



Ryan's Well Foundation celebrates 10 years

January 14, 2011 (Kemptonville, Ontario, Canada): The Ryan's Well Foundation, which began with the dream of one six-year-old boy, is celebrating its 10th anniversary in 2011.

Ryan Hreljac was in his first grade class when he launched his mission to bring safe drinking water to all. Now a young adult, he sits on the board of Ryan's Well Foundation and remains as committed as ever to that childhood dream.

Like most six year olds, Ryan figured everyone lived as he did and only had to take a few steps to the nearest drinking fountain to get clean water. When he learned this wasn't the case, he decided he had to do something about it. He raised funds by first doing household chores and later speaking to schools and community groups. Ryan's first well was built in 1999 at Angolo Primary School in northern Uganda.

From those hopeful beginnings, he and his family expanded their effort to build wells in Africa and, in 2001, started Ryan's Well Foundation to continue the work. The organization's mission remains true to Ryan's first goal - to deliver access to safe water and sanitation as an essential way to improve the lives of people in the developing world. The Foundation also aims to empower citizens of all ages to take action and effect change in the world.

"It is hard to imagine that my simple, *naïve* grade one school project has grown into the Ryan's Well Foundation," said Ryan Hreljac, founder. "Over 10 years, the work of Ryan's Well has become the work of countless people, young and old, from around the world. This is a message for all that even kids in Grade One can make a difference."

Over the past 10 years, the Foundation has remained true to its roots focusing on completing sustainable water and sanitation projects with experienced partners, and maintaining a personal relationship with donors and supporters. To date, Ryan's Well has completed **638** projects in **16** countries bringing safe water and improved sanitation to **705,365** people with the combined work of a family of communities, schools, individuals, organizations, groups and more. Over 650 schools from over 30 countries have been involved in fundraising activities in support of the Foundation and their message of safe water has been presented to hundreds of thousands of people, mainly youth, through speaking engagements and education programs.

"Like so many of us, I got involved because I was so inspired by Ryan's story, and by the commitment of his family and the Foundation to carry it forward," said Shawn McCarthy, Chair. "Our 10th anniversary confirms a level of performance, maturity and stability. We remain committed to working with partners in developing countries to provide people with access to the basic necessities of safe water and improved sanitation."

Over the coming months, Ryan's Well will be highlighting their work, hosting photography shows of the work of Lesley Marino – a photographer who visited our projects in Uganda in 2010, and completing the 2nd annual School Challenge. For more information, please visit their website at www.ryanswell.ca.

About Ryan's Well Foundation: The Ryan's Well Foundation grew out of the commitment of one boy, 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. Ryan's Well has completed over 630 projects in 16 countries bringing safe water and improved sanitation services to over 700,000 people. Founded in 2001, Ryan's Well is a registered Canadian charity - No. 88858 7110 RR0001. (www.ryanswell.ca)

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