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Office of University Communications

September 21, 2012

Students and Faculty Work to Raise Awareness About Water Issues

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. –Ever think about water? Although this question may seem ridiculously simple for many, few can say that they actually have given water a second thought. Water Week, a weeklong program at Gardner-Webb University, may have helped open the eyes of university students, faculty and staff by raising awareness on the subject as well as funds for the building of dams in Africa. The program lasted from Sept. 15-21 and brought life-changing views to both students and faculty.

The week started with a stand for clean water, a Lemon:Aid stand to be exact. Booths were set up at the University's football game against Samford as well as the women's soccer game against Charleston Southern. Each cup cost \$1. Although very affordable, the bigger picture was even more valuable. One dollar can supply an African with enough water for a year.

Funds were raised throughout the week for Blood: Water Mission, an organization that betters the HIV/AIDS and water crisis in Africa by empowering communities to take action. Each year, millions of Africans gain access to clean drinking water through projects coordinated by Blood:Water Mission, such as dam building, well construction and more.

Students supported the "Build a Dam" cause by wearing T-shirts and bracelets sold by Student Activities. Jonathan Myer, a senior at Gardner-Webb who bought a bracelet for \$1, said he felt a sense of pride in helping someone in need. "I could've spent a dollar on anything," he said. "But knowing that I contributed to someone's health and happiness is so much better than enjoying a candy bar."

Efforts to raise money continued on Thursday with Water Walk: Walk a Mile in Their Shoes, an event that gave participants an opportunity to donate \$5 before walking a total of six miles to the Broad River and back.

The University took an environmental stance on water issues as well, labeling storm drains and raising awareness about water waste and pollution. By taking an intentional look at environmental issues close to home, organizers hoped that students would begin to pay closer attention to the necessary protection of local water resources.

A screening of the documentary "Tapped" informed students on the bottled water industry's impact on health, pollution, climate change, and oil consumption and offered solutions for them to make an immediate and lasting difference. Stephanie Capps, coordinator for community engagement, hopes that the students take the information they've learned from

the film to call for change. “It’d be great if our campus could take action on this crisis,” Capps said. “We could be the first college in North Carolina to ban the selling of bottled water. If students care enough, it will happen.”

Following the water week events, many students wrestled with questions related to personal finances and worldwide social justice: Why buy bottled water when tap water is free? If \$25 can provide one African with a lifetime of clean water, why not change some spending habits and become part of the greater solution?

Organizers believe Water Week offered students a refreshing point of view on a subject that people often take for granted. The community of Gardner-Webb took advantage of a unique opportunity to become engaged and active citizens who know how to stand up and make a difference on an issue of worldwide significance.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University offers a comprehensive academic experience that introduces students to the diverse world of ideas and to the people who think them, preparing them for career success and for engaged, responsible citizenship in their professional, civic, and spiritual communities.



Watch Video At: <https://youtu.be/uzdqbeTU2Bo>