



water to thrive
BUILD WELLS CHANGE LIVES
PROGRESS REPORT 2017

Stewardship. Accountability. Transparency. Integrity. Impact. Compassion. These are the values of Water to Thrive. Just about 10 years ago, compassion moved a small Bible study group to raise funds to provide water for rural villages in Africa. The impact of that act on the lives of nearly 450,000 individuals proves the case for the mission of Water to Thrive.

Our mission includes the phrase “transforms lives.” When I consider this transformation, I envision someone whose life is completely changed for the better. It may be difficult to understand life in rural Africa or what a personal transformation might look like for someone there, but a source of clean, safe water in a village is truly life-changing for everyone.

Where there is clean water, there is better health and decreased mortality rates. Where there is clean water, there is an impact on education. Young girls who share the burden of collecting water for the household have more time to go to school. They score higher on standardized tests and have greater opportunities for higher education and escaping the cycle of poverty. Where there is clean water, there is economic development. When a community’s basic needs are met, people have time to participate in income-generating activities. They can help their families and their communities thrive. Where there is clean water, domestic violence decreases. The fear of being abducted and raped on the way to the water source is reduced when the water source is located within the village.

The impact of the number of wells and the number of people who have clean water is measurable, but the byproducts may be harder to quantify. It comes down to this. Where there is clean water, there is increased human dignity and hope for the future.

The coming year marks Water to Thrive’s 10th anniversary, and to celebrate, we have an ambitious goal of reaching the mark of one thousand wells funded. The foundation of our work is two-fold. First, the accountability of our 100 Percent Promise that all donations for water projects go entirely to fund water projects. Second, the stewardship of our new Drop by Drop Fund, a five-year pledge effort to cement our financial stability so our infrastructure and staff can sustain our growth in water development.

Donors are more conscientious and mindful of their giving than ever, and at Water to Thrive, trust and transparency go hand-in-hand. Water project donors receive reports, photos, and GPS coordinates of their well project, along with photos of the plaque installed on their well. We produce this progress report each year to tell stories of our work and to communicate the numbers and locations of projects and to report our revenue and spending. Each year, we have been able to put a remarkable percentage of our income into our work on the ground in Africa. The Drop by Drop Campaign ensures that we will be able to continue to do so, and to make the 100 Percent Promise, all with accountability to our supporters and to the communities we serve.

We could only have achieved what we have in the past 10 years with our dedicated supporters, and as we enter our next decade, we can only sustain that success with your ongoing help. It is with the highest level of integrity that we work hand-in-hand with community members, our partners, and our donors in connecting the people in need with the people who have a heart to make the world a better place.

Susanne M. Wilson

Susanne M. Wilson, Executive Director



There are 100 households in the village of Chare Dike, in Ethiopia’s rural Bona District, and when thinking about their water needs each day, village members have to make a decision. Do they want to stay close to home and collect drinking water from an unsafe, local river, or do they want women and children to make a three-hour walk to a protected spring source? The spring would provide safe water, but the walk is anything but safe, and the journey also consumes valuable time that they need for earning a living and attending school.

Summing up the life-changing impact a community water well would have, villager Enare Tumisisa, mother of six, says it best. “Daily we travelled three hours to fetch from the safe water source. Sometimes we are obliged to fetch water three times a day for drinking, cooking, and related domestic services. So our life is miserable. I believe when this water source is completed, our life will be changed and our girls will be safe and delivered from all evil and sorrowful things that happened before. It will save our time and energy to be involved in other income-generation activities, like growing cash crops such as cabbages, and learning properly for girls and boys.”

This year, to honor the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and to celebrate how building wells can change lives, Water to Thrive selected the village of Chare Dike as the beneficiary of a water project campaign. It has been active since September, and when funds are raised and the project is completed, Enare and her village will see her vision come true.

Our work is our promise

Water to Thrive's Ethiopia Project Manager Gashaw Simeneh visited the U.S. for the first time this fall, presenting at an international conference and visiting our Austin offices for the first time. He was the special guest at our Chef's Table Austin fundraiser, and in his remarks to the crowd, he brought the need for clean, safe water to vivid life with this story of an emotional meeting with a village mother.

I've been working in rural water for 15 years and it is my passion. I've witnessed people's lives changing, especially when I see the water situation before there is a source of clean water. The stories are unimaginable. The situation is very serious, especially for the women and young girls. Not only are they forced to carry heavy loads of water for many hours a day, they face attacks from wild animals during the nighttime, and abductions and even rape during the day. Education is difficult for girls also. They are absent frequently because they are responsible for gathering water for the family. Because of low attendance, they have low test scores and aren't admitted into university and are forced to marry illiterate farmers.

I would like to share a story about a special woman we met last fall. Lomi Ware lives in the village of Gogoame in Ethiopia. Until the fall of 2016, the closest source of water was a spring located 45 minutes away. Normally, she would wait in line 20 minutes or more to fill her jerry can and the walk would take her more than two hours round trip as she would strap the 45 lbs of water to her back. Lomi and her husband are farmers and the time she spent fetching water always meant time she couldn't help her husband or take care of her children.

In the fall of 2016, Water to Thrive donors funded a well that now serves almost 1,000 people. Lomi recalled her life before the well was installed. She talked about how her family had suffered from typhoid, typhus, severe diarrhea, and giardia. As she stood before us, very proud and eager to talk to the people from America who brought her village and her family clean water, we weren't prepared to hear her next words. Susanne asked her how many children she had. She said seven, but that only six remain because her two-year-old son died from a water-borne disease. She shared with us her pain and heartache of having lost a child, especially from something that was easily preventable, and we grieved together.



Our promise to Lomi on that day was that we would continue doing the work of providing clean water to villages in rural Africa so that no one else would suffer the pain of losing a child. I am thankful and humbled to be doing God's work - through our hands. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping my country and my people. And in Lomi's words, "God bless you and your people."

*Left: Gashaw on the job in Ethiopia.
Right: Lomi shares a moment of sorrow and consolation.*





New and lasting partnerships

“We don’t just build wells and walk away,” quotes Kent Miller, longtime member of the Rotary Club of Northwest Austin and committed supporter of Water to Thrive. Water to Thrive and Rotary have entered into a partnership to build water projects in Ethiopia, starting with a dozen wells, and Mr. Miller writes here for us how that partnership benefits everyone involved.

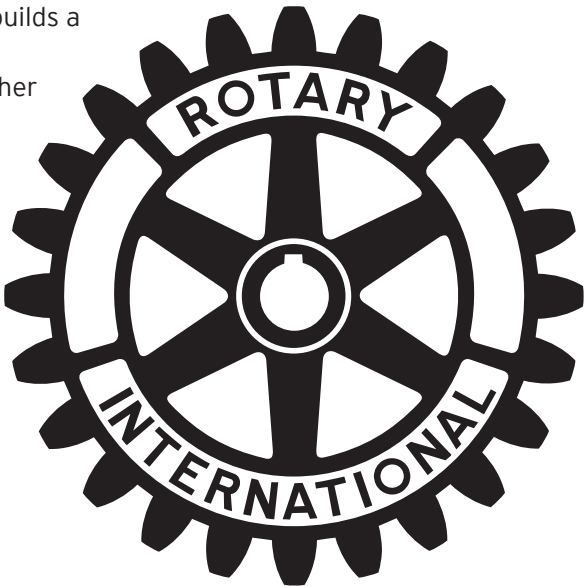
Matching similar organizational goals with money and expertise can be a powerful combination. Water to Thrive and The Rotary Foundation are two great organizations with similar vision and goals which joined together this year to provide clean, accessible water to rural villages in Ethiopia.

“Providing Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene” is one of the six major focus areas of The Rotary Foundation. Rotary says, “Clean water and sanitation is a human right. When people, especially children, have access to clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, they lead healthier and more successful lives. We don’t just build wells and walk away.” This vision of health and sustainability matches what Water to Thrive has been doing every year since 2008 as it improves lives of villagers, helping to organize their communities more effectively by providing clean water to reduce disease, improve the length and quality of life for children, and offer hope to every family.

This year the Rotary Club of Northwest Austin was inspired by the presentation and vision of Water to Thrive to connect and put our collective vision to work. We arranged a partnership with the Rotary Club of Central Mella in Ethiopia, and together worked with The Rotary Foundation and Water to Thrive to fashion a pilot project to provide 12 water sites, the W.A.S.H. training, and all the community organizing needed to make this a long-term, sustainable project.

The combination of Rotary involvement with fundraising and personal engagement of the host club and the experience and infrastructure of Water to Thrive builds a strong structure that can be replicated many times over to change thousands of lives. Hundreds of Rotarians in many clubs in Texas and other states have become aware of the terrible cycle of disease and poverty caused by lack of clean water. Hundreds of Rotary members in 14 clubs have been moved to donate club funds and personal gifts to make a difference. And Rotarians in Ethiopia have a reason to get out of their cities and engage with rural families, hear their stories, share their struggles, and be moved to action to provide clean water and build their nation – community by community, well by well, cup by cup of clean water.

The pump is primed, water is flowing. It’s a great combination.



Left: Representatives of the Rotary Club of Central Mella celebrate with villagers and Water to Thrive as one of their first projects is completed in the Elu-Gelan district of Ethiopia.

The little church that could

“I will make rivers flow on barren heights, and springs within the valleys. I will turn the desert into pools of water, and the parched ground into springs.” — Isaiah 41:18

There is a small church in south Texas, in the Valley, that has made a huge difference for thousands of people half a world away. Since their first well campaign in 2009, the 83 baptized members of Love of Christ Lutheran Church in Weslaco have funded 11 wells, bringing the blessing of clean, safe water to more than 4,000 people.

The effectiveness of a church does not come from the size of the congregation. The effectiveness of a church comes from the size of the hearts of those in the congregation. And the members of Love of Christ Lutheran Church have true servants' hearts, filled with a grace and humility that allows them to live up to their mission statement, “Christ living and loving through us.” Members have variously given once, twice, several times to each campaign. They have established recurring monthly donations. They have sought out matching donations through the programs of Thrivent Financial and they have watched their contributions grow and flow into the Ethiopian communities so much in need.

Love of Christ Lutheran Church is one of many congregations who have made our mission their own. Since our beginnings in a Bible study group at Triumphant Love Lutheran Church in Austin in 2008, we have received support from congregations in 28 states and several different denominations. From St. Clement's Catholic Church in Saratoga Springs, New York, to Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity in Kailua Kona, Hawaii, congregations have played a crucial part in our progress, providing the majority of the support we receive and serving our mission through faith and acts. And what these congregations have given to Water to Thrive, as exemplified by Love of Christ Lutheran Church and their beautiful gift of 11 wells, is the understanding that we need not be large to make an enormous difference.

Girls in the village of Serdi Bearay at the opening of one of the latest wells funded by the congregation of Love of Christ Lutheran Church.





Working for the wells

Water to Thrive depends on our supporters to help fund water projects and operations, whether through individual or group gifts, our Water Angels major gift program, specific well-funding campaigns, attendance at one of our events, or our new Drop by Drop Fund to build a sustainable base for our operations. As we commemorate our first decade of service, we are planning a year filled with celebrations large and small, each an opportunity to gather and work for the mission of providing clean, safe water to rural African communities in need.

The sixth annual Chef's Table Austin brought home to the Water to Thrive team and supporters alike the importance of working together to achieve our mission. Through the generosity of our guests, we broke last year's record for bringing in the funds we need to keep our operations strong and healthy as we continue to break ground for new water projects.

This signature live auction event features well-known Austin chefs who create unique menus that are then auctioned off as dinner parties for the highest bidders. We hosted 11 chefs this year, including Chef David Bull of Second Bar + Kitchen, Chef Yesica Arredondo of Cannon + Belle, Chef Bryce Gilmore of Barley Swine, Chef Takuya Matsumoto of Kemuri Tatsu-Ya, Michelin-starred Chef Steven Meese, Chef Brian Moses of Olive & June, Chef Wolfgang Murber of Fabi + Rosi, Chef Janelle Reynolds of @Large, Chefs Bryan Butler and Ben Runkle of Salt & Time, Chef Rob Snow of Greenhouse Craft Food, and Chef Andrew Wiseheart of Chicon. The high-energy auction team of Heath Hale and his Cowboy Auctioneers kept the excitement building and the bids climbing until we finished the evening by breaking last year's record!

We were blessed to have our Ethiopian project manager, Gashaw Simeneh, in attendance. Gashaw began by describing this first trip to our country, winning over the crowd, then shared moving stories of his experiences in Ethiopia. Our supporters responded with an energetic final Paddles Up! that laid a solid foundation as we began building our Drop by Drop Fund.

Water to Thrive's team is appreciative beyond measure of the community's embrace of this event. Our auctioneers, chefs, and guests alike brought an amazing energy to the room, and the generosity and support shown that night helps us continue to expand our work and further our mission.



Photos courtesy of Camille Marie Photography, with photos 1 and 2 by Eszter Barany and photo 5 by Joyce Moeller for Water to Thrive.

Follow our progress

Year	Region/ Country	Project Area	Community Beneficiaries	Water Points
2008-2016	Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, & Uganda	Various	377,213	691
2017	Tigray, Ethiopia	Hawzien/Werei	11,575	40
2017	Lira, Uganda	Barapwo	1,115	1
2017	Mityana, Uganda	Naumngo	9,488	15
2017	Gondar, Ethiopia	Dembia	1,900	5
2017	Manyara, Tanzania	Kieto	2,800	5
2017	Ambo, Ethiopia	Ambo Town	3,000	4
2017-2018	Sidamo, Ethiopia	Bona Zuria	11,100	20
2017-2018	Gondar, Ethiopia	Chelia	10,462	20
2017-2018	Mityana, Uganda	Kalangaalo	4,750	10
2017-2018	Manyara, Tanzania	Kiteto	5,100	10
2017-2018	Gondar, Ethiopia	Dembia	6,020	10
			444,523	831

2016 Full Project Sponsors

The most active 2016 campaigns were those of Calvary Lutheran Church in West Chester, PA; Drilling For Hope in Saratoga Springs, NY; Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church in Loudon, TN; The Smith Family; the South Carolina Synod ELCA; Texas Lutheran Univeristy-Sequin; Triumphant Love Lutheran Church in Austin, TX; and Wartburg College in Waverly, IA. Our deepest gratitude to all who gave the blessing of clean, safe water.

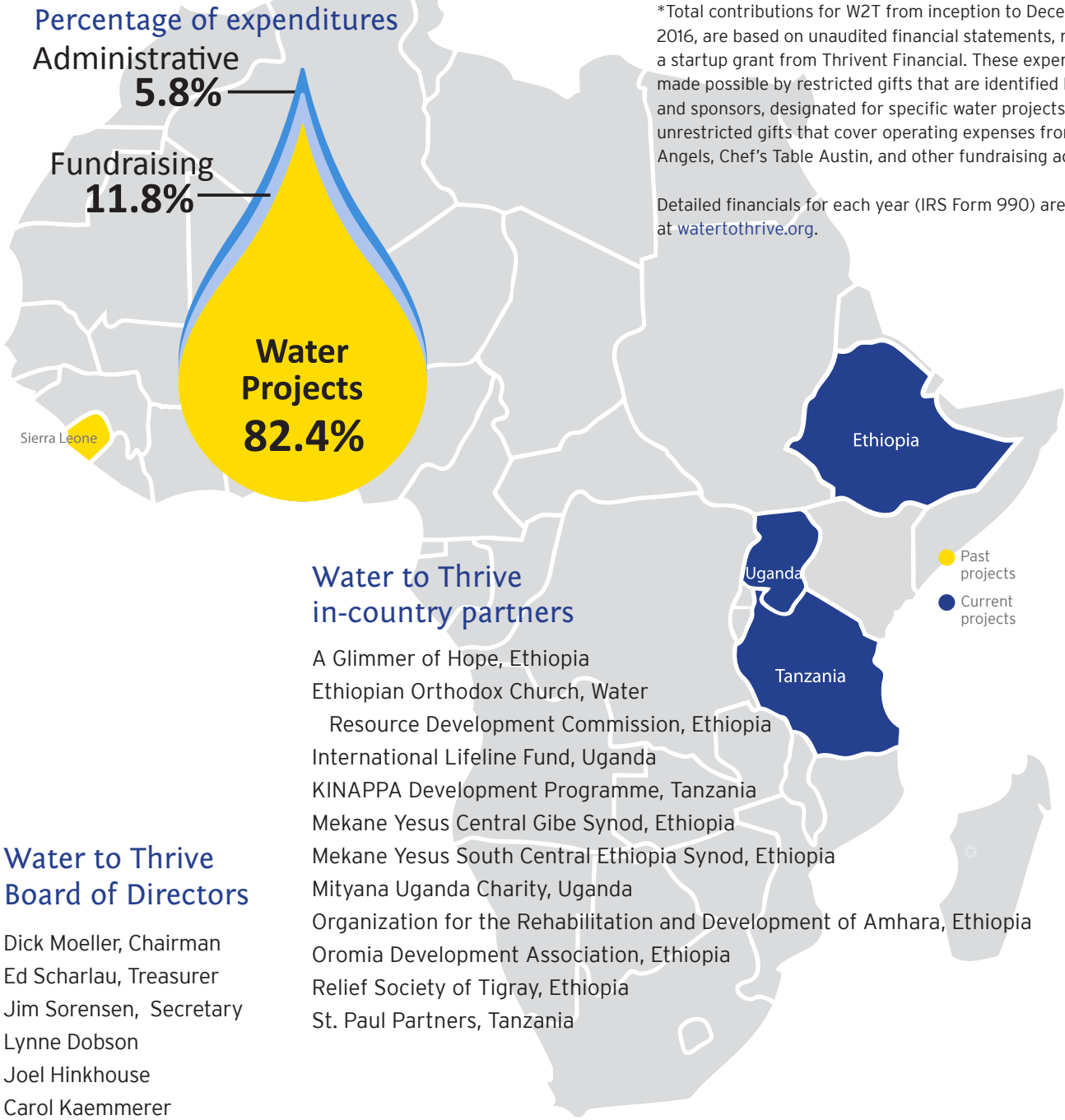
The Abazari Family
Abiding Love Lutheran Church, Austin TX
Asian Business Student Association
at the University of Texas, Austin TX
Augustana College, Rock Island IL
Baumann Memorial Well for Lynda Baumann
Bethel Lutheran Church Men’s Bible Study,
Bryan TX
Bridge A Life, Inc., and Martin Dunn, Sarasota FL
Calvary Lutheran Church, West Chester PA
Canyon Creek Elementary, Mrs. Weir’s Third
Grade Class, Austin TX
Central College, Pella IA
Concordia University Texas, Austin TX
Curves of Wells Branch, Austin TX
Doc E’s Salsa/Gustavus Adolphus College,
St. Peter MN
Drilling for Hope (Karen Flewelling),
Saratoga Springs NY
Ted and Doris Engelhardt
Faith Lutheran Church, Dickinson TX
Faith Lutheran Church, McDade TX

Giving Tuesday supporters - 2 wells in 1 day
The Gran Family
Holy Comforter Lutheran Church,
Kingwood TX
Hope Presbyterian Church, Austin TX
The Hotchkiss School, Dig Deep, Lakeville CT
The Ischy Family
Jazzwater Wood for Good, Dickinson TX
Kaleb’s Well for Ethiopia, Leander TX
King of Glory Lutheran Church, Dallas TX
Michael and Jeanne Klein
Love of Christ Lutheran Church, Weslaco TX
Lutheran Church of the Holy Trinity,
Kailua Kona HI
The McIntyre Memorial Well, Austin TX
Messiah Lutheran Church, Cypress TX
Russ and Carol Miller
Rudy and Gloria Munguia
Matthew Nauss & the GE Foundation
Nokomis Heights Lutheran Church,
Minneapolis MN
Northwest Austin Rotary Club, Austin TX

The Carol Pfleiderer Fund via the InFaith
Community Foundation
Logan Purk and Mary McClellan
Pastor Grant and Sue Quever
Kurt and Laurie Senske
Shepherd of the Lake Lutheran Church, Loudon TN
The Smith Family
South Carolina Synod, ELCA, Columbia SC
Spring Creek Baptist Church, Oklahoma City OK
St. Paul Lutheran Church, Ft. Worth TX
St. Peter Lutheran Church, Hallettsville TX
The Stribling Family
Strides for Africa 2015
Mark and Anja Thissen
The Thomsen Family - Honoring Sharon
Triumphant Love Lutheran Church, Wells of Love,
Austin TX
Texas Lutheran University, Sequin TX
TX-LA Gulf Coast Synod - WELCA, Baytown TX
United Heritage Charity Foundation, Austin TX
Wartburg College, Waverly IA
Zion Lutheran Church

Our sincerest thanks go also to those donors whose generosity of spirit is accompanied by a request to remain anonymous.

Total contributions through 2016:
\$6,062,923*



Water to Thrive
in-country partners

A Glimmer of Hope, Ethiopia
Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Water
Resource Development Commission, Ethiopia
International Lifeline Fund, Uganda
KINAPPA Development Programme, Tanzania
Mekane Yesus Central Gibe Synod, Ethiopia
Mekane Yesus South Central Ethiopia Synod, Ethiopia
Mityana Uganda Charity, Uganda
Organization for the Rehabilitation and Development of Amhara, Ethiopia
Oromia Development Association, Ethiopia
Relief Society of Tigray, Ethiopia
St. Paul Partners, Tanzania

Water to Thrive
Board of Directors

Dick Moeller, Chairman
Ed Scharlau, Treasurer
Jim Sorensen, Secretary
Lynne Dobson
Joel Hinkhouse
Carol Kaemmerer

Sustaining our service

When Water to Thrive founder Dick Moeller walked into his Bible study class at Triumphant Love Lutheran Church in the spring of 2008, he could hardly have imagined the far-reaching impact of the discussions that group would have. From sharing and pondering the meaning of the Word in daily life came the idea to put faith into action, and so Water to Thrive came into being. In its first year, Water to Thrive was able to raise funds for the implementation of 22 water projects, in Ethiopia and Sierra Leone. The next year, 32 projects, and the next, 48. Individuals, families, and congregations responded to the call, giving thousands to bring the blessing of safe, clean water to rural African communities in need. We expanded our work into Uganda, and then into Tanzania. We have been blessed with new partnerships and plans. Our organization's growth has been steady, our impact ever-expanding.

And now, as we wrap up our 10th year of service, we stand at a crossroads of success and sustainability. Each year, as we have directed your donations into more and more water projects, we have made and met our 100 Percent Promise that every dollar given for water projects will go to water projects. We have completed nearly 800 wells, with another few dozen under construction, all bringing a new, safe, clean source of water to almost 450,000 people. To celebrate our 10th anniversary year in 2018, we have committed to a drive to raise enough funds to reach a total of 1,000 wells.

To achieve this, however, and to continue to drive our mission forward into the next decade, we must be clear-eyed about the cost. The cost of our mission is not counted merely in pipes and site plans. The cost lies also in the work with our partners, both in this country and on the ground in east Africa. It lies in finding the dedicated staff who work so hard to raise awareness of the water crisis and the ways in which we can all act to resolve it, who put the pieces in place so that each new well is built on a foundation of research and reliability and can be sustained for 20 years. Our mission has been achieved by a group of two full-time and four part-time employees, a rotating cast of energetic college interns, a set of dedicated volunteers, and our irreplaceable Ethiopian project manager.

Our 100 Percent Promise can only be sustained if we have a strong financial foundation to support it. Toward that end, we are establishing The Drop by Drop Fund, a pledge-driven, ongoing campaign dedicated to bringing in the resources that will strengthen our infrastructure. Each dollar raised for operational support allows us to generate seven dollars for water, but that first initial dollar is a critical one. Without it, the stream of funding for water projects will slowly dry up, the impact of our work slowly trickling away. Our hope is that with this fund in place, our supporters and staff can keep the future flowing for hundreds of thousands of people in need.

Drop by drop, well by well, we are entering our next decade, with high hopes and plans for the future, with thanks for the generosity and open hearts of our supporters, and always with gratitude for the grace of God as we build wells and change lives.





Vision

A world where we share generously to provide health, hope, and water to all.

Mission

Water to Thrive transforms lives in rural Africa by bringing the blessing of sustainable, clean water to communities in need by connecting them to social investors, congregations, schools, and community groups with a heart to make a difference.

Values

Stewardship Transparency Impact
Accountability Integrity Compassion



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