

# From Surfer to Servant Leader: The Unlikely Journey of Water Wells for Africa (WWFA) Founder Kurt Dahlin.

*WWFA Celebrates 30 Years of Service and 680 Wells Built*

REDONDO BEACH, CA, UNITED STATES, October 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- — [Water Wells for Africa \(WWFA\)](#) is marking 30 years of bringing clean, sustainable water to remote communities in Malawi, along with the installation of its 680th well. The organization's first well, drilled in 1996, is still in operation today, reflecting WWFA's commitment to building wells that last.

They are also celebrating the installation of 680 wells. Kurt's path to humanitarian leadership, however, began far from the continent he now serves — on the beaches of Venice, California.

WWFA began in 1994. At the time, founder [Kurt Dahlin](#) was leading humanitarian teams to apartheid-affected villages in Transkei, South Africa. As the genocide in Rwanda drew global attention, Dahlin's friend, Hollywood stuntman Eddie Braun, asked for his help directing relief efforts, and actors Charlie Sheen, Cary Elwes, and John Stamos offered their support. Dahlin's research showed that aid to Rwanda wasn't feasible then, but it pointed him toward Malawi, then one of the ten most distressed countries in the world.



Kurt Dahlin enjoys water from one of his wells



In September 1994, Dahlin and Braun led an exploratory team, funded by Sheen, Elwes, and Stamos, to refugee camps in Malawi's lower Shire region. The team traveled throughout southern Malawi, meeting with community leaders, village heads, and traditional authorities.

They concluded that clean water was the country's single most urgent humanitarian need, since every other kind of development depends on it. WWFA then began the work of finding a reputable drilling company and local leadership partners to bring clean water to the communities it had visited.

For many villages in Malawi, a reliable water source is the difference between daily hardship and real opportunity. When WWFA's founding team first visited the country, they met women who spent up to eight hours a day finding a single bucket of water, often dirty and carrying disease. A clean water well changes that. It improves health, frees up time for school and work, strengthens family life, and creates the foundation for economic growth across an entire village.

Dahlin, a former manufacturing engineer with McDonnell Douglas Helicopters, has led WWFA as president since its founding. He has paired technical rigor with a deep commitment to service to build a program centered on long-lasting wells and supporting infrastructure.

"Thirty years and 680 wells represent hundreds of communities where clean water is now part of everyday life," said Brittany Harris, Manager of Marketing and Development for Water Wells for Africa. "Every well we drill gives families back their time and their health, and gives children a better chance at an education. We're grateful to everyone who has helped make this possible, and we're ready for what comes next."

As it enters its fourth decade, WWFA has set an immediate goal of providing 1,000 wells and invites the public to join the effort.

To learn more about Water Wells for Africa or to donate, go to: <https://waterwellsforafrica.org>

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