

## **PRESS RELEASE**

AMAAM IS CLOSING JUNE 30, 2012

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It is with plenty of reflection and examination that we have decided to phase out in five months and finally close AMAAM on June 30, 2012. We believe that AMAAM has served nearly 30,000 immigrants, visitors, secondary migrants and students who pass through St. Louis and many refugees and other categories of legal immigrants who call St. Louis their home since April 1983.

Looking back AMAAM by the leadership of its long time Executive Director Mr. Gedlu Metaferia, has rehabilitated many immigrants with PTSD, planned, implemented many major educational conferences regarding, internally displaced people, refugees, conflict resolution, creative transformative mediation and the alleviation of Sub-Saharan poverty through sustainable projects. It has also implemented 600 forums on refugees and collaborated with 200 community organizations over time in promoting welcoming and removing hate and bias. It has presented great lectures in black history month, in tolerance and elder mediation. It has collaborated with the Arch park Service 14 years ago in placing eye catching display of Christmas celebration of Ethiopian Gena. It has collaborated with UMSL Gallery 220 to show the historical significance of an Ethiopian Icon painter. It has assisted 100s of graduate and undergraduate students from Washu, UMSL, SLU, and other local colleges in completing their practicum and their research. It has also helped in the Festival of Nations of the International Institute. AMAAM has provided conflict resolution and community session training free in cooperation with the World Affairs Council regarding diplomats, judges, social workers and intellectuals from Afghanistan, Israel, Brazil and Egypt. AMAAM has also helped in naturalizing hundreds of US citizens by helping in the application and by referring complex cases to attorneys.

One of the simple sustainable programs AMAAM had implemented with the cooperation of UNICEF was the rehabilitation of 7 hand dug wells in the conflict ridden Somali-Ethiopian boarder areas by fitting them with inexpensive Afrdieve pipes with life span of 85 years supplying potable water for 10,000 people in 2000 for USD \$3,000 thereby cutting diarrheal diseases by 90%. AMAAM has helped many African refugees to be self-sufficient and has educated them about their rights and responsibilities in their new country including their civil rights.

“AMAAM has examined the current funding picture of Government contracts and foundation dollars both nationally and internationally. The likelihood of fair access in Missouri/ USA is very difficult if not impossible to achieve impactful projects that can grow measurable self-sufficiency. Another 30 years of service is becoming more daunting and we do not have the financial resources to continue more at present. The executive Director has been volunteering even when unemployed. Such funding disparities are often exasperated by the economic recession, human manipulation and the response of foundations for changing circumstances. In one phrase government funding and charity allocations should be reformed to be responsive to the 21st century of instant communication and domestic and global challenges. Charities, non-profits and Government entities that fund non-profits must think of long time sustainability and measurable outcomes, otherwise our short term help can only image compassion the do not affect the lives of people. It is good to provide emergency services, we have also to think of long lasting solutions. For their own survival and profitability, corporations have to invest in meaningful charity in communities that can change lives; not the usual image donation of tax deductibility, but real money that supports life changing projects. The IRS and GAO must look at their guidelines to make foundations and charities to fund sustainable programs and incorporate the fairness doctrine of reasonable charity that do away with connections and cronyism. It is better to give \$200,000 for a good agency to save lives instead of giving \$2,000 for 100 organizations.”, said Gedlu Metaferia, Executive Director of AMAAM. AMAAM, its staff and Board are grateful for the opportunity to serve refugees and other categories of legal immigrants who voted by their feet to come to the United States. We are very much proud in producing doctors, scientists, soldiers and business people and community and faith leaders that have contributed to our adopted country, not because of our efforts only, but by exploiting the existing condition of upward mobility and opportunity in the United States. We appreciate the heavy lifting of emergency responses of the US Government in reaching out to the World in times of disasters. We thank friends, Board members, clients, resettlement agencies, mentors and individuals both in Government and private charities who are in Missouri in helping us achieve our monumental work”. Our national experiment of 200 plus years is indeed exceptional, the union has to be perfected not in areas of the economy only, but also in areas of compassion and charity that is more uplifting, more sustainable and more meaningful”, said Gedlu Metaferia.

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