

# WWJ

**WATER WELL JOURNAL**

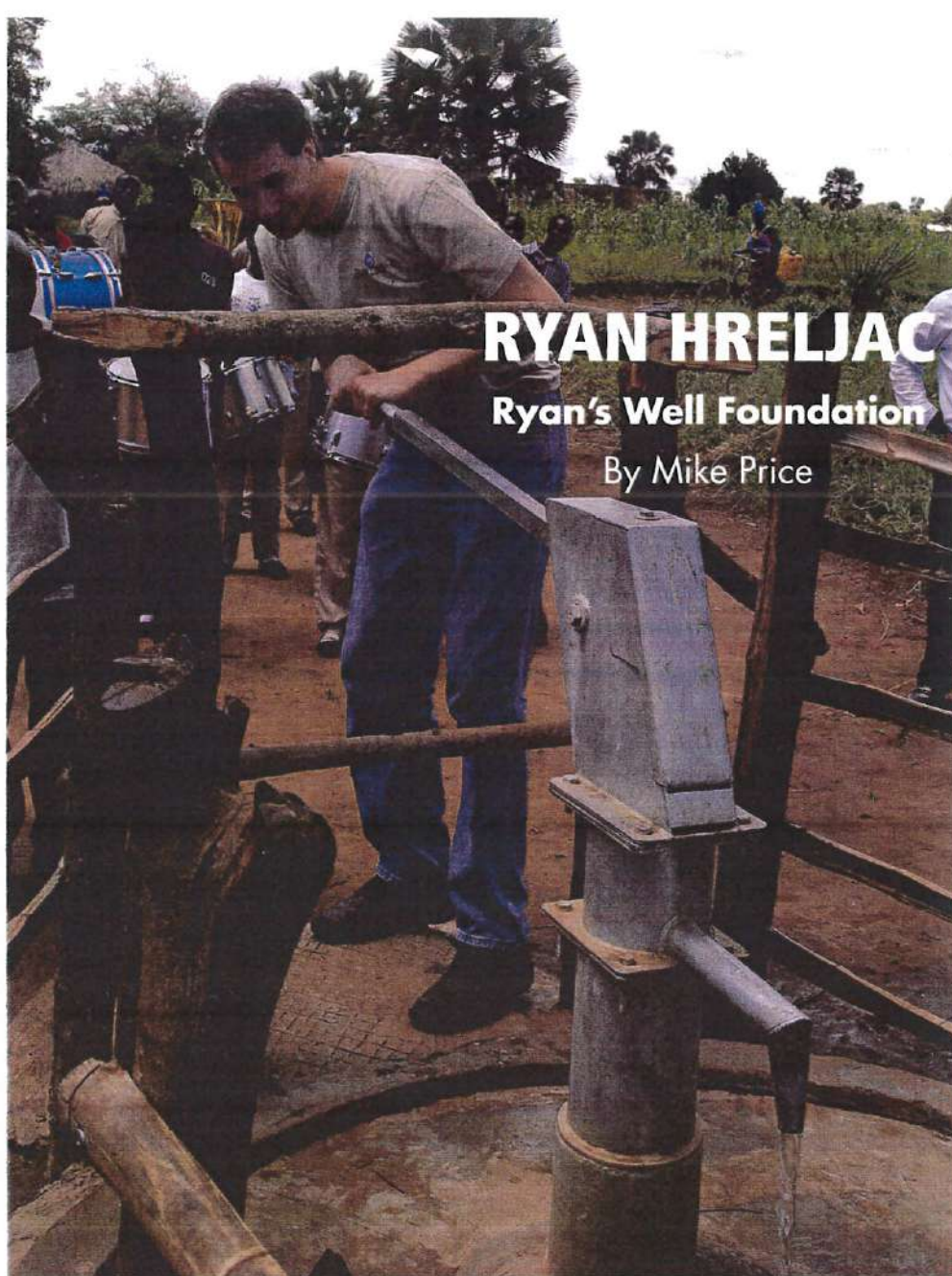
## Providing Water

**Groups aiding those in need, page 30**

*Also:*

**Household market well update, page 20**





# RYAN HRELJAC

## Ryan's Well Foundation

By Mike Price

(Left) Ryan Hreljac of Ryan's Well Foundation operates the first well system he raised funds for 15 years ago. Hreljac was in first grade when he began raising money for the well at a school in Uganda.

### dream of providing clean and safe water in developing countries?

**Ryan Hreljac:** In 1998, when I was in first grade, we had a lesson on poverty. My teacher explained to the class that people in the world were dying because they didn't have clean water. She told us that some people walked for hours in Africa and sometimes it was just to get dirty water. It was just nine or ten steps from my classroom to the drinking fountain for clean water. Before that day in school, I figured everyone lived like I did and so when I found this out, I decided I had to do something about it. I began doing extra chores and telling family and friends about the water crisis so I could raise money. It took almost a year, but eventually I raised enough money to build a well at a school in Uganda.

**WWJ:** Since forming Ryan's Well Foundation, how has your perception changed with regard to the need for developing countries to have access to clean and safe water?

**Ryan:** When I was young I thought building one well would solve the world's water problems. Of course I've learned that's not the case. But I'm still as naive and stubborn as I was when I was six. It gets a little bit harder when you realize how vast the problems are in this world. Things can be complicated. But you focus on what you can do. You learn from your experience, you put that into practice, and you do what you can.

**WWJ:** Your organization supports water and sanitation projects in East and West Africa. How has the current Ebola outbreak in Africa affected your foundation's work? What have you learned from this?

**Ryan:** The Ebola outbreak hasn't affected the work of Ryan's Well, as we are not working in the currently affected countries. But we are keeping a close eye and communicating with our partners on the ground to keep abreast of developments.

**WWJ:** You revisited the site of the original well built in May in Uganda, marking 15 years since the building of

**W**ater Well Journal caught up with Ryan Hreljac, founder of Ryan's Well Foundation, a Canadian registered charity focused on providing clean and safe water in developing countries.

Ryan's Well Foundation was formed in 2001 and has helped build more than 875 water projects and 1120 latrines, bringing safe water and improved sanitation to more than 850,000 people. Hreljac learned of the great need for clean and safe water in developing countries in first grade—and with the support of friends, family, and the community, raised enough money to build a well in 1999 in northern Uganda.

For more information on Ryan's Well Foundation, visit [www.ryanswell.ca](http://www.ryanswell.ca).

Hreljac attended the University of King's College in Halifax on the east coast of Canada, where he completed his studies in international development and political science. He speaks around the world on water issues and on the importance of making a difference, no matter who you are or how old you are. His advice to anyone? "In order to make a positive change in the world, you need to find what you are passionate about and then you need to take steps to act."

**Water Well Journal:** What prompted a desire at an early age to embark on a



Ryan Hreljac



it at Angolo Primary School in northern Uganda. More than 4000 people turned out to greet you. How was that experience and what will you remember most from it?

**Ryan:** It was awesome to go back to Uganda. We visited a number of communities where we've built wells over the years. It was nice to see the joy that comes from having clean water. People don't have to spend days collecting water from unsanitary areas that make them sick.

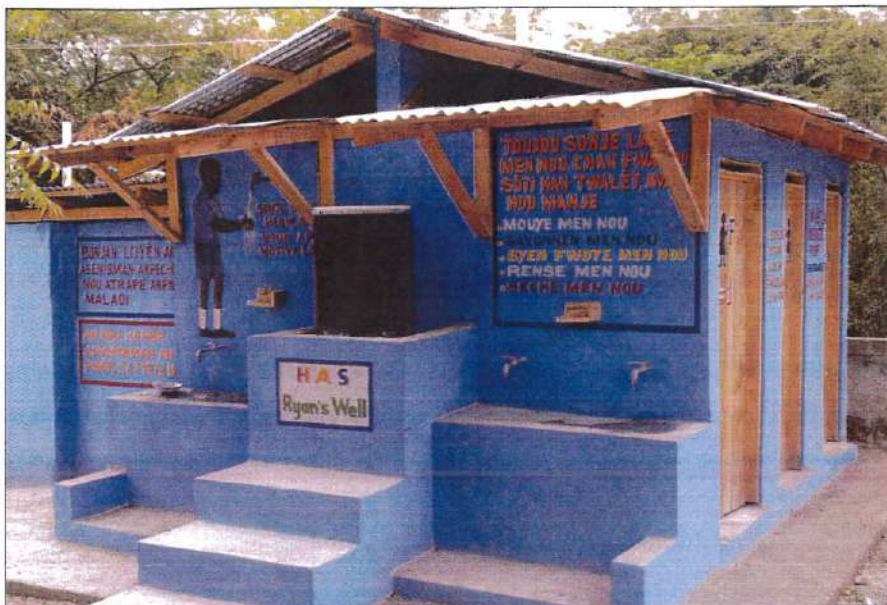
The visit to Angolo Primary School was incredible. It was amazing to see how the community has grown over the years. There's a high school now, right next to the elementary school. They're all using the same water well. I'll remember all those people, their joy, their music, their warm welcome. (You can watch the "Return to Ryan's Well" video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXpxJmyMJUQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXpxJmyMJUQ).)

**WWJ:** What current projects are in the works with the holidays approaching?

**Ryan:** Our Seasonal Giving project is the Adwir Health Clinic, in Alebtong district, northern Uganda. The clinic serves a wide community, including many women who come to deliver their babies. But right now, there's no water, no toilets, no place to bathe in privacy. There's just one clerical person and a midwife. We're raising \$37,950 to build a well, safe latrines, a washing room and handwashing facilities. Once the clinic has water and sanitation, the community will be able to bring on doctors and nurses. Clean water really is the gift that keeps on giving!

**WWJ:** How has your local community in Ottawa, Ontario, embraced your foundation and raised money for water projects?

**Ryan:** The local community—and communities all over the world, in fact—has been very supportive. The local media has always been interested in the work of the foundation, as we've grown over the years. Just recently we were announced as a charity partner in CTV Ottawa's Amazing People Gala (<http://ottawa.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=461154>). Schools and organizations in the area hold fundraisers, and corporations and individuals in the community continue to help fund the work. In our



**The Ryan's Well Foundation promotes the importance of sanitation as it builds latrines, handwashing facilities, and washing rooms as well as water wells. This latrine was recently built in Haiti.**

### Find out about the Developing Nations Fund

The National Ground Water Research and Educational Foundation's Developing Nations Fund provides small assistance grants to benefit the quality of life for people in developing economies around the world without access to plentiful supplies of potable groundwater.

Find out about projects that receive funds and how you can help or donate at [www.ngwa.org/Foundation/developing\\_world/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.ngwa.org/Foundation/developing_world/Pages/default.aspx).

small town of Kemptville, just outside Ottawa, they are very proud that the roots of the foundation are here. They've even named one of the streets Ryan's Well Drive!

**WWJ:** What do you want folks to take away from your foundation?

**Ryan:** We are all ordinary people if you think about it, but when you have a passion and you invite other ordinary people to join in, you become a community and it's with a community of ordinary people that you can make extraordinary things happen. Through the collective efforts of all of us, we can make real change. This is exactly how my little first grade project became the Ryan's Well Foundation. Since 1998, the Foundation has improved the lives of more than 880,000 people with safe water and sanitation, and impacted the lives of millions more with inspiration and motivation to make the world a better place.

**WWJ:** The "Youth in Action" program your foundation created in Ottawa is a creative learning program

designed to educate students about the importance of clean water in the classroom. What are your hopes with this program? Where is it at right now?

**Ryan:** Our education program is multifaceted. We provide tools for teachers to use in their curriculum to help educate students about the importance of clean water and to encourage them to become active and responsible citizens. We also get kids excited about taking action through our school visits, conferences, and skypes. Our School Challenge program is an awesome way to motivate students. While they fundraise for a specific project, that project is under construction and we send photos and updates. It makes it very real and students can see right away the results of their efforts.

**WWJ:** Many water projects throughout the world have formed to help provide clean and safe water in developing countries. What do you see as the biggest hurdles moving forward for your foundation and others?

**RYAN** continues on page 32



## Water Relief Organizations Working Overseas

These organizations are involved with groundwater projects overseas. More information on these organizations can be found at [www.NGWA.org](http://www.NGWA.org) under the "Professional Resources" tab. Click "Groundwater industry links" and a link to organizations involved with overseas groundwater projects will appear.

### The Ann Campana Judge Foundation

Contact: Michael Campana  
[acjf@acjfoundation.org](mailto:acjf@acjfoundation.org)  
[www.acjfoundation.org](http://www.acjfoundation.org)

### Charity: Water

[info@charitywater.org](mailto:info@charitywater.org)  
[www.charitywater.org](http://www.charitywater.org)

### Clear Blue Global Water Project

[www.clearblueproject.com](http://www.clearblueproject.com)

### Columbia Water Center

[watercenter@columbia.edu](mailto:watercenter@columbia.edu)  
<http://water.columbia.edu>

### EDGE Outreach

[claudia@edgeoutreach.com](mailto:claudia@edgeoutreach.com)  
[www.edgeoutreach.com](http://www.edgeoutreach.com)

### Flowing Streams Ministries

[cleanwater2020@gmail.com](mailto:cleanwater2020@gmail.com)  
[www.flowingstreamsministries.org](http://www.flowingstreamsministries.org)

### Global Water

[info@globalwater.org](mailto:info@globalwater.org)  
[www.globalwater.org](http://www.globalwater.org)

### H2O for Life

[phall@h2oforlifeschools.org](mailto:phall@h2oforlifeschools.org)  
[www.h2oforlifeschools.org](http://www.h2oforlifeschools.org)

### Healing Hands International

[jsmith@hhi.org](mailto:jsmith@hhi.org)  
[www.hhi.org](http://www.hhi.org)

### Hope Life International

[admin@hopelifeinternational.org](mailto:admin@hopelifeinternational.org)  
[www.hopelifeinternational.org](http://www.hopelifeinternational.org)

### Inner Voice Foundation

[innervoicefoundation@gmail.com](mailto:innervoicefoundation@gmail.com)  
[www.innervoicefoundation.in](http://www.innervoicefoundation.in)

### Integrated Community Development International

Contact: Jim Hocking  
[jimhocking@icdi.org](mailto:jimhocking@icdi.org)  
[www.icdinternational.org](http://www.icdinternational.org)

### Lifewater International

[pklever@lifewater.org](mailto:pklever@lifewater.org)  
[www.lifewater.org](http://www.lifewater.org)

### Living Water International

[tim@water.cc](mailto:tim@water.cc)  
[www.water.cc](http://www.water.cc)

### Medicine for Mali

[dave.m@shophomemakers.com](mailto:dave.m@shophomemakers.com)  
<http://medicineformali.org>

### Mercy Ships

[mark.thompson@mercyships.org](mailto:mark.thompson@mercyships.org)  
[www.mercyships.org](http://www.mercyships.org)

### Missions Resource International

[ghilliard@missionsresource.org](mailto:ghilliard@missionsresource.org)  
[www.missionsresource.org](http://www.missionsresource.org)

### National Ground Water Research and Educational Foundation

[kmccray@ngwa.org](mailto:kmccray@ngwa.org)  
[www.ngwa.org/Foundation](http://www.ngwa.org/Foundation)

### PresAid Uganda

[administration@presaiduganda.org](mailto:administration@presaiduganda.org)  
[www.presaiduganda.org](http://www.presaiduganda.org)

### Rosshirt Water for Africa Foundation

[trosshirt@insight.rr.com](mailto:trosshirt@insight.rr.com)  
[www.rosshirtwaterforafricafoundation.com](http://www.rosshirtwaterforafricafoundation.com)

### Ryan's Well Foundation

[info@ryanswell.ca](mailto:info@ryanswell.ca)  
[www.ryanswell.ca](http://www.ryanswell.ca)

### Society for Peace Rural Education & Awareness Development (SPREAD)

[spread.india1988@gmail.com](mailto:spread.india1988@gmail.com)

### Thirst Relief International

[nathanwhite@thirstrelief.org](mailto:nathanwhite@thirstrelief.org)  
[www.thirstrelief.org](http://www.thirstrelief.org)

### Water Can

[info@watercan.com](mailto:info@watercan.com)  
[www.watercan.com](http://www.watercan.com)

### Water4 Foundation

[rcgreenly@pumpsofoklahoma.com](mailto:rcgreenly@pumpsofoklahoma.com)  
[www.water4.org](http://www.water4.org)

### Water 4 Kids International

[angie@hope4kidsinternational.org](mailto:angie@hope4kidsinternational.org)  
[www.water4kidsinternational.org](http://www.water4kidsinternational.org)

### Water for Humanity Fund

[waterdowser@hotmail.com](mailto:waterdowser@hotmail.com)  
[www.dowzers.org](http://www.dowzers.org)

### Water for Life

[leonard@waterforlifehaiti.com](mailto:leonard@waterforlifehaiti.com)  
[www.wflhaiti.com](http://www.wflhaiti.com)

### Water for Life International

[garyangiebart@ptera.net](mailto:garyangiebart@ptera.net)  
[www.h2oforlife.org](http://www.h2oforlife.org)

### Water for People

[www.waterforpeople.org](http://www.waterforpeople.org)

### Water of Life

[info@givefreshwater.org](mailto:info@givefreshwater.org)  
[www.givefreshwater.org](http://www.givefreshwater.org)

### Water.org

[donorcare@water.org](mailto:donorcare@water.org)  
[www.water.org](http://www.water.org)

### Waters Edge Ministries

[weministry@gmail.com](mailto:weministry@gmail.com)

### World Hope International

[scottdrury@worldhope.net](mailto:scottdrury@worldhope.net)  
[www.worldhope.org](http://www.worldhope.org)

**RYAN** from page 31

**Ryan:** We are always trying to spread the word about the world water and sanitation crisis. Nearly 800 million people in the world still lack access to clean water and almost 2.5 billion do not have access to safe sanitation. We are a small

organization focused on helping in a handful of countries.

**WWJ:** What goals do you want to reach in the near future with your foundation?

**Ryan:** We want to continue to bring clean water and sanitation for communities in need. We want to continue to in-

spire others. I've learned there are many people who care and are willing to help. What's hugely rewarding for me is meeting people who try to make a difference in their own way . . . people who are passionate about something and then act on it. I love hearing stories of people who've been inspired by my story and they in return inspire me.



## Check Out Expo Educational Opportunities

The 2014 NGWA Groundwater Expo and Annual Meeting will feature back-to-back sessions focusing on groundwater in the developing nations.

- Developing Nations Interest Group Roundtable, 10–11 a.m. on December 11
  - Keeping It Local: How to Sustain and Grow the Groundwater Industry in Developing Nations, 11 a.m.–12 p.m. on December 11
- Visit [www.GroundwaterExpo.com](http://www.GroundwaterExpo.com) for more information.

## Other Resource

Unlocking the Potential of Groundwater for the Poor's website, <http://upgro.org>, is a social and natural science approach to enabling sustainable use of groundwater for the benefit of the poor. A new seven-year international research program, UPGro's primary focus is to enable developing countries and partners in Sub-Saharan Africa to use groundwater in a sustainable way to benefit the poor.

**WWJ:** The groundwater industry features water well drillers, pump installers, manufacturers, and suppliers. How can they aid Ryan's Well Foundation?

**Ryan:** Fundraising is our biggest need. It would be fantastic if the groundwater industry took this on as a challenge and set a goal to fund a water project. Our partners on the ground work very hard every day, often in challenging conditions, to drill wells, install pumps, con-

struct latrines and sanitation facilities. Funding from the groundwater industry to aid in this work would be most appreciated. With support from the industry, your customers and partners, we could accomplish a lot together, and bring clean water to more people in need.

**WWJ:** Lastly, do people with Ryan's Well Foundation teach people in developing countries how to work with well systems or even revisit wells they installed in the past to ensure they are

**Nearly 800 million people in the world still lack access to clean water and almost 2.5 billion do not have access to safe sanitation.**

**still operating and providing clean and safe water?**

**Ryan:** Absolutely. A local water committee is organized for every project we do. These are members of the community who are trained and empowered to manage and maintain the water source over the long term. Pump mechanic training helps ensure that the equipment will continue to operate. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation is done regularly by our local partner in the country, as well as a Ryan's Well representative. All of this helps ensure a sustainable source of water for years to come. [www.ryanwell.org](http://www.ryanwell.org)

Mike Price is the senior editor of *Water Well Journal*. In addition to his WWJ responsibilities, Price produces NGWA's newsletter and contributes to the Association's quarterly scientific publication. He can be reached at [mprice@ngwa.org](mailto:mprice@ngwa.org).



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[www.LifewaterDrillingTechnology.com](http://www.LifewaterDrillingTechnology.com)

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