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MARSHALL ISLAND RESIDENTS TO HAVE CLEAN DRINKING WATER ACCESS

Sawyer partners with Kora in Okrane to provide 3,000 filters

Safety Harbor, FL., – July 17 2018, 15,000 outer Marshall Island residents will have access to clean drinking water through 3,000 water filters and training provided by Sawyer International, a company at the forefront of water filtration providing over 80 developing countries clean drinking water. Sawyer International Director Darrel Larson collaborated with Kora in Okrane (KIO,) a non-governmental organization based in the Marshall Islands.

Larson made the trek from Sawyer's headquarters in Safety Harbor, Florida to the Marshall Islands on July 5 to train Marshall Island residents on proper use of the water filters that were gifted by Marshall Islands-based nonprofit KIO. Along with Island residents, Larson was accompanied by representatives from the United Nations, the Ministry of Health, the Marshall Islands Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), the Department of Migration, the Disaster Response Data Team and KIO.

With no running freshwater rivers, harvesting rain water from gutters was the only source of drinking water for most residents prior to filters being provided. A test conducted by the EPA confirmed there were large amounts of E-coli in these water collections, leaving most of the villagers in poor health.

"The villagers were so happy to receive the filters that they threw a party at the end of our installations," Larson said. "At first they were very shy when talking about their waterborne sicknesses, but I think they quickly realized these filters mean a healthy future for them and their children."

KIO, symbolizing "women at the break of dawn," was able to supply the filters thanks to a grant through the UN, which has previously helped support other Marshall Island efforts led by the nonprofit. Co-founded in 2006 by Monique Levy Strauss and Iva Roberto, the NGO symbolizes women's responsibility to care for their family and community.

"We understand the logistical challenges to get to the islands, the economical challenges to fund these expensive missions and the man power needed to disseminate the filters," said Levy Strauss, KIO's Executive Director. "Partnership is key and we've been able to bring everyone together with the help of Sawyer."

Larson and the Sawyer International currently have several million filters circulating in developing nations to help put an end to lack of clean drinking water. The filters have already created life-changing results in Fiji and Liberia, with families in Fiji saving an average of \$22.46 a month on health care, and diarrhea reduction in Liberia being reduced from 36% of households to 1.5% after 8 weeks with the filters.

Liberia is on track to have clean drinking water border-to-border by December 2020. For the Marshall Islands, the Sawyer team continues to work alongside volunteers with KIO's motto in mind, "Buidrikdrik Maronron-A little help goes a long way."

Photo 1: From left to right Ministry of Health volunteer; EPA representative; Darrel Larson, Director of Sawyer International; Ministry of Health representative; Monique Levy Strauss, Executive Director of KIO and a family receiving Sawyer water filters.

Photo 2: Marshall Island residents learning how to properly use Sawyer water filters.

Photo 3: Marshall Island child drinking E.Coli free water treated by Sawyer water filters.

Photo 4: Marshall Island woman using a Sawyer water filter to purify her drinking water.

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About Sawyer

Founded in 1984, Sawyer has been at the forefront of innovation in water filtration, insect repellent, sunscreen and first aid. Not only are Sawyer's filters one of the most popular on the trail, they are being used in over 80 developing countries to provide people with clean drinking water. The majority of Sawyer's products are proudly made in the USA in Safety Harbor, Florida. For more information, visit <http://international.sawyer.com/>

About Kora in Okrane

Kora in Okrane (KIO) is a non-governmental organization comprised of volunteers working from all sectors of society. Established in 2006, KIO stems from like-minded women with a passion to serve. Their mission is to provide targeted assistance to socially and economically disadvantaged women and children of the Marshall Islands. To learn more about KIO, visit their Facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/korainokrane/>