



# Partnerships

NEWSLETTER OF A GREATER GIFT • FALL 2006

## “WE MUST DO MORE...”

On June 22, SERRV Product Specialist Kerry Evans departed on a training trip that would be different from her previous artisan visits. She would be going to the center of destruction from the 6.2 magnitude earthquake that struck the Indonesian island of Java less than four weeks before, killing more than 6,000 people and leaving more than 600,000 homeless.

At SERRV, the tragedy hit close to home through our partnership with the nonprofit Apikri, which works with more than one thousand artisans in the area devastated by the quake. Apikri artisans and staff lost their homes, workshops, equipment, tools, and stacks of finished products that they were preparing to ship.

SERRV immediately sent relief funds, which Apikri used initially for food, water, flashlights, and tents, and later for clearing rubble and setting up temporary housing. Many of our supporters contributed generously to fund this critical assistance.

Kerry's training for Apikri artisans had been scheduled before the quake hit. Even though sessions had to be moved to tents because artisan workshops and homes lay in ruins, our partners did not want to postpone the training. Originally scheduled for 30 participants, sessions attracted attendance of more than 100 artisans looking for ways to move forward with their lives after the disaster.

As Kerry's firsthand account reveals (see sidebar), we need to do more to help. And we hope that you'll join us in providing that help. Every donation SERRV receives for Indonesia Earthquake Relief will be sent to fund Apikri's daunting task of rebuilding the artisans' livelihoods. Whether applied to new tools, equipment or workshops, your gift will bring Apikri artisans one step closer to earning an income for their families again.

Thank you for considering a gift of Indonesia Earthquake Relief today. (See enclosed envelope.)

## FROM THE EARTHQUAKE ZONE



*Excerpts from Kerry Evans' July 1st email from earthquake-damaged Indonesia, where she conducted training in tents for artisans at Apikri.*

“Arriving in Yogyakarta, I was left completely speechless at my first glimpses of the damage, and the sights got worse as we traveled into the center of the destruction. Villages have been leveled, and there is debris as far as the eye can see.

“The Indonesian government has been distributing aid, but it is not enough. Each family receives one carton every two weeks, but I've read the assistance will soon end.

“Apikri is very concerned about the trauma children are experiencing (not to mention how sick some are from sleeping in cold tents). Part of SERRV's relief funds went toward books, crayons, and paper for the children. With all their toys lost or destroyed, the children are hungry for something to take their minds off the losses their families have experienced.

“In my wildest dreams, I didn't imagine there'd be this much damage. Walking through the rubble, my eyes welled with tears and it took everything in me to keep from crying. We must do more to help.”

## FROM CLASSROOM TO GLOBAL COMMUNITY: ANNE ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Three years ago Cathy Doyle, Program Coordinator for the Center for Learning Through Service at Anne Arundel Community College, decided that she wanted to give students an opportunity to have a global impact through their service. Together with Joyce Ezrow, a professor of marketing and business management, she created the Global Giving Market, an annual fall sale of A Greater Gift products and showcase of alternative gift options from 30 international nonprofit organizations.

Coming from a business perspective, Ezrow immediately saw the value of giving her students a chance to participate in the project.

“Every company is becoming global these days,” she said. “We have to think of the implications of doing business internationally.”

### TEACHING GIVING

Marketing students did research on the artisans who make the products, and gained experience in promotion by creating sales pitches that they presented to the college community.

On the day of the sale, students in the Small Business Management program were in charge of inventory and cash management, learning real life applications of the principles they had

been taught in the classroom. One popular assignment was using A Greater Gift’s website to choose five favorite products to be included in the sale.

It was very important to the two organizers to create an event that could be sustained, and would be part of the school for years to come. Now as they begin planning for the market’s third year, they are envisioning ways to involve students from different academic departments. Plans include working with music and dance students on international performances and having culinary students serve cuisine from some of the countries that are represented.

One can hear the enthusiasm in their voices when they speak of the project’s potential for growth. Cathy Doyle says “People wait for the market and plan to come. If you’re not there in the first half hour, things are sold out.”

The organizers are now working to encourage other educators to follow their example and provide students with a powerful real world learning experience. Joyce Ezrow sums up the impact the project has on her students, saying “Many kids wonder what one person can do at a local level to have a global impact. This project lets them see what a difference they can make right in their own community.”



*Joyce Ezrow and a student at Anne Arundel Community College coordinate their annual Global Giving Market.*

### YOU CAN HOST A GREATER GIFT SALE!

There are so many creative ways you can host A Greater Gift Sale. Combine it with another event in your community, recruit a youth group to help out or add it to your annual Christmas celebration. Want more information about hosting a sale? Call us at 1.888.243.4423 to ask questions or request a no-obligation information packet. You can also find more information on our website at [www.agreatergift.org/hostasale](http://www.agreatergift.org/hostasale). We can't wait to hear from you!



hope and justice with every purchase  
**a greater gift**

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A GREATER GIFT

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# DEVELOPMENT WORK THROUGH CREATIVE MEANS

## FOCUS ON AFRICA SUCCESSES

In communities across Africa, we are working with small-scale producers to make huge strides in their organizations. A flagship event this year was a Product Development Training in Nairobi, Kenya, which was funded by Catholic Relief Services. Eighteen participants from nine of our partner groups and three countries gathered to learn new product trends and export best practices.



*Workshop participants collaborate on new product lines.*

The knowledge gained from each other outside of the sessions was equally important. Participants exchanged ideas on finding raw materials, increasing benefits to artisans and the fair trade movement in East Africa.

After the three day workshop, the participants were teeming with creativity and inspirations to bring back to their organizations. “Thank you to SERRV for helping us refresh our minds,” said Joesephine Mukusa, a design consultant to NAWOU in Uganda.

Recent successes this year for African partners include:

- Making the link for funds from the World of Good Development Organization for water pumps at Nyabigena Soapstone Carvers in Kenya. The wells will make life easier for the women of the village, who had spent three hours a day collecting water, and better for soapstone production, which requires water to polish the stones.
- Funding group development and leadership training for Trade Aid basket weavers in Ghana. A total of 53 basket makers attended two workshops that focused on the importance of good leadership in sustaining dynamic groups, and the roles and responsibilities of group leaders and members.

## SUSTAINING TRIBAL LIFE WITH CRAFT

*Volunteer Lori Bacigalupi has just finished a three-month visit with our partner Thai Tribal Crafts in Thailand working on new product designs. Lori, who owns and operates Kiss of the Wolf art studio in Oklahoma. She shares these words about her experience in Thailand.*

“After visiting and working with seven different producer groups from five hill tribes of Northern Thailand, we begin to see the similarities and differences in the lifestyles of the people. The artisans face many struggles as refugees and immigrants in a country where they are have no land base, no national identity, no health care and extremely limited opportunities to provide a living for their families.

“Most of them come from a centuries-old subsistence agricultural background, but this way of life has been rapidly disappearing. In some of the villages there are signs of modernization—often at the cost of families leaving the tribe to work in the cities just to be able to send money home. Others follow the rubber harvests and other seasonal work that forces them to leave for months at a time.

“The artisans tell us they are so grateful for the chance to practice their craft from the comfort of their homes and villages. The production and sale of handcrafts not only keeps them from having to leave their children to earn money, it helps to revive the traditions of tribal community life which otherwise might have been lost.

“Thai Tribal Crafts was organized more than 25 years ago to help tribes-people earn money from their traditional craft skills. The sale of these crafts has become increasingly important to thousands of people who can now provide food for their families, educate their children, obtain much needed medical care and maintain a sense of cultural identity.”

# VOLUNTEERS MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE

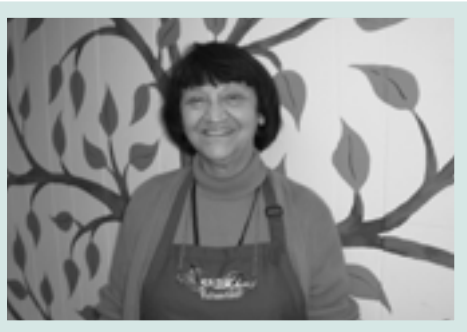
## QUALITY CONTROL IN NEW WINDSOR

At the center of the lively bustle in the A Greater Gift packing room is the energetic figure of Ferne Steckman, who has served as volunteer Quality Control Coordinator since July of 2005. She organizes volunteers who check quality on handcrafts and foods coming in from overseas.

Ferne, who is from Palmyra, PA, was drawn to SERRV because she wanted her service to reach as many people as possible. "I was thrilled to be able to have an international impact," she says.

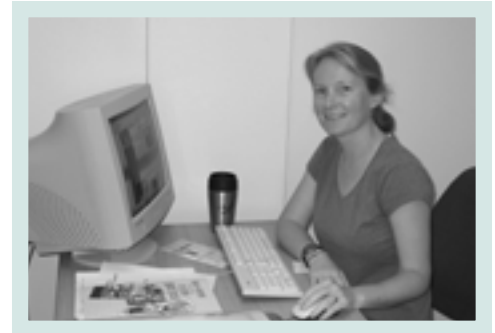
Ferne works with a strong devotion to SERRV's mission and brings warmth to our offices with her sense of humor. One of her fondest memories is of working with a group of high school students who initially were less than excited to volunteer. When their parents came to pick them up at the end of the day they didn't want to leave because they were having so much fun.

Thank you so much, Ferne, for all of your hard work!



*Ferne Steckman is one of thousands of volunteers who have contributed their time in our New Windsor operations center.*

*Teri Allendorf donated her time in our Madison offices to research craft techniques and materials.*



## PRODUCT RESEARCH IN MADISON

Teri Allendorf, a volunteer in our Madison, Wisconsin office, has known about SERRV for as long as she can remember. There was always a SERRV catalog around the house when she was growing up.

She learned of the benefits of fair trade first hand when she served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Nepal. While she volunteered at SERRV, Teri researched the techniques and materials that our partners use to make the handcrafts and foods we sell. "I've worked in Nepal and have seen how fair trade can help people. I've really enjoyed volunteering here and learning more about fair trade from this end."

When she is not volunteering, Teri is a conservation biologist and works on a research project in Nepal and Burma to study the social effects of wildlife and forest conservation.

Thank you so much, Teri, for all your time and energy!

## BECOME A VOLUNTEER!

SERRV is always looking for volunteers in our New Windsor, Maryland operations headquarters or gift shop and our Madison, Wisconsin administrative offices or gift shop.

Join our team of New Windsor volunteers that help assemble mailings, perform quality control, prepare handcrafts and foods for sale and staff our gift shop. Opportunities

are available for group day visits as well as long-term residential service. For information contact Marcia Bubel at 1.888.821.1114 or [volunteer@agreatergift.org](mailto:volunteer@agreatergift.org).

To volunteer in our Madison location, call 1.888.243.4423 or e-mail [marketing@agreatergift.org](mailto:marketing@agreatergift.org). Projects will vary depending on your interest.



## NEW NEPALI PARTNER FUNDS EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Your 2006/2007 Catalog is filled with nearly 200 beautiful new handcrafts and approximately 500 of our best sellers. Enjoy!

### CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 8am-9pm  
Saturday 9am-5pm EST

Oct 2 - Dec 17, 2006  
Mon-Fri 7:30 am - 10 pm  
Saturday 9 am - 8 pm  
Sun 12 noon - 6 pm EST

### INDONESIAN PRODUCTS LATE

Due to earthquake damage suffered by our artisan partners in Indonesia, some Indonesian products may be late. Thank you for understanding.

### DON'T MISS OUR ONLINE SALES

Visit our Last Chance Sale at [www.agreatergift.org](http://www.agreatergift.org) to find items discounted 30% to 70% off. No returns unless defective. Quantities are limited, and will not be reordered.

### STORE CUSTOMERS

If you do not already receive our monthly store e-news, call 1.888.243.4423 to join. We will e-mail you sale announcements and updates from our artisan partners.



*Kathy Harley,  
Customer Service  
Manager*

We are excited to announce that A Greater Gift's newest partner is the Get Paper Cooperative in Kathmandu, Nepal.

The Get Paper Cooperative has 125 members and 91 percent are women. Cooperative members earn more than twice the national minimum wage and are eligible for cooperative benefits which include free lunches, personal loans, health insurance, advance payments, training, and a small pension. The cooperative has won awards for their AIDS awareness work and for their efforts to protect the environment. They are also a member of the Asia Fair Trade Forum and the International Fair Trade Association.

The traditional handmade paper from Get Paper is made using a variety of waste materials such as old cotton rags, recycled paper, water hyacinth plants, and banana fibers. Each sheet of paper is handcrafted, sun dried, and decorated, often with natural plants like bamboo leaves, flower petals, grasses, ferns, and pieces of straw. The production process is environmentally friendly, and waste water is processed at a treatment plant.

The Get Paper Cooperative is unusual because of the focus it has on the wider community: it donates 40% of its profits from the sales of handmade paper to General Welfare Pratisthan to fund programs like the Suryamukhi Girls' Group. This group helps girls like Fulmaya Lama, pictured above, whose family sold her into slavery to an Indian circus. When the circus returned to Nepal, she found a chance to escape and heard about the Suryamukhi Girls' Group in Kathmandu. There she found a support network and was trained in tailoring, a skill which is helping her become independent.

Look for our products from Get Paper in our 2006/2007 Catalog!

### Your charitable gift is critical to SERRV's work!

Whether you'd like to make a gift of Indonesia Earthquake Relief (see page 1), or for the training, product design, and grants we provide to our artisan and farmer partners around the world, you can make your 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](http://www.serrv.org/donate)

On behalf of our international partners, thank you for considering a gift!

## WE'RE READY!

Frankly, we were overwhelmed with the unexpected outpouring of orders and inquiries we received in late 2005. Clearly there is a growing interest in A Greater Gift products, which connect you to skilled artisans and farmers who create unique, high quality handcrafts and foods that reflect the cultures and traditions of 35 developing countries. We very much value your orders and support for our work and are committed to doing absolutely everything we can to provide you with the best service possible.

We have taken many steps to assure that we will be better prepared to serve you this fall including improvements to our software, changes in our warehouse layout, increasing our purchasing, committing more people and resources to processing inventory earlier in the season, and adding several key management staff positions in the Customer Service, Computer, and Material Handling Departments.

Lore Fritz, Skip Wah, Patty Humm, Teresa Jones, Richard Hill, Cathy Rippeon, and Jeff Stevens are just a few of our warehouse staff who, working with dozens of temporary employees and literally thousands of volunteers, processed 117,997 items in June alone to be ready for your orders.

We certainly cannot guarantee that there won't be problems, but we can assure you that we have done our very best, utilizing all the resources at our disposal, to provide you with top quality service.

We look forward to working with you this year to supply an energetic and expanding market for the products that thousands of low-income farmers and artisans have worked so hard to prepare for our customers.

*A Greater Gift Operations Staff*



*Our Material Handling staff has been busy preparing for the fall rush.*



### 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.



A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION  
**SERRV**  
INTERNATIONAL



hope and justice with every purchase

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