

Lifewater Canada: Helping Countries Needing Access Safe Drinking Water

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Lifewater Canada was founded by Jim Gehrels, a hydrogeologist and member of the OGWA, with his friend Glenn Stronks. Jim and Glenn began a partnership with teams in Liberia and then later with Nigeria, Kenya, and Haiti to provide safe water, sanitation, and hygiene education.

The first well was drilled in Liberia in 1995. By 1997, Lifewater Canada was a registered charity, founded on the belief that where you were born shouldn't determine whether you live or die.

Today, 30 years since that first was well drilled, thousands of water projects have been completed by nationals for their own people, bringing safe water to nearly nine million men, women, and children. These water points not only improve health and save lives, but the impact ripples out by reducing the time it takes to haul water, thus increasing time for children to go to adults or adults to work, and in extremely arid communities such as Kitui County in Kenya, a chance to grow food and plant trees.

Lifewater has been recognized since 2019 by Charity Intelligence as a top 10 charity with a consistent overhead under eight per cent. Can we do more? Is there still a need? Yes, absolutely, for every 30 seconds a child still dies from drinking contaminated water. It isn't acceptable!

To help alleviate this, the Lifewater Canada team is presently in Liberia, mounting a small but customized drilling rig on an Isuzu truck to initiative another drilling team. The LS350 hydraulic is small but mighty, allowing this new team to reach the remote counties in Liberia, where poor roads make it virtually impossible for commercial rigs to reach.

The truck-mounted, third generation upgrade on this rig has improved the ease of maintenance while allowing it to continue to drill up to 300 feet. It's not fast, but the end result is safe water for an entire village! Because it is mounted on a vehicle with a narrow wheelbase and exception maneuverability, it can traverse on roads that are poor or over narrow bridges to access the forgotten, remote villages.