

# THE ROSSHIRT FOUNDATION, INC.

*If we can save the life of only one person, all our efforts will be worth it.*

Issue 1, September 2009

*A Report of Success and Need*

*I will never forget the face of a young boy in the streets of Zimbabwe, crying and begging for what he saw me carrying from my hotel: a bottle of water. Something we take for granted and often discard before it's empty because it's no longer cold – **and all he wanted was a drink of water.***

*I was naive in thinking the biggest need for the villagers in this poor country was food. It is water – the source of life and for the people we help, it is renewed hope. I realized that helping these people have safe and accessible drinking water was the true focus of The Rosshirt Foundation and the beginning of our real journey, which was now helping to find water and build wells for the villages of Zimbabwe.*

*This is the premiere issue of The Rosshirt Foundation's report, which will provide an update on where we have been, where we are now and where we want to go. I share this journey with you in words and pictures, and The Rosshirt Foundation, Inc. respectfully requests and gratefully accepts your support and donations. You can help us make a bigger difference for so many in need.*

*Tim Rosshirt*

## An eye opening experience ...

In my three trips to the villages of Zimbabwe since 2006, I know we have made a difference to thousands of children, adults and families. Through generous grants and donations, we have raised \$60,000 and this amount has helped in so many ways that words cannot describe. But ... our work has just begun.

Since my first trip in 2006 when I first saw children begging on the streets, my eyes were opened to the plight of the people of this country. People were starving and dying of hunger. On that first trip, we purchased and distributed three semi-truckloads of maize meal, hoping to meet what I thought was the greatest need of the people: food. We helped the elderly and most vulnerable first and the need for more food was so apparent. Seeing a woman who needed a cane to walk carry a 25-pound sack of grain on her head was something I never imagined could exist. Yet that is a way of life in Zimbabwe.

It was in 2008, during my second trip to that country, when I realized that the need for water was even more dire. Can you imagine going days without water, or walking miles to find water, knowing the risk of disease such as cholera exists from drinking the water? Seeing children crying and begging in the streets for water was so hard to accept.

The latest trip in June 2009 was a complete success – but not without challenges. Nonetheless, there is pride and tremendous gratification in knowing that because of the help and caring of our donors and our journeys to this impoverished country to bring water to the villagers, we were able to overcome those challenges and accomplish what needed to be done: drilling functional wells that provide safe drinking water to local villagers.



In addition to truck pallets of maize meal and other staples, we took books, toys, toothpaste and toothbrushes, and more to the families in 2006.



## The journey for water begins

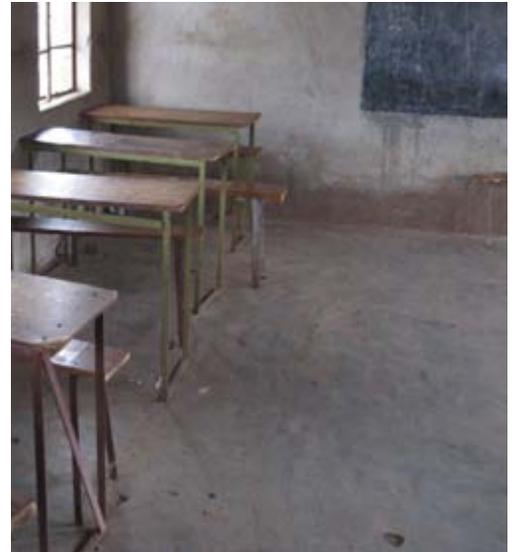
Traveling to this impoverished region of the world in June 2009 took nearly 32 hours door-to-door and upon my arrival, I slept 14 hours in a hotel with no air conditioning, sewage backing up, and rats in the dining room! And this was one of the best hotels in Zimbabwe. Once refreshed, I was ready for what the next several days would bring and how we would drill and find water at the three expected well sites.

The first full day in Zimbabwe, I met with my guide Bash and the man who was most needed to make this happen, Isua, owner of the drilling company. Isua was very helpful in negotiating a fair cost with me for the wells because he knew this was going to help the people of his country. As I also requested, he was willing to wait for payment until each well was built and pumping water.

### The first well site

The first well site was in a school yard that had easy access to the street – this was important so that the villagers could get to the water. One of the challenges I faced was time delays and waiting for people and equipment to arrive. It was while waiting for the trucks to arrive at the site that I got an up close and personal look at the depressing living and learning environment that is typical of so many villages in Zimbabwe. It is sad that children live and learn every day in such deplorable conditions.

Three-and-one-half hours later, the trucks finally arrived at the first well site. It was exciting to see this massive equipment drilling for water through rock five meters at a time. They worked till dark and camped out around the trucks until daylight to protect the equipment. On the second day, the drill struck water at 40 meters and once the casing was on-site to be put in the hole, our work at that site was done for now.



A typical classroom: dirt floors, broken windows – and very little in the way of books or educational materials.

### The second well site

This site was at the end of a very long, bumpy and dusty road – about 45 miles of dirt road that we traveled back and forth on six times – in a truck with no air-conditioning and which felt as if it would crack in two each time we hit a bump. By the time we got to the site, we were covered in dust from head to toe. Our soreness and feelings of discomfort quickly faded to excitement as we learned villagers in this area who normally walked 20 miles to get water from a dirty creek would now have clean water nearby as soon as the well was dug!



Water sprays as the mammoth drill hits 40 meters depth ... and the beginning of a new well has begun.

Again, we waited about two-and-one-half hours for the trucks to arrive and start drilling – only to be delayed again because the drill broke. While the workers set up camp to watch over the equipment during the wait, Bash, myself and another man, Easton, went on to see the third site. Once a farm run by prosperous white men who had been run out by the current government, this land was now home to 250 families living on one farm property!

Here too, we waited two hours for the woman in charge to return from a cattle drive and there was nothing to do but look around. I thought I had already seen the most deplorable of living conditions, but here was the worst I'd seen yet.

There were two young boys nearby, maybe 4 and 5 years old, who tore at my heart. They had no shoes, their clothes were in shreds, and there were flies in their eyes. These children were just sitting in the dirt with the flies and weren't even trying to get the flies off of their faces. Their parents had both died of AIDS and they were being cared for by their grandmother, the woman on the cattle drive. This had to be one of the saddest things I've seen in Zimbabwe.



These sweet, innocent children live in squalor, surrounded by vermin, flies and filth. Knowing we brought some joy to their lives is gratifying.

They were hungry and thirsty, and it was disheartening that all I had with me were two granola bars, which I gave them – and only one more bottle of water which I needed to get through the day. I didn't plan very well that day and that broke my heart. (After all the wells were dug, I did go back to this farmhouse taking food and supplies, as well as some toys that I brought from the U.S. that I gave to these two little boys. They were so happy!)



### The third well site

Finally, late in the day, someone arrived to take us to the third well site, deep into a field of grass and weeds that were higher than the truck we were in. The heat was suffocating and we could not even keep the windows open to get any breeze because of all the bugs coming out of the field. After driving about 20 minutes into the field at dusk, we arrived at the site. At this point, I realized how lucky we were to have our guide – without him, it could have been very frightening. I kept thinking, "What if we lose the guide car in front of us?" I could not imagine sleeping in a field of dangerous bugs and animals for the entire night.

### The finishing touches

After four days, the drillers had dug the three wells: two were 40 meters deep and the other 45 meters. The project was not finished yet – each well needed to have pipes placed and the cement apron around the pipe poured. I was getting a little nervous because we were on a tight schedule and I was returning home in just a few days. Keeping to the schedule in this country is not easy because there are so many delays – but we got it done. The bore holes (the wells) should last forever, and I know they will help thousands of families for years to come.



The well is tested to make sure it is functioning so that villagers would no longer have to suffer from dehydration and the fear of disease.  
**What about the other villages we haven't helped?**

## A job well done

As the drillers were completing their work, we were preparing for a well commissioning/christening event. The commissioning was done at the school bore hole, which was the first site we dug. Here, excited and happy kids gathered around, sang songs, read a poem they wrote just for The Rosshirt Foundation, and said many wonderful things. It was the most wonderful way to show their appreciation. The Zimbabwe news covered the story and the clip ran three times a day for four days! This experience was the most amazing yet. I wish that all of our generous donors could have been there to see the joy and gratitude of these people who are in such need.



Water flows. The wells will provide hundreds of villagers with safe drinking water each day in their own village for decades to come. Children gathered in celebration of the well commissioning event and one student recited the following poem:

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*Rosshirt Foundation, Rosshirt Foundation  
What a gesture  
So good and wonderful.*

*Rosshirt Foundation, Rosshirt Foundation  
Very kind you are  
Coming to rescue us at such a time  
So good and wonderful  
You are.*

*Rosshirt Foundation, Rosshirt Foundation  
Children and parents of Saruwe  
Very thankful we are  
For the life you have given  
Water is life, we know  
Rosshirt Foundation, Rosshirt Foundation,  
We thank you.*

**by Prisca Joel, Saruwe Junior High School, Zimbabwe**



We have come so far and have done so much in just three years. During my first trip in 2006, the children were afraid at first ... they had never seen a "white man." With a little encouragement, the least timid of the children reached out to me ... and within seconds, we were all giving each other "high five's" and the children were laughing and smiling – like children are supposed to.

**We can bring more smiles!**

## My personal observations

Life in these impoverished regions is so very different from life as you and I know it. I want to share some of what I've personally seen in my three trips to this country.

- It is an everyday occurrence to see children as young as 3 years old begging on the streets for food and water. *(Children that age in our world are usually in pre-school or on play dates with other families.)*
- Schools in those remote villages would be condemned in our country; the buildings are rat-infested, windows are broken, the structures are crumbling, full of trash and offer no protection from the elements to the children or teachers. *(Most of our schools have air-conditioning and high-tech computers.)*
- Hundreds of families live together on just one farm property – like area schools, a filthy, germ-laden environment – or they live in fly-infested shacks. *(A 1,500 square foot single-family home in the U.S. is small by our standards.)*
- Children are often shoeless, filthy and sitting in dirt with flies swarming around and on them. *(Parents often pay \$100 or more for name brand athletic shoes here in Ohio.)*
- It's not unusual for villagers to walk 20 miles to the nearest source of water – while knowing most likely that the water was contaminated with disease-bearing germs that could bring on diarrhea and even cholera. *(We walk 20 feet to the refrigerator to get a cold bottle of water.)*



**Our work is not done.**

**Even though we have helped hundreds of people already, there are countless more who need our help. We need to build more wells and give more help to those less fortunate than you and I.**

**On the following page, there is information on how to donate and have a well built in your name.**

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The Rosshirt Foundation, Inc.  
3817 Bentworth Lane  
Columbus, Ohio 43230

## What's ahead for the Rosshirt Foundation?

- Drilling more wells.
- Developing and launching The Rosshirt Foundation website by December 2009.
- Other fundraising events (dinner, Zimbabwe photography art show, and more).
- Media coverage.
- Bringing renewed hope to more villagers in Zimbabwe.

## We could not have helped so many without the generosity of:

- The Moritz Family Foundation\* and its \$25,000 grant
  - All donors for their generous financial gifts

### Special thanks to:

Lou Ann Ransom, Dirk Stevens, Nancy Ingling, Easton Moko and all others who also gave of time, talent, gifts and expertise at little or no cost to the foundation.

My deep gratitude to Sabhera Hossen for her inspiration and Bashir Khan (her brother) and his wife Elvira, and their family for opening my eyes to the plight of their native land.

*\* A plaque in the name of the Moritz Family Foundation will be dedicated at all three new well sites.*

## With your help, we can do so much more.

Your donations will keep clean water flowing in more villages of Zimbabwe and as written in that eloquent poem from a Zimbabwe student, "water is life." Help give better "life" to thousands of children and adults. Make your contribution now to The Rosshirt Foundation, Inc.

### MAKE A CONTRIBUTION

Yes! I want to make a donation to The Rosshirt Foundation and help bring life-saving water to villages of Zimbabwe. My check in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed. My gifting level is:

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$7,500 (or above) Diamond Level** — One well cost \$7,500 in U.S. dollars. My gift will cover the cost of drilling and installation of one well and a plaque in my name will be installed at the well site.

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$5,000 Platinum Level** — my gift entitles me to a framed photograph from the Zimbabwe Collection.

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$1,000 - \$4,999 Gold Level**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$500-\$999 Silver Level**

\_\_\_\_\_ **\$100 - \$499 Bronze Level**

\_\_\_\_\_ \$\_\_\_\_\_ **Other**

Please call me to discuss other gifting opportunities. Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_