

Forest Edge Elementary School
1501 Becontree Lane
Reston, VA 20190

May 2, 2023

Dear Community Members,

Imagine having to walk several miles everyday to get dirty water that carries many waterborne diseases, like cholera. You're probably guessing I'm talking about somewhere inhabitable, but sadly, this is the truth for many people living in remote villages in South Sudan. A light of hope, is the nonprofit organization *Water for South Sudan*. This organization provides clean water by building wells in remote villages, and is now providing a fundraising challenge called the *Iron Giraffe Challenge*.

The *Iron Giraffe Challenge* is an event that encourages groups to raise money to help Sudanese communities access better water, sanitation, and hygiene practices. Join my 6th grade class and I in fundraising for clean water in South Sudan, because no one should have to walk miles for water: a basic need...a human right.

Water is critical for survival, and it is something that everyone NEEDS. According to Benjamin Franklin, "when the wells dry, we know the worth of water." The truth of the matter is villagers walk through extreme heat during the dry season to search for water that is often contaminated with disease-causing parasites and bacteria. It is incredibly dirty, practically muddy. Drinking unclean water results in pain, sickness and even death - especially among infants and children.



You know how the saying goes, "a picture is worth a thousand words?" Well in this case it's true. Kevin Carter, a photographer, took a haunting picture that was displayed on *The New York Times* of a boy in Sudan, collapsed on the ground from famine and thirst, with a vulture ominously eyeing him in his weakened state. This picture sent ripples through humanity, causing the world to start seeing the terrible state children are enduring, in South Sudan.

According to Unicef, one in ten children die before their fifth birthday in South Sudan. If that's not sad enough, boys and girls in South Sudan are severely affected by conflict and distress due to violence, recruitment by armed forces and armed groups, displacement, famine, family separation and lack of access to education, nutrition and healthcare due to attacks on schools and hospitals. 59% of the population in all of South Sudan lack safe water, and only 41% of the population has clean water. Children are being tortured by natural and man-made conflicts.

You are probably wondering how you can “Be the CHANGE” for these children. By donating to the *Iron Giraffe Challenge* you can help build a well in the remote villages in South Sudan. A well, which brings more than just clean water to the people living in and near the village. The organization, Water for South Sudan has provided more than 500 wells in South Sudan and has helped more than 320,000 people.

My class learned about the *Iron Giraffe Challenge* after reading the amazing book, *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park. *A Long Walk to Water* tells the story of Salva Dut, the founder of Water for South Sudan. He was one of the *Lost Boys of Sudan*, and after a long time of living through famine, droughts and violence he is sent to Rochester, NY where he decided to make a change for his countrymen still enduring the hardships of his childhood.

Join us in saving lives in South Sudan by donating to the *Iron Giraffe Challenge* using the QR code below. Salva’s nonprofit organization has impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands and will carry on doing so. Everyone deserves access to clean water. Scan the QR below and donate today!

Best,

Mrs. Hanson’s 6th grade class

