

MISSION MOMENT

How Far Will You Go to Let Love Flow?

*Nobody hungry, nobody thirsty,
shade from the sun, shelter from the wind,
For the Compassionate One guides them,
takes them to the best springs.*

– Isaiah 49:10

How far are you willing to go so that your family will not thirst? For Namanu Macharia, that distance was twelve miles. Twelve miles of walking with her children; twelve miles of the heat beating down on them; twelve miles of carrying empty five-gallon containers to retrieve water, then rolling those containers back to her home.

The prophet Isaiah declares that God's people will neither hunger nor thirst. But for those living near Merille, in Kenya's Marsabit County, hunger and thirst were a daily concern as water scarcity is a huge problem in this arid desert region. Obtaining water was once a crippling daily challenge, especially for the women and children responsible for walking long distances in search of streams and ponds. Even when they found precious sources, the water they brought home was contaminated, often making their families sick. Between illness and the sheer amount of time it took every day to find water, families were caught in a vicious cycle of increasing hunger and poverty.

That was the situation until the CWS Water for Life program helped our partners and the community drill a solar-powered borehole well and install a water system. More than 2,200 gallons of water are pumped through this well every hour – using one tap to supply purified water for safe cooking and drinking, while a second tap supplies water for washing clothes and caring for livestock.

Water kiosks like the one in Merille function like small shops, where people pay a modest fee for clean water. That money covers the operating and maintenance costs of the water system, ensuring it will be around for a long time to come. This system is powered by an ATM machine where people load “water tokens” onto debit cards, allowing them to get water whenever they need it. In addition to the 2,850 community members who use the kiosk, it also serves two schools, the local livestock market, and a health center which serves more than 4,800 people!

Namanu still walks from her home to retrieve her water. But now, the entire journey is less than one-third mile to the kiosk back. “I can leave my food cooking, fetch water, and be back on time,” she says. The new water system in Merille is a huge step forward in the fight against hunger, illness, and poverty in the area. For Namanu and thousands of her neighbors, it means freedom and peace of mind. It is the kind of comfort promised from a compassionate God who “takes them to the best springs.”

How far are you willing to go so that people in water-scarce regions no longer need to walk twelve miles to receive God's promise of a life without hunger or thirst? The journey begins with Week of Compassion – sharing the compassion God places in each of us to care for our neighbors near and far; and sharing your generous gifts that support the CWS Water for Life program.

Pandasin Orguba, one of Namanu's neighbors, at the water kiosk in Merille. photo credit: CWS

