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feminine hygiene products to young girls. The "Be A Girl" project takes in washable, reusable menstrual supplies for the women and the girls.

"Just consider for a moment, you're a woman, you live in rural Ethiopia," Rogers said. "There's absolutely nothing available to you, so you're potentially using leaves or possibly dirty rags. Many of these women had absolutely nothing."

The program provides classes on health and hygiene and personal safety.

"What it does is it enables these girls to stay in school," Rogers said. "Many of them were missing school because of health issues and shame issues. It's part of restoring dignity for them. It's part filling them with hope. It's a part of them seeing more possibilities for what life can be like."

Rogers and Morrill said that the natural process of a woman's period carries a major stigma in the Ethiopian culture.

"In Ethiopia, the girls on average drop out of school in sixth grade while boys continue to eighth grade," Morrill said. "A big part of that is when the girls start puberty, they have no way of dealing with that," Morrill said. "They can't miss a week of school every month and continue to stay in school and so, they drop out."

Ethiopia is predominately Eastern Orthodox Christian, though has pockets of Muslims and other religions, Rogers said. One Children's Hope Chest facility, though, serves a mostly Muslim community.

"They couldn't afford to put their kids in school," Rogers said. "So these fami-

lies know this is a safe place where their kids can come, they can be in school, there's access to clean water, there's access to supplemental food, so there's a lot of positive things for them."

She explained that the schools require families to provide school uniforms and supplies as a requirement for being in school. That's why Children's Hope Chest finds sponsors for the students to help pay the costs of supplies which the families cannot afford.

Morrill and Rogers both said they have experienced untold blessings through their efforts.

"The contrast between poverty and that they still have a lot of faith and joy in the midst of conditions that are almost unimaginable," Morrill said. "Even though they've got all these challenges and all of these hardships, there's still an incredible level of faith and hope and joy."

"It's a whole different mindset to be with people whose joy isn't the result of their circumstances," Rogers said. "Their circumstances are pretty grim. The areas I've gone to are pretty rural, very remote and extremely poor."

She said a family may own only a can to collect water and may or may not have a bed mat.

"They're probably wearing the only clothes they own and their goal for the day is to be able to feed their children," she said. "When you sit down and talk to them, there's a joy that's coming from the inside out, an internal joy that's not a result of their circumstance. I think that's completely for-

eign in America. They know who they are. They know their creator and they rest in that and there's an intrinsic peace because of that."

The government allows just one child per family to go to school because the need is so great. The reasoning is that having one child educated is better than none, and that person will be better able to help their families.

Morrill said the need for sponsors of students is great. At the Children's Hope Chest care station, 150 students have sponsors while another, 70 do not.

Back in Mill A, their adopted daughters are not entirely aware of how they differ from others, but the fact both families look similar with both black and white children reduces any sense of being different.

Their parents celebrate the Eastern Orthodox Christmas, which occurs in the first week of January, they teach them about their home country, and the families have cultural artifacts from Ethiopia.

They said Mill A residents have welcomed Magdalyn Rogers, 5, and Isabella Morrill, 4, since they arrived there as infants.

"I look at my family and it's just my family," Morrill said. "I forget for a moment because it feels like she's bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh."

"I don't look at my kids and see three white boys and one little black girl - I just see my kids," Rogers said. "We have four kids. Adoption is how she came into our family. It's not her identity. Adoption was a point in time. It's not who she is."