

‘Water and Light’ – Auburn football players prepare water filters and solar light for Dominican communities



July 5, 2017

In May, Auburn football players, Coach Gus Malzahn and members of the FCA staff spent the beginning of their summer break in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic. A trip led by team chaplain Chette Williams, the team had many opportunities to interact directly with the communities. One of the more impactful stops on the itinerary were the days spent building, preparing and distributing clean water filters and solar light packets.

"What I took away from the trip is to be appreciative of everything, because they're living with no air conditioning, no clean water, no light and they don't complain. They're still happy, they're still smiling," senior defensive back Stephen Roberts said. "We have a lot to be grateful for. Like water, I never have to think about clean water, and they don't really have clean water. I hope other people can take a trip like this and have their lives changed as well."



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"They say disease brought on by consuming unclean water is the greatest cause of death in the Dominican Republic. A lot of times they eat using the water that they bathe in, bathe their animals in, wash their clothes in—they drink it and use it to cook. So the water filters make it 99.9 percent pure."

-- John Franklin III



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"With the size of the group we had, it didn't take us long to make twenty or so water filters to give out to families who earned them. It was a neat process because to them (clean water) is the world. Those kids may forget about us, but they won't forget about their clean water. That's just something that could last them for who knows how long."

-- Kerryon Johnson



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"We were drilling holes into the buckets for the water to transfer down to the bottom bucket. This was a special moment to me because I felt like I took a part in creating it. When we delivered the filters, just seeing the reaction on the family's faces -- how they were smiling and running up to us, hugging us, and, just so appreciative. What we were doing to give them clean water, that was just amazing for me."

-- Deshaun Davis



DL Dontavius Russell and PK Daniel Carlson drain and assemble the filters before they are inserted into the buckets. Many non-profits work to fund and provide these clean water filters for Dominican and Haitian families for as low as \$55 per kit. (Source: International Ministries)



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"Tucker (Brown), Darius (James) and I were having competitions to see who could put on those little stickers the best. It was a lot of fun just hanging out and getting to do some work and help out these different families and villages that need so much. It was really humbling to be a part of."
-- Daniel Carlson



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"There were so many families who didn't have a single light in their house. They try not to use candles because there was a big house fire there that burnt down something like 53 houses. The only thing they had was the light coming from outside, so at night it's hard to get things done. When we turned the light on, her eyes lit up, like she had never seen one before. It was just awesome to give her that light, and show her a bigger light in the world as well."

-- Kerryon Johnson



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"This guy, that we delivered a solar light to, was a single parent of two girls. That was kind of big, seeing a father actually taking care of his kids. He just wanted us to pray for him. He was not actually a Christian, but he did say he believed in God."

-- Deshaun Davis