A Water Bottle Can Make a World of Difference:

How you can help with the Clean Water Crisis

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Abstract

Research shows that the global lack of clean drinking water kills more people each year than wars, AIDS, and cancer combined. Half of the world’s hospital beds are occupied by a patient with water borne illness. The two major issues when it comes to water borne illness are apathy and ignorance. Most Americans do not know how big of an issue this is. Many are under the impression that having clean water is as easy as turning on the faucet. The purpose of this paper is, if nothing else, to raise awareness of this issue. Also, to show people how easy it is to help in small ways, and big ways. The biggest way that will be suggested in this article is for the University of Northern Iowa to partner with Clean Water Movement. In this partnership they would design a water bottle for the same cost as the current bottle given to each UNI freshman. (And also sold around campus.) Instead of giving the water bottle away they would have students pay a two dollar donation. That donation would go to dig wells in developing nations. If each student at U.N.I. bought one bottle 1,050 people would have clean water for 15 years. This would be beneficial for U.N.I. who has had negative press attention in the past few years. This would truly be the ultimate win-win-win situation. The reason for three wins: One for the university, good publicity and no more money needed to be given in the budget, one for the students, two dollars is a great deal for a water bottle, and one for the world and all the good that could be done with just water bottles.

A Water Bottle Can Make a World of Difference

Leaving a room better than it was found is something that is taught in the Midwest. What about the world though? Could people leave the world better than they found it? That thought is overwhelming. Changing the world seems to be an unattainable goal. However, it is not! The world could be changed to be far better by the year 2040.

Half of the world’s hospital beds are occupied by a patient with a disease caused by the water they drank. “3,300 children die from diarrhea” (UNICEF 2009). “1 in 5 each year children that die every year die from an illness caused by drinking unsafe water or the lack of water” (AQUASTAT 2010). In the year 2040 every person in the world could have clean water! Through the information presentment I hope all readers will have this same view. This paper is aimed to inform the reader, but also to pose a challenge to do a small thing to make a huge difference!

When one first looks at Clean Water Movement’s webpage one see’s emblazed at the top, “The global water crisis claims more lives than cancer, AIDS and war. We aim to change that (C.W.M 2013).” The global clean water crisis is by far the most pressing issue globally. It kills 3.4 million people a year. (UNICEF 2010) That is the entire population of the city of Los Angeles. Americans would act if the city of Los Angeles died in one year. That is also equal to ten jumbo jets falling from the sky and killing everyone on board. There is no way America would turn a blind eye that. “780 million people lack clean water globally” (United Nations).

That is two and a half times the population of the United States of America. Each American uses 140 gallons of water a day. While in developing nations in Africa a child will four hours or more to get two jerry cans full of water. A jerry can is similar to the small red tanks we use for gasoline. Each jerry can holds five gallons. This causes the cans to weight over forty pounds each. They water they get is more often from a muddy creek. This water is polluted with waste of *every* kind, including human. This is all they have.

There is no other better option. They cannot drive down the street until they find a place they like better. Their child lives are spent carrying cans not in school. Even if they were in school, “Over half of the developing world's primary schools do not have access to water and sanitation facilities. Without toilets, girls typically drop out of school at puberty” (United Nations 2003).

Why should you care about clean water? In America people are dying from cancer, AIDS, war, and obesity. If you want clean water, you can just turn on the faucet. It could be that American’s are apathetic to other’s suffering, or it might the might just that they are ignorant to it. Americans are bombarded by the media with advertisements about how to be skinny, and why this bottled water is better than that. We are willing to focus on the most miniscule aspects of our lives to make them more comfortable, but we are unaware that outside of our “bubble” people are unable to satisfy their most basic needs.

This paper intends to pop one’s hypothetical bubble. In America we have gold in the sink. Floods of clean water are wasted. We have let our gluttony become our global identifier. Never satisfied, and always wanting more. That can be changed! According to the World Health Organization, “for every $1 invested in water and sanitation, there is an economic return of between $3 and $34!”

In America we have forgotten what it is like to struggle to go to school, but in Africa the struggle is all too real! This issue is one that also hits a nerve with Americans, gender equality. Here are some statistics about what the equality issues surround in Africa. “Almost two-thirds, 64% of households rely on women to get the family's water when there is no water source in the home” (UNICEF 2009). “Girls under the age of 15 are twice as likely as boys their age to be the family member responsible for fetching water” (UNICEF 2010). If there were wells in these girl’s villages they could have a chance for an education! They could be more than they dreamed.

Research has shown that, “For every 10% increase in women's literacy, a country's whole economy can grow by up to 0.3%” (United Nations 2003) Talk about girl power! They gain this with an education. They gain an education by not having to walk to a dirty water source for fifty hours a week. They can only receive as long as there is a gift. It doesn’t have to be big; twenty dollars could change a life forever!

How can one help? It is easy to say, but hard to make a difference, right? Wrong! There are organizations in place that make it easy for you to make a huge difference. For two dollars a month for a year you could provide someone in need water for 15 years. This would be done through clean water movement. This can be applied on a bigger scale. University of Northern Iowa could partner Clean Water Movement. In this partnership they would design a water bottle for the same cost as the current bottle given to each UNI freshman. (And also sold around campus.)

Instead of giving the water bottle away they would have students pay a two dollar donation. That donation would go to dig wells in developing nations. If each student at U.N.I. bought one bottle 1,050 people would have clean water for 15 years. This would be beneficial for U.N.I. who has had negative press attention in the past few years. This would truly be the ultimate win-win-win situation. The reason for three wins: One for the university, good publicity and no more money needed to be given in the budget, and one for the students, two dollars is a great deal for a water bottle, and one for the world! It is amazing the good that could be done with just water bottles!

Many people do not use water bottles. Having this water bottle would be a waste and take up space and money that most college students do not have an abundance of. Another reason one may not be interested in this is one could purchase an inexpensive bottle of water. The University also may not want to be a part of something that will not directly affect their students. Water bottles also seem rather small to tackle such a large problem.

In opposition to that it could be said that that is the beauty of this idea! It is small and inexpensive! A bottle of water is typically around one dollar, so instead of buying one a day you could save 363 dollars a year! That is nearly a month’s pay for a part time minimum wage job. You would also help to save the earth by using less plastic. If one does not buy a bottle of water every day, or maybe one just does not enjoy drinking water. For people who say that they would not like to pay the two dollar donation.

This is the reply, “Okay.” No one will be forced to purchase a water bottle! It could also be said though that what better could one find to use one’s two dollars on? This would be great for U.N.I! The University should want to help, because it would provide positive publicity. It would do this by promoting an organization that started in Iowa by an Iowa State Graduate. It would also not cost the University any more than it currently does to give away water bottles. It also provides them with an opportunity to show interest in what the student’s passions are! A difference could be made globally by Iowa students that were willing to give some of what little they had for a worthy cause.

This paper is aimed to inform the reader, but also to pose a challenge to do a small thing to make a huge difference! The global water crisis is too sad, immense, and complex for one paper to spell out. It claims millions of lives. Its victims claim more than half of the world’s hospital beds. Thank you for letting it claims your attention. It is the hope of this writer that you have learned that you can be a big part of the solution by buying an inexpensive water bottle. It is also my hope that this paper’s words will not easily leave you.

That these words be emblazed on your thoughts the way Clean Water Movement has their mission emblazed on their webpage. “The global water crisis claims more lives than cancer, AIDS and war. We aim to change that (C.W.M 2013).” Be not a drop of water in dry bucket, but rather a drop of good will in an ocean of need. The smallest action done for the good of others can ripple out and cause a tsunami, one that will flood Africa with the love of a once obese, vain, and gluttonous nation. Our love will fill their wells. Our love give the child hope, the daughter an education, and the world back some of what we take for granted every day.

We have gold in our sinks. We are rich. What good is being rich if all of your money stays in the bank? Remembered is the man who gave for others. His life is one with purpose, and an affect that will change the course of generations. It is my hope that your eyes have opened to the fact that we stand on an oasis in a thirsting desert, and we hold in our hands a solution that requires no real sacrifice; a solution to be a watering can to the earth.

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