

Bringing Clean Water to Eastern Kenya: ...Making a Difference By Carl Burkybile

Eighty per cent of Kenya's 40 million people do not have access to clean water. Over the last year Healing Hands International and sister organization Caring for Kenya have repaired three deep wells bringing clean water to 15,000 people. Prior to the repair of the diesel powered generator at Kiamani, Esther Wanjiku Nzeva walked 3 kilometers to get sand pit water from a dried up riverbed for her family. Going to Kiamani takes a few minutes while going to the river takes 8 hours to make two trips with a borrowed donkey getting eight 20 liter jaricans of water/day. She said, "The sand pit river water smells like donkey urine. In July our team



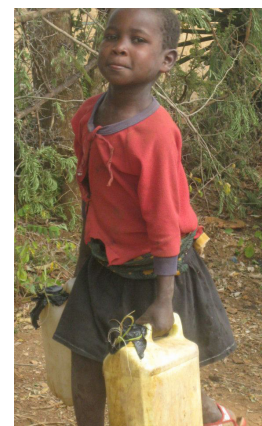
Esther

gave her a \$50 water filter that will remove the bacteria and parasites from the water for times that she needs to use the river water. Beth Mutia said that when the Kiamani well was not working she also got water from the sand pit in the riverbed. She said, "The water was dirty and there were dead animals lying in the riverbed." Her husband died last year and she reported that her 5 children got dysentery and worms from the river water. She was thankful to get the water filter we gave her.



Beth

The Kangii wind powered well that we converted to electric power had been out of service for 18 months. When the well wasn't working, six year old Mary Katuta walked with her mother to a hand dug well one mile away to get contaminated water. Because Mary is small she can only carry two five liter containers (20 pounds) and made two trips a day to get water. She has five brothers. Her mother, Violet, received a water filter and will get help developing five raised planting beds to produce vegetables to feed her family. Mary got a new pillow case dress, pencils for school, and a stuffed animal. Mary's oldest brother Steven is repeating the 8th grade, not because he failed, but because he does not have a birth certificate. During this year the family is working to obtain a birth certificate so Steven can go to secondary school. An American family has agreed to sponsor his education.



Mary

When our team arrived, the Mwangya diesel powered well had been shut down for 3 months. Rose Nzambi told the team she had been walking with a borrowed donkey to get water at the sand pit in the riverbed. She reported that her two trips/day take her a total of four hours. She said, "The river water gives my eight children typhoid and worms." Caring for Kenya Coordinator Erastus Kavuti, known in the community as "Mr. Water", said, "Rose has been crying to me on behalf of herself and the community to get the well fixed." Rose got a water filter and a new pair of eye glasses. She walked home during the



Rose

Bringing Clean Water...

repair of the well to get us a gift, a hand made basket. Also at the well site 91 year old World War II veteran, Nganaka Kathuku, came to watch and hope that the well would be repaired. He sold the community the land where the well is located. When we thanked him for his service to freedom, he said, "May God keep you safe to do good for people." Initially the team thought the problem was a hole in the well piping allowing the water to drain back into the well instead of being pumped into the storage tank. Through investigation, we discovered the problem was five rocks in the check valve and low rpm's



Nganaka

of the diesel powered generator. A team member trained as a diesel mechanic, was able to make necessary adjustments increasing the electrical output of the generator. By the time the repairs were complete, 75 happy people had gathered to get clean water.



The need still exists for more wells and more kiosks. Eight year old Mwende Mutua Mengi, one of five children, gets water for her family by filling five liter containers from the sand pit near her primary school. Her new water source will be

one of the three wells we have drilled and are working to get into operation. During last month's trip, Davis & Shirliff Co. installed the electric pumps and piping into the well casings. Now we are working with the power company to complete the electrical hook up. Local community members are digging the trenches and laying the pipe to connect the wells to water tanks and six kiosks. The first day of trenching 70 people showed up to help. This \$116,000 project funded by Healing Hands, Caring for Kenya, U.S. Rotary Clubs, and Rotary International will bring clean water to another 15,000 people. In addition to the community, a primary and secondary school will benefit from the new wells. When the project is completed, the plaques at the kiosks will say, "First the water... then the living water". We meet physical needs and thereby create opportunities to meet spiritual needs! Your donations help us impact the lives of thousands of people.



Mwende