

Choir teamed with Give Clean Water to save lives in Fiji

SOLANA BEACH — A group of North County high school students experienced firsthand how clean water can save lives, after traveling in June to villages in the Fiji Islands.

Teaming up with local nonprofit Give Clean Water, 17 members of Santa Fe Christian School's Chamber Chorale worked together in Fiji to donate and install water purification filters and provide hygiene education. The choir also performed for residents.

The Santa Fe Christian School choir members who made the trip to Fiji including Gina De Son, Karl Holmlund, Andy Kramer and Lauren Marrs, of Carlsbad; Emilee and Robby Adamson, Lauren Fowler, Alec Rogers and Carly Stein of Carmel Valley; Marissa Grice of Encinitas, Kevin Changaris and Haley Stead of Olivenhain; Mary Ashley Arendsee, Troy Elliott and Christina Saeed of Rancho

Santa Fe; Tony La Douce from Solana Beach/Del Mar; and Travis Berglund from Bonsall. The Give Clean Water team accompanying the choir in Fiji also has North County ties. The nonprofit's founder and chairman Darrel Larson is a 1979 graduate of Oceanside High School.

The 10-day trip was designed to help open the students' eyes to global health needs, especially the need for clean water. According to the World Health Organization, 1.8 million people die every year from water contamination. Globally it is the leading cause of illness and death.

"Our philosophy is not just to share our musical talent, but to also demonstrate God's love in a practical way and help the kids see they can really make a difference in the world," said Santa Fe Christian Chamber Chorale director Rhonda Fleming.



HELPING FIJI Santa Fe Christian School's Chamber Chorale members don traditional Fijian dress for a concert during their recent mission trip. *Courtesy photo*



MAKING A DIFFERENCE Santa Fe Christian choir member Karl Holmlund demonstrates how to use a water filter for a family during the group's recent mission trip to Lautoka, Fiji. *Courtesy photo*

For this year's trip, the choir worked with Give Clean Water to assist a poverty-stricken squatter settlement in Lautoka, Fiji. Last spring, Fiji was hard-hit by the devastation of Cyclone Thomas, which left many residents without safe drinking water. The nearly 100 filters the choir provided will protect the residents from potentially deadly typhoid fever outbreaks and other water-borne illnesses.

The team installed water filters in homes, schools and orphanages — where the choristers also held free performances. Importantly, the group also conducted hygiene education outreaches to teach residents about the importance of cooking and cleaning with purified water.

While in Fiji, the choir also had a chance to go sight-seeing and enjoy adventure such as scuba diving, snorkel-

ing, sky diving, swimming and parasailing.

"I had so much fun in Fiji, giving back to the world and growing closer to all my friends," Gina De Son said.

Each choir member raised \$2,400 to cover the cost of the Fiji trip, along with \$8,900 in additional funds as a group to cover the cost of the filters. Provided through Give Clean Water, the water purification filters are portable and guaranteed to last a lifetime. Give Clean

Water also provides long-term follow-up. Give Clean Water is a 501(c)(3) public benefit nonprofit organization based in San Diego and is currently working to raise \$60,000 to solve a severe typhoid water issue affecting 13 villages in Fiji. More than 600 homes urgently need filters — which will permanently solve such water-related illness.

For more information, visit www.givecleanwater.org or call (888) 429-6744.