

Outreach Contact Letters

DEPRECATED

Contact letters and emails are an easy way for you to introduce someone to AguaClara. These letters can be used for both public relations and fundraising purposes, as well as sending to individuals who make general inquiries about our time. It is important to note that contact letters are not comprehensive; that is, the letter is only a brief overview of AguaClara and does not cover the in-depth intricacies of research, design, and implementation. These letters should therefore only be used for an "elevator-pitch" type of communication: for quick explanations via oral, email, and written channels.

The following text is an example of a contact letter, which was sent through the email in Fall, 2010. This email was geared toward the theme of fundraising assistance, as the recipient would potentially lead us to donors:

Dear Mr/Mrs/Ms XXX,

Thank you for your interest in AguaClara and for contacting me last week. I would be glad to provide you with more information, and I'm writing to you because I'd like to give you a more in-depth introduction to AguaClara and let you know about its opportunities for advancement.

You probably know the basics about AguaClara: it's a student-run project team based in the College of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and we are researching, designing, and building sustainable water treatment plants in Honduras. What makes AguaClara unique is that the knowledge we gain from research and development is made available to the public. Our treatment plants require no electricity and are different than conventional plants; ours are simple to operate and utilize local materials found in Central America.

We've recently run into several barriers, but two of them are especially pressing. The first one is the lack of funding. In the past two years, most of our funding sources have gone down the drain, and we've had trouble finding corporate sponsors and grant lists. The only consistent donor we have now is the College of Engineering. The second one is our status as a "project team." AguaClara is not a 501(c) nonprofit organization, so we're often not qualified to receive certain grants. Our status has also limited our publicity, and awareness about AguaClara is poor in Cornell.

As a member of the outreach team, my job is to spread awareness about AguaClara and to find potential sources of funding. I know that your organization (and your affiliates) has a commitment to social entrepreneurship, so my hope is that we can create long-lasting partnerships. I'm wondering if you'd be open to having some discussions with me (or with some of my AguaClara supervisors) about the resources that are available from Eship@Cornell. Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best,

XXX

More examples will be added by the Spring of 2011.