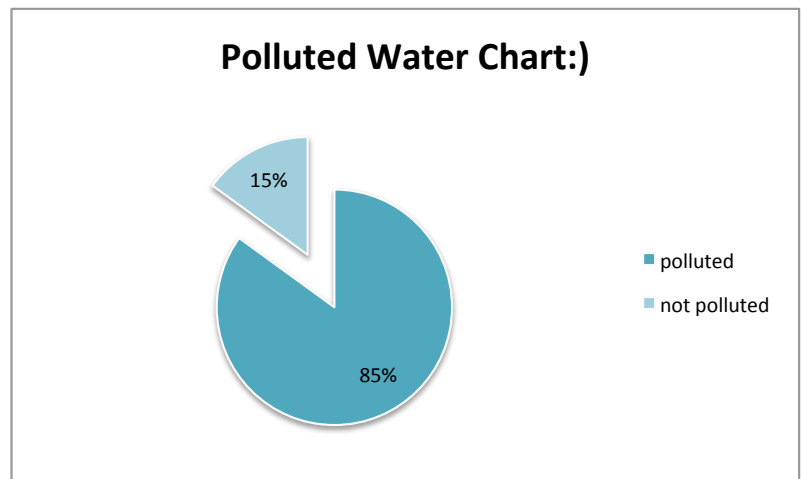


Africa's Water Chase

By: Catherine Zhang



Water is scarce. Yet, people take it for granted, we waste it, and people even pay too much to drink it from little plastic bottles. Today, nearly 1 billion people in the developing world don't have access to it. Clean, safe drinking water is limited. Yet today, in Africa, far too many people spend their entire day searching for it.



Picture this, it's a normal day in South Africa, 2001 and you're walking in Capetown with your family. You're in school and having a good life. Your food storage is fine and you are hydrated.

Interestingly enough once South Africa boasted one of the cleanest water systems in the world; now, all that has changed. People (mostly children,) have been walking all around towns trying to find clean, safe drinking water. In some places, due to the lack of sanitation and access in the country's rural communities, the threat of water borne disease steadily increases. In some places, it is simply dry. Water is hard to find. In others it is because of the climate change. The rain supply that used to fall and support the country with water, has come infrequently. Some of the constructions of the dams have not even started, or are still in the process of being built. Some are now slowly collapsing. Another reason why there has been a shortage of water in Africa is because of the poor infrastructure in the pipelines. There are toxins in the water due to the limited technology they have.

“When I first came here in 1998, there were about 600 people in this village.” Says Geoffrey Kimenke a local community member. “It’s mostly the sanitation.” “It is now a collection of mud and dirt all piled up”

People can’t find clean, safe water to drink; children collect water from their local ponds because they have no other alternative. The animals drink from the pond as well. The children suffer from diseases by drinking the filthy water. Families need all the help they can get so they pull their kids out of school.

According to findings presented at the 2012 Conference on "Water Scarcity in Africa: Issues and Challenges", it is estimated that by 2030, 75 million to 250 million people in Africa will be living in areas of high water stress. Most people say that there is not enough sanitation. Other people say it’s the diseases. They have clinics but the health situation is increasingly low. Everything has gone wrong in Africa. Try helping by donating some money to websites such as halfwaythere.com. They sell tee-shirts and the money goes to help people in Africa. Even 50 cents can be worth something. You can make a difference.



Extra!!!

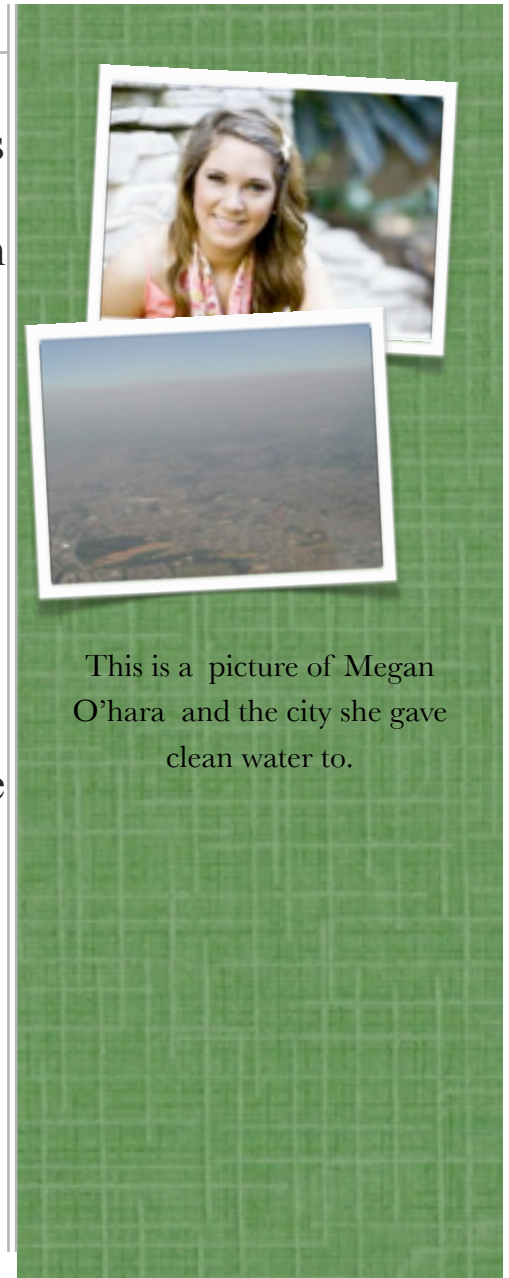
Without water, there is no life. Without clean water, there is little chance of health” says Meagan O’Hara, a young Cy-Fair resident, has been working tirelessly to bring the gift of clean water to a community in Africa.

While attending a camp last summer, O’Hara said she watched a video that made her aware of the plight facing a number of African people, after which she felt compelled to take action.

“I went to a camp called Big-Stuf in Florida. Actually, I’ve gone every summer since sixth grade,” said O’Hara. “There was a children’s choir from Africa that came to sing. They brought a video of their homes that showed how they lived.

“Some of them had to walk seven miles just to get clean water. Sometimes they’re just kids, like, 8 years old, and they’re alone because the parents had AIDS and died. Watching, I really figured out what people in Africa experience.

“After that, after watching what the suffering innocent children have to face, I could never go back to living my life and be the same without helping them. O’Hara founded a club called Umoja, at the beginning of the school year with her friends Hanna Johnson and Sonja Ginnard. Together the girls, and other volunteers held fundraisers.



This is a picture of Megan O’hara and the city she gave clean water to.



“We have karaoke nights, we sell T-shirts, we held a mini-concert in my back yard -- people from my school came to sing at it. We had a craft show, sold chicken snacks,” O’Hara recounted and added that she has raised \$2,000 with expectations of having \$3,000 by the end of May. O’Hara says she’s just a regular teen that did something anyone could do. A good student, her plans are to study medicine with the ultimate goal of becoming a doctor. “I want to be a missionary and doctor in Africa for my career. I would like people to know the lifestyle that people in Africa have to face.

“Everyone is so concerned with making more money and getting farther in life. We’re just so blessed here. There are people that die because they don’t have anywhere near the life we live. I haven’t really done anything to live this life that I have here, and that’s why I’m doing this.”



People in Africa Experiencing Water Shortage

from the years 1980-2013

year 1980	about 18%
year 1990	about 34%
year 2000	about 47%
year 2010	about 63%
year 2013	about 85%