



Partnerships

NEWSLETTER OF A GREATER GIFT • HOLIDAY 2006

INCREASING OUR DEVELOPMENT WORK IN 2006

Because of your support, we've been able to increase our assistance to artisans and farmers around the world significantly in 2006! Through **product development, training, new customer recruitment and small grants**, we provided our partners with resources to further grow their organizations and help more people.

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

- Developed new products with six partner groups in **India**, including SHARE, our newest partner.
- Sent a design consultant to work in **Bangladesh**. He found that our partners face many obstacles that make it difficult to do business, but that they work to perform at the highest level possible.
- Designed new products and improved existing products with partners at their workshops in **Bolivia, Ecuador, and Peru**.
- Worked with COOCAFE in **Costa Rica** on a plan to develop new packaging, blends, roasts and messaging to increase coffee sales.
- Selected products for future catalogs, and experimented with new techniques and design concepts on-site with partners in the **Philippines**.

TRAINING

- Organized an intensive trend and design workshop in Nairobi, Kenya, for nine partner groups in **Kenya, Uganda and Madagascar**.

"We will benefit greatly from the design workshop. My colleague and I already have an idea for a new product line!"

- Nemwel Ongondo, center, attended one of our trainings in 2006. He's pictured with other artisans of the Nyabigena Soapstone Carvers in Kenya.



- Conducted market readiness and trend training with two new partner groups in **Madagascar**. These groups are new to exporting and were eager to learn how to make products that meet market trends.
- Funded a group development and leadership training for Trade Aid's basket weavers in **Ghana**.
- Conducted a color and design trend workshop in **Indonesia** for the Apikri Cooperative and Mitra Bali artisans.

CUSTOMER RECRUITMENT

- Distributed a CD catalog of UPA products from **Mexico**, many of them designed by A Greater Gift, to potential customers in Europe, Australia, Japan, and the U.S.
- Funded a three-month volunteer at Thai Tribal in **Thailand** to design new products for export and local markets so the group can increase its customer base.
- Sent a CD catalog of Nyabigena Soapstone products from **Kenya** to 60 potential customers.

GRANTS

- Helped Eswatini Swazi Kitchen of **Swaziland** market jams and chutneys at the Chicago Fancy Foods Show, a high-profile and well-attended marketplace for specialty foods.
- Sent money to the Apikri Cooperative, which mobilized relief efforts to staff, artisans, and others after a devastating earthquake struck **Indonesia**.
- Provided a digital camera for the Nyabigena Soapstone Carvers in **Kenya** to send product photos to potential customers.
- Gave Fundación Solidaridad and Comparte in **Chile** grants for new computer equipment.

Help us continue to increase our development work in 2007 by giving a tax-deductible donation for the holidays. (See the enclosed envelope) Thank you so much for your continued support!

THE LIVES YOU TOUCH WITH YOUR SUPPORT

*By Sabrina Karl, Fund Development
Director for SERRV International*

I had the great privilege this spring to visit SERRV/A Greater Gift artisan partners in rural China, Thailand, and India. It was an incredible experience to meet so many artisans firsthand, hear their stories, and learn how the income they earn has positively impacted their families.

I wish that all of you could have been there with me to hear the gratitude in their voices and see the smiles on their faces. But since you couldn't be, I'd like to share with you some of the artisans' personal stories:

- In mountainous rural China, I met Lan Feng, whose son suffered a major eye injury last year. She told me that her earnings from handcrafts helped her get medical treatment in the city for her son. The handcraft work also provided important income during this difficult time, when her family's farming income was compromised by the fieldwork she was missing to go with her son to doctors.
- In northern India, I met a wood carver whose home once had only one permanent wall, with only plastic tarps to form the other three sides. As an artisan working within a fair trade workshop, he was able

to receive a grant to build three additional walls, helping him provide a solid home for his family.

- In a mountain village in Thailand, I talked with a group of women weavers who told me that, without handcraft orders, the only income-generating work they can do is laboring on farms. For one day's farm work, they receive about \$2.20. Even then, this work is available only about 6 months of the year. In contrast, they make 20-30% more from their handcraft work and can work in or near their homes with their children nearby.
- In a stone workshop in Agra, India, I met Varsha. With the money she earns, she and her husband have managed to pay for a good education for their two children. When asked what she likes about her work, she smiled and said: "We work here like a family. It is very good." She also told me how valuable it is to have regular work, get paid on time, and have medical insurance.

These are just four stories out of dozens that let me know in personal terms the positive impacts that a fair, steady income can have on an individual and their family.

Your support of A Greater Gift/SERRV—both through purchases of



"Since working with Threads of Yunnan, I have been treated with love and respect by city people for the first time in my life. When Threads of Yunnan staff visited me at the hospital during my son's eye treatment, and even helped pay some of the expenses, I couldn't believe anyone would ever do something like that for me."

*- Lan Feng, embroiderer and group leader
for the Threads of Yunnan handcraft
program, in the rural village of
Jigaizi, north of Kunming, China.*

products and through your generous charitable giving—help make these success stories possible. As always, we thank you for your support, your generosity, and your partnership in touching artisan and farmer lives around the world.



hope and justice with every purchase
a greater gift

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JOINING HANDS AGAINST HUNGER



Luzmila Machuca Poma grew up in a Quechua-speaking family which raised sheep and llamas and grew potatoes on a remote farm high in the Peruvian Andes. In the Huancavelica district, the poorest in Peru, 75 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty, defined as earning less than \$1 a day. Luzmila helped with the farm work but was unable to attend school, since there were no schools nearby. As a teenager, her parents sent her to Huancavelica city to live with a family which offered her room and board and school fees in exchange for help with household chores. She married at age 19 and managed to complete two years of elementary school at night as her days were full, washing clothes for other families and raising her own four children.

In 2003, Luzmila and 25 other women in her neighborhood formed the El Mercurio knitting group, hoping to supplement their families' incomes. Although knitting tiny finger puppets is not a full time job, it does help Luzmila feed her children and provides the extra income she needs to pay for their school books and uniforms. She is proud that now her children can attend the school in town. In addition, during the several hours a day the women spend together knitting, they share laughter, provide counsel, develop new product ideas, and make new friends, both in the community and beyond.

El Mercurio, named after the mercury mine which dominates the Santa Barbara neighborhood in Huancavelica, is one of 18 Peruvian artisan groups that sell their handcrafts through A Greater Gift/SERRV partner the Bridge of Hope Fair Trade Project, part of the Presbyterian Church-USA's Joining Hands Against Hunger program. The Bridge of Hope staff offers training in bookkeeping, computer literacy, costing and pricing, and provides access to international markets.

The women of El Mercurio, like the members of other Bridge of Hope partner organizations, understand the concept of fair trade. They understand that fair trade is part of an alternative economic system which measures success in terms of how it can improve the lives of the majority of the people, promising a "living" wage, and not just a "minimum" wage.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

STORE AND WHOLESALE CUSTOMERS

Please help us keep our records on track by paying your bills by December 31. Thank you!

CONSIGNMENT CUSTOMERS

Remember to return unsold handcrafts to A Greater Gift within 10 days of the last date of your sale. The sooner we receive your unsold handcrafts, the quicker we can get them out to a waiting customer. Food and gift baskets may not be returned.

NEW SALE ITEMS ONLINE

Keep an eye on our Last Chance Sale at www.agreatergift.org to find new sale items that we will be added regularly throughout the holiday season. Don't miss these great items discounted from 30% to 70%. No returns unless defective. Quantities are limited, and will not be reordered.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM A GREATER GIFT!



*Kathy Harley,
Customer Service
Manager*

Your charitable gift is critical to our work!

If you'd like to support the training, product design, and grants we provide to our artisan and farmer partners around the world, you can make a tax-deductible gift in one of three ways:

- 1** By check using the enclosed postage-paid envelope, or sent to:
SERRV International, PO Box 365, New Windsor, MD 21776-0365
- 2** By telephone using a credit card: 1.800.423.0071
- 3** Online using a credit card: www.serrv.org/donate

On behalf of our international partners, thank you for your generous support!

Dear Friends and Supporters,

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” - Margaret Mead

When I read these well-known words by renowned cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead, I am reminded of all of you reading this newsletter.

Whether you are a customer, a donor, a “world shop” employee, a volunteer, the organizer of an A Greater Gift sale or a person who spreads the word about our work, you are an integral part of a community of people who are making life better for families throughout the world.

Lives are changed as a result of your efforts! In Swaziland many women had little hope for a better life before they found our partner Eswatini Kitchen, a place where they can earn a fair income while learning a skill and receiving the support many need while they rebuild damaged lives.



Bob Chase, back, and Global Education Coordinator Sue Chase, far left, meet with Heiveld Cooperative members who grow rooibos tea in South Africa.

In South Africa, rooibos tea farmer families have seen their income double solely because they now receive a fair trade price from organizations like ours.

The result in these and innumerable other cases is new hope, a sense of pride and dignity, and confidence that life can get better.

As we approach this holiday season we extend to all of you our sincere appreciation for all you are doing to share the gift of opportunity with so many.

Thank you,

Robert S. Chase
President, SERRV International



OUR MISSION

is to promote the social and economic progress of people in developing regions of the world by marketing their handcrafts and food products in a just and direct manner.



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