

Food Safety News

March 20, 2010

SUSTAINABILITY

Restaurants Join in Clean Water Project

BY HELENA BOTTEMILLER | MAR 20, 2010

Next week, waitstaff at restaurants across the country will invite patrons to donate a dollar for their tap water to help UNICEF provide clean water to children across the globe.

Waterborne illness remains the second leading cause of death for children under the age of five--4,100 children die every day from water-related illnesses. Almost 900 million people lack access to clean water and UNICEF's Tap Project aims to help cut that number in half by 2015.

During World Water Week 2010 (March 21-27), participating restaurants across the country--including top restaurants in Washington, DC and New York--will ask their customers to donate a dollar or more for their tap water to raise funds and awareness for the project.



Since 2007, the Tap Project has raised nearly \$1.5 million in the U.S., which has provided clean water to millions of children. A one dollar donation enables UNICEF to provide clean water to one child for 40 days. This year, the project will fund access to clean water in Central African Republic, Guatemala, Haiti, Togo and Vietnam.

"The lack of sanitary and accessible water is one of the leading causes of preventable deaths for children throughout the world and access to clean tap water is something Americans often take for granted," said Caryl Stern, president and CEO of the U.S. Fund for UNICEF. "The support we have received from UNICEF Tap Project volunteers, restaurants, corporate partners and consumers thus far is incredible and we are certain this year's campaign will bring even more support, furthering our goal to reduce the number of needless childhood deaths to zero."

Vanessa Carter, a coordinator for the project in Washington, DC, is volunteering because she's witnessed the public health implications of waterborne illness.

"Last summer I worked in Kayafungo, Kenya, a village where women and children walk 3-6 hours a day to collect brown water with living organisms in it. After seeing the very serious and damaging effects such a water crisis can have on a community first hand I am so excited to be a part of the Tap Project," said Carter. "This incredible initiative brings a pressing global issue to our local DC community and with the community's support will bring clean water to thousands of children around the world."

This year, over 75 restaurants in the Washington, DC area are participating--including Farmers & Fishers, Busboys and Poets, and Citronelle. Those in DC are also invited to kick off World Water Week at Local 16 on Saturday.

Last year, more than 1,500 restaurants from 40 states participated in the project, and this year promises to be a larger effort. To find participating restaurants in your city, see the Tap Project website.

Photo: UN booklet, Water for Life Decade (cropped)

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