

Would you like a cup of water?

This phrase, spoken millions of times throughout the day across the globe, is for many so commonplace; most forget the realities for the world's access to water.

- 884 million deprived of improved sources of drinking water
- 4 billion annual cases of diarrheal illness
- 1.8 million lives lost each year due to diarrheal disease
- 443 million school days lost each year from water-related illness
- 117 million disability adjusted life years (DALYs) lost annually due to diarrhea and intestinal worm infections

These facts, according to the website of a product frequently used by HOM known as the Lifestraw (www.vestergaard-frandsen.com/lifestraw).

For this reason (i.e., the need for access to water) and many others, a team led by HOM board member Rod Ingram traveled to Haiti in June, 2011. That team also included Rod's wife Arlene, Michael and Linda Brown, and Sally Spencer.

Indeed, a major purpose for this team was to develop a local organizational plan for a concept that has become a focal point of passion for both the Ingrams and another HOM board member, Dr. Kirk Young. These individuals have essentially "adopted" the community of Lahatte; dedicating themselves to improving the lives of this community of approximately 1000 individuals in many ways; a predominant one being the digging of a well. As it currently stands, residents living in this mountainous desert like community only have two sources of water. For much of the year, obtaining water for any purpose requires a three plus mile walk (depending on the starting location), each way, up and down rugged mountainous terrain. For a short season, the community does receive local water through a cistern constructed and overseen by HOM mission partner, Mission Possible. Beyond digging of a well, an extensive effort has been put forward by Kirk to provide thousands of Lifestraws to individuals in LaHatte and additional surrounding communities.

If one needed to see evidence for the dedication of this team, its members performed a HOM first; camping! Indeed, rather than utilize typical housing facilities (e.g., dorms, motels) common to such efforts, access/distance related difficulties rendered nights in tents and food cooked on an open fire a necessity.

While a priority effort went to the notion of well drilling, the efforts for this team certainly did not stop there! Examples of other activities performed by this group included assessment of an educational program that instructs adolescents proper goat care and husbandry, evaluating an aquaculture facility, developing a program to avoid food loss due to from rodents, and providing education for more effective gardening programs.

While clearly the provision of such efforts requires time, patience, financial resources, and more...this is a perfect example of the HOM philosophy that, "It is better to teach a man to fish than to continually provide him fish." Indeed, our hope is that these activities will eventually be self-sustaining and involve Haitian outreach to other Haitians.

Hopefully, soon, individuals within the community of LaHatte will be in a position to say to one another, "Would you like a cup of water".

Please see our Photo Gallery for images from this trip.