

My Encounter in Seattle, WA

The 6th Annual Shire Fundraising Event was underway on May 22, Friday afternoon, when the airplanes begun descending from the sky from various city into Seattle Airport. Among the many supporters of Development Association of Shire in North America, the distinguish board of directors were amongst the many arriving. After everyone arriving to Seattle, Washington checked into their hotels or to love ones homes, the place to be was Tigray Community Center on Yester way. Seattle has a reputation for a rich history and tradition for having the healthiest and strongest Tegraru community in North America. Indeed, that was witness throughout the entire event. Nonetheless, the place to be on Friday afternoon to meet the entire Tegraru Seattle native's and all the out-of-towners at one place was Tigray Community Center. The Afternoon quickly turned into the evening with all the laughter's and joy of catching up with old friends, and new acquaintances. The best part was that was just a glimpse of what the weekend had in stored!

Saturday afternoon, May 23, 2009 @ 12:00 pm, the Development Association of Shire in North America (DASNA) Board of Directors held their annual board meeting at Tigray Community Center of Yester way. All the boards of Directors were in attendance from various states and chapters. The Chairman of DASNA, Ato Kiros Araya, led the entire meeting and gave his annual report to the board members. Moreover, each board member presented his and her annual report. After finalizing any last minute preparations for our biggest event ever, the board adjourns their meeting. It's wasn't long before the rest of our association started to flock like birds to Tigray Community Center Saturday afternoon. The entire scenery was beautiful. So many people young and old embracing the vision of coming together for one cause was truly speculator. Once again, with all the fun and joy shared at Tigray Community Center, time was flying at speed of light.

Saturday Evening, May 23, 2009 @ 6:00 pm, the hall was all decked out with special lighting, red and white balloons on every table, and last but not lest, hard to resist aroma of our wonderful and delicious Ethiopian food can be smelled as you entered the hall. The entire place was decorated to the detail even with souvenirs to take back home to share with friends and love ones. Shortly afterwards, as our distant honoraries and guests were arriving, a nice soothing music was playing in the background as small groups were converse among themselves in far distance. Subsequently, our guest begin to eat dinner as more people begin to come in, it was truly remarkable. After an hour into the evening, the band began to warm up by playing a traditional instrumental beat that everyone knew. Seattle chapter truly prepared a speculator band featuring lead vocalist Ababa Araya, Reshan Gebre, Solomon Haile, on the keyboard Yayne Abay, and base guitarist Mulu Haile and Kebede Damoz. Seattle chapters definitely went all out to gather an all-star band line up sure to be enjoyed by all age group. The host of the gala was Ato Berhane Abraha from Seattle Chapter who was the M.C. for the evening. He commences the event by reading a speech he prepared and welcome all the members and supporters of Development Association of Shire in North America. Following Ato Berhane Abraha, the Chairman of DASNA read a prepared speech to the audience about what the organization has done and what they are working on. After all the speeches were read and done, the crowds were all ready to get down and thrown down. The first dance was commences by the ladies of Seattle Chapter dresses in once amazing and stylist habesha clothing that showed unite and well

choreography dances. Again, the scenery of watching all those beautiful ladies in the same clothing with synchronizing movement moves was worth a thousand words. After all, the anxious crowds got down to what they know best, PARTY!!!

With an hour in to the evening, the M.C. of the evening, Ato Berhane Abraha called the Chairman of DASNA Ato Kiros Araya to the stage for an Award Ceremony presentation prepared by Solomon Siyoum from Atlanta Chapter with the collaboration and support from the Chairman. The Award Ceremony was the first of its kind and it had many members surprised and thrilled that it was part of this year event; it gave the event a humble and appreciative moment to the evening. Truly, the awards were given to members of DASNA who every year gave up their time and talent to support the DASNA cause. These valuable and irreplaceable members are our singer's like Ababa Araya, Reshan Gebre, Wedi Shuck, and Aziz Hagos who received a Certificate of Appreciation Award. The supporting cast of the band who without their talent and skills, the entire event would not be possible are Mulu Haile and Kebede Demoz on the base guitar, and Yayne Abay on the keyboard. Continuing with the award ceremony, the chapters that hosted Shire Night Event in the past, starting with our first annual event to our present event, were also recognized for their vigorous effort and devotion to host a successful fundraising event. These chapters were Toronto, Canada; Washington D.C.; Boston, MA; Philadelphia, PA; Las Vegas, NA, Atlanta, GA, and Seattle, WA. There were also special awards prepared for special members who unselfishly committed themselves on supporting the development of shire single handily and those recipients were Tashale Tesfay from Portland and Muhammad Seyid from Philadelphia, PA. Furthermore, DASNA inducted its first honoree Gebrehewit Tesfay from Seattle to the Development Association of Shire in North America as a member for all his love and support to the members of DASNA and for his continuing support to the organization since inception.

Concluding the award ceremony, the band began to play some of our favorite music and the crowds went bananas. Solomon Haile was an awesome addition to the event complimenting Ababa Araya and Reshan Gebre. After an hour into the evening, a picture of a heroic fallen soldier was to be auctioned that was presented by the Columbus Chapter as a token of their appreciation to the Seattle Chapter. This awesome picture raked an unofficial amount of \$2000. Following the auction, there was a ticket raffle that brought everyone clued to tickets checking to see if they won. All in all, Saturday event was simply irresistible. The crowds partied way into the wee hours of the morning. I was surprised for the party to last until 4 o'clock in the morning, considering what it started at 8 pm, but it was all FUN!

The next day, Sunday afternoon, DASNA conducted their annual general assembly meeting opened to all members and prospect members. The meeting was led by the Chairman of DASNA, Ato Kiros Araya and accompanying were Ato Alemseyed Mesfin from Boston as the secretary of DASNA taking minutes, and Ato Berhane Abraha and Azeb Seyoum from the Seattle Chapters. The meeting attracted many members and prospect members to partake in the annual discussion of the organization. The meeting was informative and generated many new ideas to be reviewed by the board.

Sunday afternoon at 6 pm cruise ride: A time to reflect and reminisce of childhood memories with old friends while enjoying the beautiful scenery of downtown Seattle from the magnificent Argosy Cruise departing from Pier 56 Waterfront Seattle. When you thought the event wouldn't

get better, the cruise ride was an icy on the cake. The members taking part in the cruise ride ranged from all age group from babies in strollers to grandparents. The entire Argosy cruise was rented exclusively for DASNA members; therefore, everyone was among friends and family. Again, the Seattle Chapter prepared wonderful food for their members, while alcoholic beverages were self serve. The cruise ride lasted for three hours touring the beautiful downtown Seattle waterfront. After the cruise reached the harbor, everyone picked up their pictures that were taken by a professional photographer while boarding on the cruise as a souvenir.

Sunday night at 10pm: a traditional gathering to party with new acquaintances and old one for one last time before the crack of dawn. The young at heart and the energetic were amongst the many that showed up one more time to enjoy the night.

In summary, this year's Shire Fundraising Event was truly an awesome event in many ways. I personally met many people that I only talked to over the phone. Secondly, I met family members that I never knew I had. Last but not least, the Seattle Tegar community has painted fond memories for me to enjoy for years to come. Thank you so much to all who attended this year event for your dedication and continuing support to the Development Association of Shire.

See you in Washington DC next year (July 4, 2010)!
Solomon Siyoum, Atlanta Branch