

# Support clean water with WaterStep shoe drive

Mark Hogg, Special to The Courier-Journal  
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Water. It's one of the Earth's most precious resources, yet many people in this country rarely think about how fortunate we are to have easy access to a seemingly limitless supply of clean water. If we are thirsty or need to wash our hands, we turn on the faucet and it flows freely. How often do you think about where your water is coming from, or how much you are consuming? Have you ever had to worry about how you're going to get safe drinking water for your family?

As founder and CEO of WaterStep, a local non-profit that works to create water solutions and fund safe water projects all around the world, it is my job to bring awareness to the world water crisis and to rally people to help fight this severe problem. Worldwide, over 748 million people lack access to safe drinking water, and waterborne disease is one of the leading causes of death around the world.

World Water Day, a day that was designated by the United Nations as a time for community leaders and organizations around the world to focus attention on the global water issues, is coming up on March 22.

WaterStep hopes to celebrate World Water Day by announcing that it has reached its goal of collecting enough shoes to fill a tractor trailer by Sunday, March 22, but we need the community's help to make this happen.

Businesses, churches, schools, families and individuals are asked to host shoes drives and donate the collected shoes to WaterStep. Our organization sells the shoes and uses the proceeds to fund water projects in communities in the developing world.

The funds raised from the shoes collected in March will jumpstart our next water project in the Kaabowa village of Uganda.

Kaabowa village is home to 1,300 people, 4 regional schools, a central market and 1 small health center. But what it does not have is safe water or proper sanitation. Villagers are forced to spend large portions of their small incomes on medicine and transportation to distant hospitals as a result of waterborne illnesses. With your support, we can change this and bring safe water to the people of the Kaabowa village and beyond.

WaterStep's ongoing shoe program not only generates funds for the organization, but it also keeps tons of waste out of landfills by repurposing the shoes. To get information on hosting a shoe drive, call (502) 567-7463, or visit [waterstep.org](http://waterstep.org) to find a list of shoe drop-off sites around the city. Any size, style, and condition of shoes is accepted.

Shoes can also be dropped off at the WaterWorks Museum at Louisville Water Tower Park on Sunday, March 22, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. during a special World Water Day event. Attendees can learn about water around the world, with a special focus on Uganda, and explore our local resource — the Ohio River.

At WaterStep, we believe to whom much is given, much is required. Having an abundance of water in our region has allowed Louisville to be innovative in the areas of water and sanitation. Couple this with the compassion of the people of our city, and we own a responsibility to share this knowledge, technology and hope with others around the world who thirst.

Mark Hogg is founder and CEO of WaterStep.

### **How to help**

For information on hosting a shoe drive for World Water Day, call (502) 567-7463, or visit [waterstep.org](http://waterstep.org) to find a list of shoe drop-off sites around the city. Any size, style, and condition of shoes is accepted.