While many Grovers have been “creeked,” it’s doubtful any have ever been tempted to take a big swig of Wolf Creek water. But imagine yourself living in a place where the only choice you had was bad water or no water. In such places, waterborne disease is rampant and choices can be deadly. There, you might be forced to take your chances. Enter Dr. Timothy Mech, professor of business and entrepreneurship. Mech has teamed up with Ruth Dykstra ’07 and Michael Ritter ’06 to create Deep Springs International.

Dykstra has done water purification research with Hope for the Children of Haiti; both she and Ritter have seen the effects of toxic water. With a heart and head for fighting poverty, Mech helped with a business plan, and Ritter focused on the scientific portion. Realizing the task was bigger than anticipated, they have taken aboard other students: Katie Garland ’06 and James Palmer ’07.

The mission is simple: help to bring clean water to people who don’t have access themselves. While the focus is straightforward, the problem runs much deeper. They need to educate about good hygiene, boosting school attendance and combating unemployment. And to top it off, they are hoping to accomplish these tasks all at the same time. If Deep Springs doesn’t distribute water, how does it operate? Through connections with existing businesses. After a needy area is identified, Deep Springs works with those schools and organizations that recommend qualified candidates. Deep Springs then creates sample business plans, developing curricula, scientific analyses and secure financial assistance to help build their businesses.

The goal is to attain non-profit status, launching this summer. Deep Springs organizers will start by focusing on partnership building between young entrepreneurs, schools, other non-profits and financial institutions, which will then create water treatment businesses.

While the goal may seem far on the horizon, there have been immediate strides. The project took first place in the non-profit category at the 2006 Business Plan Competition. And hopes are high. “The key will be getting enough people working in the right direction,” Dykstra said. “There’s amazing potential and I see it going very far in the near future.”
Professor Timothy Mech has teamed up with
Ruth Dykstra '07 and Michael Ritter '06 to create
Deep Springs International, an organization that
will bring clean water to people who have none.