

# Let's Celebrate Our Diverse Heritage

Join Us as We Spotlight & Explore Staff Countries of Origin



The Diversity Equality and Inclusion (DEI) committee is conducting surveys to help celebrate the diversity at Goodwin House. This month, we shine a light on Ethiopia, the land of 13 Months of Sunshine. We're excited to share what we learned from speaking with Ethiopian colleagues and family members. **Follow along to the end of the spotlight to see something special!**



## Tigray War Acknowledgement

In **November of 2020**, long-rising tensions between the Ethiopian federal government and the leadership of the northern Tigray region exploded into an ongoing military confrontation. Since then, hundreds of thousands have lost their lives, including thousands of civilians and refugees. Media outlets remain mostly silent and the rippling affects of the war have spread throughout Africa.



On **March 24, 2022**, the Ethiopian government declared an indefinite humanitarian truce. However, we understand that, for many, this terrible conflict is not over and will continue to have a devastating impact on them for the rest of their lives—even without more bloodshed.

The DEI committee will not pretend to know everything there is to know about the Tigray War. We are sensitive to how difficult it can be for many to even claim Ethiopia, as it currently exists, as their home. When we make efforts to reach out to, celebrate and shine a light on the diversity of Goodwin House — we have a responsibility to honor and acknowledge the diversity of circumstances and beliefs as well.

We will continue to refer to this great country in the Horn of Africa as “Ethiopia” broadly for the sake of simplicity, not to erase or ignore the implications of the Tigray War. If you have feedback for how we can better address this conflict in a way that is more respectful, please email us at [DEI@GoodwinHouse.org](mailto:DEI@GoodwinHouse.org)



**Diversity, Equality & Inclusion**

*Educate. Embrace. Empower.*



# Country: Ethiopia | Capital: Addis Abba

## Intro to Ethiopia

Ethiopia is Africa's oldest country, one of the oldest countries in the world and the only country in Africa to never be colonized, despite Italy's efforts in the 18th and 19th centuries. Ethiopia rests on the largest peninsula in East Africa known as the Horn of Africa. The Horn of Africa is the fourth largest peninsula in the world. Ethiopia's territories and borders varied over its ancient lifespan, along with the design of its national flag — though the flag always consisted of a tri-color.

The modern flag, adopted in 1996, includes a yellow star within a blue circle. The star represents the unity and bright future of all Ethiopian nationalities. **Blue** represents peace. **Yellow** represents continued hope and justice **Red** represents sacrifices made for freedom and equality. **Green** represents fortune, development and fertility.



## 9 Quick Facts About Ethiopia | Scratching the Surface

**Population:** 107,089,000

**Primary Language(s):** **Amharic and Oromo.** There are nearly 90 common languages and dialects spoken in Ethiopia, such as **Somali.**

**Currency:** **Ethiopian Birr**

**Religion:** Almost half of Ethiopians identify as some variety of **Christian.** Other major religions include **Islam, Judaism and Paganism.**

**Landmarks:** **80% of Africa's tallest mountains** are in Ethiopia. There are also countless **beautiful, historical cathedrals** and temples, like in **Lalibela.**

**Holidays:** **Fassika** and other Orthodox Christian holidays, like **Epiphany.**

**National Animal:** **African Lion**  
*Extra fun fact: Ethiopia is home to 10 animal species only found in its borders.*

**13 Month Calendar:** Ethiopians use a calendar **that is seven years behind** the Gregorian calendar. It is a biblically inspired calendar that has **Pagume, an extra month** consisting of five days (six in a leap year).

**Cuisine:** Much of Ethiopian cuisine is **uniquely vegetarian** due to their history of Orthodox Christianity. Ethiopian food is known for being healthy, rich and deliciously spicy.  
*Extra fun fact: The coffee bean originates in Ethiopia. It's the country's largest export!*



# Ethiopia & Goodwin House | Survey

We surveyed **216** Goodwin House team members, residents and members about Ethiopia

## How familiar are the respondents with Ethiopia's people, history and culture

- 31% not at all familiar
- 58% somewhat familiar (This number is up from our last spotlight!)
- 11% very familiar
- 14% of the respondents have lived in or visited Ethiopia
- 9% of the respondents have lived in Ethiopia

## 8% of the respondents recognize Ethiopia as their country of origin

- 94% of the Ethiopian respondents speak Amharic
- 18% of them speak a language or dialect other than Amharic
- 71% came to Goodwin House because they were referred by friends and family. Amazing!

## Ethiopian Staff Spotlights

Each Country of Origin Spotlight survey invites staff from GHA, GHBC, GHAH and HCBS to be featured in the spotlight. This month, say Selam (Amharic "hello") to Almaz, Genet and Meron!

Take a close look at the wonderful Ethiopian food and clothing represented in the photos on the next page!



**Department:** GHBC Dining Services

**Joined GHI in 2017**

### How did you end up at Goodwin House?

A friend that used to work here referred me. When I came, I left my whole family back at home.

### What do you want your family to know about the U.S.?

The U.S. allows for freedom. You can do anything you want. There are opportunities, such as education, and it is safe.

### What's your primary language? Do you speak other dialects?

Amharic and Tigrinya

# Ethiopian Staff Spotlights Cont.



**Genet Asefa**

**Department:** Hospice (based out of GHA)

**Joined GHI in 2005 | Heard about GHI through a friend**

**What do you want us to know about your country?**

Ethiopia is very proud that it was never colonized. Over 80 languages are spoken in Ethiopia. When I drink coffee, I perform a ceremony; the coffee is very strong, so small cups are used. [Abebe Bikila](#) is very famous in Ethiopia for winning Olympic Gold while running barefoot!

**What do you want your family to know about the U.S.?**

The U.S. has health care, education and career opportunities, and there is a right for freedom of speech.

**What's your primary language? Do you speak other dialects?**

Amharic



**Meron Ezra**

**Department:** Hospice

**Joined GHI in 2017 | Heard about GHI through a referral**

**What do you want us to know about your country?**

Ethiopia is very traditional, and the people are respectful.

**What do you want your family to know about the U.S.?**

It's a blessed country. You can be whatever you want to be.

**What's your primary language? Do you speak other dialects?**

Amharic

<----- Meron's ceremonious coffee and food spread



# Ethiopia & Goodwin House | Family

## Catie Ramos and Auntie Meti Chat & Prepare Shiro Wat

*My family has welcomed me and supported me. I call the kids “our” kids, because I have been part of their lives for so long. The children just see me as part of their family. They are even under the impression that I have their last name, because I am just one of them.*

— GHBC Executive Assistant Catie Ramos

Ethiopia and Goodwin House are connected in more ways than one. We’re practically family! We mean that literally. Did you know that GHBC Executive Assistant Catie Ramos actually lives with an Ethiopian family? Catie lives with Auntie Meti’s family, helping to care for the family’s three children for the last three years.

Auntie Meti, who returned home to Ethiopia in January, showed Catie how to cook a delicious Ethiopian chickpea stew called Shiro, and taught Goodwin House about Ethiopian food, traditions and culture.

[Follow this link to watch the video!](#)

**Thank you, Catie and Auntie Meti, for letting us into your world!**

