

Water tank program restores water to Shafter home

By Lexie Houghtaling,

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SHAFTER, Calif. The drought has left a number of people in Kern County with dry wells, including Juanita Garcia's family.

"We took water for granted. We never thought that this was going to happen to us," Garcia said.

Her home in Shafter has been without running water since July, when their domestic well went dry.

"When we figured out the well was dry, our hearts sank, because we were like, 'What are we going to do? How are we going to get water? How are we going to shower?'" she said.

Garcia said her father hauled 10 water jugs of 5 gallons each every morning, and filled it in a small water tank as needed.

However, the family is now getting relief through the Temporary Water Assistance Program, which installs temporary water storage tanks that restore a limited supply of water to homes.

Through a partnership between the Kern County Public Health Services, Self-Help Enterprises, Community Action Partnership of Kern and local water companies, people in the county may qualify for drought relief through the Temporary Water Assistance Program depending on their unique circumstance.

On Tuesday, Garcia's home and her grandparents' home were both given 2,600-gallon water storage tanks.

David Mendez, the project manager at Self-Help Enterprises, said they currently assist 11 homes in Kern County.

He said the family will have temporary water tanks for about 12 months while they move toward a permanent solution.

"It's a big weight off of all of our shoulders that we're getting water," Garcia said.

If you believe you may qualify for the Temporary Water Assistance Program, you can obtain more information from the Environmental Health Division of Kern County Public Health Services at (661) 862-8776.

MORE: Self-Help Enterprises drought resources

(www.selfhelpenterprises.org/programs/community-development/drought-response/)