

GEI Consultants' Tom Chase Visits Kenya with Engineers without Borders

Group's goal is to develop better sources of water for subsistence farmers

BOSTON, Mass. – October 7, 2008 – GEI Consultants, one of the nation's leading geotechnical, environmental, water resources, and ecological engineering firms, announced today that Tom Chase, a new GEI employee and 2008 graduate of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst (UMass), has just returned from the Namawanga Village in Western Kenya from his second trip with the UMass chapter of Engineers without Borders. The group is working towards designing a safe and sustainable water supply system for 1,500 subsistence farmers in Western Kenya.

Mr. Chase has been involved in the Engineers without Borders program at the university for three and a half years. He is planning to return to the Namawanga village at least once more before the project wraps up in 2010. GEI has donated funds and training materials to the clean water project and adjusted the commencement of Tom's employment in support of his efforts.

"One of the biggest challenges we've run into is trying to change the expectations of the community," said Tom Chase. "Previous attempts by other groups have resulted in hand-out donations or work being completed by independent resources. We work along-side the villagers to teach them how to implement clean water solutions themselves, encouraging not only viable drinking alternatives, but also establishing ownership and a greater capacity to contribute to the project on behalf of the community – especially when Engineers without Borders goes home."

The Village of Namawanga currently relies on inefficient water sources that are scattered around the village. Normally, villagers will have to travel up to two miles to collect water on a daily basis. The people most affected by lack of water are women and children who spend a large amount of their time looking for water instead of spending that time looking for food or participating in income generating activities. An initial



Prof. John Tobiason (UMass faculty advisor), Patrick Border, Patrick Westropp, Isaac.



Patrick, Isaac, Tom Chase, GEI, Noah (Local in yellow shirt), Prof. John Tobiason (UMass faculty advisor)

assessment trip in March of 2006 showed that these sources are contaminated (primarily with animal and human waste) and that the current supply of water cannot support the village during the dry season.

Dedicated to helping local and international communities create sustainable solutions to improve their quality of life, the objective of the group from Engineers without Borders UMass is to design a safe and sustainable water supply system that is environmentally conscious, economically feasible, and socially equitable. The current design strategy is to improve and secure the existing water sources (spring boxes and hand dug wells), and to strategically drill one to three wells so that the village can have clean drinking water year round. In addition, the group plans to encourage community involvement through active participation and to form a long term relationship with the community. There is a great potential to further develop this project for years to come within the village and the surrounding region.



Wafula, Tom Chase, GEI, Isaac

Until this trip, Engineers without Borders has focused primarily on improving the villages existing water sources and providing basic education to the villagers on hygiene, germ theory and responsible water usage. Through fundraisers aided by the University of Massachusetts and various rotary club chapters in western Massachusetts, the group is continuing to raise \$60,000 to improve the drinking water system in the village. The Rotary clubs have agreed to fund and facilitate the drilling of the wells in response to an application three successful local brothers submitted on behalf of the village.

About Engineers without Borders

Engineers without Borders is committed to designing and implementing engineering projects in developing communities around the world, addressing needs in areas ranging from renewable energy to clean water to sustainable enterprise development. Engineers without Borders project participants are asked to promote high engineering standards by following the American Society of Civil Engineers' Code of Ethics. For more information, please visit <http://www.ewb-usa.org/> or <http://www.ewb-umass.org/index.php>.

About GEI Consultants

GEI's multi-disciplined engineers and scientists deliver geotechnical, environmental, integrated water resources, dam engineering, and ecological solutions to diverse clientele nationwide and locally. The firm has provided a broad range of consulting and engineering services on over 25,000 projects in 50 states and 22 countries. For more information, please visit www.geiconsultants.com.

Media contact:

Susan Shelby, CPSM
Rhino Public Relations
(978) 468-1528
susan@rhinopr.com

###