



Charisa Knight's journey to founding Hawassa Hope began with a profound awakening to global injustice. While witnessing the struggles of women and children in Zambia, she discovered her life's calling—a deep conviction about God's passion for justice and His heart for the oppressed that would shape her future work across multiple continents.

This conviction led Charisa to serve as a justice advocate with International Justice Mission from 2008-2014, where she honed her skills in addressing systemic injustice and advocating for vulnerable populations. Her commitment to creating sustainable change further manifested in becoming a founding member of a nonprofit in Zambia focused on education and empowerment for those living in extreme poverty. This work taught her invaluable lessons about effective community development and cross-cultural partnership.

Closer to home, Charisa founded a local chapter of The Forgotten Initiative, mobilizing churches to bring joy and purpose to children, families, and workers in the foster care system. This experience deepened her understanding of how to build supportive communities around vulnerable children. This knowledge would later inform Hawassa Hope's holistic approach to child welfare in Ethiopia.

The most transformative chapter in Charisa's story began in 2011, when she and her husband Greg adopted their youngest son from Ethiopia. This personal connection to Ethiopia's children in the Sidama region sparked an unwavering commitment to the country and its people. After several years of working under another nonprofit umbrella, Charisa and Greg founded Hawassa Hope in 2016, creating an organization that now serves 17 communities throughout the Sidama region.

Under Charisa's visionary leadership, Hawassa Hope has flourished into a multifaceted organization that has completed over 20 clean water projects, supports 400+ children through education sponsorships, provided maternal care to more than 875+ pregnant women through the Elsabet Initiative, and developed numerous other programs addressing healthcare, economic empowerment, and child welfare.

As a mother of five children, including two adopted from Ethiopia, Charisa brings both professional expertise and personal understanding to her work. From her home in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, she leads Hawassa Hope with remarkable dedication, balancing family life with her passion for creating lasting change in Ethiopia.



being hope to vulnerable children and families in Ethiopia

www.hawassahope.org