

Xylem Watermark teams with Water Well Trust to install new water well for Texas family

Nearly 25 years ago, Luis and Nancy Salazar moved their family to a small plot of land outside San Antonio, Texas, to be closer to relatives. Over time, the Salazars made the property their home, but like many low-income, rural Americans, access to a reliable, clean water source has alluded the family.

The cost of caring for a daughter with cerebral palsy created a challenge for the Salazars to finance and build a well on their modest income. For more than two decades, the family has made do with sharing water from the well located on the neighboring property owned by Nancy's parents.

"My parents have been gracious, but they have their limits," said Nancy.

Because of the shared well's limited yield, the Salazars could not wash their cars or plant a garden. Even the idea of a long, hot shower was a luxury.

"I've never known what it's like to have really good water pressure," said Nissi Salazar. "I've never known what it's like to take a nice hot shower. Like a really nice hot shower. It's just not part of my life."

As Nancy's parents grew older, the couple began urging the Salazars to dig their own well, fearing that when they passed away, the family would no longer have a source of water.

In February 2019, Nancy began researching how to finance a private well. During a Google search, she stumbled across the website for the Water Well Trust (WWT), a nonprofit arm of the Water Systems Council established to provide wells for Americans who do not have a safe drinking water supply. When Nancy initially called the office, she was told the WWT did not have funding for projects in Texas and she was put on a waiting list.

Around the same time, Susan O'Grady, Xylem Director of Marketing, Residential and Agriculture, reached out to Margaret Martens, WWT Executive Director, to express interest in volunteering on a water well project in Texas. The WWT immediately called Nancy, who filled out an online application. Not long after, the Salazar family qualified for a grant due to their need and income status.



A team of employees from Xylem's Texas office came together in July to build a well for the family through Xylem Watermark.

CUSTOMER:

The Salazar Family - a beneficiary of the Water Well Trust

CHALLENGE:

Provide clean, safe running water to the Salazar family who had been living without water access in their home for more than 25 years.

XYLEM SOLUTION:

Design, install and provide materials for a new 500-foot water well system. Equipment used: 7GPM 1½ HP 4" submersible pump with CentriPro motor, control box, Pump Saver and 83.5-gallon tank.

RESULTS:

Volunteers from Xylem Watermark, Austin Pump & Supply and H.M. Schowpe & Sons provided the Salazar Family with a new water well system via donated products and drilling services.



Water is freedom, freedom is independence.” - Nancy Salazar

“Originally, when I approached the Water Well Trust, nothing was on the docket, but then miraculously this family reached out to the Water Well Trust and we were able to make a huge difference in their life,” O’Grady explained.

Xylem enlisted help from Austin Pump & Supply, a distributor for Xylem’s Goulds Water Technology brand, which assembled a team of volunteers and helped coordinate product donations from several manufacturers. H.M. Schwoppe & Sons, a local Goulds Professional Dealer Association member, provided drilling services at a discounted rate.

“It was surprising how easy it was to contact people and how many people were looking for an opportunity to help,” said Ryan Arnett, Vice President and General Manager, Austin Pump & Supply.

In July 2019, a crew from H.M. Schowpe & Sons assessed the Salazar property and identified the best location for the well. Geology and underground water levels ultimately dictated the need for a 500-foot well.

Along with product donations secured by Austin Pump & Supply, Goulds Water Technology provided the well pump, control box and holding tank for the project and supported the WWT with a \$5,000 grant through Watermark, Xylem’s corporate citizenship program.

The well was outfitted with a Goulds Water Technology 7GPM 1½ HP 4” submersible pump with CentriPro motor, a CentriPro control box, Pump Saver and HydroPro 83.5 gallon tank. Crews also laid down more than 400 feet of new piping and 500 feet of new electrical wiring. To prevent damage to the motor and pump, a CentriPro PumpSaver was installed to protect against dry well conditions, low and high voltage, over and under current, rapid cycling, dead-heading and jammed impeller.

Overall, with assistance from WWT and Xylem Watermark, as well as donations of products and services, the final project cost came in around \$6,500. In contrast, hooking into the closest public water supply would have cost nearly \$85,000.



The team from H.M. Schwoppe & Sons works on completing the installation of the new well.



Xylem employees build a new chicken coop to accommodate the family’s chickens.

“I’ve never known what it’s like to take a nice hot shower ... It’s just not part of my life.”

– Nissi Salazar

“This project is a perfect example of why the Water Supply Costs Savings Act is so important,” said Martens. Signed into law in 2016, the act aims to reduce local, state and federal costs of providing high-quality drinking water to millions of Americans in rural communities by increasing the use of cost-effective alternatives such as water well systems.

Following the installation of the new well system, more than 35 volunteers from Xylem, Austin Pump & Supply and H.M. Schowpe & Sons came together to clean up the Salazar’s yard and build a chicken coop for the family’s flock of chickens. The cleanup effort involved hauling away scrap metal and bringing other debris to the local dump during a record heat wave with temperatures hovering around 100 degrees.

According to O’Grady, the project illustrates how Xylem is now extending Watermark activities to customers, channel partners and suppliers in an effort to build relationships and make a meaningful impact on their communities.

“Last year we took on some initiatives to involve our customers in Xylem Watermark and it’s been an awesome experience,” said O’Grady. “Giving this family the gift of water has been pretty amazing.”

After spending five days helping the Salazar family, project volunteers left with a strong sense of fulfillment having shared their skills and expertise to help a deserving family while strengthening relationships with local stakeholders.

“It’s incredible,” said Kyle Knox, Xylem Market Development Manager. “Water is something that we all take for granted. I think we’ve done a lot of good.”

The Salazar family is beyond grateful to have access to safe, clean water on their property for the first time ever.

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