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A catalyst for development; where communities take the lead.

Clean Water for the Watha!

Local hero Guyo Jefferson, founder of the Watha Project, has built the first (and second and third!) well for the Watha community in Kenya. The wells serve more than 1,500 people and dramatically improves their health, safety, and quality of life.

Guyo was inspired by his personal history to build these wells and provide clean water for his people. When he was 12 years old, Guyo's mother was viciously attacked by a crocodile while she was collecting water from the river, leaving her badly injured. While tragic, Guyo relates how this incident is not uncommon among his neighbors: "Every family has been affected by this."

Because of the crocodile attack, Guyo's mother couldn't work for several years and a choice had to be made to keep either Guyo or his twin brother home from school to help his family with additional income. Guyo was chosen to continue his education while his brother stayed at home to do his mother's chores and grow tomatoes to sell at the local market.

In the case of Guyo's family, the lack of access to clean water affected not only the physical health of the Watha tribe but also its economic and psychological well-being. "Not only [did] the community have to contend with waterborne disease," Guyo points out. "But also the continuous threat to our people for this necessary resource is the devastating effect of crocodile attacks." This is why building these first wells for the Watha of Kenya was so vitally important.



GRACE Cares' mission is to partner with local heroes and communities on small-scale community development projects that make a difference by empowering people to improve their lives. We do this with respect to local cultures and traditions.

Founded in 2002, our projects have successfully helped build healthy, educated, just and productive communities for 17 years! GRACE Cares provides expertise, funding, and support for health, education, peace and social justice, cultural preservation, and economic development projects.



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How Rosa Is Making it Through the Pandemic

Rosa's story serves as the perfect example of the myriad ways that Community Finance Guatemala (CFG) is helping the Kakchiquel Maya of Guatemala during the pandemic:

CFG's financial literacy workshops, savings groups, and access to credit have allowed Rosa, mother of three, to manage her family's budget and to ensure that they will have enough food to make it through this uncertain time. Rosa's financial literacy has been particularly important since she and her husband lost their jobs as day laborers when Guatemala first went into lockdown.

In addition, since Rosa and members of her savings group do not have access to the internet or other media, they have been dependent on CFG for updates on the pandemic and health guidelines for COVID-19 prevention. As Rosa shares, "It was a relief to receive regular updates via calls and texts from the local [CFG] team about the COVID crisis."

Lastly, Rosa benefited during these hard times from the seed packets that she obtained from CFG. Since she doesn't own land, she built planter boxes and then taught her fellow savings group members to do the same. Now they all add a variety of healthy vegetables to their typical diet of corn tortillas and black beans.

It has been inspiring to see Rosa take full advantage of the opportunities offered to her by CFG, not only to improve her family's life but to improve the lives of her friends, neighbors, and community.

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Get Involved!

You can be a catalyst for change with GRACE Cares around the world! Whether you want to donate your time, financial support or expertise, we want to hear from you.



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GRACE Cares Has a New Partner!

We are excited to announce a new partnership with the organization Munali Youth Empowerment Program (MYEP) in the Chongwe District of Zambia led by local hero Blessed Ngoma! MYEP is a grassroots community-based organization dedicated to improving early childhood education, maternal health and childcare, human welfare, and opportunities for children, youth, and their families.

MYEP plans to build a community center that will serve as the hub for many important activities, especially as a place where families can come to read. Blessed's passion for reading is born from his experience in college when he realized the fundamental importance of reading for childhood development and education. Since then, he has dedicated his time and labor to improving the reading skills and educational development of children from infancy to 9 years old.

Over the years Blessed collected books, puzzles, and educational toys and sent them to Zambia before realizing he should open a community center where parents could take their children to play with the educational toys and picture books. Fortunately, he owns property that would be the perfect location for the center. Blessed looks forward to working with GRACE Cares to build the community center and make his dream of sharing his passion for reading with the children of Zambia come true!

You too can join the GRACE Cares volunteer team! GRACE Cares is always in need of volunteers. A few ways you can help: host a fundraiser, volunteer with your community group to one of our project partner's field sites, volunteer time as a grant writer or IT specialist

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Memoriam for a GRACE Cares Project Leader

We are paying tribute to Gulam "Afaq" Haider, one of the leaders of the Lucknow Project, who recently passed away at the age of 87. His granddaughters, Afshan and Nazeela, who are now the leaders of the Lucknow Project, shared their memories of their grandfather and his life story.

Afaq's family emigrated from Saudi Arabia to northern India prior to Indian independence, and he grew up in the farmlands of Lucknow where he formed a deep connection to the place and people. Even after his family moved to the United States, Afaq never lost touch with his childhood home. In fact, Nazeela revealed that her grandfather acted like the unofficial mayor of the small village outside Lucknow where he grew up, staying engaged with local affairs and volunteering his time and wisdom when needed.

Although the Lucknow Project is known for its English language program (which gives the local Urdu speaking youth a chance at more lucrative jobs) and annual free medical camps, Afaq's passion project was the community fund he started to help those in need. Afshan and Nazeela attribute the success of the Lucknow Project to the passion of their grandfather to empower the people of Lucknow towards a better life. Even though Afaq is no longer with us, his generosity and commitment to improving the lives of others will continue to be an inspiration for years to come.



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