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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

BACK TO SCHOOL FOR TWO CANADIAN CHARITIES IN AFRICA

Ryan Hreljac was a 6-year-old boy determined to build a well in Uganda after learning in school about the challenges of the kids his age who didn't have access to clean, safe drinking water, and the devastating impact on their health.

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) is a charity dedicated to improving the health and lives of the people of Africa, and was the builder of what would become Ryan's first well.

Today, more than 20 years later, Ryan and the foundation he created, Ryan's Well Foundation, is reuniting with CPAR to bring water, sanitation, and hygiene to over 1,000 school children in Malawi, as part of CPAR's Green Schools Project.

"There's something inspiring about the symmetry of this partnership," says CPAR Executive Director, Kathrina Loeffler. "CPAR was thrilled to fulfill a young boy's goal to bring drinking water to the children in Uganda, and to partner today to benefit so many more children in Malawi is really the story of our mutual commitment to give kids both health and hope."

"Twenty-two years ago," said Ryan Hreljac, Ryan's Well Foundation Founder and Executive Director, "the local community rallied around my dream of clean water for an African school in need, and it was the team at CPAR that made that dream a reality. We are so fortunate to have developed and nurtured a relationship with CPAR, which has in turn helped Ryan's Well Foundation grow; we have now managed to provide clean water and sanitation to over 1.1 million people. We're ecstatic that we are able to continue our partnership with CPAR through the Green Schools Initiative in Malawi, which will provide even more people with clean water."

Under the agreement announced today, the Ryan's Well Foundation is contributing its funds and expertise for the construction of four 30,000-litre rainwater harvesting tanks for four primary schools, 40 latrine stances, and sanitation and hygiene education for the teachers and staff at three primary schools.

Green Schools is a project to not only bring clean, safe water to schools in rural Malawi, but it also teaches children about sustainable agriculture and includes the establishment of community and school gardens – aided by water from the tanks. Ryan's Well Foundation is focused on the water and sanitation elements of the project and has expanded its scope by providing a much-needed element that had been missing – latrines. Only 25% of schools in Malawi meet the recommended standard for provision of latrines and three schools will be upgraded as part of the partnership. Ryan's Well Foundation joins the Blossom Foundation and the ChariTree Foundation in supporting the Green Schools Project.

MALAWI FACTS AT A GLANCE:

- 1.7 million people in Malawi don't have access to safe water, and nearly 10 million don't maintain adequate sanitation practices. (Malawi population: 16 million)
- 1,700 children perish every year due to preventable diarrheal diseases.
- Water and sanitation-related diseases, such as diarrhea and malaria, remain the leading cause of death among children under age five.
- Only 54% of people living in Malawi's Kasungu District have access to safe drinking water.
- 30% of the population in the Mangochi District lives without sanitation facilities, and practises open defecation.
- Fewer than a quarter of primary schools in Malawi meet the national standard of one latrine per 60 students.
- Only 4% of schools have handwashing facilities.

For additional information or to arrange interviews, please contact:

Ryan's Well Foundation:

Virginia Larose, Communications Coordinator, Ryan's Well Foundation
communications@ryanswell.ca or (613) 258-6832

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief:

Janine Foster, Senior Advisor, Philanthropy, CPAR
jfoster@cpar.ca or (613) 893-5332

High resolution photos available on request.