

## **Shenandoah Presbytery Living Waters Team**

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## **Structure of the Living Waters Team**

Shenandoah Presbytery's Living Waters Team (LWT) is a partner with *Living Waters for the World* [www.livingwatersfortheworld.org](http://www.livingwatersfortheworld.org), a mission initiative of the Synod of Living Waters (Mississippi, Alabama, Tennessee and Kentucky).

The Shenandoah Presbytery Living Waters Team functions under the World Wide Ministries Committee, through whom it is accountable to the Presbytery Council and to the Presbytery. The LWT is a Presbytery-based team that works with any Shenandoah Presbytery organization to help bring clean water to a developing country partner.

At present the LWT includes three members trained at Clean Water U, the mission training facility of *Living Waters for the World*:

- **Team Leadership:** Mac Sterrett (Augusta Stone)
- **Health and Hygiene:** Rhonda Richie (Olivet)
- **Installation:** Dan Woodworth (Waynesboro First)

In their role, the LWT trains and equips groups in the Presbytery to survey, install and train on the *Living Waters for the World* water purification system. They serve as a resource for Presbytery groups doing water systems. Once the system is up and going, the LWT steps back and serves in an advisory capacity as needed.

The LWT is responsible to both the parent mission program, *Living Waters for the World*, and Shenandoah Presbytery's World Wide Ministries Committee. Our team has a signed

Covenant relationship with *Living Waters for the World* laying out certain responsibilities on the part of both parties. Major decisions concerning projects to be undertaken by the LWT, and major fund expenditures (for example, we responded to the crisis following the Haiti earthquake by making a financial donation to *Living Waters for the World*) are made by the LWT and members of the Worldwide Ministries Committee.

### **LWT partners with other Presbytery organizations**

The role of the LWT is to introduce and involve other members of the Presbytery in mission work by encouraging, training, equipping, and traveling with them to carry out a *Living Waters for the World* mission project. The LWT partners with congregations, mission communities, committees, or any other Presbytery-based organization. To date, the LWT has partnered with three different Presbytery groups to do three different water projects: The Baja Mission Team; First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro; and Maury River Mission Community. The LWT can partner with a single congregation or organization, or it can partner with a group of Presbytery-based people. There is the potential that LWT could partner in some fashion with other civic, mission or humanitarian groups.

### **About the water system**

The water system is a “batch” system designed to fill five-gallon water bottles, just like the bottles of “spring water” available in office buildings and business establishments here in the States. It is not a “municipal” type water treatment plant. The system is called a batch system because water is purified in batches, usually 300 or 600 gallons at a time. It takes approximately 75 minutes to purify 300 gallons of water, and 2-1/2 to three hours to purify 600 gallons. The purified water is then stored in a tank until it is ready to be distributed. The water is intended only for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene. Nearly everyone who benefits from the clean water has no plumbing in their homes. The systems are excellent for locating at day care centers, community centers, orphanages, churches, schools, medical clinics, etc. Although water might be piped directly to a kitchen sink, for instance in a day care center or church or school, the principal use is filling five-gallon bottles (called “garafones” in Central America) for distribution to families for use in their homes. The treatment process includes filtration, ozonation and ultraviolet light and is highly effective at removing bacteria, parasites and viruses. It is not effective in removing heavy metals and volatile organics, etc., nor is intended for this purpose. It is simple to install, simple to operate, and can purify water at a cost of approximately one penny per gallon. Replacement parts are readily available, though the system can treat approximately 100,000 gallons before any routine replacement is necessary. Although the water must be sold (at much lower cost than the price for which it may be commercially available in the area), provisions also must be made to give water free of charge to those who cannot afford it. By charging for the water, it has value and also generates enough revenue to create a job for an operator and perhaps delivery persons and to maintain the system.

### **The Shenandoah Presbytery LWT Model**

The goal of a LWT project is to establish new or enhance existing long-term relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ around the world and in the United States. Clean water is the gift we can give them and allows us to work together with them as we come to know them and develop our relationship with them. While most projects to date under the auspices of *Living Waters for the World* have been international (and all of LWT’s projects to date have been

international), an emerging program within ***Living Waters of the World*** focuses on the needs of people in impoverished areas of our own country such as Appalachia.

*The LWT helps organize, train, fund and conduct the first two of four required trips in-country. Following those first two trips, the LWT “steps back” to allow the sponsoring group to continue the water system project and long-term relationship building on their own. The LWT then “moves on” to a new project with a new sponsoring group.*

The best situation is to implement a water project at a place where there is already an existing mission relationship. Some congregations have been doing mission and humanitarian work at a particular place (church, orphanage, village, etc.) for several years and already know the people, the place, and perhaps some of the “politics.” The gift of clean water is a natural extension and continuation of the mission relationship between the two groups. In some situations, groups have no existing relationship but desire to become involved with a water project, and a ***Living Waters for the World*** water system project is a great way to establish a long-term relationship. In these cases, the LWT will be able to recommend a project that has been brought to the attention of ***Living Waters for the World***, as they have Network Coordinators operating in several countries to help develop potential project sites.

The LWT partners with Presbytery groups by providing training, funding, and actual project support by traveling with the team. The group wishing to do a water project will partner with the LWT by entering into a three-year commitment that will include making a minimum of three (and possibly four) trips in-country; will provide five team members to do the actual travel and project installation; and will provide approximately one-half the funding for the project over the three-year period. (*Note: The LWT will pay approximately one-half the funding for the entire project, including travel, lodging, materials, equipment and system costs, for a team consisting of up to eight members – three LWT members and five members from the sponsoring group. Costs for any members over five from the sponsoring group must be paid in full by the sponsoring group.*) The total cost of an eight-member LWT project in Central America is in the range of \$25,000 - \$30,000 (previous projects have all been about \$26,000; the actual cost will, of course, be location-, time -, and team-specific, as the majority of the project cost is travel/meals/lodging). So the partnering group would be responsible for funding approximately \$12,500 - \$15,000 of the project cost over the three-year period; the LWT will pay the other half. More about funding is explained below.

Four in-country trips are mandatory for a ***Living Waters for the World*** water system project: 1) Survey Trip; 2) Installation Trip; 3) Follow-up Trip within one year; 4) second Follow-up Trip the following year. This is the minimum number of trips required; there is no limit on the number of trips beyond these four.

Teams (known in ***Living Waters for the World*** parlance as the “Initiating Partner”) enter into a Covenant with the in-country group (known as the “Operating Partner”). The Covenant is negotiated by the Team Leader between the Initiating Partner and the Operating Partner and specifies who does what; who pays for what; and any other things that need to be agreed upon (e.g., OP will build a building of certain dimensions and provide labor and the IP will pay for materials; OP will purchase one or two water tanks of “x” capacity and the IP will reimburse the

cost; etc.). The Covenant often is negotiated and signed during the first (Survey) trip but may be completed after the Survey Trip. Once the Covenant has been signed by both parties, the water system is installed, and Follow-up trips are scheduled and completed per the Covenant.

The entire team (three LWT members and the five from the sponsoring group) will hold three or four meetings prior to making the first trip. [Note: some projects will consist of three trips; others will consist of four trips. The normal model is four trips, but if a water project already has been “surveyed” and is “Covenant-ready” it is possible that the sponsoring group will be involved only in three trips]. *The main purpose of the meetings is to build relationships among those doing the project. Information can be disseminated by email; relationships need to be built in person.*

The three LWT members will fully participate in all training and preparations and will accompany the sponsoring group on the first two trips (Survey and Installation). Following successful installation, the sponsoring group will be responsible for scheduling and making the two Follow-up trips on their own, without LWT participation (one or more LWT members may be available and willing to make one or both follow-up trips with the sponsoring group if necessary. This will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis).

### **What happens on each of the trips**

**Survey Trip:** Usually lasts about five days, give or take. Typically will consist of three LWT members and two of the “new recruits” representing the sponsoring group or congregation. Team members travel to the OP to meet with them, get to know them, worship, share meals, and in general begin relationship development. In addition, team members will look at potential water source(s) to be treated and conduct field testing and water sampling (wells, ponds, streams, ditches, even a municipal water source – meaning one that is piped to a site but is not clean); decide if existing buildings are adequate to house the system or whether a building and/or water tank stands will need to be constructed; review electric service and possible connections; take lots of photos and lots of measurements; and in general develop a plan for the installation and operation of the water system. Health and hygiene education classes are discussed; facilities for conducting classes are visited and decided upon; potential students (mothers, Sunday School teachers, etc.) and daily schedules are discussed; and a plan is agreed upon. If it “feels” good and things are falling into place, the Covenant is negotiated and signed by both parties. (Covenant negotiation and signing may take place once the team has returned home; the important thing about the Survey Trip is to determine if the team believes all the “stars are lining up” for a successful project – including relationships, trust, physical facilities, water availability and quality, long-term commitment on the part of the of potential OP, etc.).

If the project is a “go,” things gear up quickly: full- and small-team meetings are held (Installation members meet on their own for system training and “dry-building” the system; Health and Hygiene members meet on their own to plan activities and shop for materials); the Installation trip dates are nailed down; educational classes, lessons and projects are planned and materials purchased; the water system is purchased (we carry it with us on the plane packed in large duffle bags); fundraising begins in earnest by the sponsoring group; involvement of the congregations or organizations is discussed; Team Leader works out logistics for travel, meals and lodging.

**Installation Trip:** Usually lasts about 10 days, give or take. Generally is set three to four months following the Survey Trip (need to make this trip as soon as is practical, but it takes time to make all the arrangements and get things together). All eight team members make this trip. We carry all our materials, equipment and tools with us (except the obvious things such as plywood, water tanks, etc., that must be purchased in country). System installation and concurrent health and hygiene classes occur over approximately four days. At least one day is needed for water system operation training. On the final day, usually the fifth, sixth or seventh day, a celebration is held to dedicate the water system. Everyone is invited, especially the children. The additional days on this trip are for travel on both ends, and we always try to give the team a day to do touristy things like shopping and sight-seeing. [It is not advisable to schedule an installation trip that allows for being at the site for any less than six or seven days (this does not include travel days). *Things never go as planned!* Promised water tanks have not been delivered; electrical service in the town or village is off for three days, or water is turned off for days at a time so the system cannot be operated; something breaks; something leaks; etc. *Plan on it!*]

**Follow-up Trips #1 and #2:** Usually last about five days, give or take. Highly recommend making the first Follow-up trip within six months of installation. The final Follow-up trip usually is about a year after the first Follow-up trip. Typically will consist of at least three members of the sponsoring group, but can take as many as you wish. Important that *at least two of the people making this trip were involved in the installation and health and hygiene*, as they will have the expertise to evaluate system operation and maintenance and to discuss continuing education; also want these “old friends” to help continue and form those relationship bonds with the in-country group. The LWT members generally do not participate in these follow-up trips, but may be available if they are needed. The purpose of the Follow-up trips is to: 1) continue to build long-term relationships that hopefully will lead to a long-term mission relationship with the in-country group or organization; 2) check up on the operation and maintenance of the water system to ensure things are working as planned (they seldom are, and that is why the first Follow-up trip should be planned in approximately six months).

## **Typical team makeup**

Each team that initiates a project will include three trained and experienced LWT members, and generally will include five additional members from the sponsoring group for a total of eight team members. Eight is not a magic number, but our experience shows that eight members is an excellent number to get the job done and to travel with. More than eight members can sometimes just be too many people, and less than eight can leave a team short-handed. However, a project can be done with more or less than eight.

Gender mix is important on a *Living Waters for the World* project, particularly depending upon the country and/or culture where the project is being done. Although men are perfectly capable of teaching the Health and Hygiene curriculum, in the Central American cultures in which we have worked to date, it is imperative that women be the Health and Hygiene trainers. Husbands and fathers in those cultures will not allow their wives and daughters to be trained by men. We have found that a minimum three women, and preferably four, are required for the Health and Hygiene training component. Similarly, while women are perfectly capable of doing

system installation work, in general it is a better fit for men to be involved with the water system. It is highly likely that only local men will be involved in the work of installing the system, and it is not a good fit to have a woman training a man how to do physical/mechanical tasks – or any tasks, for that matter. This is not a blanket policy, and team makeup will depend on the country and culture in which the project is being carried out. Although Shenandoah Presbytery has done projects to date only in Central America, other teams nationwide have installed systems in over 20 countries, so they can happen anywhere.

Age is less important, but in general, team members probably should be of college age or above. Certainly some teenagers would be excellent trainers, and this should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Once again, it must be taken into consideration how the local Operating Partner will respond to being taught or trained by a teenager. Will the local women be receptive to being taught by a young person? And, more particularly, will the local men be comfortable being instructed by what they may consider a boy? The LWT would never wish to exclude anyone from becoming involved in this vibrant mission project, but there are practical and cultural considerations that must be taken into account. The recommended approach is to limit the sponsoring group team of five people to college age or above, and begin to involve younger people on the follow-up or subsequent trips as the relationships progress.

All that being said, practical experience here in Shenandoah Presbytery has shown that the “perfect” team consists of at least four women (Health and Hygiene trainers); two or three men (Installation trainers); and a Team Leader. A successful trip can be done with less or more; team numbers depend on available funding and practical space considerations in the working spaces (sometimes classrooms can be very small, and in nearly all cases, the building or room in which the system is to be installed will be very cramped and confining, making it impractical to have more than two or three trainers involved).

### **Living Waters Team members are trainers, not doers**

This is a difficult concept for us do-it-all Americans, but that’s the way it is: we *teach* others how to *do* the work; *we don’t do it for them*. If you are a hands-on doer and simply can’t restrain yourself from stepping in all the time to do it “the right way;” or are not comfortable watching someone else work very slowly; or get impatient with slow learners who have to be shown and told multiple times; or cannot accept that in some cultures, certain building, construction and code (ha!) practices are just “different” and may not conform to what you have been taught – well then, perhaps this mission project is not for you. **Our role is to “train the trainers.”**

In the Health and Hygiene classes, the trainers teach a handful of women (usually anywhere from 4 - 12) in the morning on the different lessons, stories and activities. In the afternoon, the team trainers observe their “students” as they teach the same lessons and activities to children (sometimes as many as 30 children – or more -- may be in the classes).

On the installation side, the trainers’ role is to teach and observe. We teach by showing local installers where to drill a hole (they usually know how to use a drill, but if not, we teach them that, too; we help them measure by holding the “dumb” end of the tape and letting them hold and read the “smart” end; we show them how to glue PVC pipe with solvent, then let them glue all the joints; we show them what wires to connect to what pieces of equipment, then make sure

they do it properly. An installation trainer named Bubba Martin at Clean Water U, the training school for *Living Waters for the World*, teaches all his students that they must assume “The Bubba Pose” at all times. The Bubba Pose is arms crossed over the chest, where they remain at all times. The arms and hands in this position cannot touch or pick up any equipment, tools, or system parts; the only body part available to use for instruction is the mouth. While this certainly is somewhat of an exaggeration, the message is clear: **as a team member, you teach; you do not do!** Letting the local people do the work (in system installation and classes) is so important; it is only by doing it this way that they will be able to solve problems to ensure a successful operation after we are gone. Knowledge is power; I think someone important said that!

### **Language qualifications**

None. However, any knowledge or competency, especially fluency, in the local language will be a plus! It is the job of the Team Leader to arrange for competent translators to be available at all times to the Installation and Health and Hygiene trainers.

## **Funding in practical terms**

As previously explained, the LWT will pay for approximately half of a project for up to a total of eight team members (five of which are supplied by the sponsoring group). A Survey Trip typically costs in the \$3,000 - \$5,000 range. ***In practical terms, the Survey Trip normally is paid for entirely by the LWT.*** Generally five people make this trip (two from the sponsoring group and three LWT members) for the purpose of “feeling out” the proposed project. Of the two sponsors, at least one probably should be an “installation” person [man] and one probably should be a “health and hygiene” person [woman]. Because it is very early in the game, funds generally have not been raised by the sponsoring group; and it also is possible that, after making the trip, it is determined that this potential Operating Partner is not going to pan out. ***So the LWT pays all the costs of the Survey Trip.***

Assuming the project is a “go,” the sponsoring group will begin fundraising in whatever fashion they wish (or perhaps fundraising has already started long before this time). The cost of the Installation trip to a Central American country is in the vicinity of \$15,000 - \$16,000, including travel/meals/lodging/transportation and the cost of the water system and health and hygiene training materials (prices will vary, of course, depending upon many variables). ***In practical terms, we ask that the sponsoring group pay half the cost of the Installation Trip; a good planning figure for a Central American project is \$8,000. The money does not have to be paid “up front;” this will be a reimbursement to the LWT following completion of the Installation Trip.***

***For the two Follow-up trips, the sponsoring group is on their own for financing, travel arrangements, and making the trips. The LWT has now stepped back and is no longer actively involved.*** The cost of a typical Follow-up trip to Central America in the past for three people has been on the order of \$2,500. ***Because the sponsoring group will be paying for both of these trips on its own, the approximate combined cost for the two Follow-up trips is \$5,000.***

The cost of the initial Survey Trip, which the LWT team funds entirely, is approximately equal to the cost of the two follow-up trips, and that is why we say ***the LWT funds approximately half*** of the entire project from start to finish. We have learned that it is impractical to actually try to split the cost of an entire three-year project exactly in half down to the dollar.

## **Accounting and bookkeeping**

The LWT maintains its accounts and funds at Presbytery. Any sponsoring group (congregation, Mission Community, etc.) that partners with the LWT on a project ***will maintain their own accounts and bookkeeping. These funds will not be funneled through Presbytery.*** When the sponsoring group is accountable for reimbursing half the cost of the Installation Trip, they will be given instructions where and how to send the money to Presbytery. ***Other than this one-time “reimbursement” to the LWT, all other monies raised and expended on the water system project (the two Follow-up trips) will be received, maintained and disbursed by the sponsoring group.***

## **Shenandoah Presbytery water projects**

To date, the Shenandoah Presbytery LWT has completed three water system projects:

- Day care center in Los Misionos, Baja California, Mexico (sponsoring group: The Baja Mission Team)
- Day care center in San Lucas Toliman, Guatemala (sponsoring group: First Presbyterian Church of Waynesboro)
- Church in Santiago Atitlan, Guatemala (sponsoring group: Maury River Mission Community)

### **How to become involved with a *Living Waters for the World* water project**

There are two ways you can become part of this exciting mission experience: get your congregation or several congregations or a mission committee or mission community interested in doing a project, and contact the LWT. As described above, the LWT will join forces with you and your sponsoring group to help you implement a water project, either at a place where you have an existing mission relationship, or we will help you find a project site.

Or, you can become part of the LWT and help partner with these sponsoring groups.

To become a member of the LWT, you must attend Clean Water U (CWU), the mission training school for *Living Waters for the World*. All LWT members have attended CWU. Clean Water U is a five-day school held in either Oxford, Mississippi or Oakhurst, California. This training is at your expense, and you will take one class for the entire five days, so you have to choose which curriculum and role interests you: Team Leadership; Health and Hygiene Trainer; or System Installation. Once you become trained at CWU, then you are eligible to join the LWT.

As for how we get involved with projects, all of us who are trained do presentations to groups within Presbytery to market the program. So far, on the first three projects, only three people who had been trained at CWU were “active” and so it was a given who the three LWT members would be when partnering with a sponsoring group. In the future, with new people being trained and new projects coming on line, decisions will be made at that time which three LWT members will work on a particular project. It will depend on many variables and circumstances, including the project area, team member availability, special circumstances, etc. As the team and number of projects grows, so will grow the program and operating procedures.

### **For more information:**

- Shenandoah Presbytery Living Waters Team: <http://www.shenpres.org/LWWindex.html>
- Living Waters for the World: [www.livingwatersfortheworld.org](http://www.livingwatersfortheworld.org)
- Clean Water U: <http://www.livingwatersfortheworld.org/cwuindex.php>
- Doug Sensabaugh, Shenandoah Presbytery LWT resource person and Presbytery LWT liaison: [doug@shenpres.org](mailto:doug@shenpres.org) (540-433-2556)
- Mac Sterrett, LWT Team Leader: [macsterrett@comcast.net](mailto:macsterrett@comcast.net) (540-448-0552)