Groundwater Foundation Begins Year Long Effort to Drill Wells for Families in Need
Program offers long-term, low interest loans to those who lack access to clean, safe, and affordable water

The Groundwater Foundation has kicked off its year-long effort to drill water wells for low-income families across the United States who lack access to clean water. On Tuesday, February 4, drilling began on a new water well system for the Saleh family in Crete, IL.

Last year, the Groundwater Foundation donated $100,000 to the Water Well Trust to fund a program which pays for the initial cost of drilling a well and participating families are given a 20-year 1% interest loan.

On July 4, 2019, the Saleh family’s water stopped flowing due to a broken casing which caused their water well system to be filled with sand. Unable to afford the up-front cost of a new water well, Marvet Saleh was forced into costly short-term solutions to provide her family of six with water.

“We ended up buying gallons and gallons of water jugs and eventually purchased four large totes and a shallow well pump, all connected with gardening hoses and PVC pipe,” said Marvet Saleh. “But this is Chicago, and it’s getting cold which creates a lot of problems for our system.”

Marvet’s improvised water system also relied on rainwater catchment to provide water for the home’s kitchen and bathroom, but had to rely on bottled water to for drinking.

After learning about the grant program from her local fire department, Saleh began the process of applying for funding assistance to purchase a new water well.

“I’m so thankful for the partnership between the Groundwater Foundation and Water Well Trust because there is nowhere else I could get a loan for a new well, especially not one I can afford for me and my family,” said Saleh.

The Groundwater Foundation, working with the Water Well Trust, assisted Saleh throughout the entirety of the project, from soliciting bids from well drillers to the final installation of the system.

“Water is a basic human need and often taken for granted. Living without clean, safe water impacts almost every part of your day-to-day life,” said National Ground Water Association CEO and Groundwater Foundation Board Member, Terry S. Morse CAE, CIC. “I’m thrilled we were able to help Marvet and her family, no family should be without clean, safe, and affordable water.

Currently, there are 2.9 million housing units lacking complete plumbing and access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water.

The $100,000 donation will fund the drilling of 10 wells in selected states across the U.S. Drilling is expected to be completed by the end of 2020.

“There is a tremendous need to help families struggling to make ends meet and they shouldn’t have to worry about access to clean, safe, affordable and sustainable water,” said Morse. “I’m thrilled we are partnering with the Water Well Trust to tackle this problem, we have a lot of work to do all across America.”

The Groundwater Foundation merged with the NGWA Foundation in May 2018, leveraging the strengths...
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--MARVET SALEH, WELL RECIPIENT