



Healing Matters



Maureen with Dr Catherine

“Ongoing support is very worthwhile.”
- Sharon, Hamlin Regular Giver

prevention, outreach and rehabilitation with confidence. As a consumer health advocate, Sharon understands the importance of holistic care. “I have seen that Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia works hard to understand and support women affected by fistula. As well as physical health care, there is also consideration for the women’s emotional, relational, community, financial and spiritual needs.”

approach, working alongside the government and other organisations to maximize its effectiveness and reach. But most of all, Sharon is glad to support women living with the pain and hardship of obstetric fistula.

“Seeing the important training and clinical work in Ethiopian communities firsthand showed me that ongoing support is greatly needed and very worthwhile.”

Sharon’s visit to Ethiopia highlighted the challenges of delivering healthcare in a country where many communities are isolated by distance, terrain and limited infrastructure. The commitment of donors like you helps Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia overcome these barriers and reach women in even the most remote areas.

“The isolation hit me hard. The roads were rough and it took several hours to reach a clinic only 30 kilometres away.”

She was also impressed by Hamlin’s partnership



A special message from Dr Solomon Abebe, General Manager of Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia

To each member of our Hamlin community, thank you. Your compassionate support helps our teams continue Dr Catherine Hamlin’s vision of a fistula-free Ethiopia – finding and treating more women, and training midwives to prevent future injuries. Every day, your generosity brings us one step closer.

In the early 1990s, Sharon’s mother Maureen visited the Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, meeting Drs Catherine and Reg Hamlin in person.

A lifelong supporter, she corresponded with Dr Catherine for the next 25 years. Thirty years after her Mom’s visit, Sharon would retrace her steps as a participant on a Hamlin Ethiopian Adventure.

Sharon is also a member of the Hamlin Monthly Giving community. Her ongoing support provides long-term reliability, helping Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia plan and deliver treatment,



Sharon and Zeditu, Hamlin trainer



These women have suffered more than any woman should be called upon to endure. To meet only one is to be profoundly moved and calls forth the utmost compassion that the human heart is capable of feeling.

- Dr Catherine Hamlin



Farewell to *Lete*, friend and colleague

The Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia team recently mourned the loss of their much-beloved colleague, *Lete* – affectionately known as *Weleliye*, meaning “sweet.”

As one of the earliest patients of Drs. Reg and Catherine Hamlin, *Lete*’s journey began when she was referred to the Princess Tsehai Hospital for life-changing obstetric fistula treatment, marking the dawn of a transformative mission in Ethiopia.

At the same time, Mamitu Gashe arrived seeking treatment for her own childbirth injury. The women formed a lifelong friendship, dedicating their lives to supporting the work of Drs. Catherine and Reg and caring for Ethiopian women seeking treatment.

Years after moving to Addis Ababa, *Lete* was involved in a car accident which resulted in her needing a wheelchair. Despite this, her commitment to the daily life of the hospital never wavered.

“Every day, I do rounds in my wheelchair to comfort the patients. I tell them they will be cured and share my own life journey as an example.”

Lete will be remembered for her kindness, encouragement, and devotion. Mamitu says: “She was so strong and never complained. She was a respected woman who found a warm home in this hospital. May she find peaceful rest now.”

Read the beautiful tributes shared at *Lete*’s memorial service: catherinehamlin.org/bidding-farewell-to-lete



Carrying *Dr Catherine's* spirit into rural clinics

After graduating from the Hamlin College of Midwives, Sister Tsedenya’s first deployment was to a small rural clinic in North Mecha. She arrived, she explains, guided by the example of Emaye (Dr Catherine).

“I learned so much from her life story - especially the way she approached medical cases, and her philosophy that the services we provide should be free, compassionate, and driven by kindness without expecting anything in return.”

Her new role began just as conflict affected the region. Public transport and ambulances were grounded, and the electrical grid was often damaged or cut off. Sister Tsedenya faced her first major challenge as a midwife: a work environment where light was not guaranteed.

“When a mother leaves her dark home to come to us, it brings me so much joy to keep the lights on for her through the entire night so she can rest comfortably

and move without fear or shame. Without light, our work is brutal.”

Sister Tsedenya and her team delivered many babies using the flashlights on their mobile phones.

Fortunately, Sister Tsedenya has the opportunity to discuss these difficulties at regular meetings of the Hamlin Midwives Alumni Network. It is a chance to refresh her skills, while also learning from her more experienced peers.

“These women have lived through immense hardships, yet they are still standing and still saving lives. The biggest takeaway for me is the conviction that I can overcome my challenges.”

– Sister Tsedenya

Your support helps empower midwives like Sister Tsedenya, whose skilled, compassionate care transforms maternal health in rural communities. Together, we are making a lasting difference for mothers and babies.



Thanks to you, Genet is ready to *begin life* again



Recently, we shared the story of Genet, who had lived with obstetric fistula for 17 years, unaware that treatment was available until she was found by a Hamlin Patient Identification Officer.

After successful surgery at Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's Addis Ababa hospital, Genet returned home happy and healed. But her transformation story had yet another chapter. Determined to build a new life, Genet is taking part in our Women's

Empowerment Program at Desta Mender, a six-week residential course made possible by donor support. Here, women whose lives have been impacted by childbirth injuries receive literacy and numeracy learning, vocational training, and essential counselling to help them recover from the trauma they have experienced. They also learn small business skills, and return home with seed money to start their new enterprises.

“When I was cured of the fistula, I was so happy, but I was still worried about how I would survive back home. I had been isolated for so long, and I had no money or skills to start over.” – Genet

With new skills and knowledge made possible by your support, Genet is making plans: “We are learning so many practical

things to help us start again. I am determined to grow vegetables in my backyard and sell them. I also want to buy a sheep and grow a flock.

“As a single mother, life is difficult. But I will be able to provide food, support my family, and hold my head high as a respected member of my village.” – Genet

Genet also wants to share a message with other women who may be living in shame and isolation: “Please, do not lose hope, and do not hide away in fear. Fistula is not a curse, and it can be healed. Step out of the darkness and come to the hospital. Your new life is waiting for you.”

Thanks to your support of our recent appeal, hope and healing are within reach for women like Genet. Your kindness truly changes lives.

Comfort and care upon arrival



For almost two decades, Almaz, a nurse aide, has been welcoming women at the start of their healing journey.

When patients arrive at Hamlin's Addis Ababa Fistula Hospital, she is there to offer kindness and reassurance: “They are often very distressed. However, when I translate for them in their own language, it feels as though they have already begun to heal.”

Almaz believes the gift of a Comfort Package has a profound meaning: “It symbolises warmth and care. This small gesture can have a significant impact on their emotional wellbeing during a challenging time.”

For Almaz, the most rewarding part is seeing women return to health – something you help make possible.

“By the time they leave, they are filled with hope and happiness. It's truly heartwarming to witness their recovery and new beginnings.” – Almaz

Thank you for making this possible. Your generosity gives women the strength and hope to begin their healing journey.

Your *impact*

October 2025
to March 2026



2,276 life-changing surgeries for women with childbirth injuries



19,223 babies safely delivered by Hamlin midwives



677 women found and treated through Project Zero

Explore the latest impact data at catherinehamlin.org/impact-report-oct-mar-2026

From supporter to witness: Elissa's Ethiopian *adventure*



For Elissa Slingsby, visiting Ethiopia was not something she had ever imagined doing. But as a committed donor, she decided it was time to see Hamlin Fistula Ethiopia's life-changing work firsthand.

"I never thought I'd do something like this, but it has been amazing and so rewarding."

During her time in Ethiopia, Elissa saw firsthand the breadth

of Hamlin's work – from the specialist treatment provided at Hamlin's six fistula hospitals, to the rehabilitation and reintegration support offered at Desta Mender, as well as the training of midwives, through the Hamlin College of Midwives, helping to prevent obstetric fistula in rural communities.

Elissa's support as a donor has helped make these vital services possible for countless women in Ethiopia.



So what would Elissa say to someone thinking of planning their own Ethiopian Adventure in the future?

"Absolutely do it. Don't even think about it."

Choose your own adventure

We are now offering two exciting itineraries. Beyond Addis Ababa and the Hospital by the River, you can travel:

- south to the culturally rich Omo Valley, meeting diverse tribal communities while also exploring Ethiopia's stunning Rift Valley; or
- east to the centuries-old walled city of Harar, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and experience the wild beauty of Aledoghi Wildlife Reserve.

All spots in our 2026 are now filled, but bookings are open for March and November 2027.

Learn more at catherinehamlin.org/travel

The Hospital by the River: a story that continues to inspire



**Celebrating
25 Years
in Print**

Since the first edition was published 25 years ago, *The Hospital by the River* has never been out of print.

What if a single book could change thousands of lives – and you could be part of its legacy? Written by Dr Catherine Hamlin with the support of John Little, this candid account traces the journey that took her from a childhood in suburban Australia, to studying medicine, working alongside Dr Reg Hamlin at Sydney's Crown Street Hospital, and eventually arriving in Ethiopia on a short-term contract – only to make it her home for the next 60 years.

More than a memoir, *The Hospital by the River* offers a rare glimpse into the determination and compassion

that drove Dr Catherine Hamlin to dedicate her life to women suffering from obstetric fistula.

What remarkable impact can one person have on the world? This book reveals the answer. Through its pages, readers will discover the stories of thousands of women whose lives were changed by the Hamlins and learn how their work led to the establishment of the world's leading treatment program for obstetric fistula.

[Discover Ethiopia from the comfort of your home: order your copy of this extraordinary book today.](#)

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