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Contact: Michael Lipman
Info@SAPWII.org

South Asia Pure Water Initiative, Inc. Press Release June, 2006

South Asia Pure Water Initiative, Inc. announces the completion of its first “**Adopt-A-Village**” program in India. The program matches local civic groups and churches with poor villages in south India to provide them with clean drinking water.

It all began in June of 2004 when shock was the only word to describe the feelings of Michael B. Lipman, president of South Asia Pure Water Initiative, Inc. when he visited Kolar Karnataka after a 35 year absence from the area. The shock was for the condition of the water in Kolar.

Thirty five years ago when Lipman was an American Peace Corps volunteer working in Kolar in conjunction with Mysore State Agro Industries in India to blast farmer’s irrigation wells and to drill bore wells in villages the water table was 25 feet deep. Back yard wells were common and farmers could irrigate their crops with shallow wells and pump sets. Now deep bore wells are necessary as the water table has receded to depths of 1,000 feet and more. Townspeople and villagers have no access to potable water. Water is delivered untreated in old tanker trucks to neighborhoods and villages where women and children meet them with jugs and pails to collect enough water for their daily use.

On the airplane back to the United States in June 2004 Lipman decided to do something about the water problems in Kolar district. Research directed him to a Canadian designed Bio Sand water filter for household use. He went to Calgary Canada to get training on how to manufacture and implement a program for the distribution of Bio-Sand water filters.

The Bio Sand water filter is made from local materials consisting of concrete, aggregate, sand, and copper which, when assembled properly, gives a very effective and natural water filter. In November 2005 Lipman and his wife and former Rotary Club of Hamden Connecticut president, Cathy Forsberg, established a small factory in Kolar to manufacture Bio-Sand water filters with the help of Rotarian RamaChandre Gowda, the project director, and member the Rotary Club of Kolar, India.

The response from the users of the water filters has been overwhelmingly positive. Users say the water tastes sweet and have reported benefits such as less joint pain and better general health. The secret of the effectiveness of this filter is that its design promotes the growth of a beneficial biological layer on the surface of the sand filter media. This biological layer feeds on the pathogens in the source water poured into the water filter. The filter media is washed powdered granite that is very effective at trapping protozoa and worms and it absorbs viruses, heavy metals and minerals.

The Bio-Sand water filter was specifically designed for rural areas because it uses no electricity, has no moving parts, requires no chemicals or replaceable cartridges, has no on-going costs. Surprisingly, most of the filters have been placed in urban areas to date because the benefits of the filter apply to everyone whether urban or rural. As an additional benefit, employment and service opportunities have been provided for more than twenty people in Kolar, a town with 50-60% unemployment. This includes full time employment for eight previously unemployed young men in the manufacturing facility.

The “Adopt-A-Village” program consists of a donation of fifty Bio Sand water filters to the neediest families in a village. The program also has a water sanitation educational component for the children. As part of the educational component water filters are donated to the village school along with soap and instructions on proper care of water and general cleanliness. Another important component of the “Adopt A Village” program is the training of a village water keeper called a “community steward” who is paid an honorarium for a one year period. The job of the community steward is to see that the water filters are used and maintained in a proper way.

Chilapanahalli, a very poor village of agriculture workers where the family income averages \$120 per year was the first village to be selected for this program. The Rotary Club of North Haven Connecticut committed to support this village in an **“Adopt-A-Village”** program. A gala event to kick off this program in Chilapanahalli was held on June 7, 2006 and included a troop of musicians and actors who tell the story of proper hygiene and water sanitation through songs and skits. “Our dream of providing clean water for the people of India will get a tremendous boost from this cooperative program between our countries. We hope to talk to more civic groups in the United States to sponsor similar programs for many other villages” says Cathy Forsberg.

The motto for South Asia Pure Water Initiative, Inc. is “Helping People One Drop At a Time”. This affordable natural water filter seems to be one of the answers to the water problems in Kolar district and indeed is helping one drop at a time.

For more information, contact South Asia Pure Water Initiative, Inc., 2832 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, CT 06518 or email Info@SAPWIL.org.

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