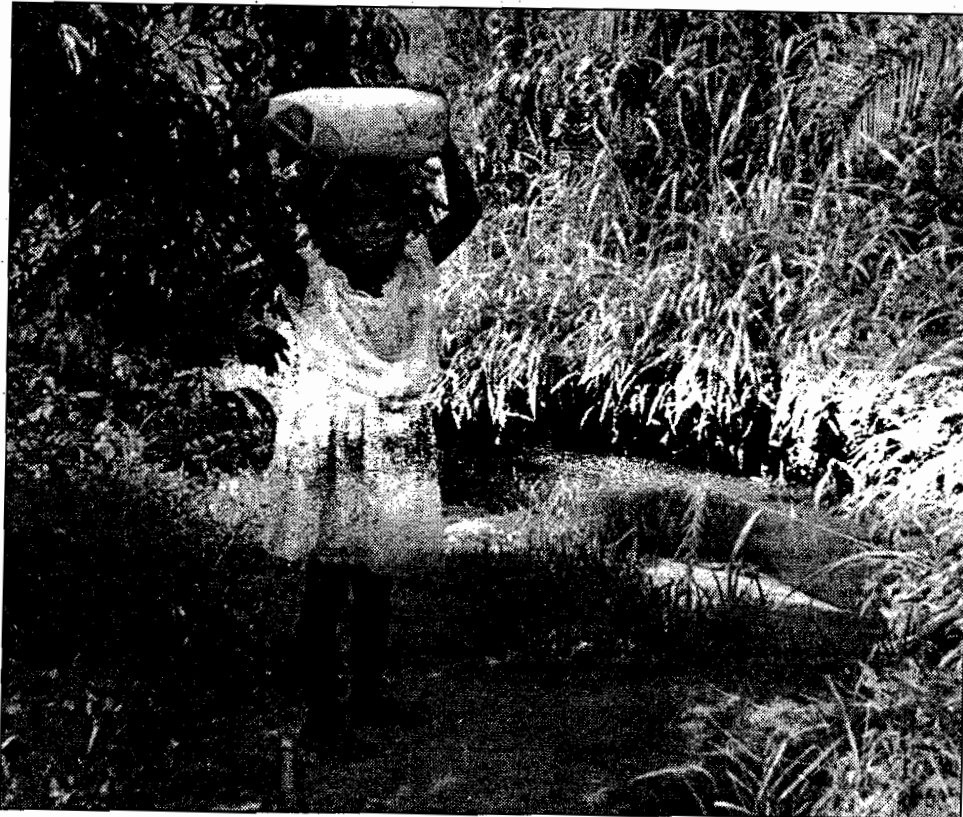


HEALTH AND FITNESS



A three year old Ugandan child fetching water to carry back to her village.

Where Does Your Water Come From?

by Mary Schwartz, CPT

Drinking water is so important to our overall health and vitality. Although we don't have to go very far to find a cool, refreshing glass of water, many people find it difficult to drink the amount of water their body needs. Since water is so readily available in the United States, we hardly give it a second thought. So, let's consider for a moment where our water comes from. If you wanted a glass of water right now, where would you get it from? A plastic bottle? Your refrigerator? Your kitchen faucet? A water bubbler?

Now, imagine if you had to walk for several miles to a river or stream to fetch your drinking water. How difficult would it be to get in your 8-10 glasses of water a day? Well, this is exactly what many people around the world have to do, just to get a glass of water. Although, I knew that people from other countries did not have all the amenities that we enjoy here in America, I honestly did not think about it very often, that is until I spoke to Jane.

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Jane Holler, one of my running clients, told me about a trip she had taken to Africa. She shared her experiences with me and educated me about the living conditions she encountered while traveling to the local villages. I learned that many rural villages in Uganda don't have electricity or running water. The villagers must walk several miles to fetch water, carrying it back to their village in large, plastic jugs that weigh more than forty pounds when full. The task of retrieving the water would be difficult for most adults to accomplish, yet the job of fetching the water is usually the responsibility of the children, leaving them with little or no time for school work.

Jane asked me if I would help her organize a 5K race to raise money for a solar-powered water pump for the village of Rwesigiire, Uganda. I agreed. A committee was formed and we began the process of organizing the race. Over the past year, I have learned more about Jane's mission. Jane Holler, together with her husband, Daniel Marecki created a 501(c)(3) organization, Uganda Farmer's Inc. The mission of their organization is to provide fresh, running water to Rwesigiire, Uganda. Last year, Uganda Farmer's Inc. brought fresh, running water to Kyarusenzi, another rural village in Uganda.

Uganda Farmer's, Inc. chose Rwesigiire, Uganda as the next village to receive a solar-powered water pump after meeting Father Emmanuel Byaruhanga last summer at Saint Gabriel's Church in Milford, where he served as a visiting priest. It was Father Emmanuel's first visit to the United States and he was overwhelmed by the many conveniences available here, especially our abundant supply of water. I met Father Emmanuel Byaruhanga on several occasions and I am proud to be able to help raise money to provide his village with fresh, running water, something we all take for granted here in the United States.

If you would like to help this cause, please join me on Saturday, June 4, 2011 for the 1st Annual Running Water for Africa 5K Run/Walk and ½ mile Kid's Fun Run. The 5K race begins at 9:00 a.m. at Foran High School in Milford and runs along the water. The ½ mile kids fun run will take place on the track and begins at 8:30 a.m. If you would like to participate in the race, volunteer, or become a sponsor, please visit www.ugandafarmersinc.org or contact me at (203) 824-3913 or e-mail me at mary@workoutwithmary.com.

Mary Schwartz is a Certified Personal Trainer and owner of Mary Schwartz Personal Training located in Orange, CT.

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