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ChemMatters (ISSN 0736-4687) is published four times a year (Oct, Dec, Feb, and April) by the American Chemical Society at 1155 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036-4800. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *ChemMatters* Magazine, ACS Office of Society Services, 1155 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Subscriber Information

Prices to the United States, Canada, and Mexico: \$16 per subscription. Inquire about bulk, other foreign rates, and back issues at the ACS Office of Society Services, 1155 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036; 800-227-5558 or 202-872-6067 (fax). Information is also available online at www.acs.org/chemmatters.

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American Chemical Society
Canadian GST Reg. No. 127571347
Printed in the USA



NEWS

ChemClubs Collect “Coins for Cleaner Water”

Thweeeee! The coach's whistle blows for a quick break. You head to the drinking fountain for a few gulps of water before heading back to practice. For most of us, we have such easy access to clean water that we do not even think about it. However, for many people around the world, particularly in developing countries, having access to clean, drinkable water is a daily concern.

According to the Web site of the Children's Safe Drinking Water (CSDW) program (www.csdw.org), which is run by Procter & Gamble (P&G), nearly one billion people do not have regular access to clean drinking water. Those who use or drink contaminated water without treating it in some way run the risk of becoming sick. CSDW says that diarrhea caused by drinking contaminated water is a leading cause of illness and death among infants and children in the developing world. It states that about 1.8 million children die every year as a result of diseases that cause diarrhea. This is more than the number of children who die from HIV/AIDS and malaria combined.



KATHLEEN MELLOUS

In addition to raising money for the “Coins for Cleaner Water” initiative, ChemClubs became interested in testing the quality of their own local water. Shown here are students from (top) T. Wingate Andrews High School, High Point, N.C., and (left) Oshkosh North High School, Oshkosh, Wisc.



BARBARA MUZZARELLI

CSDW aims to provide children in developing countries with clean drinking water. P&G produces water purifier packets, each of which costs 10 cents and can purify 10 liters of water. The packet contains a powder that dissolves in the water and releases a chlorine disinfectant that kills bacteria and viruses. The packet also releases iron sulfate, a coagulant and flocculent that removes parasites, dirt, worms, and heavy metals, which are then filtered out by pouring the water through a cloth.

What can we do to help? American Chemical Society (ACS) ChemClubs are raising money as ACS partners with P&G in the campaign “Coins for Cleaner Water.” More than 500 ChemClubs are joining the fundraising effort with a goal of raising \$5,000, from January through May 2013. The collected money will be used to buy enough packets to treat 500,000 liters of water. Just \$1 would give a child clean water for 50 days! Visit the ChemClub Web site, www.acs.org/chemclub, to see how they are doing. Find a ChemClub near you or visit www.acs.org/cleanerwater to share your own “coins for cleaner water.”

—Erica K. Jacobsen