



WATER WORKS
HELPS PROVIDE
CLEAN WATER
AND
SAVES LIVES

Wellspring For The World

By Nolan P. Schmidt
Photos by Hillary Ehlen

Sawyer Anderson is not your typical 10-year-old girl. While she no doubt enjoys partaking in activities with her classmates, Anderson seems to have the sensibility and awareness of someone far beyond her years. A typical 10-year-old may enjoy playing outside, drawing and anything in between.

Sawyer Anderson enjoys writing children's books, despite being a child herself. Not only that, but Anderson's children's book has a message behind it and a problem it wants to solve. Her book, "Water Works", aims to provide clean water to those in impoverished African countries.

Anderson's journey to authoring "Water Works" was a little different than perhaps most authors. She was working with her church's children's ministry to provide chitenge bags for those in need, they are also known as Bags Of Hope.

"Bags of Hope are beautiful tote bags otherwise known as chitenge bags. Chitenge is an African wax fabric that women use to make skirts, blankets, baby carriers, etc. The scraps of fabric from these items are sewn together to make chitenge bags," Anderson said. "I worked with my children's ministry team at Hope Lutheran Church to make and sell these bags. Bags were designed by children ages 3rd to 5th grade, and the wonderful ladies from [Bags of] Hope sewed the bags."

It was creating those bags for those in need that led Anderson to another venture, which would be authoring an educational

children's book.

"A bunch of people bought more chitenge bags than they needed just because they wanted to help support the cause. My dad's friend, Tom, suggested I bring them someplace where they could be used. I decided to bring those extra chitenge bags to The Jeremiah Program and was just going to drop them off. But, Coiya Tompkins and Lonnie Pederson had different ideas. They asked me to speak at the Empowerment Program Graduation and afterward, Coiya suggested I write a book about my work to bring water to Africa," she said. "I thought, 'you're kidding... right? I'm only nine!' When we decided I could illustrate it, too, I was like 'okay, I'm writing a book!' I outlined the story and figured out the drawings I wanted to do. I added the parts about Brian and Maria and the hardship of life without clean water. That moved me to raise money for water. I decided to name the main character after my little sister, Sloane, because I love her so much and her name means 'warrior.' It took me about five months to write and illustrate 'Water Works' and I have had so much fun doing 'Water Works' presentations."

"Water Works" tells the story of a young American girl (based on Sawyer) and her goal to bring clean water to Africa. "In addition to saving lives in Africa, each book is touching the lives of children right here in our own community. It is a book about faith, strength, perseverance, hard work and hope. It's my prayer that this book touches the hands of many kids that so

truly need a source of hope and inspiration. Every kid can make a difference," Anderson said of Water Works.

Creating the book was not always easy, especially at 10 years of age. Yet, Anderson says she welcomed the new challenge. "I'm always up for a challenge. I like to read, I like to write, and I like to draw, so working on it a little every day wasn't hard at all. I do like to do a lot of dancing and handstands, too, so those were my 'brain breaks' when working on the book," she said.

Once "Water Works" was created and in its development stages, Anderson and her family worked alongside Wellspring For The World to provide clean water to those in Africa. Wellspring For The World is a Fargo-based non-profit founded in 2005. Their mission is to provide safe drinking water to people around the world. 100 percent of public donations go directly to the building, maintaining and educating people about wells and sanitation.

Sawyer's father, Mark Anderson had done work with Wellspring For The World in the past and had even been in Africa to see the issue firsthand. With that prior familiarity, the Anderson family teamed up with Wellspring For The World and World Vision, a global non-profit, to assist those in Africa.

"When the idea for 'Water Works' started, we shared the idea with them and they suggested a 'co-venture cause agreement'. I had no idea what that was until they laid it out. I guess it took about 15 conference calls because they had never done this

with a minor, or for a book, or where all the proceeds go to water,” she said. “We sell a copy of ‘Water Works’ for \$9.99. Wellspring for the World matches that. Then, World Vision triples that. So, the \$10 (unless you want your penny back) becomes \$60. That’s amazing because \$50 provides clean water to one person for life. That’s how I came up with the inscription I put in every book. #1Book1Life - because every book saves a life through clean water.”

Anderson writes that hashtag in every book she signs at events. She writes it because it is true, each copy of “Water Works” provides water for one person in Africa for life. That cannot truly be understood and Anderson’s impact on people she has never even met is immeasurable. All of this good work is being done by a 10-year-old.

“Before working with Wellspring for the World, I had no idea that there were millions of children that live without safe, clean drinking water. As a kid, we just take it for granted that we can go to the tap or the fridge to get water whenever we’re thirsty,” Anderson said of Wellspring For The World. “We can fill a tub full of water for a bath every night. We can fill our swimming pools with clean water every day in the summer. Clean water changes everything and Wellspring for the World works hard to bring that awareness to us in the midwest. Even though we are miles away, we can help.”

For those who wonder how Anderson does all this good at her age, she has a simple answer: time. In her mind, anyone, regardless of age, can donate their time to helping others.

“When kids and adults alike see that a 10-year-old can raise thousands of dollars to build 36 clean water wells (to date); has spoken at 84 schools/churches/businesses/non-profits since June, and has been named the youngest recipient to receive the F-M Raise Your Spirits Champion of Charity Award all while attending school, competitive dance, theatre, basketball, volleyball and church activities. I hope that they can believe that no matter how busy we all may be, we can always do something to help others.”

Sawyer Anderson is saving lives with her book and the help of Wellspring For The World. With “Water Works,” people in need of clean water are getting that very thing. The work Sawyer Anderson is doing is changing our community and the entire world. Pretty impressive for a 10-year-old, don’t you think?

Wellspring For The World
PO Box 9993
Fargo, ND 58106
wellspringfortheworld.org/

Purchase “Water Works” by Sawyer Anderson at waterworkssea.com.





Cass County Electric Cooperative

YOUR energy.
YOUR time.
YOUR way.

Download the Cass County Electric app to pay your bill, view and compare energy use, and report outages.

Just a tap away from controlling your power.

CassCountyElectric.com

