

Marshalltown Rotary, Hy-Vee and Rotary International pledge to support clean water project

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Rotary International, the Marshalltown Rotary Club and Hy-Vee Inc., have joined forces with Trinity Lutheran Church of Marshalltown to install wells in Old Fangak County, South Sudan, Africa.

For years, residents in the remote area have historically drawn disease-laden water from swampy areas or the Zaref River, which flows through the county.

Fatalities and debilitating illnesses result from its consumption.

Although several wells have been installed in Old Fangak village - one of the largest villages in the county - more are needed to serve the growing area.

The project received a major boost Tuesday as Rotarian Dr. Dennis Drager, of Marshalltown, announced at the clubs weekly meeting at Elmwood Country Club that RI had recently committed a \$78,000 matching grant on the condition that \$22,000 is raised by Marshalltown Rotary.

Drager urged his fellow Rotarians to support the initiative immediately. And they did, by dropping checks and pledge forms in colorful water cans placed on each table.

"Rotarians donated \$2,800 today of the goal," said Greg Brown, a Rotarian and Trinity member. "Additionally, Hy-Vee has agreed to donate \$5,000, and Trinity has committed \$11,000. Consequently, Marshalltown Rotary is well on its way to meeting the \$22,000 goal."

Trinity's involvement began in 2009, when Sudanese parishioners made the church aware of the pressing need.

Shortly, thereafter, the church partnered with the Alaska-South Sudan Medical Project, which has sponsored a medical clinic in the Old Fangak village for nearly 27 years.

As the project momentum grew, Trinity members then contacted central Iowa churches and asked them to contribute.

New Hope Christian Church of Marshalltown and St. Cecilia's Catholic Church in Ames have donated funds, among others, to the effort.

Parishioners from New Hope, St. Cecilia's and Trinity traveled to Old Fangak village with members of the ASSMP in February 2012, and installed a new well and repaired another adjoining the medical clinic.

"Today was a good day for the project and the people of Old Fangak County," said Drager, who has learned to drill wells in hopes of teaching South Sudanese the skill, a critical part of the initiative.

"We've made great progress now with Rotary International, the Marshalltown Rotary Club, Hy-Vee and area churches are working together," he said.