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HURRICANE MITCH

High-tech help on way

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CALGARY HERALD

A life-saving shipment of high-tech Calgary water filters is winging its way on a Canadian military jet to Nicaragua, the Central American country devastated by Hurricane Mitch.

Last week's storm killed thousands of people in Central America and left hundreds of thousands stranded and helpless as mudslides and flooding battered Nicaragua, Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala.

Clean drinking water is in short supply and waterborne diseases threaten helpless survivors, David Manz, said Saturday. The University of Calgary professor, who developed the filters, said the equipment could be in Managua, the Nicaraguan capital, as early as Monday.

Unsanitary conditions provide a breeding ground for numerous diseases, said Manz. Government health officials are especially concerned with cholera, malaria and dengue fever.

"Cholera spreads primarily through feces," said Manz. "If it gets into a stream above a community, that community has serious, serious, serious problems."

Even the rinsed water from someone washing soiled clothes can deploy the bacteria on a deadly rampage, he said.

"When you get cholera, you get vomiting and diarrhea simultaneously. And the people die due to dehydration."

Calgary-based Samaritan's Purse, an international Christian relief organization, has purchased the filters and will distribute them with the co-operation of the Nicaraguan government, said John Clayton.

Eighty small filters, capable of purifying 20 litres of water per hour, and four larger units that will clean 600 litres per hour, will be put to use immediately, he said.

"There is no question they will be deployed rapidly."

Damaged roads and limited air transport has made it difficult to get medical supplies to victims, leaving many survivors at the mercy of quickly spreading diseases.

Emergency relief!

Calgary water filter inventor is working to help in the mountains of Nicaragua, remains safe, her mother, Annette Danis, said Saturday.

Danis' was to return to Calgary this week from a two-year placement with the Voluntary International Christian Services missionary group. However, the roads are impassable and it will be at least another week before she comes home.



Making a world of difference to our water.

June 2003

- At the invitation of the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Canada, Davnor has submitted a proposal to ship 700 twenty lph BioSand Water Filters for emergency flood relief. The High Commissioner is taking this proposal to CIDA for funding.
- 35,000 people can receive safe drinking water from this single 20 foot shipping container of filters.