



Water CCC Alums Doing?

Written by Elizabeth Medina.

Walking into their Religious Studies classes this past Thursday, Clearwater Central Catholic High School's Juniors were greeted by two unfamiliar faces and a PowerPoint setup at the front of the room. As the students sat down, the two strangers, donning black shirts and white smiles, stepped out from behind the desk and introduced themselves as Samantha Rubin and Ashley Albers—both CCCHS alums. Eager to begin, they jumped right into their presentation and wasted no time in explaining that, similar to how the Junior class had recently reported on issues that affected the world and that they were passionate about, they themselves had encountered a pressing matter that attracted their attention and that they have spent the majority of the past year doing whatever they can to fix, all via the nonprofit known as Water4Mercy.

Founded by Rubin's mother, Nermine, Water4Mercy's mission, according to its website, is to "transform the world one person at a time by providing schools and villages in third world countries in Africa with permanent and sustainable water and agricultural solutions essential for life and livelihood, thereby promoting dignity and mercy as persons of

God." Using advanced Israeli water and solar technologies to achieve this, Water4Mercy partners with another nonprofit known as Innovation: Africa, working together to bring clean water to some of the 350 million people in sub-Saharan Africa who cannot readily access it.

In the classroom, the two girls displayed pictures they had taken during their trips to the Africa, giving context for each. Some displayed the large amounts of people who were gathered to collect their water, whereas others focused on the actual water they were waiting to collect—dirty, muddy, and often disease-ridden, they explained. The pictures after that depicted the drilling operation, with a tall tower of water erupting from the ground as volunteers had finally hit an aquifer on their third time attempting to find one. Smiling faces dotted the photos, with villagers dancing in the "rain" and celebrating the fact that they would have access to clean water for the first time in their lives. Now, they would not only be able to drink and cook, but they would also be able to make new livings for themselves, selling the water to others, farming, and making bricks for construction.

Ultimately, Water4Mercy is about more than just bringing people water—it is about changing lives. By paying a small fee to keep the taps functional, villagers become responsible for their livelihoods. They become the ones in charge, rather than just having some foreigners help them out and come back again to fix things if something goes wrong. They get healthier, no longer drinking water riddled with bacteria or parasites, keeping them out of the clinics. And they get to live fuller lives, having time to go to school or to go to work instead of spending all day walking to collect water. In the end, people's lives are positively impacted, and that's the point of it all. As Albers said, "Our goal is to change the world, one person at a time."



**CLEARWATER CENTRAL CATHOLIC
HIGH SCHOOL**

Where Possibility & Opportunity Meet

