

# SAVING LIVES ...

## one well at a time



A newsletter from the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation

Issue 3, 2014

## Together we have drilled 10 wells ... and are now making a difference to over 25,000 people EVERY DAY!

*Can you imagine your world without water and what it's like not to have it to drink any time you want? This is the way of life in so many areas of Zimbabwe – but not a normal part of my life. Throughout my waking hours every day, I need to have water near me – even at night, there is water at my bedside.*

*Thousands of Zimbabweans now have easy access to water like I do, because of the wells we installed from your donations. In the trips to Zimbabwe from 2009 through 2014, the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation and its compassionate donors have restored hope and health by giving safe and accessible drinking water from 10 wells that serve over 25,000 people every day.*

### Trip number 6: getting there

*I arrived in Zimbabwe, Africa on January 18, 2014 and during the next 10 days, oversaw the construction and installation of three new boreholes (wells). It was not easy going at the start; in fact, the first part of my journey was more difficult than I could have imagined.*

It was during a 36-hour period early in this trip – 600 miles into the desolate bush trying to find the sites for our new wells – that I became terrified that we would have no water. How ironic, since I was there to help bring water to those most in need, never expecting that I would soon feel that same thirst.

In our earlier trips to find sites, we escaped bush fires by driving right through them; we've been shot at; encountered dangerous animals, poisonous snakes and insect attacks; and endured the most oppressive heat. I never experienced the fear in those instances that I felt on this trip realizing not only that we were running out of gas, but there was no food and only one bottle of water left for eight of us – and many more hours still to drive in rugged and unpopulated areas before we would get back to a semblance of civilization – and stores where we could stop to get water, food and gas. I was getting sick; adding to the frustration and worry was that Bash (my friend and on-site driver who helps with the drilling process from start to finish) is diabetic and needed food. Tempers were definitely flaring. (See **GETTING THERE**, page 2)

---

*“If we can save the life of only one person, all our efforts will be worth it.”*

- Tim Rosshirt  
Rosshirt Water for  
Africa Foundation

---

### In This Issue

- **Getting there**
- **The way to water**
- **Tariro's story**
- **Care and maintenance**
- **A Columbus school cares**

## **(GETTING THERE — from page 1)**

I had never felt so helpless and discouraged, and just wanted to give up and go home. I was angry with the guides, as planning for food, snacks and water was part of what they were hired to do. I was angry with the driver hired to get us to our hotel because we were running out of gas and I was sure we were going to be stranded. For a while during my panic, I was also becoming very angry with God and felt that He had abandoned me – but I quickly remembered that it was His hand that guided me to the need in this part of the world – and helped me learn how to make a difference.

Finally, after 36 hours in the car, we made it to our hotel. The kitchen was closed, and there were no vending machines or other basic amenities – but it was indoors and had beds for all of us. We were hungry and thirsty, but even more, we needed to sleep.

From that point on, I personally made all the arrangements, hired the cars and drivers, and made sure that there was food and water for all of us. Most important, however, was that despite the obstacles, we would continue our mission to make a difference to those in need of this most vital substance of life: water.

## **The way to water**

*After a much-needed night's sleep, our first order of business was to determine the three new sites, which we selected based on need, accessibility and the number of people that could be helped through the years. Over the next 10 days, wells were drilled and installed at sites in the Mwenezi District, the Masvingo Province and the southeastern part of Zimbabwe. In addition, there were structural changes made to a well drilled two years ago in the Hope Center, and needed repairs and maintenance to all other previously-drilled boreholes.*

### Ngongondi Village

The first well was constructed in a village of about 1,750 people, along with more than 1,000 cattle, goats and sheep. The villagers had to walk 15 miles each day to the closest source of water – which like far too many villages in the country – was unsanitary and filled with germs. A dip tank (the source of water for livestock) that was located one mile from the well had not been working because there was no other water source nearby to fill it – and this dip tank is once again functional.

### The Bongo Business Center

On our site visit to this area, we learned that the need was high and that a new well would serve approximately 2,500 people every day. This well was paid for by a \$7,150 grant from the National Ground Water Research and Educational Foundation in Westerville, Ohio – and is by far serving the most people of any of the 10 wells that we installed.



No one could have predicted the major difference made by this well. Just days after it was completed in early February, torrential rains caused dangerous and massive flooding in a village 100 miles away from Bongo. A state of emergency was declared and over 1,000 families were relocated by the International Red Cross to a temporary tent city near the well. This well is by far the most productive and life-sustaining well that your donations to the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation have helped drill.

**(THE WAY TO WATER. from page 2)**

### The Rusaza School

Even after walking the long distance, the only water to be found was disease-laden and germ-infested. Teachers at the school reported that many children were afflicted with typhoid and cholera from the unsanitary water, and that it was common for half the children to be out sick with these illnesses.

## **Three wells and water for thousands of families!**



When these three wells were completed, there was an official ceremony held at the Rusaza School to show gratitude for those who made the wells possible.

Local officials thanked the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation and its donors, and students in grade 6 wrote and sang a song of appreciation:

*“Goodbye contaminated water,  
goodbye cholera and typhoid!  
Welcome welcome clean and safe water!”*

**Families, civic officials, other dignitaries and students gather at the Rusaza School to celebrate the new well and thank the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation and its donors.**

## **Tariro’s Story**

Tariro is a 10-year-old girl in the village of Ngongondi in the Mwenezi district. She dropped out of school in this impoverished community, to start helping her family as a laborer. While she has several household chores, her primary task begins every day at dawn, when she starts a 15-mile trek over rugged terrain to the closest source of water, usually a river or pond. The water is not safe to use – it’s laden with disease-carrying germs, human and animal body fluids and excretions, and more – but it’s the only water she can find. Many hours later, close to sunset – and with a four-gallon bucket of filthy water on her head – she returns home to the village.

Her story is not unique – in so many areas of Zimbabwe – remote, rural and urban, children and adults, even the very elderly, often trudge 15 miles or more to find a source of water. In the heat of summer, it can be much farther, as the hot weather dries out the water sources.

There is a happy ending for Tariro and others like her from Ngongondi, as there is now clean and sanitary water flowing in the village because of your donations – her days of struggling to find any source of water are now over and she can return to school.





## Ongoing care and routine maintenance

*With each trip to Zimbabwe, we visit every well that the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation installed to make sure that it continues to function. We provide any needed maintenance during these trips, and leave detailed local contact information for the villagers should any problems arise in between our trips.*

*It is a source of pride to know that the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation appears to be one of the only foundations that takes such meticulous care of all wells it has constructed, as there are many other wells in Zimbabwe built through other charities that are now broken down and dry.*



**Pictured above, a well drilled on an earlier trip needed the entire top of the structure replaced, and this was done in 2014.**



It is also gratifying to see that a well installed in 2012 is making even more of a difference than first expected. This well is in the Kadoma Training Institute, a home for

abused, underprivileged and abandoned children — and was one of the four wells drilled in 2012.

Before our well was built, residents had to walk the equivalent of six football fields each way to get water. Today, the well is now connected directly to the interior pipes and the facility has water to the sinks and showers. This was a huge success to see!

**Restoring Hope ...** Also constructed in 2012, the borehole at Hope Center, which is a daycare facility serving about 300 children and neighboring families, had lost productivity and was yielding only about 15 liters of water a day (four gallons). During our January trip, we had the driller take this well deeper and are pleased to report that the yield has drastically increased from just over 15 liters a day to an average of 250 liters an hour — a significant difference! The well was also converted from an electric pump to a hand pump, which keeps the well functioning when power is lost.

## THANK YOU!

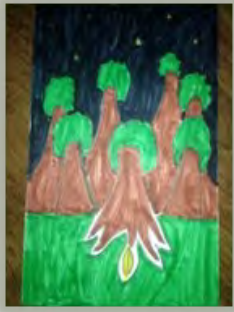
*We could not have drilled the three new wells without the support and caring of so many. I offer my heartfelt appreciation and thanks to all the donors who made this most recent trip possible, and gratefully acknowledge the major donors listed below:*

Moritz Family Foundation  
Barb Trueman  
The National Ground Water  
Educational and Research  
Foundation  
Bus Ransom  
Klingbeil Foundation

*In addition to the donors, there are some very special people in Zimbabwe who have been with me from the beginning and have worked on the well drilling process from start to finish. I also couldn't do this without them.*

**Bashir Khan** ... my friend and driver, helps identify the new sites and navigate through language barriers and red tape.

**Easton Moko** ... my right hand man and assistant, and a wonderful friend.



## **A Columbus elementary school supports the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation ... donating twice to the cause!**

For three years, I was invited to speak about the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation to fourth grade students in the classroom of Ronda McIntyre at the Indianola K-8 school in Columbus. In 2012 and again in 2013, the students included us in their fundraising efforts through the annual Harvest of Giving 8K Walkathon, which was held by three 4th and 5th grade classes from the school.

Ronda and her class felt that the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation was the perfect choice of a local charity with an international focus, as it is reminiscent of a book they read, "A Long Walk to Water." This book not only tells the autobiographical story of Salva Dut, one of the "lost boys of Sudan," but shared the compelling reality that people in undeveloped countries must walk hours to find water. The number "8" in the distance of the school walkathon in kilometers represents the number of hours it often takes a person in these countries to get to a source of water, which is also "8." "We want our families to be involved because as citizens of the world, we must always focus on the greater good," McIntyre said. "This is by far one of the most meaningful experiences I've had with children."

In the past two years, the students raised funds that were donated to the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation. The children also participated in a logo contest for the 2013 event, and the winning design, pictured above, was created by fourth grade student Leroy Dannemiller.

**If you would like to hold a fundraising event to benefit the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation, please contact Tim Rosshirt at (614) 361-3745.**



**Your donations make such an impact! The lives of these students changed drastically after a well was installed in their village this year. They have better health, safe water to drink every day and renewed hope for the future!**



## An unexpected blessing in the Bongo ...

International Red Cross volunteers and residents of the Bongo Village help provide buckets of clean water to families displaced from their village from torrential rains and flooding. What was expected to be a temporary holding camp has become a semi-permanent tent city for 1,000 families, and the new well drilled in the Bongo Village is providing clean and accessible water for nearly 7,000 people each day.



### **H<sub>2</sub>O – a life force that sustains us.**

All living things on earth need water to survive and while human beings can live several weeks without food, they can only live a few days without water. Only oxygen is more essential to our survival.



**Families in the villages and areas surrounding the new wells now have clean and safe water to drink — and cook with!**



Together, the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation and all its donors have brought smiles to so many! We are making a tremendous difference in this world of ours.



**Waiting in eager anticipation!**

Villagers were curious and excited about the new well that was dug, and nearing completion.



## **Three new boreholes drilled in 2014, bringing the number of wells to 10 – and providing over 25,000 people of Zimbabwe with life-sustaining clean water each day!**

How gratifying it is to know that since my first trip to Zimbabwe in 2006 through the most recent one in January 2014, life has changed for thousands of people in many poor areas of this country. Thanks to your donations, we have made a difference in so many ways including:

- Purchasing and distributing thousands of pounds of maize meal (grain) – nearly six semi-truckloads were passed out.
- Giving educational resources for children and teachers.
- Helping with the cost of school tuition for many families.
- Purchased groceries for over 300 families.
- Donated hundreds of personal hygiene products, including toothbrushes and toothpaste.

*How easily we take water for granted, knowing that our next sip is at most just a room or two away. We don't worry that the water we drink is contaminated with germs and disease, even animal and human feces. Our biggest inconvenience may be that the water is not cold enough.*

*However, that's not the case in most of Zimbabwe. There are still millions of people in that country who walk miles each day to find water, and way too many continue to suffer from cholera or dysentery because they have no safe water to drink or cook with.*

*While we have made a difference in the lives of thousands of families, so many others are still in need. Stopping now is inconceivable to me, and the Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation*

**Your support will help raise dollars to keep the 10 wells in working order and to build more new wells. Together, we will continue to make a difference for those less fortunate.**