



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RYAN HRELJAC, FOUNDER OF RYAN'S WELL, RECEIVES HERO'S WELCOME IN UGANDA

Over 4,000 people turn out to greet the young Canadian man who changed their lives with his gift of clean water as a six-year-old

Ottawa, ON – June 23, 2014

The Ryan's Well Foundation announced today that Founder Ryan Hreljac received a hero's welcome at his historic revisit to the site of the original well he helped build with little more than stubbornness and determination as a six-year-old boy. For the 22 year old Canadian and his family, it was an emotional and fascinating visit, where Ryan met with some of the hundreds of people whose lives have improved dramatically and forever because of his childhood dream.

Fifteen years ago six-year-old Ryan inspired a community, a nation and the world by rallying support for a well to be built at Angolo School in Uganda; thus beginning an international charitable organization that has built over **822** water projects and **1025** latrines, bringing safe water and improved sanitation to more than **805,813** people. Ryan's face went from local newspapers to international media, and he soon got a call from a producer of "Oprah". He replied that he had something important at school (he was a student helper for the kindergarten class) and couldn't travel to Chicago. Ryan did eventually visit [Oprah](#) twice to tell his story, in his very best leather tie.

At 6'7", at 22 years of age, there is nothing little about Ryan now. He's finished university, and is a sought-after keynote speaker at many international events. He's received significant [honours](#), and is committed to continuing his volunteer work with the Foundation. Ryan still sees himself as that ordinary kid who loved video games, and just wanted to help make the world a little more fair. His key message? Anyone, no matter what age or circumstance, can make a difference in this world.

This past May, Ryan and his family returned to the site of that very first well in Uganda to mark its 15th anniversary, and to monitor the projects in the area. Over 4,000 people were there to greet him; forming the same long line as they had for the little boy 15 years ago, and bursting into applause as his vehicle came into view.

He may have been a great deal taller, but he was still their Ryan, and the happiness and health he had brought them was reflected in their smiles and their cheers.

In a ceremony rich with music and dance, the people of Angolo Community welcomed their Canadian son home. Young and old waited to have a few words with Ryan, give him gifts (chickens and eggs) and have their picture taken with the young man who had given them so much hope. Ryan had time for them all; bending low to chat with the smallest children and speaking respectfully to the elders.

Available for media

- Still photographs capturing a wide variety of colourful and emotional moments featuring Ryan, his mother and father, well site, community members (children and adults), local partners and dignitaries

About the Ryan's Well Foundation: The Ryan's Well Foundation grew out of the commitment of six-year-old Ryan Hreljac, who learned of the great need for safe water in developing countries. The Ryan's Well Foundation is a family of people committed to delivering access to safe water and sanitation as an essential way to improve the lives of people in the developing world. We empower citizens of all ages to take action and effect change in the world. Founded in 2001, Ryan's Well is a registered Canadian charity (www.ryanswell.ca).

Ryan Hreljac is a graduate of King's College University (Nova Scotia) in International Development and Political Science. He has received many international [awards of distinction](#). He has been featured on international media such as the Oprah Winfrey Show and CNN, and his Foundation has received support from prominent individuals including the Prince of Wales, Craig Kielburger, Matt Damon and Dr. Jane Goodall.

For further information or to arrange an interview with Ryan Hreljac please contact:

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Ryan in Uganda May 2014



Ryan in Uganda, age 9