



Students from Inkisanjani Primary School smile at an assembly during the visit from St. Philip's Lutheran Church (Delaware), which supported a borehole well in July 2025.



WATER IS LIFE KENYA



Fall 2025

STAYING CONNECTED

Our Donors Provide Life-Transforming Clean Water!

Letter from the Director ***We Are Vision Multipliers***

Dear Friends,

This year, we are thankful for our role as vision multipliers. In each Water is Life Kenya partnership and training program, we empower participants to bring their vision to reality.

It's a natural carrying on of the role I inherited from my parents, Beatrix and Francis Tannian, who both died this past year. This is one of the many things they did for me and my Co-Founder, Joseph Larasha. They listened to our report of people suffering from lack of clean water, drought, and opportunity. They heard the plight of farmers, widows, youth, and how we wanted to help.

They said, "Yes, how can we support you?"

This is what we do for our partners, and what my parents did for me: **multiply the vision**. First, they tackled the vision of lessening the suffering of others. They listened, supported through prayer, resources, experience, and energy, and sent requests for help out into the world. They helped our shared vision grow and multiply.



My parents selflessly supported this dream and devoted their resources so that people would have clean water and use that water to transform their lives.

When we enter partnerships with committed donors, we listen to and understand their vision. Then we remove all obstacles to enable them to reach their goal of delivering clean water. Vision multiplication is glorious work, and we are so happy to be doing it together with you!

With love and appreciation,

Joyce Tannian

Director & Co-Founder

Livestock as a Business Program: MOU Signing & Loan Disbursement

Our Livestock as a Business Program (LAB) has been in full swing! In our last newsletter, we shared about LAB's most recent graduation ceremony, which included 60 Maasai livestock keepers.

Since then, we've welcomed 3 new groups to the program, training them in everything from creating business plans to our Livestock Disease Practical. Meanwhile, we've also been checking on our other 8 groups in their second, third, and fourth years of the program.

On October 22, each of our 11 LAB groups received their livestock loans. These loans are the cornerstone of the LAB Program and provide both new and returning groups with the financial muscle needed to buy animals, keep their herds healthy, and turn a profit. The loans are 250,000 Kenyan Shillings, which is about \$1,970 USD.

At the Loan Signing, our teacher Esther Solonka reviewed group business plans to make sure groups were prepared to go to market, while the WILK team collected the required documents. When groups sign the loan agreement, they agree to use this money to purchase cows and sell them for a profit by June of next year.

Over the years, we've found that all these steps are necessary so LAB participants understand



Joyce and Osiligi Kitirua LAB Group at the Loan Signing Ceremony in October!

the importance of the loan and repaying it. The program has a 99.5% loan repayment rate. This means the money is recycled, and groups can borrow up to 4 times. Most importantly, they learn to sell livestock on time, overriding the Maasai cultural habit of deep reluctance to sell livestock. This builds better selling habits, which are critical for drought resilience.

Groups have been picking up on the lessons we've taught. Two of the women's groups are cutting, storing, and selling grass to earn additional income. They have sufficient food for their own livestock and are profiting from the surplus. Grass conservation like this will help them endure future droughts. Other groups are working on intensive feeding to fatten their cows quickly.

Our LAB Program continues to generate more capable livestock keepers year after year. New ideas are catching on as groups innovate, grow their herds, and prepare for the next drought. The longstanding success of LAB bolsters income for our communities, in turn increasing the sustainability of our water projects.

Youth Program Update

From an Idea to Practice

We've made Dr. Tannian's dream come true! After our fundraising efforts and much planning, our new Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP) is underway!

For the pilot of the program, we're working with three groups of 30 participants. The first group from Ildepen got together for its first session in October. Led by WILK Co-Founder Joseph Larasha, the first lesson plan (saving money and building excitement for their future work) was discussed. About half of the group would like to focus their businesses on Livestock Keeping, while the other half is interested in tourism.

They were broken up into groups of five for small group work and more specific discussions. They also signed a commitment form that outlined their agreement to fully participate in YEP. Then everyone ate cake to celebrate the launch and toast Dr. Tannian's vision and generosity!

The second orientation session took place in Ilmarba. People who weren't on the list showed up looking for their chance to join—such is the need of the young people in Kenya for employment. Those who are participating, shared their goals, which fall into three categories: those who want to find a job, those who want to start a business, and those who want to do service in their community. (continued on back)

Hope for Widows Update: Group 4 Making Progress, & We Are Learning, Too!

Group 4 Widows Update

Women in our 4th Hope for Widows cohort have been busy! Since their Goats & Grants Ceremony at the end of June, they've bought stock for their stores and made beautiful beadwork to sell. The \$150 grants they received have been spent, and now the profits from their businesses need to be managed well. They've also been busy keeping their 3 goats (2 females and 1 male) healthy and happy.

The Risa Widows have tapped into the nearby tourist market, so their businesses have been robust and diversified. Meanwhile, the **Meshenani Widows**, who have fewer tourists, have been selling goods locally. While their methods may differ, most of the women are finding their footing, taking steps each day to improve their lives.

Since starting their businesses two months ago, **the average monthly income of the widows has more than doubled**—with 3 out of the top 5 earners (among 70 women in Groups 3 and 4) coming from Group 4! Those top performers have earned an average of 13,000 Kenyan Shillings (about \$100 USD) per month. They are raking it in!

Before they received their training and grants, Group 4's average income was about \$21. In July, after the Goats & Grants Ceremony, that income increased to about \$49. **In August, the average throughout the group was \$64!**



Group 4 widows during a training session earlier this year.

This upward trend shows just how much these women learned from their training. Their earnings have increased, their savings have increased, and their lives are getting better and better.

Room to Grow & Improve

We constantly monitor participants on the progress of their businesses and the impact it's having on their lives. Then we suggest improvements. One such improvement is mitigating risk.

This time, two widows received the grant and goats at the ceremony then disappeared. In the future, we may change the order of the program so that we award only the cash grant at the beginning, observe how they use their grants, and determine if they demonstrate a commitment to improve. When they show good progress, we can award goats at the time of the second grant. We strive to ensure that participants get the most benefit while optimizing the use of donor funds.

A change we've seen among the widows is that, to prepare for the new school year in January 2026, they are increasing their savings. Risa women started a savings group and are earning money by giving loans with interest. They plan to divide the principal and interest in December, just in time to pay for school expenses. Smart!

We also have many reports of home improvements being made: women are purchasing new beds, materials towards building new houses, and chairs. The women are happy that they have businesses which keeps their children in school and help them afford clothes and school supplies. They have a way to manage their families now. **Indeed, hope is alive!**



Group 4 widows with their stock!



WILK-TEC Finishes Phase 2 of Rainwater Harvesting at Inchakita Primary School

Recent Kenyan Journey

This September, Emily, Doug, Weldon, and Ryan, engineers from our very own WILK-TEC (Technical Engineering Committee), made the trip to Kenya. This trip focused on Phase 2 of the Inchakita Primary Rainwater Harvesting System. A new building was outfitted with WILK-TEC's custom-designed first-flush system, which keeps dirt and sand out while still capturing seasonal rainfall.

Weldon, also known as "Baba Ryan," wrote about this first trip he took to Kenya! Get a chance to see the WILK-TEC experience from the point of view of one of our engineers.

If you or someone you know is interested in traveling with WILK-TEC, send them an email: wilktec@waterislifekenya.org.



Students having a math class with our engineers!



Emily and Joyce riveting away while Larasha spots them.



Engineers Ryan, Emily, Doug, and Weldon.

Travel Journal *by Weldon*

We left for Kenya from JFK in New York on September 19. It was nice to be greeted at the Nairobi airport by Joyce's familiar face. We met Joseph, our driver, and talked with Joyce, who brought energy and enthusiasm for the work we had planned to do.

The next morning, there was prayer and a fellowship breakfast served by the most loving, wonderful, and gracious ladies. I enjoyed trying new foods cooked and shared from the area. Then came the notorious trip across the African savannah from Kimana Lodge to the school. What kept my interest during the trek was the occasional sighting of an elephant, giraffe, Maasai village, or herdsman with goats or cows.

It was a welcome sight to see the school buildings. We inventoried the supplies and got our jobs assigned. The Kenyan support group worked alongside us from the beginning. The edges of the roofs were inspected and fascia boards replaced as needed. The brackets were measured, pitched, and screwed into the vertical boards so the eight-foot-long splash gutter sections could be installed. After gutter installation, a water gravity test was conducted to see if there were leaks and to determine if the downspout configuration worked. Three six-foot vertical pipes were installed to catch the sediments, which allowed cleaner water to

enter the large eight-foot storage tank. Taps were placed near the bottom of the storage tank to allow access to the water.

While we were deep into the nitty gritty of the work, the breeze blew red clay dust around. These times of noticing the surrounding landscape were among my most enjoyable moments. The mini tornado dust swirls danced in the far distance below Mount Kilimanjaro. By noon, you could see the white glacier top of the gigantic mountain, which stood as if it was watching everything below.

The pleasure of working together with others and the thought of helping the school capture essential rainwater made the day go by fast. Some of us designed the new gutter and tank systems, while others cleaned and repaired older systems. A third group prepared for the next day's assignments. At the end of the week, it was very satisfying to see all that we had accomplished. We had excellent teamwork and a wonderful cultural experience while having the privilege of serving others.

– Weldon, "Baba Ryan"

Global Linkages Travelers Journey to Kenya, Dedicate Borehole & Garden in Olmoti

Since 2023, the Global Linkages travel community and Water is Life Kenya have been collaborating on a project to bring clean, reliable water access to the community of Olmoti, Kenya. Together, the GL travelers, the WILK Team, and the Olmoti Community, celebrated the official Opening Ceremony of the project on October 15.

About the Partnership

Global Linkages is a boutique travel organization that connects the African Diaspora with the Motherland. Led by their fearless leader, Lorna K. Johnson, GL travelers engage in cultural exchanges across the continent, often finding ways they can support the communities they visit. GL's inaugural trip to Kenya in 2022 led them to meet the Olmoti community and learn about its need for clean water. Soon after, they partnered with WILK to make this dream a reality for Olmoti.

Global Linkages Water Project

For two years, we've collaborated to drill a deep borehole, equip it with elephant-proof infrastructure (Olmoti is near the elephant heartland!), and ensure there is sufficient water for families and their livestock.

As with all WILK projects, the Olmoti community was involved from the beginning. We require a buy-in from all community members to ensure the project serves the community, providing reliable service to all who call Olmoti home. We also helped organize a Self-Help Group (called the "Olmoti Community Borehole") to manage the project long-term. This method is what makes our projects sustainable and built to last.

Sixteen GL Ambassadors raised over \$110,000 to make this project happen. From walking and swimming challenges to cookouts to letters to family and friends, these ambassadors, led by Carole Best and Becky Doggett, made this effort possible. Without them and over 430 donors, this project would not exist.

We were grateful to officially hand this project over to Olmoti's Water Management Committee, which will manage it for the long-term. We look forward to our continued partnership with Global Linkages and the Olmoti community!



The Olmoti Tank, with community members, GL travelers, and the WILK team gathered to officially commission this life transforming project.



Global Linkages Legacy Garden

To inspire donations in the final stretch of the water project, the Fundraising Ambassadors encouraged their networks and the GL community to honor their loved ones by planting trees in Olmoti.

Along with WILK's vision and Olmoti's commitment to re-greening its home, a beautiful garden space was created near the borehole. Trees have been planted, and they are able to grow thanks to fresh water from the borehole.

WILK plans to maintain the garden in the near future to ensure it is properly established. One day, we hope this garden will help generate income for the community as a tourist attraction, meeting place, medicinal garden, and even nursery.



Honoring the Lives of Beatrix & Francis Tannian

Beatrix (Laube) Tannian

November 26, 1935 - November 18, 2024

Francis X. Tannian

December 5, 1933 - March 1, 2025

I started Water is Life Kenya with my Kenyan Co-Founder, Joseph Larasha, and my parents, Beatrix and Francis Tannian. This is my reflection about my parents, how we built WILK together, and the legacy and challenge they leave us with.

Both died this past year. It has taken me time to be able to write about them. As I write this, the 1-year anniversary of my mom's death is a week away.

Starting Water is Life Kenya was a natural progression of all we did together. I was often cooking up big things and they always showed up and supported me.

We four Tannian kids constantly received the present of their presence. Concerts, trips, holidays, birthdays, performances. My parents were always getting us together to do family things.

When I went to Kenya in 2006, I urgently told them about the drought emergency that I saw. They were ready to help, fundraising at our church in Newark for food for families in need while I distributed the food with Larasha in Kenya.

After doing emergency food relief in this drought-stricken area, I shared the next vision Larasha and I had: Can we help people get clean water? Can we change things for good?

The answer was, *If God wills it, we will make it happen.*

As the real scope of what we were undertaking became clear, my parents dug in and reached out to all their friends, created new circles of friends, and acquired new skills as we built a non-profit from the ground. My dad contacted his attorney colleagues, working his connections to help us register as a non-profit.

My mom helped sell the beads, tag the beads, and fix stuff that broke. "I'm not a salesperson," she would say as she led her friends past her strategically-placed selection of beadwork on our dining room table. She was our ace seller!



We didn't know what we were getting into, but we were always led by faith.

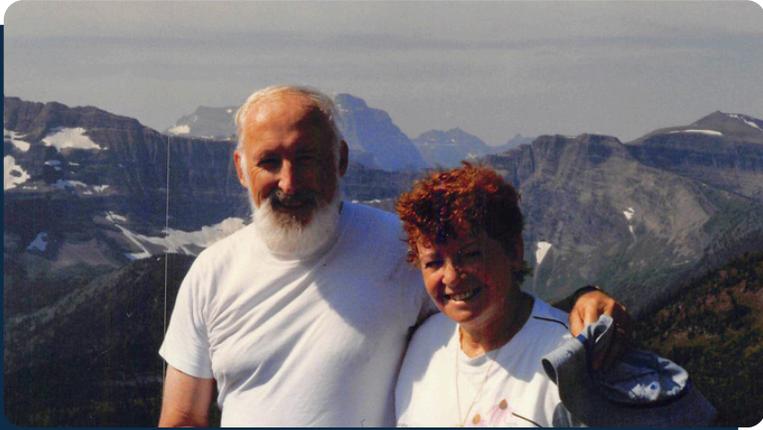
That is one aspect of my parents' legacy. They moved forward in faith.

My mom and dad each had their own approach. Yet they worked as a unit for the same priorities. God. Family. Those in need. Like the way they always offered a meal, a bed, a place at the table for stranded students during the holidays. Friends remember my mom saying, "You're welcome to our home, now grab the plates and set the table," as she put the finishing touches on her mouthwatering goulash, sauerkraut, and dumplings. Those friends become members of our ever-growing family.

My parents were always working with energy and commitment to be God's love and mercy in the world. And they had fun doing it.

There was a power of intensity in my mom. I wish I had been more observant about her ways of getting things done. Sometimes she powered ahead in the foreground, but more often she worked in the background. How did she get it all done? The church garden, the church breakfast, teaching German, Sunday choir and rehearsal, her glorious garden at home, dinner for the neighbors with her delicious German specialties.





There were many German-family holiday celebrations that my mom, the dervish, mobilized. She carried us all along in a whirlwind of decorating Easter eggs, baking Spritzgebäckene Christmas cookies, and handing out Christmas music song sheets, all with candles lit and food abounding.

When Kenya came up in my life, it was a natural progression of their faith, service, and supportiveness. They got behind it in a big way.

Water is Life Kenya became my dad's second career after retiring from the University of Delaware. Three days a week, he would come into the office. When I was in Kenya, it could be everyday. He loved it, was devoted, and was invaluable in so many ways as we forged new pathways.

My dad's perspective was Eagular, seeing from above while soaring like an eagle. Yes, we also liked to make up words together. I hope to continue the tradition. **Eagular**. My dad always saw things from a wide perspective, systems intertwining, overlapping, with God's presence and power enveloping all of it. The ideas of human capital, microeconomics, subsidiarity land rights (such as the challenge of communal vs. private ownership of land) flowed as his economics brain weighed the significance of serving communities that lived in semi-arid climatic zones. He advised us according to his wisdom.

He wanted to understand how people make decisions. He helped me design surveys and questionnaires to capture opinions and values in an unbiased way. "Don't lead the question," he would say. "We want to know what they really think."

We built up a body of work, committing ourselves to completing durable water projects sustained by good management, always keeping expenses tight but delivering lasting transformation.

My parents are our original **Kilimanjaro Club** members. Now they have evolved to legacy donors. They supported WILK for the long haul, contributing money to keep us afloat for the first five years as we bumped along with a 2-person team and a small group of faithful donors, many of them family friends. My dad would pitch in the difference when our bank balance was too low to cover our meager payroll.

His investment savvy and generosity are the reason we exist today.

Climbing the Mountain, Together

My parents showed us how to be generous.

As members of the Kilimanjaro Club, WILK's giving society that honors annual donors of \$1,000 or more, my parents set the bar for altruism. Now they have become the first members of the Uhuru Society, as they gave us a generous legacy gift.

Do you see my parents at the top of Uhuru Peak beckoning you?

My mom was always the one who reached the top of the mountain first, enjoying the view, waiting for us slowpokes to catch up. Now my parents are in paradise, my dad's voice booming out, my mom leading the choir.

Will you take the climb with us?

Please consider honoring my parents' legacy by joining the Kilimanjaro Club or leaving a legacy gift of your own.

With love,



Ways to Donate to WILK:

- **Send us a check** via the enclosed blue envelope
- **Give from your retirement account** or portfolio to maximize tax benefit
- **Donate online** at waterislifekenya.org
- **Give monthly**, quarterly, or annually
- **Match your gift** by asking your employer about corporate matching.

Contact us for more info | Tax-ID: 26-3185829



SUPPORT OUR CLEAN WATER FUND

All across our work region, we see projects made by others in need of repair. This holiday season, we're raising \$250,000 to bolster our Clean Water Fund and address this growing list of requests immediately in 2026.



Make your year-end gift at waterislifekenya.org



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Youth Program Update

(continued from page 2)

Most people in this group are responsible not just for their own families, but also for other children and members of their extended family. They have many responsibilities, so the need for employment is great. Even the rain couldn't keep them away from this opportunity!

The third group met in Enkong'u Narok, and these participants also have many interests. In particular, they are aware of the market in their area and what services are missing from it. About half of the group is interested in tourism, but several would like to be involved in motorcycle repairs. A few also had started nursing school but were unable to finish.

These young people are eager to learn, and they all need capital and skills to launch a business. This is why so many people have expressed interest in YEP.

The participants in all three groups signed an agreement that outlined the rules of the program, namely, that they attend all of the trainings and do community service in order to be eligible for any grants that will be distributed at the end of their training. We look forward to working with these young entrepreneurs in this ambitious endeavor!



He came for the service project, he told us.