

Paul Grosso: Japan

WELL FREES POOR WOMEN

They say a woman's work is never done. Now imagine that woman lives in a village miles from the nearest clean water.

Paul and Sallyanne Grosso have traveled the world and seen just how much a simple well can improve lives in such a village. So when they got their Pay-it-Forward money, they donated it through UNICEF to buy and install a well pump somewhere in Africa.

"We chose the water pump because we wanted to affect the lives of not one individual but many," Sallyanne explained. "We recalled scenes across the developing world where we saw the toil and hardship associated with bringing water to a family."

Sallyanne grew up in Australia where she learned as a child that you don't survive long in the bush without water. Whenever her family traveled, a canvas water bag was hung on the front bumper of their car, just in case. She saw and admired how the Aborigines could survive and thrive in what appeared to be endless desert.

"For over 30 years, my husband and I have traveled to remote places in the world where having clean, fresh water is a luxury," she said. "This luxury does not flow from a tap but is often carried on the shoulders or head of a female family member, often for miles."

She can vividly remember a trip to Rajasthan, India, where women clad in brightly colored saris trekked miles daily with metal water jugs. "Then my husband and I arrived at a village where a single water pump was the gathering place for the community. This single

water pump brought extraordinary changes to the lives of the people, especially the women." Time that had been spent on getting water could now be put to use raising or gathering food, they realized.



There are no spigots in much of Africa

They chose UNICEF because it both had the pumps and could get one to a community in need of clean, available water. "We have donated to them over the years because they seem to have access to many areas of need." A trip to deliver aid to Somalia years ago showed her that sometimes a large organization is required to get help to those who need it.

They aren't sure where the well pump was installed, and they don't really care "because we know it will bring joy and great benefit to many people," Sallyanne said.

"One just has to imagine being without water during an emergency to realize the impact it has on one's life," she said. "But not to have clean water is a human tragedy."

The well isn't the only donation in their Pay-it-Forward file, though. They also have given to the Himalayan Cataract Project, inspired by trips in Nepal where they encountered people going blind from simple eye infections; the Greg Mortenson school project for girls in Pakistan and Afghanistan (when you empower women and girls to live more productive lives, the whole community is enriched, she explained); the Grameen Foundation for microfinance, and Transforming Faces Worldwide, a Canadian non-profit, inspired by poor children they have met in the Andes, "with cleft palates without any possibility of leading a normal life."

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