



water^{1st}
INTERNATIONAL

WATER 1ST INTERNATIONAL
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(206) 297-3024
info@water1st.org
www.water1st.org



2008 Annual Report



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Water 1st International is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

WATER 1ST STAFF AND CONSULTANTS

Marla Smith-Nilson, *Executive Director*
Kirk Anderson, *Fundraising/International Programs*
Stephanie Nelson, *Donor Relations/Events*
Jennifer Norling, *Fundraising/Events/Outreach*
Christopher Brown, *Film/Photography/Web*
Steve Deem, *International Programs*
Ann Hollar, *Education Outreach*
Sandy Nelson, *Graphic Design*

OUR PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Akshaynagar Pallisri Sangha – India
COCEPRADIL and Catholic Relief Services – Honduras
Dushtha Shasthya Kendra (DSK) – Bangladesh
Water Action – Ethiopia

(January 1–December 31, 2008)

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IT'S OUR PROBLEM, TOO

April 2009 marked our fourth anniversary as an organization. **In this short time, Water 1st supporters have given nearly \$3 million to fund 170 projects in four countries, benefiting more than 28,000 people.**

When we started in 2005 with no money in the bank and a mailing list of about 100 people, we were guided by a few simple beliefs that remain with us today:

- Access to safe water is a basic human right.
- Providing people with safe water systems, latrines, and hygiene education is the first step to ending the cycle of poverty.
- The individuals and communities who benefit from Water 1st-supported projects must be involved in all aspects of planning, implementation, and long-term operation and maintenance of their projects. They should make significant investments of their time, labor, and/or money to demonstrate they value the project.
- A vital part of our work is sharing ideas, techniques, and approaches with our partners and other organizations working to end poverty and the global water crisis.
- The dedication of Water 1st's staff, board, volunteers, supporters, and local partner organizations is crucial to our success.

That small initial group of supporters has turned into a network of nearly 4,000, all giving what they can to this cause. We are proud of the diverse group that makes up the Water 1st community. We are not alone in our feeling that there is something special about the donations that Water 1st supporters give.

"The funds for your project don't come from some big suitcase," said Wilfredo Ramos, the president of our local partner organization to the community of Valle de La Cruz, Honduras. "They come from families in the United States who are each giving something, and when it's all added together it is enough for your project."

It's not just water and sanitation projects you're helping build. Your contributions also send a message to the world that we refuse to accept that poverty is an unavoidable part of the human condition. And just because we don't live in Ethiopia, Honduras, Bangladesh, or India doesn't mean that this is someone else's problem. It's our problem, too.

On behalf of the people we serve, thank you for being part of this exciting, life-changing work.

Marla Smith-Nilson
Executive Director

James R. Moore
2007–2008 Chair, Board of Directors

THE MISSION OF WATER 1ST

Our mission is to unite people to fight the global water crisis. We believe this worldwide, silent catastrophe will be solved when we build a community of concerned individuals and mobilize them to take simple, effective actions.

Water 1st educates people about the water supply and sanitation crisis in developing countries and the need for sustainable solutions, and provides an opportunity to respond in a way that has a lasting impact on people's lives. The funds we raise help the poorest communities in the world implement sustainable, community-managed projects that integrate water supply, sanitation, and health education.

THE WORLD WATER AND SANITATION CRISIS

Lack of access to safe drinking water and sanitary latrines is the top public health problem in the world:

- More than 1 billion people in the world do not have access to a safe and adequate water supply, and 2.6 billion people lack access to basic sanitation.
- Each year, more than 5 million people die from water-related diseases—and most deaths occur in children under age 5.

Without safe water nearby, children pay the price:

- Water-related illnesses are the No. 1 killer of children in the world. Every day, 5,000 children die from diarrhea, an easily preventable illness.
- Even when children do survive, they too often do not thrive. They are sick, malnourished, and make daily treks to collect water instead of going to school or studying.

Lack of access to safe water has a disproportionately devastating effect on women and girls, who are traditionally responsible for water collection:

- On average, women and girls in developing countries walk 5 kilometers a day, carrying 5 gallons of water in heavy pots on their heads or strapped to their backs. This saps their energy, causes injuries, and prevents them from participating in economic and social activities.
- Water-collection duties prevent millions of girls from attending school; and when schools lack toilets, girls often do not attend. The resulting lack of education perpetuates a cycle of illiteracy and poverty.

WHY WATER 1ST?

People living in extreme poverty have many needs, but we believe water comes first. We know that a sustainable, safe water supply is critical for survival. Safe water saves lives. There is a powerful and direct link between human development and water, sanitation, and hygiene projects.

Water 1st projects:

- reduce childhood mortality;
- improve health;
- reduce the time and effort spent, normally by women and girls, carrying water from distant sources;
- increase gender equality by reducing women's workloads so they can devote their energy to other activities, and enabling girls to go to school and develop the skills that will allow them to become leaders and decision-makers;
- protect the environment through better water and waste management practices;
- improve self-worth, social status, and dignity;
- improve economic development by increasing business opportunities, decreasing medical expenditures, and reducing the time taken off work or school due to illness; and
- accelerate overall community development by providing techniques, skills, and concrete experience in successfully addressing a major community-level issue.

Unlike Water 1st projects, more than half of all water supply projects in the developing world fail. All Water 1st projects are still in operation today.



2008 INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

In 2008, Water 1st continued its support of four partner organizations dedicated to integrated water supply, sanitation, and hygiene education projects in Ethiopia, India, Bangladesh, and Honduras. A significant achievement for Water 1st during the year was passing the 25,000-beneficiaries milestone.

Our projects assist the world's poorest—people living on less than \$1 a day and in some cases less than \$1 a week—who do not have access to functioning public or private water supply and sewer systems.

REMOVING OBSTACLES TO THE GOAL OF SAFE WATER FOR ALL

“Lack of adequate capacity” is a phrase often used by development professionals. It means there is a shortage of organizations and institutions in developing nations that are capable of implementing sustainable water and sanitation projects in poor communities. The consequence is a high project failure rate.

By working with local partner organizations to implement projects, Water 1st is building local capacity to address the water and sanitation crisis. The organizations we select as our partners identify, design, and build appropriate technological solutions. And, because they have the ability to engage, educate, and train local communities, our local partners effectively prepare communities to manage their own water and sanitation systems. Water 1st provides consistent, annual funding to each of our partner organizations in response to a regional plan that they have developed to provide comprehensive water and sanitation coverage in a defined area. This predictability in financing and proactive planning allows our partners to be efficient and effective. It also fosters an environment of continuous program improvement. The end result is a group of projects that are sustainable over the long term.

PROJECT MONITORING AND FOLLOW-UP

We are diligent in selecting, evaluating, and monitoring the ongoing work of our partner organizations. Applying a comprehensive program evaluation system is one of our central operating principles. We take very seriously our role in ensuring that our donors' money is being spent efficiently and effectively. We also believe that our partner organizations and our beneficiary communities appreciate our thorough assessment of their work. When they have done exemplary work, they are proud of their accomplishments. Getting positive feedback from the donor is a great reward for them and a motivator to maintain high standards.

COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

Community empowerment is central to the Water 1st program model and a primary reason that our projects are sustainable over the long term. Our beneficiary communities are empowered through participation in planning, implementing, and financing of their projects, as well as assuming responsibility for maintenance and repairs. Community members learn a variety of skills through these projects, equipping them to take on new development endeavors.

ROLE OF WOMEN

Women and girls are traditionally responsible for collecting water for their families, so they benefit significantly from these projects and contribute to their sustainability. Our projects place women in key roles, particularly on the local water committee. In this way, women participate in design and siting decisions, as well as long-term project maintenance. Having an important public role as a hygiene promoter or a water committee member provides a woman with job skills, enhances her status in the community, gives her more confidence, and ultimately paves the way for increased involvement of women in community affairs.



In communities all over the world, we have witnessed a chain reaction of events as a result of a water project. Empowered communities no longer feel isolated and helpless, and on their own tackle other problems in the community, like building roads and schools and opening small businesses. That's why at Water 1st, we believe providing people with water is the first step to ending poverty.

OUR WORK IN THE FIELD

ETHIOPIA

COMPLETED: Ilamu Muja project serving 3,500 people.

IN-PROGRESS: Bishikiltu water system serving 4,250 with 12 public water taps and 45 model latrines, plus engineering studies for three water systems to be constructed from 2010 - 2012.



HONDURAS

COMPLETED: Agua Caliente and San Gabriel projects serving 580 people.

IN-PROGRESS: Four water systems with 233 household water taps and toilets, hygiene education, and natural resource protection serving 1,355 people in Plan de Gallinero, Tierra Colorada, San Sebastian, and Valle de La Cruz communities of the municipalities of San Andrés and Erandique.

BANGLADESH

COMPLETED: 144 water projects, 177 toilets, and hygiene education in Pallabi, Demra, and Kamrangir Char slum settlements of Dhaka serving 12,240 people.

IN-PROGRESS: 60 water systems, community latrines, and hygiene education serving 5,500 people including expansion to Chittagong slums.



INDIA

COMPLETED: 27 wells with hand pumps, 569 toilets, and hygiene education serving 11,800 people in the Sundarbans.

IN-PROGRESS: Two wells with hand pumps, 40 toilets, and hygiene education serving 400 people.

OUR WORK AT HOME

Our fundraising and outreach strategy is an intentional effort to develop community around the cause of clean water, sanitation, and health education. We believe the global water crisis will be solved when we build and mobilize a community of concerned individuals to take simple, effective actions – making a donation, telling friends about Water 1st, visiting a project, or volunteering for the organization.

EVENTS:

GIVE WATER • GIVE LIFE BENEFIT

In October 2008, we held the 4th annual Give Water • Give Life Benefit, our premier fundraising event of the year. To accommodate our growing guest list, we moved the event to a larger space. More than 600 guests enjoyed a dinner reception, a unique silent auction, and a documentary film featuring Water 1st project beneficiaries. A record \$489,000 was raised for communities in need of clean water.

Water 1st was pleased to present the 3rd annual Water Ambassador award to Brian and Diane Langstraat. This award recognizes outstanding supporters who have played a critical role in making the work of Water 1st possible. Water 1st and our beneficiaries are extremely grateful to Diane and Brian for their generosity and compassion.

Special thanks to our corporate sponsors, table sponsors, silent auction donors, volunteers, and guests for their support of this event.



CARRY 5 WALKING FOR WATER

In 2008, Water 1st created a new, all-ages event—CARRY 5, a 5K Walk for Water. Individual and team participants raised money, and on walk day, tried to carry 5 gallons of water for 5 kilometers, the average walk made by women and children in poor countries who lack access to safe, convenient water supplies. More than 400 Seattleites participated, raising \$54,000. Special thanks to our corporate and in-kind sponsors and all participants for making this first-time event such a success.

WATER 1ST – BEER 2ND FUN(D)RAISER

Our 3rd annual Water 1st – Beer 2nd Fun(d)raiser in Seattle featured beer (and root beer!), live music, dancing, and a short presentation about the work of Water 1st. The event drew such a large crowd that we filled the venue beyond capacity and raised \$30,000.

Also in 2008, we introduced Water 1st to Portland, Oregon with a Water 1st–Beer 2nd event. Guests learned about our work and funded a community water project in India.



OUTREACH TO SCHOOLS AND YOUTH

Water 1st's unique program for schools and youth grew considerably in 2008, reaching dozens of schools in Seattle and beyond. Students learn about the global water crisis and Water 1st's response in holistic, integrative ways using Water 1st's Water Day curriculum—a DVD/film and presentation, classroom discussion, various writing, arts, math, and science activities, and fundraising ideas. As young people grow in their understanding of the issue, they are inspired to take action.

Among the many schools that supported Water 1st in 2008 were:

Arcadia Learning Center, Inc.
Broadview-Thomson School
Brooklyn Friends School
Chase Lake Elementary School
Daniel Bagley Elementary School
Glenbard East High School
Mars Hill Graduate School
The Meridian School
Montlake Elementary School
Oceanside School District
The Red Oaks School
Secret Garden Preschool
St. Joseph School



The 7th-grade class at Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School in Palo Alto, California, took part in a philanthropy project called Avodah L'Olam, in which students research and choose a non-profit organization, educate themselves on the issue, do a presentation, and raise money for the cause. Tal Peleg chose Water 1st and raised \$1,100.



Water 1st delivers cards made by students from Seattle's Meridian School to the community of Ilamu Muja, Ethiopia.

ETHIOPIA WATER TOUR – CELEBRATING ILAMU MUJA

The annual Ethiopia Water Tour is an opportunity to witness the work of Water 1st first hand. Travelers visit rural communities with in-progress and completed water projects, interact with community members to learn about their lives and their water projects, meet with representatives of our local partner organization, and participate in a one-day work project.

In January 2008, we had our largest trip yet. Travelers were fortunate to take part in the inauguration ceremonies for the Water 1st Ilamu Muja water project. Of the 3,500 beneficiaries, at least 500 were on hand to celebrate the culmination of 18 months of hard work. At 2 p.m. on January 14, water officially began to flow from the 10 new taps constructed with funds provided by Water 1st.

Participants also met with 200 villagers from Bishikiltu. On this particular day, Water 1st was able to announce that we could fund their water project. The community was overjoyed. "We are reborn today," said Galana Bayesa, the village headman. "We are poor, but we will do whatever is required to make this project happen."

The adventure culminated with a work day. Travelers teamed up with local community members to help build a water point. Taking part in constructing a tangible element of a water project that would soon provide water to hundreds of rural Ethiopians was a rewarding conclusion to the trip.



2008 DONORS

We thank those who generously contributed to Water 1st from January 1 to December 31, 2008. Through the support of individuals, schools, corporations, religious organizations, civic groups, and foundations—people of all ages and backgrounds—together, we raised \$1,013,451 to support the implementation of 53 water projects in Honduras, India, Bangladesh, and Ethiopia.

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

\$25,000 AND ABOVE

Ty Cramer and Steve Romein
Pat Kennedy and Melissa Ries
Brian and Diane Langstraat
Darryl Swenson and Carol Merrifield

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Jonathan Grodnick
Jon and Nancy Magnusson
James Moore and Kristi Branch
Mary Pigott
Richard and Barbara Stuart

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Stan and Kristine Baty
Norm and Lisa Bontje
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Jennifer Norling and Kirk Anderson
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Brant Oelschlagel and Anne-Marie Amies
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Daniel Won
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Julie Wroble and Rick Kolpa

While space does not allow us to acknowledge all of our donors, every gift is valued and adds up to support entire village projects. Your support has a lasting impact on thousands of lives and sends a message of hope to the people we serve around the world.



\$500 - \$999

Eric Baldwin and Penelope West
Kathy Barker
Cheryl Bauermeister
Elissa Benson and Mark Brannon
Luther Black and Christina Wright
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David Bryant and Romy Mann
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Dwight Elving
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Craig Vierling and Jennifer Durrie
Betsy and Allen Webb
Carter and Jennifer Weil
Frank Weiss
John and Becky Williamson
Christina Woods and James Potts

CORPORATIONS

\$10,000 AND ABOVE

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Barry Swenson Builder
Costco Wholesale
Microsoft Giving Campaign
SurveyMonkey.com

\$5,000 – \$9,999

Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc.
Laird Norton Company, LLC
Mercury
The Mosaic Company
Tonic Generation, Inc.
Washington Mutual Matching Gifts

\$2,500 – \$4,999

Aspect Consulting, LLC
CH2M HILL
Hach
Northwest Hydraulic Consultants, Inc.
Starbucks Matching Gifts Program

\$1,000 – \$2,499

J.A.S. Design Build, Inc.
Laird Norton Tye
M.A. Mortenson Company
Qualcomm Matching Gifts
Raz Public Relations, LLC
Rexonad Beaufort, Inc.
Security Press, Inc.

\$999 AND UNDER

Attachmate
Baker Knapp & Tubbs
Benaroya Hall Music Center
Classical Wines from Spain
Executive Conversation
GoodSearch
GSI Water Solutions, Inc.
Jet Parts Engineering, Inc.
Lake & Company Real Estate, Inc.
LGM Machining, LLC
Nike Matching Gift Program
Pacific Continental Bank
Salmon Bay Community Lending
Symetra Matching Gifts
Third Place Books
Twist Restaurant & Lounge

FOUNDATIONS

\$40,000 AND ABOVE

Covenant World Relief
Laird Norton Family Foundation

\$20,000 – \$39,999

Johnson Haefling Foundation

\$10,000 – \$19,999

Lenore Hanauer Foundation
Siochian Foundation

\$2,000 – \$9,999

The Atticus Trust
Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
Matching Gifts Program
Chaney Family Foundation

\$1,000 AND UNDER

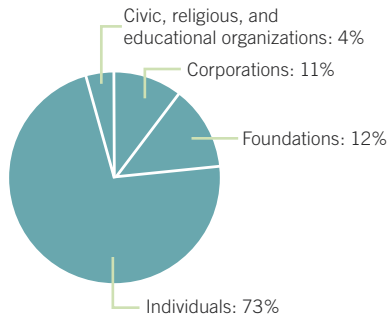
Thomas and William Gilbane
Foundation
Review Foundation

CIVIC AND RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

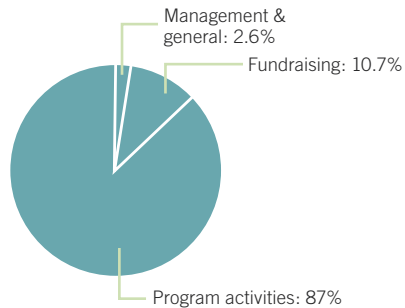
Bellingham Covenant Church
Bellingham Covenant Women
Community Church of Boulder Junction
Edmonds-Lynnwood Lutheran Parish
Girl Scout Totem Council Troop 18
Leadership Eastside
McMinnville Covenant Church
Missio Lux
Monastery of St. Gertrude
Port of Seattle
Quest Community Development
Sisters of Notre Dame
Sisters of St. Joseph of Peace
Solid Ground Washington
St. Malachi Church
State of Washington
Wellesley Hills Congregational Church

HOW YOUR \$1 WAS SPENT IN 2008

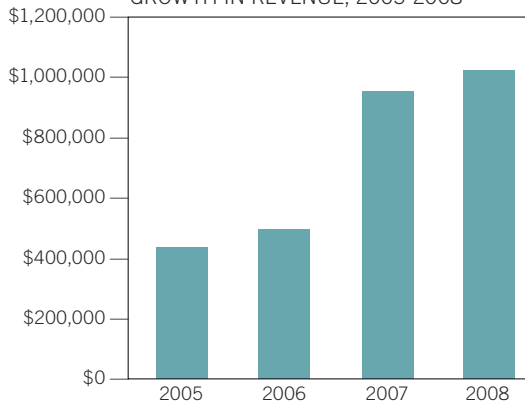
REVENUE SOURCES:



2008 EXPENSE ALLOCATIONS:



GROWTH IN REVENUE, 2005-2008



INCOME:

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, our total annual income was \$1,013,451, an increase of about 10 percent over 2007. Even in the recession, we are making progress toward our strategic goal of raising \$2 million annually by 2011.

More than 70 percent of our funding comes from individual donors, giving us a sustainable fundraising base. In 2008, through new events such as CARRY 5, we continued to expand our base of supporters, doubling our number of donors from 2007 to 2008.

EXPENSE:

Total expenditures in 2008 were \$1,082,297, of which \$938,546 (87 percent) supported our program activities. Our program activities include: the funds awarded by contract to our partner organizations to implement water, sanitation, and hygiene education components; the costs of monitoring the implementation and long-term sustainability of those projects; and the funding of our work in advocacy and education about the world water and sanitation crisis.

We spent \$143,751 (administrative plus fundraising expenses) to raise \$1,013,451, a ratio of 13 percent.

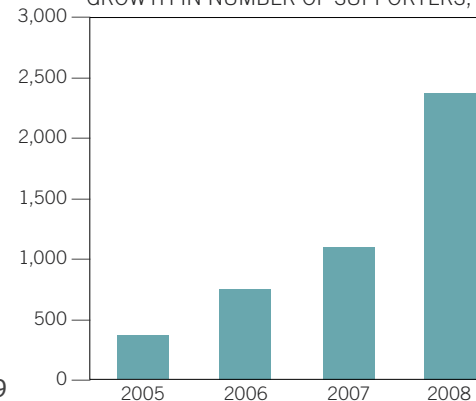
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS

Year Ended December 31, 2008

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Total
SUPPORT AND REVENUE			
Special events revenue	\$ 531,210	\$ 25,000	\$556,210
Less: direct expenses	(90,528)		(90,528)
Net special events revenue	440,682	25,000	465,682
Contributions	291,123	6,000	297,123
Grants	157,100		157,100
In-kind contributions	79,781		79,781
Other income	5,164		5,164
Investment income	8,601		8,601
Net assets released from restrictions	76,000	(76,000)	
Total support and revenue	1,058,451	(45,000)	1,013,451
EXPENSES			
Program services	938,546		938,546
Support services			
Management and general	27,684		27,684
Fundraising	116,067		116,067
Total expenses	1,082,297		1,082,297
Change in net assets (deficit)	(23,846)	(45,000)	(68,846)
Net assets, beginning of year	96,015	129,000	225,015
Net assets, end of year	\$ 72,169	\$ 84,000	\$156,169

Copies of our 2008 Form 990 and audited financial statements are available at Water 1st International's website, www.water1st.org, or call us at 206.297.3024.

GROWTH IN NUMBER OF SUPPORTERS, 2005-08



For just \$70 per beneficiary, we provide water, sanitation, and hygiene education services that are designed to last a lifetime.