

WaterStep Partners with JCPS to help 7th Graders Learn the Value of Safe Water Around the World

Echo Trail Middle School gives students a deeper understanding of the world's water crisis.

LOUISVILLE, KY, UNITED STATES, February 12, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Every JCPS seventh grader reads *A Long Walk to Water*, a work of fiction that weaves together the stories of two eleven-year-olds in Sudan. They endure loneliness, attacks from armed rebels and encounters with lions and crocodiles in their search for water and safety. But for 2 billion people around the world today, this isn't just a story. They walk miles every day in search of water or simply go without.

WaterStep, an international non-profit based in Louisville, Ky., that provides safe water to people in 72 countries, has partnered with Echo Trail Middle School to give students a deeper understanding of the world's water crisis. To get a feel for what it's like to carry water, students lined up in the gym and lifted 45-pound jerrycans. They also created a campaign to change the lives of students just like them in a school called Congo Connect and Thrive in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Echo Trail Middle School students raised \$5,173.29 through a peer-to-peer campaign, a dress down day, and ticket and concession sales at a basketball game. Teachers also integrated the opportunity into the school's three learning pathways: engineering, business, and consumer science.

Once the campaign reaches \$6,000, students at the Congo Connect School will have new bathrooms, three for boys and three for girls. They'll be private, safe, sanitary, and gender



Student now has access to safe water in order to wash hands.

specific. They'll replace the ramshackle, dangerous latrines that function like outdated outhouses that are at risk of collapsing. Right now, there are only two latrines for 400 children.

"This project shows what happens when young people realize they have a role to play in the world beyond their classroom," said Mark Hogg, founder and CEO of WaterStep. "They learn that education carries responsibility. By working together, these students helped bring safe, dignified sanitation to hundreds of children in the Congo so kids their age can go to school, use a safe bathroom, and not have to worry about getting sick."



WaterStep and Echo Trail Middle School provides safe water access to Congo Connect & Thrive school.

The goal is to make projects like this an annual effort to support more WaterStep projects around the world.

"I am beyond proud of our students and teachers for the collaboration between what they are learning in their ELA classes, connecting it with our Explore classes, and partnering with WaterStep," said Dr. Kara Ammerman, Principal at Echo Trail. "Our motto at Echo Trail is "Expect Greatness", and we have our GREAT Pillars of success. This service-learning project is a real-world activity that brings our motto and pillars to life for our students. It also provided the opportunity for our students to be leaders and is a wonderful example of what we want to promote and instill in our students."

To help the students reach their goal of \$6,000, donate here:

<https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/echotrail25>.

About WaterStep

WaterStep is a U.S.-based INGO that focuses on sustainable solutions to the world's WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene) crisis. Since 1995, WaterStep has evolved from a small service organization to a global leader in safe water technology and innovation.

WaterStep has developed simple tools, patented technology, and effective training to empower people and communities to solve their own water and sanitation needs. We provide expert solutions for places where infrastructure is fragile and execution challenges are particularly difficult, especially in slums, rural villages, and in communities responding to natural and manmade disasters. We teach people how to use salt, nearly any source of water, and a 12v

power source to make safe drinking water for the long term.

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