

Whiz Kids Television and Book Launching Event
Remarks by U.S. Ambassador to Ethiopia Patricia Haslach
February 4, 2016
Oromo Cultural Center, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
(as prepared for delivery)

Selam new! Good afternoon! It is great to see so many of Tsehai's friends here today!

At the U.S. Embassy, we really love what Bruky and her team at Whiz Kids have been doing with the Tsehai Loves Learning television programs for Ethiopian children.

In the United States, we have something similar called Sesame Street. As a parent, I felt confident that my girls were learning positive and valuable lessons when they sat down to watch Sesame Street. Ethiopian parents can feel that same confidence when their children watch Tsehai Loves Learning.

Studies show, and we all know from our own experience, how much good information children can absorb from educational AND fun programs and materials. For this reason, we decided to partner with Whiz Kids to facilitate the production of 39 TV episodes and 12 complementary books on child health, which we are launching today.

In addition, we are supporting Whiz Kids to open a large resource center and eight smaller resource corners for children and their parents to learn more about healthy practices.

It is a sad fact that with all of the progress made in Ethiopia in recent years, there are still approximately 350,000 children who die here each year. More than 90 percent of these deaths are due to preventable or treatable causes such as pneumonia, diarrhea, malaria, malnutrition and HIV/AIDS.

We know that education is one of the best ways to bring an end to preventable deaths. Learning and applying healthy practices, identifying warning signs and taking action early-on can truly mean the difference between life and death.

With the Healthy Whiz Kids grant from USAID, Tsehai and her friends are enhancing children and parents' knowledge and positive attitudes in four major health areas crucial for children's health: communicable diseases such as malaria and TB, good nutrition, prevention of injuries and accidents and good hygiene practices. Creating awareness so that parents and children will adopt healthy behaviors around these four areas will reduce child morbidity and mortality.

Children throughout Ethiopia will be able to watch all 39 TV episodes on EBC. Such targeted health messaging for children through electronic media is a new approach for Ethiopia. More

than five million children will see or hear Healthy Whiz Kids programming, and because children love to share what they learn—their friends and relatives will also surely learn too.

I want to thank Brupty—and yes Brupty, you have to translate that—and everyone at the Whiz Kids Workshop for their hard work. I would also like to thank both the ministries of health and education for their close collaboration to make this activity successful.

I highly encourage children and their parents to tune in to hear what Tsehai and friends are up to and to learn about what they can do to have healthier and happier childhoods.

As our friend Tsehai says, *Ewed-achoo-halow. Ciao! Ciao!*