



Philadelphia Global Water Initiative

November 2008 Newsletter

Hello PGWI!

Here are some interesting articles from November! I apologize this is late! Be sure to check out the announcements as PGWI is gearing up for its second annual Conference this April!

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1. ***FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK***

Dear friends,

Thank you for your interest and support in addressing the global water, sanitation, and hygiene crisis. This crisis results in the death of over 4000 children each day and is one of the world's most important health problems. Your efforts, and those of others, have the potential to save many lives and improve the quality of life for countless people in developing

countries. Leaders from the Philadelphia area have been finding ways to supply water and sanitation services in such places as Kenya, India, Afghanistan, Cameroon, and Honduras. Others have been educating Philadelphia-area students at all levels from K-12 to graduate school. And still others have been raising awareness of these issues and building partnerships throughout the world.

One exciting partnership is the Rotary-PGWI effort. Rotary District 7450 represents over 50 clubs in the Philadelphia Area and has over one million members worldwide. PGWI has developed water/sanitation projects in developing countries and Rotary will be looking for sponsors of these projects. You should also mark your calendars for April 4, 2009 when PGWI will hold its third Conference. This Conference will explore the links between public health and water/sanitation. At the international level the World Water Forum will be held in Istanbul in March, 2009 and PGWI will be represented by members and students at this event [see www.worldwaterforum5.org]. Please read our newsletter and visit our website for information on many other activities underway.

Your help is needed. There are volunteer opportunities for everyone--- people with technical skills, communicators/educators, fundraisers, etc. Please consider getting involved.

You can contact me at laskowski6@aol.com or Cassandra Partyka at partykaa@sas.upenn.edu if you can dedicate some of your time to this effort.

Stan Laskowski, President
Philadelphia Global Water Initiative
www.pgwi.net

2. In the fight to save children's lives, washing hands takes centre stage

On October 15, 2008, the first ever Global Handwashing Day was celebrated worldwide across five continents and in over 70 countries. This momentous occasion reinforces the United Nations General Assembly's declaration of 2008 as the International Year of Sanitation (IYS) in an effort to rally and encourage millions of people to wash their hands with soap. The simple act of handwashing with soap is one of the most successful and cost-efficient ways to prevent pneumonia and diarrheal disease, which are responsible for roughly 3.5 million child deaths every year. This outrageous death toll can be reduced by 50 percent by washing hands with soap, especially after using the toilet and before eating.

http://www.unicef.org/media/media_45956.html

3. Arsenic removal saves lives in India

In 1996, in support of arsenic-removal efforts, Dr. Arun Deb, a member of the Water For People Board of Directors (and PGWI) responded to the arsenic crisis in India by working to develop arsenic-mitigation technologies appropriate for use in rural villages. Soon after, Water For People joined

Bengal Engineering and Science University and developed domestic and well-head arsenic-removal units using activated alumina. These in-home domestic units are cost-efficient and effective. The installation of 103 units has already improved the quality of life for 20,600 people. Continued installation and advancement can help to improve the quality of life for thousands of people in the future.

<http://washtech.wordpress.com/2008/11/07/arsenic-removal-saves-lives-in-india/>

4. An unmentionable global crisis

In today's society, 'sanitation' is a taboo topic that people need to address. Programs that are dedicated to 'water and sanitation' in the developing world, ignore the issue of sanitation (95% of program resources are spent on water). Modern sewers would be the perfect solution to ameliorate the sanitation issue, but this expensive engineering feat would be impossible in developing countries. Other options need to be examined, but the first step to solve this crisis is to talk about it and open up the debate. Toilet installation with on-site models and systems can be a great way to improve sanitation because they are inexpensive, a great alternative to 'open defecation', and do not require complicated sewer systems.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/earthcomment/3336148/An-unmentionable-global-crisis.html>

5. WaterAid America Unveils New Online Resource for Children, The Adventures of Super Toilet

World Toilet Day, November 19, 2008,

called attention to nearly 40% of the world's population or around 2.5 billion people in developing countries, who have no safe place to go to the toilet. This day also addressed the 900 million people lacking access to safe drinking water. 1.8 million children die every year because of diseases caused by unclean water and poor sanitation. To address this issue, Charlie Williams, author of the children's book about toilets, Flush, and performer of comical, educational shows about toilet sounds, developed an online animation: The Adventures of Super Toilet for WaterAid America. The goal of this animation is to help children understand the importance of toilets, safe water supplies, and good hygiene to help prevent the spread of deadly diarrheal diseases. While addressing a serious issue in a humorous manner, children are guaranteed to learn valuable lessons and hopefully, they will be inspired to participate in the future.

http://www.wateraidamerica.org/about_us/newsroom/world_toilet_day_2008.aspx

6. Water 'angels' bring hope to slum dwellers

In Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, one third of its 10 million people live in slums and are touched by poor sanitation conditions. Recently, the local population has gained hope thanks to WaterAid and one of its partners, DSK, who have been working together to change the water policy in Dhaka by trying to persuade the Dhaka Water Supply and Sewerage Authority that slum dwellers also have a moral right to public water and will pay the proper amount for water. There are now around

200 available water points for slum dwellers and now have enough water for cooking, bathing, and cleaning. Ms. Begum, who makes a living from trading scrap comments, "DSK are like angels to us. They have enabled us to pursue our livelihoods. They have helped us live with dignity and courage."

http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/083cd07c-bf02-11dd-ae63-0000779fd18c.dwp_uuid=ce659ad6-896a-11dd-8371-0000779fd18c.html?nclick_check=1

7. Zimbabwe cholera toll rises as rainy season comes

A cholera outbreak in Zimbabwe threatens thousands of people as the rainy season quickly approaches. Since August, more than 11,000 people have been sickened and according to the authorities, officially 425 people have died (even though the real death toll number is suspected to be around 1,000 people). The Health Minister David Parirenyatwa stated, "What I am afraid of is that now that the rainy season has come, all the feces lying in the bushes will be washed into shallow wells and contaminate the water." International aid agencies have already launched emergency relief efforts in South Africa because cholera has migrated over the border. The water crisis poses a real problem in the upkeep of good personal hygiene and therefore, increases the risk of spreading this disease to an even greater extent.

http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5jYaMdvfd4B2f0SL_hy9UM7heD0-QD94P8M501

8. Changemakers Finalist WaterPartners Gets \$4.1 Million From PepsiCo Foundation

WaterPartners, a respected 20-year-old U.S. non-profit with a mission to provide safe drinking water and sanitation to people in developing countries, has received a major grant from the PepsiCo Foundation totaling \$4.1 million, which is the biggest single contribution to WaterPartners' WaterCredit Initiative. This original initiative's goal is to use an innovative microfinance program to increase access to safe water and to improve sanitation for local communities in India. Through this initiative, a microfinance market will be established to enable hundreds of thousands of impoverished people across India to gain better access to water through micro loans. Over the course of three years, 120,000 people in India will benefit from the delivery of safe and clean water. Water access will be improved for urban communities and therefore, reduce dependence on individuals who frequently control water supply and charge high prices for water.

<http://www.changemakers.net/en-us/node/13927>

9. Access to water must be high on climate agenda: group

More than 1 billion people have no access to safe water. For years, the World Water Contract group has fought to make availability of water a basic right and to have it added to the U.N.'s Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Emilio Molinari, chairman of the group's Italian branch, promised that his group would lobby the United Nations to add water access rights to the

climate change debate in Poznan, Poland, where 190 countries will meet and lay the groundwork for a global deal to succeed the Kyoto Protocol after 2012. Molinari argued, "Given that water is threatened by climate change, it is time to include the human right to water in (the new climate) protocol." Previous efforts to improve water access have failed due to lack of public funds and the resistance of multinational water companies who want to control the water resources. Around \$10 billion a year is required to meet the U.N. Millennium Goal Campaign's target of reducing the proportion of people with no access to safe drinking water by 50% by 2015. So far, only 5% of the funds have been raised.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/environmentNews/idUSTRE4AR4FU20081128?sp=true>

10. 2.5 bn people worldwide lack basic sanitation

Instead of using toilets, more than four million Ghanaians defecate in bushes, open drains, water bodies, and fields. This barbaric and negative practice is caused by the absence of clean households and public latrines as well as the general population's ignorance of the harmful effects of open defecation to the society. World Toilet Day has inspired the Coalition of NGOs In Water and Sanitation (CONIWAS) to call for drastic efforts to provide Ghanaians with access to clean toilets. In response to this sanitation crisis, new building codes will now require every house to have a toilet facility and the authorities will be strictly enforcing these regulations in an effort

to reduce the overall poverty of the country.

<http://www.ghanaian-chronicle.com/thestory.asp?id=9559&title=%3Cb%3E2.5%20bn%20people%20worldwide%20lack%20basic%20sanitation%3C/b%3E>

11. **South Africa: Expert Warns of Water Crisis Leading to Instability**

A political scientist and researcher in the field of water resource management, Dr. Anthony Turton, has alerted South Africa that the country is “heading for a significant crisis in the water sector.” South Africa is facing this crisis because of two related factors: declining water infrastructure and a lack of skilled personnel. The rural areas will be the most affected by the deteriorating water quality because they are the least capable of adapting water treatment processes. Recent disease outbreaks that have already killed 83 babies and left thousands of other people sick and dead enforces Turton’s hypothesis. According to Turton, South Africa must attend to these issues immediately to avoid a larger crisis in the near future that will put millions at risk.

<http://allafrica.com/stories/200811250117.html>

12. **Water - Use It Wisely: Join The Cause**

One of the leading water conservation educational outreach programs in the world is Water – Use It Wisely. This Arizona-based organization that started in 1999 promotes awareness of the growing water concern in the state of

Arizona. Today, there are over 400 towns, cities, states, utilities and public and private organizations that have adopted their program. Home Depot and Lowe’s have also been featuring their campaign in their stores. Water – Use It Wisely has also received many awards because they know how to get the word out about water and encourage everyone to get involved.

<http://www.waterdrop.ca/?p=81>

Article of the Month:

WAP!

By, Nalat Phanit

“WAP” may just be the new onomatopoeia. It’s the sound that represents an epiphanic moment. Seriously, though, WAP stands for the Water Ambassadors Program. WAP is part of the Philadelphia Global Water Initiative (PGWI - now what onomatopoeia could that be?). Its aim is to train volunteers to become ambassadors in water education. After a series of training sessions, volunteers will be sent out to various schools to bring awareness to students on global water issues. Through working closely with local schools, it is the group’s goal to produce active citizens in solving the world’s water crisis.

On November 8th, WAP held a training session at the University of Pennsylvania’s Hayden Hall. The attendees had diverse backgrounds. Several were Villanova University engineering students, some were University of Pennsylvania’s environmental and business students, and a group came from Abington Senior High School. What drove them to spend

their Saturday in a classroom? Water. The training session enlightened the crowd on the horrible situations that children are living in due to unsanitary water conditions. Not only did the attendees learn of the direct impact that water conditions have on children, such as water-borne diseases, they also learned of the indirect impacts. For example, many girls dream of going to school but can't because they have to spend their day fetching water for their family. The girls who are lucky enough to get an education usually miss their classes when they are menstruating. The lack of clean and private bathrooms deters girls from attending school. This also illustrates that water issues can lead to social injustice.

Chris Morssink, President of the United Nations of Greater Philadelphia, first gave a brief presentation on the United Nations and its purpose. He then showed how WAP is supporting United Nation's Millennium Development Goals, especially the seventh one: "Ensure Environmental Sustainability – Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation." Through education and advocacy, WAP can help create a small group of "global citizens" (those who think from a global perspective) that can bring clean drinking water and sanitary bathrooms to developing areas. The goal of the program is not solely to help the world achieve the United Nation's target. The program takes on a more profound perspective on life and water. According to the presentation, "Water is life; a right to life implies a right to water; let's make clean water a universal human right!"

Mary Rogers and her student volunteers from Abington Senior High School gave an inspiring presentation. This is a real-life example of how a small group of young adults can have a substantial impact in solving the world's water crisis, one school at a time. Last year, they raised \$10,000 for bathrooms to be put into a school in Mali. The funding was matched by Save the Children and was also supported by H2O for Life. Now, they are currently raising funds to put in bathrooms at a school in New Delhi, India.

Aside from fundraising, the students from Abington Senior High School also teach younger children on water issues. To do this, they employ various interactive techniques. One method was to have a volunteer from the crowd carried a 45-pound canister of water on his head. This was to illustrate how some women have to walk three hours to a water well and then walk three hours back, with the filled canister on her head. Another illustration was having a volunteer built her own watershed (using a plastic tub, spray foam, and spray paint). After the watershed was built, the student asked the volunteer to "pollute" the watershed. This included sprinkling soil, candy wrappers, cigarette butts, mayonnaise (representing oil), and mustard (representing sewage) on the watershed. Water was then poured into the tub, washing the pollutants out. The student then transferred the milky-yellowish washed-up "pollutants" into a clear cup. This represented the quality of the water in a polluted watershed after a rainstorm. If there were a comic book rendering of the audience's reaction to this presentation, a big WAP will be plastered on everyone's head. According to the students, this exercise usually

shocks and awes their audience. It makes their audience care about water conservation and pollution. It is also a technique that WAP ambassadors may want to employ when they are out in the field.

WAP Ambassadors have a tough task ahead of them. However, the training sessions are filled with unique information and educational tools that will help them recruit “global citizens.” For the attendees, the 2015 goal seems achievable and so does the universal human right for clean water.

Recent Developments:

- PGWI is now part of GoodSearch! This is a search engine powered by Yahoo! Search, which allows you to browse the web, and as a bonus, every search donates one cent to PGWI! GoodSearch donates fifty percent of its revenue from its advertisers to the charity you choose, without costing PGWI, or you anything! Please only use this site for legitimate searches, however, as any fraudulent searches will cause PGWI to be delisted from the site. If you go to: <http://www.goodsearch.com> you will come to their homepage and see a place to type in whatever you're searching for – whether you want to search the web, images, videos, or shopping, you can do it all on GoodSearch which is comparable to any other search engine! Before you complete your search, make sure to go to the drop-down box that says above it “Who do you GoodSearch for?” and scroll to find the Philadelphia Global Water Initiative – PGWI (Philadelphia, PA)! Now, you can search the web as usual,

come up with the same great results as any other search engine, and each search you complete while using GoodSearch donates one cent to PGWI! There is even a little yellow button below the box where you choose what organization to GoodSearch for that permits you to see how much PGWI has raised! Think about it, if everyone involved in PGWI uses GoodSearch two times a day, we could easily collect at least a few dollars a day, which will add up very quickly! This is a great and extremely simple way that PGWI can raise money on a daily basis, so join in and please use GoodSearch!

- The 5th World Water Forum being held in Istanbul, Turkey from March 16-22 2009 is considered to be the main event in the ‘water’ world. The goal is to decisively make water an international priority. It is, “A stepping stone towards global collaboration on water problems, the Forum offers the water community and policy-and-decision-makers from all over the world the unique opportunity to come together to create links, debate, and attempts to find solutions to achieve water security.” Check out their website for more information, agendas, and details on how to get involved! Penn will be sending a group of students to this event so look for a review in the April newsletter!
<http://www.worldwaterforum5.org/>

Reminders and Updates:

- PGWI’s second annual Conference will be held on April 4, 2009 at the College of Physicians on 21st and Market. Look for the second announcement soon! If you would

like to volunteer or help in the effort please contact me by email at partykaa@sas.upenn.edu!

- Use the Water Events Worldwide website from UNESCO to keep track of upcoming happenings! There are useful summaries of each event, as well as location, contact, and date information. November is packed with great things all over the world so browse the website for more information and participation details! http://www.unesco.org/water/water_events/Date/2008/
- If anyone has an article, website, photo, or anything PGWI would be interested in, please submit it to me by email! It may be included in the next newsletter! Thank you to those who have sent me tips on articles! Keep them coming!
- Do your part! Get your family and friends involved – spread the word and have them sign up for the PGWI Newsletter to promote awareness and engage in the efforts!
- Start using GoodSearch! Tell your family and friends about it to start raising funds for PGWI with a simple internet search – something most people do on a day to day basis!
- We are building a film library for PGWI and would appreciate any videos or films you could suggest or have found online – just email anything directly to partykaa@sas.upenn.edu!

Resources:

- Philadelphia Global Water Initiative <http://www.pgwi.net>
- GoodSearch <http://www.goodsearch.com>

- 5th World Water Forum: Istanbul 2009 <http://www.worldwaterforum5.org>

Interesting Fact:

- In 2006, the United Nations Human Development Report stated that almost two in three people lacking access to clean water live on less two dollars a day.

Water Proverb of the Month:

- The stone in the water knows nothing of the hill which lies parched in the sun.
- African Proverb



○ Attendees at the Water Ambassadors Program's training session

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