

Brooklyn Technical High School Chapter of Gifts of Awesome

Spotlight: Peter Mikhlin

Thousands of families are struggling to survive in conditions considered to be less than adequate for the health and well-being of themselves. These circumstances are in violation of Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and yet they can be seen commonly across areas such as Syria and Africa. Peter Mikhlin is one of many high school students who has been following these devastating conditions around the world, however he is one of the few who has decided to be proactive and try and fix the situation, in hopes that “if [he] helps people in these countries, many others might jump in and help as well.” This initiative, started at the Brooklyn Technical High School Chapter of Gifts of Awesome, consists of students coming together to provide resources for the less fortunate in Africa.

Mikhlin’s initiative aims to raise money by focusing on a different topic each month. Currently, his concern is the shortage of potable water. Many families in Africa cannot afford to buy drinking water due to the privatization of resources by big corporations. As their wells and sources are taken over they must resort to drinking water from the nearby rivers and streams. However, without the proper filtration system many children are falling sick with diseases such as cholera, giardiasis, and dysentery. When these families cannot even afford a necessity such as clean water, the idea of being able to pay for medicine to treat these illnesses is like a far-away dream, causing many to become permanently ill or to die from a lack of treatment. Mikhlin was inspired to fight for clean water by the Water is Life straw. This device is a portable water filter made from durable plastic and uses iodized crystals and active carbon to reduce the waterborne bacteria and viruses common in unclean water. This revolutionizes the principal of drinking water for children in Africa, and instead of drinking only eight ounces of water a day,

this straw will create up to 3 liters of potable water for them. With the help of Peter Mikhlin's initiative, many families in Africa will be able to receive these straws and improve their standard of living immensely.

Raising money to create access to potable water is only the beginning for the Brooklyn Technical High School Chapter of Gifts of Awesome. Soon Mikhlin and his partners will move on to raising money and awareness about topics such as safe sex and birth control as well as women's healthcare. As Peter said, "People in difficult circumstances should understand that others care about them and want to help." With students creating initiatives and working together, we can spread that message one fundraiser at a time.