

Help H2O — a Nova Scotia Registered Charity— on WORLD TOILET DAY!

The can. The john. The head. The throne. The loo. The crapper.

And those are just the polite ones. We have a thousand euphemisms for “toilet” because our need for them is so universal. Toilet humour is so easy it’s been an icebreaker on Grade Primary playgrounds for more than a century. Imagine their delight when they find out that November 19 is World Toilet Day! But for millions of people in Western Africa and beyond, toilets are no laughing matter.

Ben John is a Nova Scotia plumber who founded an aid group, Help 2 Overcome (H2O) to deliver plumbing and sanitation to developing world communities where the need is great. John understands the seriousness of the problem better than most Nova Scotians because he grew up in South Africa, in a home without plumbing. He learned his trade so that he could change lives, starting with his own family.

“I remember my mother and sisters having to use the pit toilet at night, and being afraid of predators or animals,” he said. The pit toilet — really just a deep hole in the ground — was located about 400 feet from the house, so the threat was real.

As if that weren’t enough, other threats loom without hand-washing facilities.

Cholera, hookworm, typhus, and polio are among the host of deadly illnesses caused by poor sanitation. The World Health Organization estimates that more than 900 million children live without toilets at home, while more than 2.4 billion people don’t have access to adequate sanitation.

But those stark statistics hide even greater tragedies. More than 10,000 people will die today because they drank water contaminated with human waste. More than 315,000 children will die of complications in 2017 because they contracted diarrhea. In developing nations, more than 17 percent of the workers who die are killed by diseases caused by poor sanitary conditions, costing those countries more than five percent of their GDP.

And that’s why John wants Canadians to give a crap.

John’s first project with Help 2 Overcome built washrooms for 230 students in Freetown, Sierra Leone at the Prisons School. That small but mighty triumph made him flush with excitement, and he can’t wait to return to this nation of seven million people — where 70 percent live in poverty — to build a sanitation block consisting of 10 compostable toilets (Ecoloo) and sinks.

This second vital gift will empower the 325 girls in the African Women Educationalist (FAWE) School. In developing nations like Sierra Leone, young women often quit school once they enter puberty because latrines are fraught with danger from human predators and cleanliness stigmas surrounding menstruation. So the new EcoLoo facilities will make it much easier for them to get an education and fan out to make a difference in their communities.

We need your help, to spread the word that Ben John and H2O want to be number one in the number two business. Or we could just say that 325 girls in Sierra Leone desperately need our help.

Please help us make a big stink! For more information, or to arrange an interview, please contact:

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NOVEMBER 19, WORLD TOILET DAY! Support H2O.

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