



Changing Lives with Water

By Carl Burkybile

On the recent trip to Kenya Dean Ekberg (hydro-geologist), Justus Mutua (Water Project Coordinator), and Caring for Kenya, Healing Hands International and U.S. Rotary representative Carl Burkybile met the Thika Rotary President Leonard Kasyok at Kiosk #2 to take pictures and discuss the impact of the water well project. Leonard

was extremely complimentary of the on the ground leadership provided by community leaders Erastus Kavuti and Justus Mutua and the quality of the work done.

Leonard said, “The Thika Rotary Club is currently partnering with four Rotary global grants and this water project is our best project.” Thika Rotary has agreed to partner with us on another three well global grant water project for the other eastern Kenya communities of Nzawa,



Masaani, and Kithumula. He indicated that Peter, the Rotary International On-site Investigator, gave four reasons why he was impressed with the current project. He said, “This project is benefiting a large number of people; the plan was well thought out including the spacing and location of the boreholes, water tanks, and kiosk distribution points; the project is fulfilling a great need for water after people have suffered for many years; and the record keeping and project accounting have been very well done.”

Leonard noted that Rotary International was so impressed that two weeks after the on-site visit all the remaining project funds were released to finish the project.



Five of the six kiosks on the current project were delivering water when our team arrived.

Elizabeth, kiosk #2 operator, said she earns \$34 per month and is permitted to operate a little retail shop at the kiosk. She said, “The community and I are very thankful for the new clean water.”



After paying the kiosk operators and the electric bill, the first three months of operation has netted \$1,150 in the maintenance and repair account. During the visit to the kiosk our team saw people carrying water on their back, on their donkey, on their bicycle, on their motorcycle, and in

wheelbarrows. While getting water Dixon said, “The project has changed our lives. It has saved us lots of time with shorter walks for water. The children don’t have to get up early to look for water. Many gardens have been planted and health of both people and animals has improved.” Ten year old Rogues said, “I walk 600 feet instead of one



and a half miles getting clean water instead of dirty salty water.” Rogues carries his water on his bicycle. During the trip the well repair team came to pull and replace the pipe at the 2005

Mwangya borehole. The repairs were funded by the local water committee and Caring for Kenya. The repair team found a large hole in the pipe near the pump that caused the problem. By the end of the day the new piping and the water pump had been re-installed. Women and children lined up to fill their jericans with clean water.

The Christian Oil Well Drillers Fellowship funded the purchase of two diesel powered generators for borehole 2 and 3. We had waited for a year for Kenya Power to bring electricity to the wells. When Kenya Power hooks up the electricity, the diesel generators will be moved to new well sites where there is no access to electricity. With the help of 10 men the



generators were unloaded and put in the power houses. The men in the community set 10,000 liter water tanks on tank stands at kiosk #5 and #6 and dug the trench for the last of the piping and for the electric lines. Davis and Shirtliff made the power connections from the generators to the well pumps. The team was able to see the first water pumped from borehole #3.

Augustus Ngei, President of the community water committee, spoke about the impact of the water project. He said, “The project is making a great difference. Before the project was working we had problems at a kiosk at the edge of the community. Because the water available would be gone in two hours, people would arrive as early at 3:00 am. Sometimes fights would break out over a person’s place in the line.



This water project is changing lives and also the development of the area. There is less water borne diseases. Because the water is closer to home, many people carry jericans of water in a wheelbarrow instead of using a donkey.” The team saw a young boy pushing his wheelbarrow with jericans of water up the hill while another boy pulled from the front with a rope. When you see firsthand the impact that a supply of clean water close to home makes, you understand the phrase “Give water, give hope, give life”. It really is true!

