

CLEAN WATER FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES

ROTARIANS PROVIDE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER IN RURAL ETHIOPIA

It started with a trickle as great rivers often do; as great hopes do, as great plans do; as great movements do; as great changes in lives and communities around the world do.



Yes, Rotary started in Chicago with just a trickle of four men meeting in an office. And it grew into a great river of 1.2 million members that circle the globe making great changes.

Yes, Water to Thrive started in 2008 in Austin, Tx in a church class with a trickle of folks with an idea of putting their faith into action by providing a water well in Ethiopia. In ten years this became 778 water wells with 332,000 beneficiaries.

About 53% of Ethiopian people have no access to clean water. Death rates from water-borne diseases take up to 80% of children before they are five. A cycle of poverty infects all families lacking clean water.

Yes, the Rotary Club of Northwest Austin heard a man

from Water to Thrive and a trickle of interest started with one Rotarian donating funds for a water well. One year later the club provided one water well as a demonstration for a global grant in partnership with the Rotary Club of Addis Ababa -- Central Mella, Ethiopia working along with Water to Thrive.

Yes, this small trickle grew into a global grant providing water from twelve developed hillside springs in rural Ethiopia west of Addis Ababa that gives clean, parasite-free drinking water, washing water and livestock water to 688 households with 6,442 adults and children.

Yes, this trickle became a river formed by the two original clubs, and one from Evansville, IN, two from Waverly and Pella, IA, two from Denton, TX, eight from central Texas in District 5870. And of course, this trickle soon swelled with the power of Rotarians all over the world who funded the project with their gifts to the Rotary Foundation--twelve wells for \$60,000 from world-wide gifts.



Before construction begins, each community around the site must be organized enough to form a Water Committee.



At least seven persons (three of whom must be women), must successfully open a bank account in a nearby town with a deposit of 1000 Ethiopia birr (about \$35) collected from every participating household. This is typically about a three to five cents per month payment. This trickle of birr will continue to become the funds used to maintain the water site for its ten to twenty-year life.

Once construction of the spring site or water well has begun, the Rotarians and local agencies providing leadership and workers, engage in training the community members in the WASH program: Water and Sanitation, Hygiene. This program teaches how to use clean water, good hygiene and sanitary practices. It is taught to all community members and children in the ensuing months of organization and instruction. They also teach the Water Committee how to repair and sustain the three parts of the

spring water system or water well. This team training involves cleaning the water holding tank, the spring cap, and all the pipes and faucets. In the case of a water well, it involves maintenance of the well and casing, and repairing the pump.

When a trickle of spring water is found, its outflow is measured to assure enough flow for the community. The spring is capped and plumbed to take water downhill to a reservoir tank where faucets



dispense water into the typical five gallon “jerry can” that is carried home on a girl’s or woman’s back—a 42 pound cargo. Filling and carrying the cans is a job for girls or women. It is also often a social occasion at the spring line-up to fill containers.

The overflow of water into the reservoir is often used by piping it downhill to a laundry wash table where the women can launder their clothes—almost always an improvement over using dirty water at the edge of a river or pond.

Information on this project is available at
Kent.kcm@gmail.com



Typically, the overflow is also piped to a cement cattle trough since by capping the natural spring, the cattle need a new source of water. The trickle now becomes a source of fresh clean, parasite-free water for the cattle.



When children and families finally access a nearby clean water source in fifteen minutes instead of an hour or two hours round trip, their excitement is a joyful cause for celebration.



There is pure elation when children can turn on a faucet and take the clean water in their hands and drink it and wash their hair and face knowing that it is okay. Laughter and singing can be heard so literally “the hills are alive with the sound of music.”



Thirty-five year old Shito Mulgeta, mother of seven children describe the change in lives to have clean water.

Before the construction of this water scheme my girls and I were fetching water from unprotected water pond. Cattle and horses drink from the same source and also defecate around. Moreover during rainy season the source will be more polluted by surface runoff and turned the color to brown. The water borne diseases such as typhoid, Jardia and diaharia were common and we spent 300-500 ETB per child when one of them infected. Now thanks to God we saved our time energy and money in addition to our health.

Yes, huge changes in lives around world often result from a mighty flow starting with a trickle. That is Rotary in motion.

