

## KENYA CLEAN WATER

August 2014

*By Joe Schon – Scottsbluff-Gering Rotary Club, Special Projects and Grants Committee*

I just returned from Meru, Kenya after spending 3 weeks to confirm that Clean Water and Basic Sanitation Systems had been installed in 22 schools in the last 12 months, bringing filtered water and WASH program to 5714 children. With the previous 5 schools installed by our Partners PEAK from Fort Collins, that makes 27 schools and almost 9000 children.

Last year, we had gone to Meru with Rotarians Mark and Karrie Gillam, Deb Glenn and my wife Sandy. We traveled with 5 Mission folks from Trinity Methodist Church in Lincoln. Working with the Project Manager for the Meru Rotary Club, Catherine Kimathi, and Meru Bishop Catherine Mutua we developed a priority list of 24 schools. We had initiated the First Phase of the Kenya Clean Water Project which Partners Rotary Club with Methodist and Faith Based Organizations.



(Photo: Rotary Meru Project Manager Catherine Kimathi and Joe Schon hold the KENYA CLEAN WATER BANNER while the students of MBUUTA PRIMARY enjoy Clean Filtered water at school for the first time.)

During the July 2014 trip, we found No Surprises to our strategy to install Roof-Gutter-Storage and Filtration systems in schools. We had managed the costs so that Clean Water and Hand Wash Stations are now serving 22 schools. We did the assessment and priority for the next 24-30 schools that will be installed over the next 12 months as part of Phase 2. With this detail in hand, and the cooperation of Meru Rotary Club President Dickson Ntwiga, and Methodist Bishop Catherine Mutua, we are now writing the new Global Grant Application for these next schools.

Rotary Partnering with the Methodist Church and other Faith Based organizations, both as donors and as Participants, is the best way to assure the success and long term Sustainability of this project. Most all of the rural schools in this Project are located in rugged and mountainous countryside along the equator. The most remote schools were accessed through guarded Elephant and Rhino Nature Conservancies. The Faith Based Partners also bring school supplies and food, sewing and craft materials and most important, medical clinics (doctors, pharmacists, dentists and the drugs for treating patients) as part of their Mission Programs.

The Kenya Clean Water system has several requirements: All components must be locally available; No electricity required; No maintenance required; No moving parts. Running Water International (RWI) in Nakuru, Kenya, builds the Bio-Sand Filters and installs the systems. We couple these filters with the roof- gutter-tank storage system known throughout Kenya. We add Hand Wash stations and Clean Water storage pails for the Basic Sanitation part of the System. RWI has improved on the Bio-Sand Filter, now utilizing plastic containers which eliminate the breakage that we experienced from transporting the concrete filter shells to the schools.



(Photo: Isaac Soita of RWI with new Micro-Filter System and Clean Water Containers.)

We had many incredible experiences on this July trip. We visited two Rescue Women's villages in Samburu and the Elephant Nature Conservancy much in the news these days (See Nature Conservancy August-September 2014). We visited a Blind Knitters shop (Lighthouse Knitters) which Rotary is assisting in Meru. And the dedication of a new church in Chuga, that was funded by Hope Methodist, Englewood, Colorado.

We helped to install Gutters and Tanks at Matuuru Primary School. And we participated with the rest of the Mission Team in many other initiatives. We helped with medical clinics by assisting the doctors and pharmacists. We bought corn and rice and delivered it to needy villages. We re-packed school supplies and delivered them to schools (soccer balls are especially prized). And we bought and distributed goats to the poor who had none as part of the "First Born" program. Microfinance was started last year, and 30 new loans were considered made. There are so many needs and wants and opportunities to share.

For the Kenya Clean Water project, our Rotary Club received the Rotary District 5440 "World Service Award" for 2013-2014. But the Project is not finished. We already have commitments for funding for the next two phases of this project. And still WE will not be finished. Not until all who need it have Clean Water and Basic Sanitation. We welcome other Rotarians, Donors, Partners and Faith Based Organizations to join us and to become involved in this Project. We'll be going back in September 2015. Please consider joining us on the next Mission trip to Meru.

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