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## **Local Orthodontists Send Toothbrushes to Remote Ugandan Villagers** *New Availability of Clean Water Helps Dental Hygiene Project*

**(Issued Fall 2011)** -- When 21 year-old David Rice of Brockton described his planned participation for the second consecutive year in the Uganda Water Project ([www.ugandanwaterproject.com](http://www.ugandanwaterproject.com)), Dr. Robert Chavez of ARCH Orthodontics didn't hesitate to offer support. He donated a large supply of toothbrushes toward the program.

Rice had visited Uganda in 2010 as part of the humanitarian effort that places rainwater collection tanks on community buildings throughout the poor East African nation: "On my recent trip, mostly focused on the village of Kawanda, I co-led a group of college students that to towns and villages to talk about general healthy habits and oral hygiene. Some places were so remote that we were the first white people they had ever met."

Uganda is a world away from Boston -- 7,000 miles and 14 hours. But getting there is just the start of a long journey. The size of Oregon, Uganda has a population of 30 million. Some 52% of the population has poor sanitation, but besides food and waterborne diseases, many suffer and die from hepatitis, typhoid, malaria and plague. Life expectancy is 53 (vs. 78 in the U.S.) There are fewer than 10 physicians per 100,000 persons.\*

Rice says, "On the previous visit, our group helped to install 7' high tanks that hold about 2,600 gallons. Each tank provides drinking water for 100 families. Using water from these tanks is far superior to getting it from a well." A next step will be to introduce simple electrolysis units that convert salt water to chloride and make water treatment affordable, he adds.

The water project is a strategic part of meeting basic needs and transforming communities throughout Uganda, making a tangible difference in the lives of thousands.

Now that the villagers have regular access to drinkable water, dental hygiene is possible. Rice and fellow visitors gave lessons on proper dental care. "My co-leader, a dental hygienist, brought a fake pair of teeth to demonstrate. We gave out toothbrushes and instructed on brushing to make sure they got their gums. It was incredible to see how little they knew about proper dental care."

Dr. Chavez, who has been practicing for 38 years and operates 7 ARCH Orthodontics offices south of Boston, says that early good oral hygiene habits mean that children will encounter fewer dental problems as they grow up, will have healthier teeth and avoid other health issues.

Rice said, “I want to thank everyone at ARCH for supporting this project. It was so awesome to see communities come together and be enriched by the blessings we were able to provide. I’m so thankful that I was given the privilege to see firsthand the effects of your giving and by the giving of others. I know that the people who received toothbrushes will take care of them and their teeth.

“Because they have so little, they cherish what they do have. And while we gave them a physical gift, I think they gave us a gift as well: a lesson of thankfulness and to cherish our countless possessions. So on behalf of the villages, schools, and many Ugandans you blessed, I thank you with love and gratitude.” Donations may be sent to: Ugandan Water Project, 2648 Rabbit Run, Bloomfield, NY 14469. For more information, visit [www.ugandanwaterproject.com](http://www.ugandanwaterproject.com))

Both Dr. Chavez and his son, Dr. Andrew Chase, have a long history of community involvement. Both been active in local youth activities and both have participated in Operation Smile, helping repair kids in poor countries who are born with cleft palate and oral surgery needs.

ARCH Orthodontics is the Official Orthodontist’ of Miss Massachusetts. The practice has offices in Stoughton, Bridgewater, Brockton, Canton, Hyde Park, Randolph and Westwood. Arch Orthodontics offers free initial consultation including digital photos and panoral x-rays. For more info: [www.archorthodontics.com](http://www.archorthodontics.com) / 1-800-28-SMILE.

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\* Source: *World Fact Book, CIA, 2011*

**PHOTO CAPTIONS** – Children in Kawanda, Uganda, show off their new toothbrushes donated by ARCH Orthodontics.

Contrast between well water and drinkable rainwater now being collected in giant tanks.