

Wooster Rotary to Support Water Project in Kenya

In the spirit of the international aspect of Rotary, the Rotary Club of Wooster is pleased to support a project in the Maragoli region of Kenya intended to help improve the delivery of clean drinking water in that area. Clean water is a major focus of Rotary International at this time. The Club is working with the Maragoli Community Development Foundation (“MACODEF”), an established non-governmental organization which works in the area under the supervision of an internationally based Board of Trustees. The Club’s efforts will be coordinated by its World Service Committee. The Club’s Board of Directors has fully endorsed the project.

The Project

In much of the Third World access to clean drinking water is severely limited. Major health problems are presented by consumption of unclean water, often polluted by animal or human waste. Merely surviving becomes difficult when faced with chronic exposure to water borne disease. We hope to alleviate this situation to a small extent in a very poor area of the world.

Our project will be undertaken in the Maragoli region of Kenya, which is in the far western part of that country along the Equator and near the shore of Lake Victoria. The nearest town of any size is Kisumu. The area is largely rural, but Kisumu can be reached by commercial air flights. MACODEF has an established presence in the area, including a Project Coordinator who is a resident there.

The project generally will consist of the three following activities:

1. Installation of rainwater harvesting systems
2. Protection of springs
3. Improvement of latrines

Wooster Rotary Involvement

As a Club, we hope to look at this project as having the following three components:

1. First and foremost, our hope is simply to implement the water delivery improvements outlined above in order to help relieve human suffering. This will be accomplished by raising sufficient funds to complete at least one rainwater harvesting

system, protecting several springs, and improve one set of latrines. If additional funds are raised beyond those set forth in the budget, more of the same type of improvements can be undertaken.

2. Second, we hope to encourage several college students to become interested in service above self by paying a portion of their expenses to travel to Kenya during March 2007 to participate in the implementation of the water delivery improvements. The College of Wooster has agreed to pay an additional portion of these students' travel expenses. We will ask the students to pay some small portion of their expenses, if able, in order to have a more focused commitment to the endeavor. Our goal is excite these students about lifetime interest, whether as a vocation or avocation, in international service, along with a favorable impression of the good works of Rotary.

3. Third, we hope to energize our Club and the greater Wooster community to focus on the many needs in Africa. Without taking away at all from other areas of need in our world, many of which have received our attention, we feel that the needs of Africa have not received as much attention as they might. One aspect of this component will be to invite as many Club members as might be interested to travel to Kenya during March 2007 to participate in the implementation of the water delivery improvements. This travel would be at the personal expense of those persons who would elect to go.

We will be accompanied on the trip to Kenya by Dr. David McConnell, a professor of Anthropology and Sociology at The College of Wooster. Dr. McConnell is on the MACODEF Board and has traveled to Maragoli on many occasions. We are in the process of finalizing arrangements to partner with the Rotary Club of Vihiga in Kenya which has offered home hospitality with local Rotarians, so that may alter the itinerary somewhat.

Funds will be raised in several ways. The Club has committed \$2,500 of its own funds to the project. The Club's World Service Committee hosted a dinner featuring Kenya cuisine at the Wooster Inn on October 15, 2006. More than \$2,000 was raised at the dinner.

Several local foundations, including the Noble Foundation, the Jones Foundation, and the Seaman Family Foundation, have committed to generous contributions. The club has received a small grant from District 6650 and hopes to receive more funds from the district and Rotary International to assist in implementing the project.

More is needed. Private, tax deductible donations are welcome and will save lives. One in ten children in this area of Kenya dies before the age of five, mostly from water-borne illnesses. Clean water will save many of these children.

For more information, contact Doug Drushal, World Service Committee Chairman, at 330-264-4444 or ddrushal@ccj.com, or Bob Gorman, Wooster Rotary Club President, at 330-264-4444 or gorman@ccj.com.