

Liberia News

JOHN DEAN TOWN HEALTH PROJECT - UPDATE

BRINGING SUSTAINABLE HEALTH IMPROVEMENTS TO
18 VILLAGES IN LIBERIA, AFRICA

What is it? The John Dean Town (JDT) Health Project has the goal of bringing *sustainable health improvements to 18 rural Liberia villages* through the training of local midwives, known as traditional birth attendants (TBAs), along with the construction of wells and latrines. The project focal point is a place called John Dean Town, located in the heart of the St. John River District, Grand Bassa County. John Dean Town is in a remote location. The people of this area suffer from dire maternal and infant health issues. Training of TBAs by qualified health practitioners gives them the capability to act as public health workers and increases their status in the villages, which in turn allows them to positively impact the overall health of the villagers. Construction of the wells reduces the disease associated with drinking from the local creeks and rivers. This work is a partnership. All Ann Arbor District congregations were invited to contribute to fund this three year project. The Department of Health of the Liberia Annual Conference of the UMC is responsible for implementing the program in Liberia. The villagers of John Dean Town provide labor and materials for well construction and are asked to compensate the village TBA.

What is the funding status? Thanks to your generosity and great stewardship the project is fully funded with over \$80,000 contributed. THANK YOU!

What has been accomplished? Based on first hand observation in John Dean Town by the AA District Volunteers in Mission in December:

- Six formal TBA trainings sessions have been completed, including one on diabetes conducted during the AA District VIM trip in December.
- The TBAs are functioning as an organized group and are helping pregnant Moms get to the JDT Clinic for giving birth.
- 12 Wells have been constructed and are operational
- A small number of latrines have been built

What remains to be done?

- Training sessions are being planned for HIV/AIDs and child nutrition.
- Formal TBA identification tags and uniforms to be provided.
- Six more wells to be constructed during the next dry season (January – March 2018).
- Cultural and issues surrounding latrines and birthing huts need to be resolved.

Thanks to the efforts of all the partners in this project, mother and infant mortality has been reduced and general community health has been improved for the people of John Dean Town. This is one of the ways we connect with our brothers and sisters in Liberia and demonstrate Christ's love for those in need. Please continue to pray for the people of John Dean Town and the workers of the UM Department of Health in Liberia.



Arthur Johnson shows off the well in Joetown



TBAs in Training Session