

## THE ABYSSINIAN FUND: A MISSION TO REINVEST IN THE LAND OF PARADISE

Reverend Nicholas S. Richards, President of The Abyssinian Fund and Assistant Minister at Abyssinian Baptist Church, will be honored for his work in Ethiopia for the third annual Hidden Heroes Awards.

Reverend Richards' mission is to reduce poverty in Ethiopia, the birthplace of coffee. Since its incep-

tion in 2009, The Abyssinian Fund partners with coffee farmers to help them learn more efficient methods of farming. The training the farmers receive results in the production of a higher quality of coffee that can be sold at a premium rate. This effective system ultimately improves the livelihood of the farmers and their communities as they reinvest the coffee profits into development projects throughout their village.

The devastation Reverend Richards witnessed while visiting Chaffee Jenette, Ethiopia was enough for him to create a plan to help. The community is suffering from a shortage of educational and modern health care facilities and the lack of clean water sources. Ironically, Chaffee Jenette means "land of paradise" but this land is not like any paradise many of us in the U.S. have experienced. Though they are in need of help, the people of Chaffee Jenette demonstrate the will and desire to change their lives. This change is possible with the help of one of their major exports, coffee and with the training they receive from The Abyssinian Fund.

The Hidden Heroes Award, hosted by The Andrew Goodman Foundation, is to honor, encourage and support this type of effective social activism. Reverend Richards was nominated as a Hidden Hero because he is ambitious, innovative and diligent about giving back. His plan works because coffee is the second most traded commodity in the world so Ethiopia is able to reach international buyers who are willing to pay premium prices for excellent coffee. In America alone more than \$40 billion is spent on coffee each year.

Coffee farming is nothing new to Ethiopia; it's a trade that has been active for more than 200 years. The coffee farmers, who make about \$500 per year, tend to the fields using methods they learned passed down from generations before them. Often what they had been taught is outdated especially due to recent changes in climate and a higher, quicker demand for the crop.



Rev. Nicholas A. Richards, President of the Abyssinian Fund & Assistant Minister of Abyssinian Baptist Church

The Abyssinian Fund hires field trainers with over 40 years of modern agricultural engineer experience. They teach the farmers new skills and techniques like how to choose the best beans— bright red ones are the most profitable and therefore increasing their yield and income. So far, more than 800 farmers have taken part in the training and as a result, it has had a positive effect on the lives of more than 5,000 Ethiopians.

What's so unique about The Abyssinian Fund's mission is that they have a contractual agreement with the farmers that says they must reinvest 10% of their coffee profit into the community. Giving back means building more schools, training doctors in modern health practices and incorporating clean water programs.

The Hidden Heroes awards ceremony will take place at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in Harlem, NY. Former Mayor David Dinkins will accept a Lifetime Achievement award to be presented by Harry Belafonte, last year's Lifetime Achievement Award winner.

*For more information about The Abyssinian Fund and to support our mission please visit [www.abbyfund.org](http://www.abbyfund.org).*

**Arts Grants** capacity building for arts organizations, support for community based arts projects.

**Artists and Arts Organizations Advancement** via organizational development, creative development and art spaces.

**HAA's Artz Rootz and Rhythm Series** showcasing the talents and creativity for Harlem's artists and arts organizations.

**Advocacy and Education** forming strategic partnerships to strengthen support for the arts on city, state and federal levels.

The Harlem Arts Alliance holds an open monthly meeting with its membership on the first Monday of every month from 10:00am - 12:00pm at the Riverside Theatre. All are welcome.

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*...fueling Harlem's cultural engine*

**The Harlem Arts Alliance** is a nonprofit service organization committed to its mission of nurturing the artistic growth and organizational development of artists and arts organizations based in Harlem and surrounding communities.

700 members strong, the Harlem Arts Alliance provides a critical set of programs and services for its constituents and serves as a strong voice for the artistic and cultural life of Harlem.

Visit us online at [www.harlemaa.org](http://www.harlemaa.org) for more information about our wide range of development services and the HAA Cultural Calendar.

**Join Us!**

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347 735 4280  
Visit us online at [www.harlemaa.org](http://www.harlemaa.org)

Harlem Arts Alliance  
229 West 135 Street  
New York, NY 10030