

WATERLINES

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June, 2017

Dear Friends of Waterlines,

Waterlines began its first drinking-water project more than 30 years ago (in Mexico). As I begin this year's letter, I'm overwhelmed with gratitude for volunteers, donors, and in-country facilitators who've been with Waterlines from the beginning—not to mention an extraordinarily dedicated board of directors, who, it's fair to say, are not overpaid.

Water nonprofits (Waterlines included) tend to inadequately communicate to donors the expressions of gratitude from communities and schools where water is now flowing. At the office we regularly read reports noting how improved access to water and sanitation has enhanced life in a specific village or reduced disease at a school; too often we only file it away. Here are some voices, for example, from communities which have benefited in the past year from Waterlines' projects in Kenya:

"This water tank is empowerment for girls" . . . "The school has been transformed" . . . "Waterlines has helped an entire village of 400 families; you protected, now we will do our part" . . . "This is what we really needed; everything is possible through faith. . . "We give thanks for all things; God has started this work in you" . . . "Water should be a right but here it is a privilege" . . . "The toilets are not a nightmare—only the boys' (which await improvement)."

In the words of Shimeta Ezezew, who's overseen spring-protection projects in Ethiopia this past decade: *"Waterlines has been doing great work in life-saving projects, especially in supplying clean drinking water to thousands of poor rural communities who are unable to be reached by the government and by other NGOs. Let Waterlines flourish!"*

The face of the child to the left expresses his reaction to having water flowing for the first time to his Panamanian village.

Last year Waterlines provided technical expertise and funding--with communities sharing in the cost and labor--for 43 new water projects, mainly in Kenya, Ethiopia and Panama. Of that total, full WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) programs were implemented at 10 Kenyan schools overseen by Tenwek Community Health and Development.

Volunteers (including Mark and Diane Reimers, Scott McKittrick, Paul Kennedy, Fr. Robert Cumberland, Leo Redmond, Tom Redding, Tim Wellman, John Vavruska, Migs Muldrow) and in-country facilitators (Richard Kayla, David Kurgat in Kenya, Nicholas Arcia and Esteben Mendoza in Panama) checked on the functioning of 63 previously-completed water systems.

Waterlines received \$168,987 in contributions last year and spent \$174,829 for projects in 2016. Waterlines started 2017 with \$83,502 in its bank account. As always, a copy of the Waterlines IRS 990 for the most recent tax year (2016) can be forwarded to anyone interested.

Thank you.

David Douglas



Panama Update: For two decades Waterlines has worked with rural indigenous communities to build spring-fed gravity-flow water systems in the provinces of Chiriqui and Bocas del Toro. Now numbering 116, many have been overseen by Nicholas Arcia, whose expertise is known across the Ngabe-Bugle Comarca. Eleven new water systems were completed this past year.

Waterlines' work with communities hosting Peace Corps Volunteers in Panama has grown extensively, managed by board member Tim Wellman, former Associate Peace Corps Director for Panama. Tim provides advice to PCVs in water committee development, water-system design, construction, renovation and post-construction work. Over the years, Tim has designed a planning tool for water systems that could be utilized by PCVs working in WASH anywhere in the world.

In January, Father Robert Cumberland (who has visited Panamanian communities each year for 25 years, see photo to the right), Leo Redmond and Tom Redding checked on the functioning of water systems in 19 communities. Most were functioning well or needing only minor improvements. Some villages were remote. *"Even when we walked ten miles just to visit a village of 30 people,"* Tom Redding writes, *"our brief presence there assured them that we care about the continued success of their water system."* Tom notes a dilemma facing many villages and water non-profits alike: *"As the population grows, several communities are finding that the water systems built a few years ago no longer fulfill their needs. The question arises how to rank the priority of an extension vs. a new project elsewhere, considering cost and number of people who benefit."*



Ethiopia Update: Waterlines has helped build 65 spring-protection projects among Oromo and Amhara rural communities since 2003. While political unrest last year caused suspension of water work in Wollega province, Shimeta Ezezew, head of Afro Ethiopia Integrated Development, continues with his program, completing the Hawei WASH Project this year and dedicating it to the late Bill Muldrow, emeritus board member of Waterlines, *"who was one of the great men in the world blessed with the most kind heart, to remember him forever."*

Shimeta writes: *"Before the projects, the people fetched drinking water from unsafe spring water ponds, rivers that dried at dry seasons, shared with their cattle. Cattle and women would fall due to mudslides, and frequent injuries to people and animals were reported. People had very poor sanitation. People were losing much money for treating water-borne diseases. After the projects the communities easily access potable water in their villages. They have a new life. Before this project the people were dirty. Now their eyes are free from trachoma. Every household has built their own pit latrines. No one defecates in the field or by hiding behind small bushes. In addition to the direct beneficiaries, indirect beneficiaries have also had access to clean drinking water. Churches, development centers and satellite elementary schools are project sites which are using clean water."*

Bill's daughter, Dr. Migs Muldrow of Denver, founded the non-profit Village Health Partnership to improve medical care in rural Ethiopia for pregnant women and those suffering debilitating complications of childbirth. Migs travels to Ethiopia each year and for Waterlines recently completed assessments of the often harrowing lack of WASH in 13 different health-care facilities (later writing about her experience for Time.com).



Kenya Update: Waterlines completed 21 new rainwater-harvesting systems at public schools in Bomet, Kericho and Nandi Counties last year. Waterlines' Kenya program, now in its twentieth year, is overseen by Mark and Diane Reimers, Betty Kersting, Judy Crawford, and in-country facilitators Richard Kayla and David Kurgat. Earlier this year the Reimers made site-visits to 30 schools, clinics and spring protections, to check on the functioning of new and old systems. Most continue to function well. Where small repairs or upgrades are needed, Waterlines shares the cost (up to \$250 per school) with the local school community.

A decade ago, Waterlines began an advanced WASH (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) program with Tenwek Hospital's Community Health and Development.

Complete WASH programs

have so far been implemented in 71 Kenyan schools (ten new ones this past year), often with funding help from H2O for Life's school-to-school matching program. Each project involves a rainwater-harvesting tank with gutters (photo at left, above) and at least one multi-toilet latrine block (photo, right). The hygiene education program includes Child-to-Child training, hand washing, latrine-cleaning training, menstrual hygiene education and a student health club. The Kenyan Government, at national and county levels, promises to increase investments in water, sanitation and a standard curriculum for hygiene education in schools.



Late last year, Scott McKittrick and Paul Kennedy (Souder Miller senior hydrologist and senior civil engineer respectively) made site visits to Bomet County, checking on programs at schools, dispensaries and potential projects at currently unprotected springs. Their visit, planned by Tenwek Health and Community Development and Mark Reimers, expanded the range of projects visited yearly (beyond those evaluated by the Reimers). Their visit also reinforced the long-standing relationship between Waterlines and Souder Miller's professionals who volunteer their time.



Nepal Update: Waterlines has supported several small-scale water and sanitation projects overseen by John Vavruska, board member, engineer and former Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal. John and others this past spring performed repair and maintenance on the existing water system in Chupar, Nuwakot district, where they had built an earthquake-resistant school last year. (Left photo shows children at Chupar school's new tap stand that enables even the smallest child to reach the tap.)

In the Solukhumbu district, John and others carried out a feasibility study for a new gravity-flow water system in the village of Kerung, finding an excellent spring source. Design work and cost estimates are being worked on for a project that would benefit 420 people.

Speaking of political unrest, please keep an eye on the Trump Administration's proposal to starve poverty-focused U.S. foreign aid, despite its humanitarian, economic and national security benefit. Waterlines does not receive any federal money. But we've seen how foreign aid has benefited efforts to improve global health and agriculture, not to mention clean water. As some of you remember, Waterlines' supporting organization Water Advocates helped increase Congressional funding for water and sanitation access internationally. Millions of people have benefited from USAID's technical expertise and investments. Those quantifiable, bipartisan, gains will not be lost if members of Congress understand what the new Administration does not—that US poverty-focused foreign aid saves lives, reduces disease, and quite directly protects America, all at one-half of 1% of the federal budget.

And a note on Waterlines' future after 2020:

Looking ahead, we want to bring friends of Waterlines up to date on where it will be heading in a few years. Waterlines plans to sunset on December 31, 2019. By then it will have been in existence for 35 years. It will have completed water projects in over 1,000 rural communities, influenced the sustainability of many organizations' water work, and

demonstrated unequivocally what a dedicated group of volunteers can accomplish.

What does 'sunset' mean? Waterlines will take no new projects after 2019. Waterlines will continue with a normal pace for 2017, lower the number of new projects in 2018, and concentrate just on checking on the functioning of past projects in 2019.

Why sunset in the first place? There are certain advantages to having a clear finish line and what some would call an exit strategy, particularly after 35 years. It encourages communities and governmental officials in the field to take even more responsibility. It conveys to facilitators in developing countries how

much longer they will continue to work. We have almost three years to land the plane so that, as Waterlines board member Pete Fant points out, "people can take connecting flights."

Will volunteers who want to continue to check on functioning of past projects after 2020 still be able to? Yes. Waterlines will leave adequate funding with another nonprofit—Water Engineers for the Americas (WEFTA)—for up to five more years of site visits.

We benefit from having WEFTA in Santa Fe with a comparable operating philosophy. As many of you know, WEFTA has a similar volunteer model to Waterlines but engages in more complex WASH projects. Headed by long-time Waterlines board members Pete Fant and Lou Harrington—with a tradition of employees from Souder Miller (the engineering firm headed by Pete) visiting Waterlines-related projects—WEFTA will maintain a fund for former Waterlines volunteers who want to continue to check on past projects.

This transition is still a way off. But we are grateful for everyone's continued support as we head toward the sunset date. Gracias,

David

Board Members: Judy Crawford, Father Robert Cumberland, David Douglas, Deborah Douglas, Peter Fant, Lou Harrington, Betty Kersting, Diane Reimers, Mark Reimers, John Vavruska, Tim Wellman (Bill Muldrow, Emeritus, 1926-2016)



