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Swampscott and Marblehead teens raise money for clean drinking water in Africa

By [Daniel Kane](#) | March 22, 2018



Chrissy Rogers, Marley Schmidt, Mahder Teferra, Reece Klusza, and Mariel Flughum walk for water around the halls of Swampscott High School on World Water Day. (Owen O'Rourke)

SWAMPSCOTT— World Water Day splashed into the halls of Swampscott High School as a group of about a dozen students marched to raise money for Barka Foundation, a non-governmental organization that works to provide clean water Burkina Faso, Africa.

“It seemed like a really good cause,” Swampscott student Mahder Teferra said. “We want to do everything we can to help.”

All together, around \$300 was raised, according to the school’s French club advisor and Interact club co-advisor, Melissa Albert. The amount included \$220 raised by one student who opted not to be named.

“We collaborate close with Barka on a number of projects,” Albert said. “We’re hoping to show that even something small like this can make a difference.”

The Interact Club is a youth division of the service organization, Rotary International. It works closely with the Rotary Club of Swampscott, according to Albert. The French club also got involved because French is one of the more than 60 languages spoken in Burkina Faso.

In Burkina Faso only 63 percent of the population has access to any form of drinking water and 19.4 percent of infant mortality is caused by water-related illnesses, according to the Burka Foundation.

Students from Marblehead High School's Interact and French organizations, including Bobbi Dynice, Gaby Rabinovich, and Emma Grazado, joined the Swampscott students Thursday.

"We were put into contact with Marblehead through Burka," Albert said. "We decided it would be cool to join forces."

Each of the Marblehead students carried a gallon of water on the walk in order to represent the hardships of some women in Burkina Faso who must walk around six kilometers to and from the nearest water source with buckets balanced on their heads.

"It's good to get involved however we can," Dynice said.

Thursday's unfavorable weather forced the students to walk a course inside the school mapped out to approximately six kilometers.

During the walk students were interviewed and filmed by the high school's Cable Club, which is creating a video that will be shown at a gala on Sunday in Burkina Faso as apart of their Water Fair.

"This is a good learning experience for our students because it combines community and language," Albert said. "It's about them becoming engaged global citizens."