

FIRST GRADER'S DETERMINATION BRINGS MUCH NEEDED WATER TO THOUSANDS

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS
CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.SL.8.1D; RI.8.1; RI.8.3 and RH.6-8.2

HERE'S RYAN'S STORY!

Water! What is so **significant** about water? Ryan Hreljac discovered that water is important if you do not have access to it

When Ryan was in the first grade, his teacher wanted her students to begin **rationalizing** the purpose of sharing basic needs with others.⁽¹⁾ She was referring to those basic needs, which some people do not have, yet what most people take for granted. One of the needs that Ryan's teacher was referring to was water. Ryan's teacher went on to explain that some people in Africa needed a water well. Ryan asked, "Why do they need a well? Why don't they just go to the water fountain?" His teacher indicated that there was no water fountain nearby; the nearest water well was 5,000 meters away.

In order to determine the distance between the water fountain and where the residents lived, Ryan had to **convert** (change) the measure of **meters** in relation to footsteps. Ryan realized that it took only ten steps to go the distance from his classroom to the water fountain at school. It was then that he began to realize how difficult 5,000 steps would be. The idea of providing a well sounded significant. Ryan decided to raise funds to provide one. Upon arriving home, Ryan asked his parents for seventy dollars. That was the amount he thought could dig a well. Ryan's parents sat him down and told him that since it was not a small amount of money, he would have to earn it over a period. Ryan's parents provided chores for him to do to earn the money.

By the time Ryan had completed enough chores to earn the seventy dollars, he found that seventy dollars was not nearly enough.⁽²⁾ Ryan decided to contact **organizations** that provide wells in Africa. He found out that the total cost to dig a well, and have it function, was going to (cont. next page)



VOCABULARY

Significant - to be worthy of attention

Rationalizing - explain or justify

Meters-a unit of length

Convert - change

Organizations - a group that has the same goal

References

(1) <http://www.ryanswell.ca/>

(2) <http://kickasscanadians.ca/ryan-hreljac>

Photo source: Ryan's Well Foundation

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RYAN'S STORY (CONT.)

cost about two thousand dollars. Ryan quickly determined that he would not be able to earn that amount of money by doing house chores.

At the young age of seven, Ryan began public speaking throughout his community about the importance of sharing basic needs with others. "After that," he reports, "it became less and less of my project and more of a community project. The entire community got involved and slowly so did the country, and finally, the entire world." Ryan **established** the Ryan's Well Foundation. Over the past twelve years, Ryan's Foundation has completed over eight hundred water projects, totaling millions of dollars. The projects have helped over 700,000 people in more than a dozen countries.

Ryan, now a very **eloquent** and mature young man of twenty, clarifies that his Foundation serves three basic purposes. First, the Ryan's Wells Foundation builds clean water wells. "Every day," he says, "six thousand children die because they don't have clean water." The second aspect of the Foundation is its ability to educate the **inhabitants** of the village about the **significance** of clean water. Instead of building a well and walking away, the whole village is involved in building the well. The villagers also know how to repair the well when it breaks. This makes the well project **sustainable**. The third, and perhaps most paramount aspect the Foundation accomplishes, according to Ryan, is helping people to consider, in his words, "their puzzle piece". By utilizing this statement, Ryan means that he hopes that the citizens will begin to find their niche within society in order to make the world a better place. Once these individuals find his or her puzzle piece, the world will be a better place. **Assuredly**, Ryan has found his puzzle piece and is making the world a better place

VOCABULARY

Established-to find or build or bring into being

Eloquent-fluent or persuasive

Inhabitants-a person or animal that lives in a place

Sustainable-remain productive

Assuredly-without a doubt; in a way that shows confidence

Quiz

CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.RI.8.3 Analyze how a text makes connections among and distinctions between individuals, ideas, or events (e.g., through comparisons, analogies, or categories) (*i.e. what portion of the classroom discussion led to Ryan wanting to buy a well*)

QUESTION 1. When Ryan Hreljac's first grade teacher discussed the water problem to her class, why did Ryan, age 7, not understand the need for a water well? How did his teacher change Ryan's ideas about life in Africa compared to life in America?

- She encouraged Ryan to understand the difference between meters and feet.
- Her introduction to the water problem led to Ryan's desire to research water wells. Ryan discovered that it cost two thousand dollars to dig a well and have it work properly.
- Ryan realized that making money from doing chores at home would not be enough to buy one well.
- Ryan knew that it only took seven steps to get to his school water fountain. He learned that it was easier for him to get to a source of water than it was for certain citizens in Africa.

QUIZ (CONT.)

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions. (i.e. recall or review the story line to find the answer that best indicates the reasons why a group of people can accomplish more than that of one person alone.)

QUESTION 2. What part of the story provides text that indicates it takes a group of people to accomplish what one person cannot do alone?

- “Everyday, six thousand children die because they do not have clean water.” “Water is pretty special if you do not have it.” His teacher wanted her students to begin to think about sharing basic things with people who do not have what most people take for granted.”
- “There is no water fountain; the nearest water well is five thousand meters away.”
- When he contacted organizations that provide wells in Africa, he found the total cost to get a well dug and functioning was about two thousand dollars. He quickly determined that he would not be able to earn that much through house chores. Ryan began to speak publicly and established the Ryan’s Wells Foundation. This Foundation has completed over eight hundred water projects in the past twelve years.
- “He went home and asked his parents for seventy dollars. They told him that he would have to earn that amount of money over a period of time.

CCSS.ELA-CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.8.1 Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. t.(i.e. choose the answer which best fits the reason why the author wrote this particular story.)

QUESTION 3. What is the author’s purpose in this text?

- To show that if everyone does his or her part in the world and figure out which piece of the puzzle to work on, the world would be a better place.
- To get kids to ask their parents for money when they see a need for change in the world.
- To encourage children to speak publicly throughout the community.
- To help the reader understand that what one may take for granted could be a basic, unfulfilled need for millions of people in the underdeveloped world.

CCSS.ELA.LITERACY.SL.8.1D Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented. (i.e. when reading the text, what answer would best describe the meaning of the story.)

QUESTION 4. Which of the following would be an objective summary of the text?

- Eight hundred water well projects could prevent the death of six thousand children every day.
- Water is a basic necessity. Many people do not have water. It was provided to 700,000 people in 12 countries due to a seven-year-old boy wanted to help the situation.
- When presented with a problem to solve, the most important this is to determine which piece of the puzzle you can solve the best.
- Ryan, now twenty years old, has a foundation that serves three purposes: 1.) builds clean water wells; 2.) educates populations of citizens about the importance