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By Amy Fox January 26, 2010

ADA, Mich. (WZZM)- One of the most vital and immediate needs after the earthquake in Haiti was clean drinking water.

A partnership of West Michigan businesses is working to provide clean water in Haiti and all around the developing world.

It is a technology that started with International Aid. The Spring Lake based organization sold the rights to its HydrAid BioSand water filter to a partnership including Cascade Engineering and Windquest.

Now, hundreds of the filters are on the way to Haiti.

It's a rush job at Amway Corporation. Workers are making hundreds of parts for HydrAid BioSand water filters.

Roy Kuennen of Amway says, "Really what we have done is put the power of a water filtration plant back into the individuals' home." He says the filter can provide drinkable water for a family for ten years.

Here's how it works. You pour dirty water into the blue bin, which is filled with sand and a biological agent that kills micro-organisms. It takes about a half an hour for five gallons of water to filter.

Then Kuennen explains, "This is a chlorination device that will re-chlorinate the water so that it will kill any microorganisms that might make their way through the BioSand media."

The water then it goes through a carbon filter to make it taste good.

Kuennen says, "It basically provides safe water with no water pressure and no electricity." That is vital after a disaster.

While prototypes of the improved HydrAid BioSand water filter were being tested in several countries, the Haiti earthquake spurred the partnership to build 1,000 filter systems to donate in Haiti.

Jim Bodenner of the non-profit "Safe Water Team" will help distribute the filters, with help from the U.S. Navy. He says, "It creates the opportunity to get filters into a country quickly, using the heavy lift capacity that only the United States Navy can provide."

Christina Keller of Triple Quest, which is marketing the filters, says eventually entrepreneurs in developing countries will be able to sell, install, and repair the water filters. She says that will "provide rebuilding instead of just relief for Haiti."

The first shipment of HydrAid BioSand water filters will leave Grand Rapids Wednesday headed to Haiti.



A HydrAid BioSand water filtration system, like those being donated to Haiti earthquake relief.