



thirst relief news

saving lives, changing the world

Water and Health: Inextricably Linked

Nowhere is the link between water and health currently more visible than in Zimbabwe, where a cholera outbreak rolls on since its beginning last August. Already this diarrheal disease has infected more than 60,000 people and claimed more than 3,000 lives.

Any time people are forced to drink from an unprotected water source such as a stream, pond, or open well, they are vulnerable to outbreaks of disease. Waste from animals or upstream users and runoff from latrines pollute the water, which is then used for drinking, washing, and cooking. When these conditions are accompanied by annual flooding, crowded conditions, or a breakdown in public health services, such as in Zimbabwe, things quickly go from bad to worse.

Yet water-related disease and death can be prevented. All it takes is providing safe water and improving hygiene and sanitation conditions. The World Health Organization estimates the combined

health impact of safe water, improved sanitation, and hygiene as follows:

- Safe water: Reduces cases of diarrhea between 6 and 25 percent.
- Sanitation: Reduces cases of diarrhea by 32 percent.
- Hygiene education and promotion of hand washing: Reduces cases of diarrhea by up to 45 percent.

Improved health is one of the primary benefits of improved access to safe water. Consider the ways safe water is impacting the health of communities where Thirst Relief and its partners work every day:

- Children miss less school due to illness.
- Adults are better able to work and earn income for their families.
- Families no longer spend their income buying medicine for water-related illnesses.
- Children under five have a much greater chance of surviving to adulthood.

The following statement from a man named Denis in Nkuv, Cameroon, who acquired a biosand filter last year sums up the powerful connection between safe water and health:



A young boy in Mboh Nso, Cameroon, collects water from the river.

"I believe this is going to be a great change in the lives of everyone in my family. I am a father of 8 children and we all depend on the stream water, not treated and we have been having health problems, which most of it is related to water contamination. But with this filter, I believe that it will be a thing of the past in our lives now."

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Unlocking Access to Safe Water in Southern India

Since 2007 Thirst Relief has partnered with Serve the Women and Poor (SWAP) Trust to provide safe drinking water to those in need in the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. As its name indicates, SWAP Trust focuses on those who are most vulnerable and most in need of basic resources such as safe water.

Enthalpatty Village is a community of Dalits, people who under India's caste system are called "untouchables." Although the caste system was officially abolished in 1950, Dalits are still considered the lowest class in Hindu society. Historically, Dalits, which compose 16 percent of India's population, have been forced to perform tasks such as scavenging, disposing of human and animal waste, and handling dead bodies. They face an uphill battle against ostracism and maltreatment.

While the people of Enthalpatty have found employment as daily wage workers in brick kilns, until recently, they were denied access to safe water by their fellow people. Once a week a government truck would come and fill a water tank located near their village. However, Enthalpatty's neighbors refused to let the people of Enthalpatty collect water from the tank unless a surplus was available. Week after week, Enthalpatty's residents were turned away from the tank and forced to use water from contaminated open wells. As a result, diarrhea and other illnesses were commonplace.

Then, in January of this year, Thirst Relief and SWAP Trust came alongside the people of Enthalpatty to help. With input from the community, technicians located and drilled a well to serve Enthalpatty's 300 people. The village leader and several other men

also learned how to maintain their new well and perform minor repairs. As clean water began flowing from Enthalpatty's new well, village women came to draw water. Their faces were wreathed in smiles.

At the close of the project, Enthalpatty's leader shared, "For long period, we were not allowed to fetch the water from the Government water tank by the other community, and now our people and children are having freedom for water. We adore the dear people who helped us through [Thirst Relief]. Our future generations too owe to this noble work."

Together SWAP Trust and Thirst Relief have completed more than thirty drilled wells serving thousands of Dalits and other Indians who, without your support, would still be without access to safe water.

HEALTH SPOTLIGHT: *India by the numbers*

Population: 1.1 billion
Rural access to safe water: 83 percent
Rural access to improved sanitation: 22 percent
Most common water-related diseases: bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A and E, typhoid fever
Life expectancy: 69
Diarrheal disease prevalence in children under five: 19 percent
Children with diarrhea who receive oral rehydration and continued feeding: 32 percent
Children who die before reaching age five: 7.6 percent

Statistics courtesy of The Little Green Data Book 2008, UNICEF, and the CIA's World Factbook.



Letter From the Founder

Thirst Relief financial partners Bob and Dawn Davis are not just passionate about seeing the world water crisis defeated, they are also passionate about seeing orphaned children cared for in a loving environment. Recently Dawn wrote to me with the following story:

"I just got word today that a home that our adoption agency built in Romania may have to be sold. God knows where the children will go. The owner of our adoption agency is the most amazing woman on earth and had done more in the adoption world than I could ever dream of doing. She built several homes in other countries. During a trip to India about [a year and a half] ago, she was given a bottle of water and she didn't hear the crack of the seal but she drank it anyway. She knew she shouldn't have; she didn't make a good decision. She is fighting for her life to this day. In and out of the hospital. She had to let go of our adoption agency, merge it with another one. She has lost so much."

This sad but true story painfully illustrates how so many dreams, visions, goals and good can be lost simply because of the sickness and disease caused by contaminated drinking water. On the other hand, how many dreams and callings will be fulfilled simply because we gave what we could in the form of clean drinking water?

What does it mean to bring health in the form of safe water? A cup of cool, clean water is life itself, the promise of a healthier future. And with that life come a purpose, a plan, and good that may affect the lives of thousands more! Thank you for partnering with us in saving lives and changing the world.

Warmly,

Jim Hicks
Founder and President



Enthalpatty Village well dedication

Connections

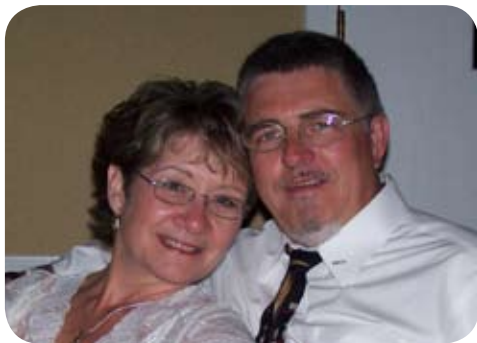
Stories of people who are connecting their time and talents with Thirst Relief's mission.

Newly retired couple plugs into service with Thirst Relief

Rick and Chris Provard have recently joined the Thirst Relief team as volunteers dedicated to furthering our project work throughout the world. Rick is a retired engineer and pastor, while Chris is a registered nurse. We are overjoyed to receive their help in encouraging and equipping our partners in eight countries. We asked them to introduce themselves by answering a few questions.

1. How did you learn about Thirst Relief?

Rick first learned about Thirst Relief when he was on a mission trip with his church in Brazil in 2007. Chris learned about Thirst Relief when Rick and she were dating and he kept telling her about this organization and the call he felt to work with them somehow.



2. What will you be doing with Thirst Relief as a couple?

We will be developing programs for auditing existing partnerships as well as developing curriculum for Health and Hygiene. We hope to use our talents and abilities to support the organization and create areas for more couples in this phase of their lives to do something that has great value.

3. Where have the two of you traveled in the past?

Both of us have traveled quite a bit. Rick has gone on numerous mission trips to Brazil in the last years. He also has traveled for business to Europe. Chris has gone to India and Honduras for mission trips as well as a few trips to Europe. Last year after we married, we went to Italy for a ceremony to honor Chris's daughter who died in the Cinque Terra while vacationing with her husband in September 2007.

4. What are you most looking forward to this year?

We both are excited to see what God will be doing in developing this new adventure. We are hoping to get more training to assist us in these new roles. Both of us are excited to be going on our first trip in June to Cameroon, Africa.

5. Any advice for others approaching early retirement?

We feel like the best is yet to come. We made serious plans to simplify our lives to be able to move fully into this new adventure. We hope to see many other couples who join in on this adventure supporting this wonderful mission. We already find ourselves challenging others at our age to consider how to be available to help out in this organization and support the mission of Thirst Relief.

Focus on Giving

By Carol Nowlin
Director of Development

Knowing that so many people are struggling financially makes me even more grateful for our Thirst Relief supporters. Many of the gifts we received last year came from individuals and small business owners who dug deep to support those without safe water. Thanks to them, we ended 2008 on a positive note. Consider these numbers:

- \$246,244: total income
- 31 percent: growth over previous year
- 62,000: approximate people served with safe water
- \$4: average cost per person

Already in 2009, our supporters continue to surprise me with their creativity and commitment. Students are organizing concerts, joining Thirst's Facebook page, and giving up non-water beverages to save money for safe water. Groups of friends are committing together to sponsor a new water source each month. And at the third annual Thirst Relief Mentor Auction this past January, photography industry professionals came together to raise an amazing \$25,392 for safe water! The proceeds from this year's auction will benefit approximately 6,500 people.

We all deserve access to safe, clean water. And even during bleak economic times, we can continue making progress toward this goal. Through creative means like social networking, the donation of time or talent, or just giving a small amount monthly, we can save lives and help change the world together.

If you haven't done so already, I encourage you to stop by Thirst Relief's new website (www.thirstrelief.org) and sign up to become a monthly donor. A monthly gift of just 25 dollars will multiply over a year's time to serve up to 300 people with safe water! That's a worthwhile investment, even in the most uncertain of times.

CAUSE MARKETING

New in 2009, Thirst Relief has launched its business cause marketing program. Business owners and corporations interested in supporting the cause of safe water now have a way to broaden their audience and contribute to the greater good. The program offers tiered levels of involvement; depending on the level of commitment, Thirst Relief will offer exposure on Thirst Relief's website and through its other publications, equip participating businesses to promote the partnership to their constituents, and provide opportunities for employee involvement. To learn more about this program, please contact Brent Westermeyer at brentwestermeyer@thirstrelief.org.





Thirst Relief International
P.O. Box 436
Lewis Center, Ohio
43035-0436
info@thirstrelief.org

1-866-5THIRST
614-899-7909

www.thirstrelief.org

Get Involved: Global Fast for Thirst Relief

March 22nd, World Water Day: “Shared Water – Shared Opportunities”

Each year on March 22nd, people around the globe commemorate World Water Day. It is a time to learn about the world’s water crisis and work toward improving access to safe water for everyone. In 2009 the theme for World Water Day is “Shared Water - Shared Opportunities.”

In observance of World Water Day 2009, Thirst Relief is calling for a “Global Fast for Thirst Relief.” During the week of March 15-22nd, give up one or more meals and share in the experience of going without, as much of the world does daily. Then use the money you would have spent on food to provide safe water for someone in need. Because of Thirst Relief’s effective and proven partnership model, we are able to provide a long-term source of safe water to an individual for only \$5. Where else can \$5 save a life? So go hungry with us, recruit others to join in on this shared experience, and together, we can save lives and change the world.

How to Donate

1. Donate by Check:

Thirst Relief International
P.O. Box 436
Lewis Center, OH
43035-0436

2. Donate Online:

www.thirstrelief.org



Mission

Our mission is to overcome death and disease resulting from the consumption of contaminated water by providing safe, sustainable clean drinking water to those in need around the world.

