



*In the new year The British School community will be helping to assist the children of Ethiopia.*

Project Pencil Case "Supporting Ethiopian Students" is a personal initiative of **Arabella Stewart**, resident of Parklands, Wotton-under-Edge.

*"I spent my childhood in Ethiopia from 1963 until 1974 as the daughter of broadcast journalists and went back as a volunteer teacher earlier this year. My love and attachment to Ethiopia was immediately rekindled when I returned as an adult."*

Project Pencil Case came to life in 2008 when Arabella's teenage son presented her with numerous unused pens and pencils while clearing his room. Arabella decided to buy inexpensive plastic pencil cases, fill them and during the course of three trips in 2008/09, she distributed them at random to children on the streets of Addis.

In 2009 Bluecoat Primary School in Wotton-under-Edge became involved generously donating Pencil Case supplies and Arabella was able to distribute over 50 pencil cases to needy children in Addis Ababa.

Initially inspired by the experience that she had as a volunteer teacher for a vocational school in Addis Ababa, Arabella quickly became aware of how dedicated but impoverished many schools and students in Ethiopia are. The teaching experience for her was a wonderful and enriching time but supplies were extremely limited and absolutely nothing was taken for granted.

*"I was constantly impressed that every child I met fortunate enough to attend school values education - whether at a free government school or small private school. As I walked along the colourful and vibrant streets of Addis and encountered these children (half of the population of Ethiopia is currently under age 21), most children were keen to practice their English and told me with pride which grade they were in or how much they liked school. Each encounter with a child is special and encourages me to want to help even on the smallest scale. To see a child's face light up with a smile is reward enough but for these kids to have their own pencil case which is both useful and positive is the real satisfaction."*

Project Pencil Case also has goals to link schools in the UK with schools in Addis Ababa in other ways including schemes to Adopt a School, Class or Student - full details can be found on the website



Arabella is in Ethiopia until December, however her extraordinary help can be followed on the Project pencil case website. [www.projectpencilcase.org](http://www.projectpencilcase.org)

She will be in the UK for the beginning of the new year when she will visit The British school who have kindly agreed to participate in fund-raising for this worthwhile cause.