insight, find resources and employ strategies to help their children in their distance learning. Further, these dialogues helped expand our scope and understanding of community needs, available support services and attract newcomers to the ECLA organization.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE- A DISCUSSION ON EQUITY, RACIAL DISPARITY AND ADVOCACY.**  
 JUNE 25, 2020 / 8PM - 8PM

**FEATURED GUESTS**

**HEMI BRISOLA**  
 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT

**ALLAN W. BRIDGEMAN**  
 FORMER CEO PRESIDENT  
 SENIOR FELLOW

**YOUTH PANEL**

**YVONNE ABIB**  
 FORMER PRESIDENT  
 FORMER PRESIDENT

**WENDY BROWN**  
 FORMER CEO PRESIDENT  
 SENIOR FELLOW

**WENDY BROWN**  
 FORMER CEO PRESIDENT  
 SENIOR FELLOW

**ECLA**  
 Ethiopian Community in Los Angeles

**DISTANCE LEARNING DURING COVID-19: SUPPORT STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION.**

**ZOOM PRESENTATION AND Q&A**

**THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24TH @6PM**

**Febem Fantu**  
 Education Advocacy Specialist  
 Westside Regional Center

**ECLA**  
 Ethiopian Community in Los Angeles

**AWARNESS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ITS DETRIMENTAL EFFECTS ON THE MIND**  
 "ጤናማ ቤተሰብ ለጤናማ ማህበረሰብ" "HEALTHY FAMILY, FOR HEALTHY COMMUNITY"

**THURSDAY OCTOBER 22 @6PM**

**FACEBOOK LIVE & ZOOM ID 88100556875**

**10-22-20 @6pm**

**DR. MULATU BELAYNEH**

**JIBRILL MUSEIN**

**"NO HEALTH WITHOUT MENTAL HEALTH"**

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## SPIRITUAL CONNECTION

The spiritual connectedness team was instrumental in providing a bridge to help those individuals or family members who were feeling disconnected, or sensing a level of meaninglessness due to the closures of religious institutions or finding the disruption of routines related to attending worship places extremely challenging. This team was able to choral our spiritual fathers from various denominations to be part of our weekly seminar, sending uplifting messages and redefining how to continue their spiritual connectedness remotely.

## MEDICAL TEAM

Our COVID-19 response to the community was launched with our Medical Team presenting on the status of COVID-19 through a seminar to our members. Their efforts quickly held traction and ECLA started receiving questions, requests and inquiries for information such as where to get free tests, how to differentiate between the flu and COVID, transmission mode and much more. To meet the needs of the community, the team provided weekly updates by highlighting state specific policies, guidelines and mandates. They shared several links that were posted on our social media accounts for community members to take part in and advantage of progressively. The medical team continued the updates as needed as the routines related to the pandemic settle in lives of our community members, the medical team continued their updates through materials and as needed.



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## MENTAL HEALTH TEAM

Our mental health team knew of the challenges that were to come with the pandemic. The group of dedicated individuals consisting of social workers, marriage family therapists and support from the community based organization African Coalition, they were able to provide a timely webinar discussing the issues associated with being confined to the home environment especially those that were struggling with domestic harmony prior to COVID. While the situation exacerbated these issues, the team provided support in outreach, resources and by making themselves available to help families address some of the challenges as they came up.

## FINANCIAL REPORT



Ethiopian Community Center in Los Angeles		
Financial Statement		
From Inception to 09/30/2020		
Account	Description	Amount
<b>Revenue:</b>		
4000	Membership Fee	2,212.00
4000	Donation - COVID-19	3,505.00
4090	Funeral Support - Eth. Community	2,790.00
4040	Collections for Nonprofit Fees	1,100.00
	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>9,577.00</b>
	Commission - Fund Facilitators	117.08
	<b>Net Revenue</b>	<b>9,459.92</b>
<b>Expenses:</b>		
5000	Financial Support - Eth. Community Members	300.00
5020	Financial Support - Funeral Services	2,750.00
5090	Financial Support - COVID19	2,000.00
5040	Office Supplies	92.92
5090	Zoom and Other Communication Fees	164.95
5060	Fund Transfer Facilitation Fees	75.11
5070	Non-Profit Establishment Costs	1,182.00
5080	Bank Service Charge	12.00
	<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>6,526.98</b>
	<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>2,932.94</b>
	<b>Balance per Bank Statement 09/30/2020</b>	<b>2,932.94</b>

#### IN-KIND DONATION

Ethiopian Community Los Angeles	
ECLA IT - Web Development and Zoom Account	
1 year hosting	\$100.00
1 year maintenance	\$600.00
15C donation terminal	\$175.00
Payment Merchant	\$100.00
ECLA Zoom account	\$104.92
	<b>Total \$1,079.92</b>

## From Community Members

*It is my pleasure to give this testimony to the ECLA board members. A few months ago my family was hit by an unexpected tragedy when I lost my wife of 26 years and the mother of my two children. My wife's sudden death happened after suffering from cancer for just two*

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*months. We were new to Los Angeles and it was only a year since we moved from Texas. We hardly knew anyone during such a difficult time. One phone call to ECLA changed that! My family was overwhelmed by the kindness and sincerity of the board members. Even though ECLA was just in the process of being formed, the board members were able to come in person to comfort us bringing food, drinks, flowers, and other essential needs for Covid-19 protection. ECLA provided us with funeral arrangement ideas and bereavement counseling. I would like to thank the ECLA board members for being there for my family at the time of our despair. I am proud and pleased to state that ECLA can count on me and my children to do whatever we can to support our community.*

*Kassahun Zemene*



## From our Board Members

*Our strength is in our unity. It is my pleasure to serve and advocate for our Ethiopian community here in Los Angeles. I take this service as an opportunity to serve our community in the area they need the most. Ladies and gentlemen, I am pleased to announce the amount of work done since the establishment of the newly elected board members despite the disrupting of COVID-19. As the pandemic kicked in, the board immediately established a task force to respond to the crisis. Then, the board conducted weekly meetings while making follow-ups on urgent matters daily. The board established an emergency plan to reach out to folks that were in urgent need. As a result, the following activities were conducted. We were able to reach out to many of affected families in the*

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*community, Many grieved families were comforted from their sorrows, We provided support to those who needed food and financial assistance. Finally as soon as the government opened up the lockdown, immediately the board recruited an executive director also Additional sub-committees were established in accordance with our bylaw to assist the director in charge and they got into action right away. We will keep on updating our communities the progress we are making frequently.*

*Thank you, God bless you all.*

*Binyam Woldesenbet*

*As a board member I take pride on being one of the founders of ECLA. Our greatness comes from being all inclusive and embracing all Ethiopians regardless of one's ethnicity, political and/or religious affiliations. Because of our inclusiveness most people trust and relate to ECLA. Therefore; our membership drive was a success from the start. Thus, our board members have done a great job in building ECLA on a sturdy foundation. Number of Other Ethiopian Communities from other states have approached us to acquire wisdom from us. This past year was a blessing to me working with these incredibly talented board members. It feels like we've known each other forever and worked as*

*one family. We sat in meetings for three, four hours and end our sessions with rejuvenated energy each time. I've learned a lot from each of the board members. I consider myself to be lucky for being chosen to work with ECLA's very first board members.*

*Abekyellesh Allenne, ECLA*



## **PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS**

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*I was fortunate enough to have had an opportunity to contribute toward the Health, Wellness & Physical Fitness needs through at least one video conference panel discussion, and will strive to do more.*

*I am committed to doing all I can in continuing to meaningfully support ECLA in its endeavors. Unequivocally, I understand that ECLA's overall success in its mission & strategic goals & obligations "MEANS" the overall success of each Individual member, families, and ultimately the Ethiopian Community in Los Angeles and the surrounding Counties. I, therefore, strongly urge one and all to invest his/her respective time, energy, and resources in making all envisioned efforts and initiatives a reality.*

*Iyob Tessema*

*During the onset of what would be the worst economic and health crisis since the early 20th century, I had the pleasure of working with ECLA to make an impact in my community. A few classmates and I raised over \$13,000 to help struggling restaurants stay afloat by placing large orders to feed food-insecure individuals within our community. The idea was that these orders would help restaurants stay*

*solvent while helping feed families in need. It was truly an honor to work with ECLA on this initiative to help our fellow Ethiopians. In the day-to-day chaos, we often get so ingrained in our own lives that we forget to be kind, considerate, sympathetic, and decent to our neighbors. Thank you for all that you do and I hope ECLA continues to be the change it wants to see in the world. Ermiyas Nessibu*

## **CONCLUSION**

Over the course of this past year, volunteers serving in board membership roles dedicated time to strengthen a newly established non-profit organization serving Ethiopians and Ethio-Americans living in Los Angeles and surrounding areas. This year posed several challenges with the pandemic including working through several aspects associated with setting an infrastructure that will serve generations to come. The outcome of this organization is dependent on you, the community members. Your support, involvement and keeping account of this organization will help it grow, prosper and reach its highest potential.

Visit us at:

Website: [www.eclosangeles.org](http://www.eclosangeles.org)

Twitter: EthopianLos

Instagram: ethiopian\_communityla