



# Lifewater Canada Fact Sheet

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## We believe:

1. Every life is created in God's image and is of equal value
2. Access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation are basic human rights
3. The place where you are born should not determine whether you live or die

## The problem:

- 780 million people on the planet are trying to survive each day while drinking dirty water
- Someone – usually a child – is dying every 20 seconds from diarrheal diseases caused by dirty water and inadequate sanitation
- To get water, people must often walk long distances for it
- A lack of water makes hand-washing a rare luxury – resulting in much more disease transmission, especially during COVID-19
- Girls and women are disproportionately impacted by water scarcity
  - They do most of the water-carrying in the developing world
  - Carrying heavy jugs or buckets daily causes potentially life-long neck and back problems
  - Puts them at risk of assault, rape, and even death as they walk isolated trails to the water
  - Prevents girls from consistently being in school, and adds to women's already long workdays

## You can offer a solution through Lifewater:

- **Providing safe, accessible water by:**
  - Drilling new wells
  - Rehabilitating dormant wells
  - Repairing or replacing broken handpumps so water flows again
  - Installing rainwater catchment systems
  - Construction toilets and handwashing stations
  - Providing vital health and hygiene training
- **Building the capacity of Africans and Haitians**
  - Providing African and Haitian workers with ongoing training for well drilling, pump repair, health and hygiene, business best practices, marketing skills, and community mobilization
  - Supporting the establishment of locally run businesses
  - Insisting on the participation of the local village
    - Determining well locations, making them available to the entire community
    - Helping to pay the well costs – money, labor, materials
    - Designating someone to serve as the well caretaker – trained by Lifewater to manage, maintain, and repair the well
- **Investing in proven, low-cost technology**
  - Relying on simple, relatively low-cost well-drilling equipment and hand-pumps that don't require Canadian technicians to be stationed in, or travel to, Africa or Haiti to maintain them
- **Providing ongoing follow-up**

- Ensuring that Lifewater staff live and work year-round in the countries where the wells and pumps are; they periodically visit finished projects to ensure the wells/pumps are working
- Offering villages the opportunity to sign annual pump maintenance contracts with Lifewater or to do the maintenance work themselves
- **Minimizing costs**
  - Not employing any full-time employees in Canada, with staff and volunteers working from their homes
  - Volunteers in Canada paying their own way to Africa or Haiti to provide well-drilling and pump maintenance training, and to audit completed projects
  - Focusing on low-cost solutions – for example, repairing a pump rather than drilling an entirely new well, or ensuring that a well location will serve as many people as possible
  - Consistently keeping Lifewater’s administration and fundraising costs below 10% of every dollar donated
- **Being highly accountable to donors**
  - Matching donors (individuals, families, churches, civic groups, and corporations) with specific water projects in Africa and Haiti – and then providing detailed information and updates (including

### **The impact:**

- During a typical year, Lifewater will drill more than 100 new wells, rehabilitate other wells, and repair several hundred broken hand pumps
- All these projects, plus the installation of rainwater catchment systems, will provide safe, accessible water to an additional 500,000 people each year

### **Achieving the most with your donations:**

- Charity Intelligence, an independent organization that monitors the performance of 800+ non-profit organizations in Canada, has repeatedly:
  - Included Lifewater in its “Top 10 Impact Charities” list – meaning the 10 charities in Canada achieving the most impact on behalf of their donors (an estimated \$7 for every dollar invested, or more than three times the national average)
  - Designated Lifewater as Canada’s top water-focused charity
  - Made Lifewater one of only 11 charities of any kind in Canada to receive an overall A+ rating

### **Lifewater’s beginnings:**

- Lifewater was founded by Jim Gehrels in 1997 after the Ontario government hydrologist visited Africa and saw the urgent need for safe, accessible water
- It has been a registered Canadian charity (#885420737RR0001) since 1997
- He began recruiting donors and volunteers to drill wells in Liberia, then expanded to other African countries and to Haiti
- Despite an eye disease that would eventually leave him blind, Gehrels travelled many times to Africa and Haiti to oversee Lifewater’s operations; his wife Lynda often travelled and served with him
- When Jim died in July 2020, Lynda assumed the leadership of Lifewater and – with a two-person team of part-time, home-based employees in Canada – oversees its life-saving work internationally
- Contact information: 457 Heather Cres., Thunder Bay, ON, P7E 5L1 / [www.lifewater.ca](http://www.lifewater.ca) / [info@lifewater.ca](mailto:info@lifewater.ca)