Open Letter: Asheville's ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS are making a difference

Unbeknownst to most of our citizens, Asheville has a much-needed connection to the outside world---the developing world, that is. The engineer whom you employed on your local construction, water, soil conservation, or environmental projects may have spent last week in Africa, Asia, or Latin America applying his or her skills to solve health and environmental problems at a village level.

Throughout the developing world, waterborne diseases are the principal cause of death, claiming 3.4 MILLION victims annually, most of them children. The Asheville Professionals Chapter of Engineers Without Borders (EWB) is one of 300 chapters that provide a channel for American engineering skills to help solve these problems confronting the world's poorest populations.

For almost a decade, the Asheville Professionals EWB Chapter has been working in a remote district in northwest Kenya at Uluthe Village. Lack of potable water was an obvious need, so our first project was drilling a well to a depth that would assure replenishment with no contamination, and capping it with a pump that is useable 24/7 and does not require electricity. Local health officials are tracking reductions in the incidence of waterborne diseases because of this well.

Uluthe Village is also the site of a Community Dispensary & Clinic which, in servicing villages in the surrounding community, produces a significant amount of potentially infectious medical waste.

While in Kenya working on the well, our engineers witnessed a terrible sight: "We literally saw a kid kick his soccer ball into the medical waste pit", says Nathan Epling, professional engineer and chapter member. "What if this pit was in your backyard? Do you want your kids playing in your doctor's trashcan?"

Asheville EWB engineers immediately began work with clinic directors to plan an incinerator which would assure safe disposal of such waste to prevent spread of disease and avoid soil and water contamination. Concurrent with design and construction oversight, our team conducted community education and training of local health care providers and future incinerator operators.

In May 2016, the incinerator commissioning was attended by the Governor of Siaya County, Uluthe community leaders, local public health officials, and our chapter members. Now Uluthe clinic, and several nearby clinics that bring their waste, are disposing of waste waste properly and safely without worry.

Most recently, the Lake Victoria South Water Utility has provided government funding, engineering design services and construction support to leverage the borehole installed at the Uluthe Clinic by the Asheville Chapter in 2014. It will develop an 8 point drinking water distribution network for the Uluthe community surrounding the clinic.

The borehole designed and installed by the chapter has excellent water quality and productivity relative to other local sources and provided the genesis for the Kenyan water utility to expand drinking water availability to thousands of additional people.

Please Consider a tax Deductible Donation

Online
ewbasheville.org/donate

By Check
Payable to "EWB-USA" with memo line "Asheville Professionals"

Engineers Without Borders USA is a 501c3 organization. All donations to our chapter are tax deductible.

Mail to: EWB-USA Asheville Professionals
C/O Anchor QEA of NC PLLC
231 Haywood St, Asheville, NC 28801

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Asheville EWB chapter is currently planning our next project: a much larger medical waste incinerator at the Siaya County Hospital near Uluthe Kenya.

Here is the kicker: Asheville EWB cannot do this great work without your help. Protecting our children from dangerous medical waste costs money, and we need Ashevillians like you to make our next project a reality. Please, consider donating using one of the method below.

Thank You,

Benji Burrell
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The Kids who inspired the Uluthe incinerator



Other Photos

Our recent trip: https://goo.gl/HfWh4q Select photos annotated: https://goo.gl/Ig6MWK

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