

## How BT Roasters is doing the most good in Ethiopia and beyond

**Fifteen-year-old Eden Wild is funding wells, assisting a young mother in Uganda and helping support a corps in Ethiopia.**

Three years ago, Eden Wild began [Buna Tarik \(BT\) Roasters](#), a coffee roasting project. Initially, she planned to raise money to build wells in Ethiopia, each costing \$5,000. To date, her efforts have funded four wells, giving thousands of people access to clean water. The project has raised enough money to begin construction on a fifth.



“A donation here is water for someone else for 20 years in Ethiopia,” Eden, 15, said. “Just think—this small sacrifice or thing that you’re taking from your own life and then the multiplication of the impact it’s going to have on someone else’s life.”

When Eden began BT Roasters, which means “coffee with a story,” she was [thinking of her personal story](#) and how the lack of clean water impacts people in Ethiopia, her birth country. Since then, her coffee story has evolved and grown, impacting a Ugandan coffee farm and The Salvation Army corps in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

### Turning coffee into water in Ethiopia

In the Ethiopian village of her birth—Bue, in the Sodo district—clean water was unavailable, and many people caught waterborne diseases, Eden said. Her birth mother died in childbirth, and Eden wondered if having clean water might have saved her life.

She never forgot her origins, and said she wanted to do something meaningful for her birthplace. She [launched her project](#) to “roast coffee so children can have clean water” with help from her adoptive parents, Salvation Army officers Lt. Colonels Ivan and Jennifer Wild, and the support of The Salvation Army. Those connections fuel the fundraising, and her partnership with [Water to Thrive](#) allows the wells to be built.

Recently, Water to Thrive invited Eden to speak at its donor banquet in Austin, Texas, where she shared her story. The event was a success, with donations and coffee auctions from the evening totaling around \$100,000. Auctions of BT Roasters coffee contributed \$10,000 to that total.

“Because Eden was there, there’s two more wells being built,” Ivan Wild said, crediting Eden and the connections she’s made with the success of BT Roasters.

“Eden has been invited to speak in an Atlanta church on [National Adoption Day](#) and share her story,” he said. “And then that leads to other partnerships that lead to other partnerships...It’s that connection, just hearing the story and connecting people—the project has grown. Like exponentially, we almost can’t even control it.

“You know, I’m biased because she’s my daughter, but Eden maintains straight As,” he said. “That’s a big thing for us, education. And she’s in cheer and cross country, having a quote ‘normal life.’ And then still doing this on the side. I’m a proud dad.”

During the Water to Thrive donor banquet, the Wilds connected with Geoffrey Kinaala, a coffee farmer from Uganda, and another partnership was born.

### **Changing lives in Uganda**

Through his business, [La’ Marc Coffee](#), Kinaalwa aims not only to introduce Ugandan coffee to the world, but also, via the La’ Marc Foundation, to help people acquire the skills needed for sustainable careers.

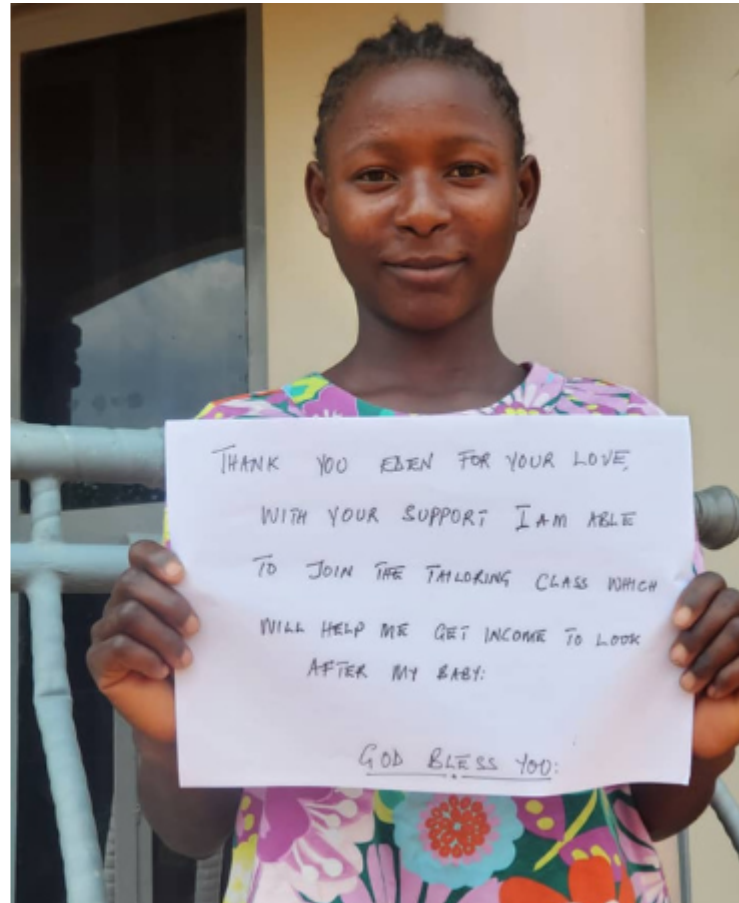
Previously, Kinaalwa had reached out to the Wilds after hearing about Eden’s project from Water to Thrive, and Eden had ordered some of his coffee beans to sell, in addition to the beans she gets from Ethiopia.

“When we bumped into him in Austin, we said, ‘Hey, we have your coffee. We’ll roast it if you want to come through Phoenix, where we live,’” Ivan Wild said. “And we’ll have you share your testimony and we’ll sell your coffee [at the Kroc Center](#) coffee shop. And then all the money that is raised, Eden will give to your ministry.”

During the event at the Kroc Center, Eden and Kinaalwa shared their stories. Eden sold Kinaalwa’s coffee, which she had roasted. She raised \$500 and presented it to him to support his foundation.

The La’Marc Foundation then selected Nashiba Zawedde, age 17, to receive the funds for vocational training.

According to the La’Marc Foundation, Zawedde’s family had been unable to support her, so she did whatever she could to survive. At age 16, she became pregnant; the baby’s father left before she gave birth on July 26, 2021. In early 2022, she came to La’ Marc seeking assistance.



Courtesy Ivan Wild and Geoffrey Kinaalwa.

Ivan Wild explained that the coffee farm [helps girls, like Zawedde, who become pregnant](#). Once they have their baby, the foundation assists in helping them to develop job skills so they can be self-sufficient, he said. “They have to raise money to do that,” he said. “And that’s where Eden’s money came in.”

The La’Marc Foundation newsletter reported Zawedde had always wanted to be a fashion designer. “Her prayers were answered when Eden from Buna Tarik Roasters offered to sell La’ Marc coffee and raised \$500, which will fund Nashiba’s tailoring training,” Kinaalwa said in the newsletter.

“Nashiba couldn’t hold her tears after learning that she would begin her one-year training in November,” the newsletter said. “She is now hoping that after her training in November 2023, she will be able to open a tailoring shop.”

Eden said Kinaalwa had shared some of the stories from girls who have received help at the coffee farm.

“It’s really sad but it’s also just so cool to see the total transformation as you see some of these girls coming out of the program and opening their own coffee shops or their own pastry stores,” she said.

## The Salvation Army in Ethiopia

The Salvation Army is beginning its work in Ethiopia, with just one corps in Addis Ababa formed in 2019.

Eden has been sponsoring the children there, sending materials and money to help support activities. With the recent [civil war in Ethiopia](#), she said she wanted to do more.

“The corps didn’t have officers,” she said. “It’s being led by soldiers and they lease their corps building. So we told them that we would sponsor them—their lease—for six months. It’s \$300 a month. And then we wrote to THQ [The Salvation Army USA Western Territorial Headquarters] about it and THQ offered to match.”

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- Being a nice human *a/ways* has a place in your day. But how to go about it? [Join 23k+ people who care](#) and find weekly inspiration from the Do Good Digest right inside your inbox.
- Discover more of Eden Wild’s story and [how BT Roasters began](#).