

Downward Spiral



~ Choupette's Quest for Water ~



Every day in the stillness of early morning, Choupette, 10, puts on her torn shoes, picks up her two, one-gallon water containers, leaves her home, and carefully picks her way down a mountainside in her village in Grand Boulage, Haiti. She scurries around fallen rocks, loses her footing, and clears boulders twice her size in a quest to get water for her family.



To view a video of Choupette's quest for water, please go to www.FoodForThePoor.org/quest

Choupette knows the route by heart — she has been making this treacherous hike to the only water source in her community every day since she was an infant strapped to her mother's back. But when she was just 5 years old, the heavy responsibility of gathering water for her family was placed on Choupette alone. Her mother takes care of the younger children in the family and Choupette's father must leave to find work each day.



Throughout developing countries, children like Choupette spend as much as two hours a day walking to a water source. In Choupette's case, the source is a tiny stream contaminated by animal waste, parasites and harmful bacteria. Because there is so little water, there are times when Choupette must return home with empty containers because others have crowded her out.





“When I come home with no water, I have to go back later in the day and try again,” Choupette said.



The stream where Choupette gathers water is not safe to drink. Grand Boulage is located in an area that was affected by a cholera outbreak. Families constantly worry about the possibility of getting the deadly disease. Choupette said her mother uses the water to cook, wash clothes and bathe. **“We’re afraid to drink the water, but we add bleach to it,”** Choupette said.

Even though the water looks clear, it is full of harmful, life-threatening parasites and bacteria. The day we met her, Choupette had tea for breakfast. **“I feel sick sometimes if I don’t have food to eat and I drink the water,”** she said. **“Water doesn’t make me feel full, it makes me feel sick.”**

Choupette doesn't know what it's like to live without the fear of dying from contaminated water. She doesn't know what it's like to go to school and she doesn't know what it's like to have a childhood filled with joy and laughter. This is a little girl whose hopes are dashed every day, yet she never gives up. **"I believe in God,"** Choupette said. **"I talk to Him and ask Him to bless us; I ask Him to deliver us from this misery."**



Climbing back up the mountain, Choupette takes careful, measured steps; if she spills the water, she must go back down and start over again. It is lonely and dangerous on the mountainside, but Choupette has no choice — she must help her family survive. The kindness and loving generosity of people like you who read about Choupette's struggle can help bring lifesaving water to her community, and to other communities just like hers.



Pick your Poison:
In an effort to kill deadly bacteria, Choupette's mother pours bleach into the contaminated water.



The Problem

Every 15 seconds throughout the world, a child dies from a water-related disease.

Without access to clean water, even strong adults can die within days. Across Haiti, countless innocent children are at risk. Most available water sources are unfit for consumption. They are contaminated by animal and human waste, and even dangerous chemicals.

The water the children in Haiti typically drink is contaminated with deadly bacteria. E. coli and other bacteria can cause vomiting, colitis and cholera, which has killed more than 7,000 people in Haiti since 2010.

Not only does dirty water contain bacteria, but it can also contain parasites and worms. These can cause constipation, bloating, diarrhea, anemia, fatigue and chronic disease. Children are also at risk of getting Hepatitis A, a life-threatening virus causing jaundice, fatigue, weight loss, nausea, diarrhea and fever.

You can be the solution to helping Haiti's thirsty poor.

With your help, Food For The Poor can dig and install water wells that provide clean, safe drinking water. A typical water well produces 9,600 gallons of fresh, clean water a day; enough for an average village of 4,000 people.



These wells can help save lives in Haiti, where diseases like cholera continue to claim innocent children. When you provide a village or community with a water well, you will literally be helping thousands of people and giving a gift that will last for generations.

Your generosity will quench the thirst of those who are parched and refresh the spirits of those who are often neglected.

The Solution



*“The afflicted
and the needy seek
water in vain,
their tongues are
parched with thirst.”
(Isaiah 41:17a)*



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6401 Lyons Road, Coconut Creek, Florida 33073 • (954) 427-2222 • www.FoodForThePoor.org/water