2025 Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue
Session Title: 2025 Borlaug Dialogue Opening Ceremony and Opening Keynote
Date: October 21, 2025

Speakers

- Doc Hendley | Founder and President, Wine to Water

Transcript

VIDEO
Voiceover 1:

From soil, we rise. I hold the soil that holds my family. When my harvest failed, I fled my home. Peace begins with a full stomach. This soil grew our future.

We are the soil's caretakers, not its owners. I hold the soil that holds my When my harvest failed, I fled my home. This soil grew our future. We are the soil's caretakers, not its owners.

Emma McLean:

Doctor Norman Borlaug said that peace cannot be built on empty stomachs. Today, we say, security cannot grow without soil. This is our charge. This is our moment. Welcome to the Borlaug Dialogue.

Voiceover 2:

To begin the twenty twenty five Norman E. Borlaug International Dialogue, please welcome founder and president of Wine to Water and international humanitarian, Doc Henley.

Doc Hendley:

Thank you all so much for having me today. What an honor it is to be here with y'all. Before I get started, I got a quick video to show you if that's alright.

VIDEO

Voiceover (Doc Hendley):

1,100,000,000 people in the world don't have access to clean water. My efforts are gonna be a drop in the bucket. But if I had never taken that step because it was too big of a problem, then we wouldn't be anywhere right now. In

December 2003 is when the idea came for the organization, Wind of Water. We're very involved with water filtration around the world.

When we take the water from the street and we put it in here, the water that's in the bottom is not gonna be making you feel sick to your stomach.

February of last year, I got a phone call from someone in the scene in the heroes department saying that I've been nominated, which was completely shocking.

CNN Host:

From Boone, North Carolina, meet Doc Henley. Through his wine to water program, this bartender provides clean, sustainable water to thousands worldwide.

Voiceover (Doc Hendley):

This feeling that we were kept hitting over and over that we can only tell this amount of people about this water crisis was just completely shattered. Everything from when you're nominated to getting through the top 10 to being in the Kodak theater could not have made me and everybody that was around me feel more special. I'm very proud to be a part of this group.

News Reporter:

For many trapped in the rubble of downtown Port Au Prince, the struggle to live continues.

Voiceover (Doc Hendley):
The earthquake happened in Haiti. Immediately, I went down there and to figure out where I could be plugged in.

Earthquake Survivor:

She can't get well if she doesn't have anything to drink.

Voiceover (Doc Hendley):

Obviously, you can see it's something that is that I'm very passionate about now. I'm sorry. I never yeah. Five years, my goal is to have reached a million people for clean water. If you find something you're passionate about, I don't care who you are, you will make a difference.

My name is Doc Kinley. I'm a 2009 CNN hero. I started the organization Wine to Water.

Doc Hendley

Alright. Thank you. My wife asked me why I keep showing that video because they we made it like fifteen years ago. And she's like, you just like to show it because it makes you look younger. Right?

Is that is that what it is? And I'm like, well, I don't know maybe. But I like to still show up because at the very end, they had asked me a question in the interview. What do you hope to do in five years? What's your dream?

At that time, we maybe reached about thirty, forty thousand people in four or five different countries around the world and I remember saying my dream is to have reached a million people. That number was so big at that time and it took us a little more than five years. Think about seven or eight more years. We reached our first million people the first year of the pandemic and it took us only two or three more years to reach the next million. Now we've worked over 55 different countries around the world and getting close to our three millionth person with clean drinking water.

But before thank you. Before I tell you about that journey, I think it's important to know a little bit about my personal journey. Because sometimes I feel like I don't belong up here. So I think it's important to know a little bit about my background. My heroes of my life were my two grandfathers.

I'm named after both of them. My real name is Dixon Beatty Henley. My middle name Beatty is my grandfather who was a farmer in South Carolina. I don't have many memories of talking with him because he didn't talk all that much. He was in that South Carolina House of Representatives for twenty years representing rural farmers in South Carolina.

And they called him the quiet one in the chambers in the House of South Carolina because he didn't speak all that much. And when he did, people listened to him. He was one of my heroes. I remember him pulling me up in his lap on that old red Farmall tractor, sitting me on his lap and just riding me around the fields with him. And my other grandfather, whose name is Dixon, is my other hero.

He was a professional football player, American football, for the Pittsburgh Steelers back in the day, the late forties and early fifties. And those days, you didn't make a lot of money though playing professional football. So he already had four kids at that time on his way to six kids and he couldn't feed his family on a salary from playing for the Pittsburgh Steelers. So he came back to South Carolina and he started cleaning toilets and bathrooms as a janitor. He ended up starting his own janitorial company and he became an entrepreneur.

His janitorial company grew all over the country and then he started a landscaping company and then he started a machine factory company that where they can go into a factory and they can fix the machines if they broke. They could clean the toilets if they broke, or they can mow the grass. He looked at all the things that needed to be done, but he started cleaning toilets and bathrooms in South Carolina. Those were my heroes in my life and I wanted to be just like him. The problem is, everything I tried to do when I was younger failed.

I wanted to be a great athlete like my grandfather. I tried to play football because I wanted to play for the Steelers just like he did. But in order to get to the NFL one day, your rear end eventually has to leave the bench. And there's a second string and there's a third string and there's another number down there that basically you're never gonna get playing time on the field. I was that string.

I was a little bit of a late bloomer. I was I grew a little slower than everybody else. And so I wasn't going to be a good football player. And the Carolinas, we love basketball. We're big college basketball people.

So I started playing basketball. I was a little better in basketball, played on a few competitive teams. And I thought I was going to do good in basketball until my younger brother turned out to be six foot nine. And I don't know how many centimeters that is, but it's like this tall. He's like this tall.

He can dunk a basketball without hardly jumping. And so you need confidence to play a sport. And so I lost all my confidence when my 11 year old brother was dunking on me in the backyard. So I switched to another sport, golf. You don't have to be really big and strong to play golf, right?

I mean, it's a stick and a ball. So my granddaddy was my coach. Me and my cousin, he would pick us up from school. He would take us to the golf course, teach us golf. My cousin went on to play on the PGA tour.

He's on the PGA tour right now. He's been on the tour for almost twenty years. His name is Lucas Glover. He won the US Open in golf. I never made it to the tour.

I never won a tournament. Actually, I was always the bottom of the leaderboard. My brother went on to play professional basketball all over the world. So sports was not my thing. So then I thought, well, what about maybe I can impress my grandfathers by just being a good student, like being really smart.

That was worse than sports unfortunately for me. You know in the 80s and 90s they didn't have all the ADDs and the ADHDs and all that. I would have been diagnosed with all of them. I can't sit still. I'm trying really hard just not move too much on the stage right now.

I can't sit still. If a teacher is preaching at me all day long about something that I don't care about, I won't hear it. If there's a window in that classroom, I'm just looking out the window cause all I wanna do is be out there. And so my grades suffered. I was the very bottom of the class, almost the bottom.

I'm lucky that I graduated. My sister was the very top. She made one B in her entire Scholastic career. One, I was there. They used to send us our report cards in the mail because we didn't have computers.

They would send us a report card. She opened it, she saw her first B and she wept. She cried for an entire day because she got a B. If I got a B on my report card, I was crying as well, but there were tears of joy because I never I never saw those bees. I wasn't good as a student.

I wasn't good in school and I have one more shot. My father was on his way to be a really great football player. My granddaddy says he was the best in the whole family, but he was injured just before he went to college. Bad enough to where they said you probably never walk normal again. And so he quit sports and became a preacher.

So there was one one more shot. If I could just be good enough for my dad, be good enough for my grandparents, Maybe I'd be all right. Unfortunately, at that time my life that was harder than the other two for me. I was a little bit of a I was a little hard headed. The one thing I was good at I felt like if I had a superpower at that time in my life, I think my superpower would have been my unique ability to break rules.

If you put rules and regulations in front of me, I have an uncanny ability to break every single one of them. And I can break them in record time in ways that nobody ever thought you could break a rule before. I was going to break them and that wasn't really seen as a superpower though by my dad who was a preacher man. And so honestly, got pretty frustrated with just with everything. I ended up leaving the Carolinas, which is about a thousand miles, I don't know that way.

And I have family out in Montana, which is about another thousand miles that way. And I just had this idea that I was just going to melt away in the mountains of Montana. If you know anything about Montana, it's where like, I don't know a lot of the John Wayne movies are probably based out there. It's out west with the mountains and there's great long ranch lands and not many people. I'd work with horses a bit growing up and I just felt like that's where I was going end up for the rest of my life.

So I got a job on a horse ranch out there and that was a really important part of my life. One, I learned that when you're doing something that you love because I'd really love working with horses. I learned that the thing that you love to do, especially with ranching and farming, if you're something you really like, you're probably only gonna get to do it for about 5% of the time. 95% of the time, you're gonna have to put it in

doing the work of all the stuff you don't like. For me that was shoveling horse manure and stalls all day long.

I was the only one that lived on the ranch full time, everybody else lived off the ranch. I lived in one of the empty stalls with the horses and I just shoveled horse manure. That's all I did or fix fences because a tree or something had fallen down. I was fixing fences, shoveling horse manure, feeding the horses, making sure their water hadn't frozen in the winter and maybe 5% of the time I got to do what I love. So it taught me something.

Life's not always about just doing what you love to do and you got to put in that work, you got to put in that effort, but something more important than that happened in that time before I finally started making my way back East is that, it was the first time in my life I was alone for a long time. I had no one to compare myself to. So I felt like I realized at that time my life, was something in my head, like a voice, but not a voice, but something there that was just constant and it always just yelled at me and pointed a finger and was like, you're not like everybody else, you're not good enough, you're not this, you're not this, Like like accusing me of all the wrong that I'd ever done in my life and all that's wrong with me. When I look in the mirror, that's all I could see was that finger pointing there. That voice, those times being alone in Montana just it just kind of went away.

And I think it was replaced with something else, not so loud and not so angry, another voice that was that was like a like a whisper. You had to be quiet and you had to be still to hear it. And it would say almost the same things, but just in a different way. And you're not like everybody else. That's okay. That's how I made you. It's beautiful.

And so with that new voice in my head, I moved back across the country. I got a job in the restaurant industry. I love working in the restaurant industry.

I was just serving and waiting tables like Mr. Borlaug. I know he met his wife serving and waiting tables. I've met my wife in a restaurant but it was years later so I wasn't at this time as well. I'm just serving people a hot meal on a cold drink and I got to be where I was a bartender.

And I love being a bartender. It was the first time in my life when I was bartending that I actually fell in love with people. I didn't know that. I didn't work so well with people before that. I worked better with horses than I do with people.

But at the bar, I remember being there and there were all walks of life in front of me. There'd be people in their white collars, CEOs of companies sitting next to blue collar people, sitting next to school teachers, next to stay at home mamas, next to construction workers. And there were people there that were just there to just take a deep breath, have a good conversation, talk about their day that they had, they were there for community. They were all seeking something. They were all hungry for something, But there wasn't any number of food plates that I can put in front of them that would fill that hunger.

There wasn't any amount of beer and wine I can put in front of them that would quench that thirst that they all had for something. I got to share and whatever that was in that moment in my life and it was beautiful. They would come in and they would celebrate with me when they got a promotion in their job, they would come say, I got the promotion. I'm now the president. I'm now the CEO.

I just had my first child, Doc. I get to celebrate with him. I just got married. I'm coming here from my bachelor party or whatever like I got to celebrate life with these people or things that were not good happen.

They lost their job. Their marriage was falling apart. They lost a child. They would come to me and talk to me. I love that about my job. Why am I here getting all teared up on a stage in Iowa?

I don't know. I don't know why I'm here. I remember when it all changed for me though, December 2003. As you remember, tend to break rules and at this time of my life, I have a lot of energy. And if I don't have anywhere good to put that energy, sometimes I put that energy in places that aren't good.

I was in a pretty self destructive path of my life because I had this weight on me. Because I knew that whisper was there, always there. And I didn't want to believe it anymore. Because what if it was true? What if it was true that I'm meant for something more?

What if it was true that I'm meant to be something more than a bartender? I'm not sure if I wanted it to be true, so I ran from that voice. And when I wasn't working, I went straight to the bar and I would drink and do other things just to try to make that voice go away now because it was uncomfortable. And I got to a point December 2003 when that that weight on my shoulders was so heavy and constant and always there where I couldn't I couldn't take it anymore. So I pushed back from the bar that I just walked in.

It was like 10:30 in the morning. I'm like, I'm not gonna go to the bar today. And I went into the bathroom at this bar and I locked the door and I fell down on my face and I'm like, look, okay, I'll do whatever you want me to do. Wherever you want me to go, I'll go. I can't run anymore, can't do this anymore.

I'm here. So I picked up myself from that dirty bathroom floor and I went, I took a couple of weeks off the bar, I asked my boss, look, can I just have a couple of weeks to get away? I got to figure some stuff out. And I did, I got home to where my parents had just retired and I just was trying to do that thing where I was quiet again and alone again. And that phrase, if you can put that slide back up on the screen there, the phrase wine to water.

One night it was in my head and I couldn't get it out. Was like, wasn't really a dream, wasn't really I wasn't really awake. I was kind of in between sleep and dreaming and I'm like, why is this in my head? And why is it backwards? My daddy told me about water to wine, but why is it backwards?

And I couldn't figure it out. But I can't sleep now and I'm just now learning how to use a computer. This is 2003. So I go down to my parents' computer and I start researching water issues, water problem because I poured wine every day at my job. So I'm like, I don't even need look up in my wine, I know nothing about water.

All I know is you just move a handle and it just turns on. If I want to go sit down in the shower, I just turn it on and I go like this and I stand there for twenty minutes if I want it. That's all I know about water. I like to swim in it. Maybe there's something I need to know about water.

That night I learned about the global water crisis. I learned there were women and kids around the world walking four and five hours every single day before the sun

comes up to get their water so that a mama could take care of her younger babies or go in the field and try to work and the kids can try to go to school. I didn't know that. I don't know the rest of the world didn't have water like we had where you just turn a tap and then it comes on. And then I learned that the number was over a billion people, a billion with a b.

And I'm like, look, I'm not real great at math, I'm pretty sure there's only six or 7,000,000,000 people in the world. 1,000,000,000, that's a lot. And I don't know what I can do about that. I'm just a bartender, but maybe I can do something. Maybe I can help one family.

Maybe I can help one village one day not have to walk anymore. So I went back to my bar and I held the first ever wind water event. It took me about six weeks to put it together and it was the first thing I'd ever done in my life that worked, that wasn't a failure. Had over 300 people show up that night to the first wind water event and we raised 5 or $6,000 which is more money than I'd ever I'd ever seen before in my life. Then we did another event a month later, another event a month later and six months later, I quit my job and I moved to Sudan, to the Darfur region of Sudan and there's a middle of a genocide happening in Darfur in 2004 and 2005.

I got there, I'm not an engineer y'all, I don't know what to do but I learned when I fell in love with people in the bar, you don't have to be everything, you just need to get really good at finding the people that are good at this one thing and this one thing and one thing and pull them together and make a team of people. And so I went around and made my first team of local Sudanese. And, I also knew that Sudan was a country that was divided. It was before they had become North and South. And I knew that there was a country in war over religious war of Christians and Muslims for years and I'm a bit naive so I'm like well and I'm going to make my team half Christian and half Muslim and just see how that goes.

I don't know, we'll see how it works out and it worked out awesome. It was beautiful. We loved each other. We served alongside each other. We care for each other. We were willing eventually to die for each other if we had to.

Unfortunately, some of my team members did pass away towards the end of my time there. But what we did, the government would destroy the wells that was more effective than them shooting the people with bullets. They could go into a

community and destroy the wells with bombs or or machine gun fire and make the people of Darfur leave, which is all they wanted to do. They wanted to ethnically cleanse the area with the same tribe that was in the government. And so we would go around and fix these wells and that ended up becoming a problem for the government.

We became a problem for them and so they started to stop our vehicles. They would I remember one time that the bad guys that were doing all the killing would shoot their gun off, stop my vehicles, pull my men out of the trucks, question us, smash them with the guns and threaten us. The last time it got really bad, they stripped one of my guys down of his clothes and they beat him really bad and they said in this one area that they were planning to ethnically cleanse, if we see you and your team come back here again next time we're not stopping you we're gonna kill you. So you need to find another place to work. So we we chose to work in areas that were deemed United Nations no go zones or even the UN or UN affiliated organizations would not work there because the fighting was going on actively.

And I'd never really been good at following rules. So I knew that was where people needed the most self, that's where I went. They said, don't come here anymore. You need to stay where everybody else stays. So after that I'm like, okay, well, you know, we'll just stay where everybody else stays.

It's safer there. But then I got a call from a village community leader that I had gotten to know really well. Can you please come back? We have cholera in our village. The kids are sick.

Can you come back? And I said, yes sir, we'll come back. And so I told my team, don't have to go, I understand what happened last time. You don't have to go if you don't want to. And they all all of them came except for one and he was going to come but he he was in bed with malaria so he couldn't get out of bed.

But we all went and we made it. The tribe that was doing a lot of the killing is a nomadic tribe, you don't always see them. And the tribe we were working with were black African farmers that had been in the same place for probably thousands of years. So we went back to their village, treated the water supply with chlorine tablets and other things to try to shock and keep the collar out and work on their water

systems and we're all good. I'm like, all right, we're going to go back to our compound and think we're good.

Maybe we'll make it out today. On our way back to where we were based out of, I was getting to about halfway a few hours back. I was getting to this village that was already burned out and I could see people on the left side of the road and people on the right side of the road, I could see horses and camels up on the hill, there were nomadic traps. So that means they were in the area and they were all like, I could see people on either side of the road and they were hidden behind these trees and rocks with their machine guns. And we're getting closer and closer I'm like, what do I do?

My heart's pounding and I'm driving the lead vehicle. So it's my decision, do I stop and try to talk to them and explain to the people, this is why we had to come back, there was cholera, you need to understand and I get closer and I can't make a decision. Sometimes when I'm afraid, I just freeze and my brain doesn't work. So I'm frozen and the car is still moving and then I felt my foot just hit the gas. I'm like, alright, we're gonna go.

My foot made the decision for me and right when my foot hit the gas almost that instant, I could see a guy out of the corner of my eye that I didn't see to the last second he shot his machine gun and I could feel the blast from that barrel. And then everybody else started shooting. And then my guys on the radio behind me where we all try to I tried to learn Arabic with them. So they're screaming at me in Arabic like, this is Sudanese Arabic. So it may not be perfect Arabic.

I'm like, we need to stop. We need to stop. And I'm like, no man, you got five minutes. We need to go five minutes. They had their tire shot out and the ambush.

And a lot of them are newer drivers. You know, I've been driving since way before it was legal for me to be driving. We won't get into that. But anyway, I knew if you had a tire, a flat tire, you can go on the flat tire for a good five miles and you're going to be fine until you have problems. So I'm like, five minutes, five minutes, we can make it five minutes.

We're not stopping in the middle of an ambush to change the tire. So we made it five minutes because my thought was maybe five minutes on a rim was far enough to get away from their horses and their camels. So we got away and y'all we changed

the tire on that Land Cruiser, like the most well old NASCAR pit crew that you've ever seen or Formula One pit crew, whichever one you like. We changed that tire in like thirty seconds, we had it up and gone And I was looking my vehicle over there's bullet holes in their vehicle, my vehicle, they shot out my gas tank. My vehicle was the only one that had two gas tanks.

And thankfully I was on the one they didn't shoot out or I would have just run out of gas right in the middle of the ambush. So that was a good thing. And there was another bullet hole that caught my eye, went in right to the back window of the vehicle I was driving. And it looked like a perfect shot to hit me right in the head. It was a good shot, right through the back window.

And I went out in the back and I looked and I didn't see the bullet in the seat. I didn't see it in the dash. I didn't see it anywhere. I'm feeling my head and make sure I didn't have a bullet in it. And I'm like, where did it go?

And I go in and the chlorine tablets that we would use to treat the water supply, there was a cardboard box of them right behind my seat. And I could see the line on the top of the box where the bullet went in the window and it was a perfect line straight to where my head was. And I kept looking closer and closer and on the very edge of that box, I could see without line of the bullet, it was going straight and the line of that bullet took an almost 90 degree turn and went that way. And I'm like, that's impossible. So I look now, I look at the new line, it's going this way and sure enough, I look and I see the little hole in the side of my vehicle where where that bullet turned and went in the side.

I don't know don't know why I'm here still. That's one of a thousand stories. I don't know why I'm still here today. I don't know why I got to come home and meet my wife. I have three kids.

When I'm turned 11 today, I get to go home and celebrate her birthday tonight. I don't know why I'm here. I don't know why a few weeks later, the bad guys found some of my team and kidnapped them and executed them and they didn't get to go home to their wife and their three kids. I don't know why I'm on this stage. I don't have the answers.

I feel like the older I get, the more questions I have than I have answers. But I believe with all my heart that the way every one of you out there was made intricately was to love and serve your neighbor. No matter if they look like you or don't look like you. No matter if they talk like you or don't talk like you, no matter if they pray like you or don't pray like you or don't pray at all, I believe it's our job in life to love and serve each other. Period.

End of sentence. And I think for the first time in my life, I was just trying my best to do that. And I believe all those prayers my daddy and my mama were saying back home that they were heard. I believe that. And maybe that's why I'm here today.

When I came home, I wanted to keep working. It took me a little while. I met my wife like I said, actually just two or three days after coming home from Sudan and I would have given up to be honest with you. After my friend died, my last two or three days in Sudan, after he was executed, it was spent digging his grave. And when I came home I was I wasn't in a really good place.

I was probably just gonna go back to being a bartender. But I met my wife three days after coming home. My wife's a lot tougher than I am. I think the more I've had so much fun researching this event and who it honors, Mr. Borlaug and found that he was married for sixty nine years to a Miss Margaret Borlaug.

I had so much fun reading about her and learning about her and learning about how awesome of a mother she was. How awesome of a grandmother she was. How they're married for sixty nine years, Sixty nine years. And I just kind of laughed to myself and I'm like, I bet she was tougher too. I wouldn't be here without my wife.

My wife's the greatest gift God ever gave me on this planet. She's the mother of my children. She's praying for me right now. I don't have the strength in me to do this work. I'm not smart enough.

I'm not. I don't know the right decisions to make as a leader. I never wanted to be a leader. We're in 55 countries now and have hundreds of staff around the world. I don't know what's right.

I don't always make the right decisions. I make the wrong decisions more than the right ones. But I rely on people in my life that are stronger than me to get through. I

don't have to always be strong. I rely on people like my wife, I allow people like my team, a couple of people that you'll meet that'll be here the rest of the week, while I get to go home to see my daughter for her birthday.

Carrie and Carissa, you'll see them here, they're to stay all the way through. They're smarter than me. They're tougher than me in these things and that's a good thing. It's a beautiful thing. That's why we get to do this work.

That's why we grew into Cambodia after Sudan finally. And we built that drilling machine. We didn't have the money for a nice expensive drilling machine. They cost a couple $100,000. So we built one for like $5,000 and it runs just like it looks, it's a piece of junk.

It breaks down like once a week and that's okay, because it's made out of all local parts and materials. So they just go to the market, get a part and they fix it. So we get our costs down. We were digging wells for under $500 in Cambodia, all along the Vietnam Cambodia border, hundreds and hundreds of wells. Every other organizations were digging wells for over $5,000 because they use everything that's expensive.

And when it breaks, you got go to Thailand to get parts to fix it. So from there, we started to get into water filtration. It's not just wells people need, but there's plenty of communities all over the world. The Amazon Jungle up in Northern Uganda and and the Nile River where it starts in Ethiopia. All these tributaries of the world's rivers, then the water's right there.

It's right there. But it just looks like this when they drink it, it's dirty. Since a lot of places they're not just walking, but when they get there, if they're walking three minutes or three hours, the water looks like this. And they either have to spend a lot of time and energy and money trying to deforest and cut down wood and boil every single bit of water before they drink it, which doesn't really happen because they can't afford that. And a lot of places have already had enough deforestation, so they just pour it through a cloth, try to make it as clean as they can and they drink it and these kids are dying.

The number one reason why a child's not gonna see their fifth birthday is because of diarrheal disease due to dirty water. So we got into water filtration, but we wanted to

make water filters out of local materials. So that picture you see there, those are water filters made of concrete, sand and gravel. And then we started making water filters out of clay. That's my oldest son, he's 17 now, but he would come with me and help, made out of ceramics and clay.

We can make a clay filter like we have a factory in Tanzania. We have a factory in Dominican Republic and they make filters that we can clean water beyond our EPA standards with just lumps of clay. We put a little bit of colloidal silver mixed in so that it's an anti microbial. So we can make a ceramic filter with 95% locally available parts. We teach them how to order colloidal silver and sprinkle it in the batch and we can get that.

And when we give these filters out, these families, they cherish their filter. And I realize it's because it's more than just the kids aren't getting sick anymore. We've done all this data and research and we found out that when we give a household clean water, school days missed of the children plummets near zero. Work days missed by the parents plummets near zero. Household income drastically increases.

In areas where they may have a little bit of money, fathers like this will spend a third of their household income, a third of their household income just to buy water. In Dominican Republic, they buy these water in these things called botellones, which is like a five gallon water jug. And they spend a third of their income because they know the water is killing them. When I give them a filter, they've just increased their household income by 33.33333. That's a good day for him.

They love these filters. So then we started getting into disaster response. I don't know what it is, but I found out that I guess my ability to break rules, I can get in places nobody else can get. This is Syria, right after the war broke out and ISIS began to destroy the villages inside Syria. I didn't have a technology that I could get in Syria.

There were 1,500 families when Turkey shut the border and said no more. We can't accept any more people. This was back in 2012, right when the Arab Spring happened and people in Syria were saying we've had enough of this oppressive regime, but it also allowed for ISIS to spring up and they just started destroying communities. And by this time 1,500 families were stuck between the border of Syria and Turkey in no man's land with nowhere to go. And word got to us that they needed water.

And so I was like, all right, we'll figure it out. So I found a water filter that sometimes backpackers and hikers use based off a similar technology, same technology as kidney dialysis. They take a membrane that's in a kidney dialysis machine and you can clean water with it. And they're about the size of a Coke can and they can last for ten years if you take care of them. So I got 1,500 of those and started getting them.

We partnered with a local Islamic organization in Turkey and we began smuggling filters inside Syria. I didn't know I was gonna get to break rules for good in my life. Like it's my favorite thing to do in the world, sneak inside a place and get people clean water. So we were able to get everybody these filters. And then after Syria, we started using these filters more.

The super typhoon that hit Tacloban in The Philippines back in thirteen or fourteen, not long after that. We were able to get thousands of filters inside The Philippines and they weren't able to go back to school until they could get clean water in the school. So the water at the school looked like that, as she's holding. And the filter, one of the filters we got, you can see on the bucket there, can turn the water to that. So then we started using these filters and really remote tribes up in the Amazon Jungle, all throughout Colombia, Brazil and Peru.

Because we can fit so many of them in those little dugout canoes. They last for a decade, ten years, ten years. We can get them clean water and you can put them on a bucket like that or I'll tell you, you can put them on a bottle like this because after a while we've using these filters, I kept thinking there's some things I would do different if I could. I'm more a non profit but we built our own drilling machine out of nothing. Why can't we make our own filter?

So Wind to Water started making our own filters a few years ago and right when we got our factory up and going, we're based out of Western North Carolina and our factory is right over the border in Tennessee. Right when we got our factory up and going, the Western North Carolina storm hit last year, devastated our region. I never seen anything like it in my life. I've been to a lot of disasters. I think something changes when you go to a disaster in someone else's home and you see it in your home, you see it through a different lens, a different eye.

So we started using our water filters and we started giving out food, medical supplies, aid. We started rebuilding houses for people in Western North Carolina and that really kicked off. We had been working in The United States a good amount. We've worked in Navajo Nation, Hopi tribes during the pandemic to help people have access to safe water. We've worked in Florida after hurricanes and things like that.

But this just took our United States response to a whole new level. And so we began working and have are still working in Western North Carolina to this day, rebuilding homes. We've rebuilt over 60 homes in Western North Carolina, provided thousands and thousands of water filters for people that needed clean water in their homes. We had volunteers coming, clean up after the storm. But I wanna leave you with two pictures.

The first one is this one. It was taken in that refugee camp inside Syria. These families, these children, they just lost everything. ISIS just destroyed their homes. They had nothing.

They were living in tents and you would think you would think it would be like they show you on the news, on social media when they're really trying to make people angry and mad and sometimes we should be. You would think you would see children that look bloody and dusty. I've been to some of the worst disasters in our world in the last twenty years. I've been to some of the worst wars in our world in the last twenty years. And you see that sometimes, you do.

But it's 1% of the time. 99% of the time, no matter how bad the war is or how bad the disaster is, when I see the children, they look like this. My daddy taught me that we're to learn from the children. That it's not the religious elite. It's not the political elite.

It's not Hollywood. It's not the CEOs in the white collars. My daddy told me that it's the children that have the answer. This family here just lost their house behind them in the storm when we found them. We're helping build them a new home right now.

And whether they're children in Syria or whether they're children here in The United States, the children are the ones that are going to help us move forward. With whatever we got going on in our country right now, whatever we got going on in the world right now, and your search for food and feeding children, and my search for giving them something clean to drink, those that we serve are the ones that have

the answer. They will save us. The children will help what sometimes in the world looks like this. And turn it into this.

And my challenge to you all as you're going back to your jobs, everything you do, think about what would a child do? Will they smile? Would they give this person that doesn't look like me a big hug? What lens would they look to the world at? Because they're the ones that are going to lead the way.

Y'all God bless you. Thank you.