

Alternative Gifts International



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Gifts of Hope and New Life

Spring, 2006

Millennium Development Goals

1. **Eradicate** extreme poverty and hunger.
2. **Achieve** universal primary education.
3. **Promote** gender equality and empower women.
4. **Reduce** child mortality.
5. **Improve** maternal health.
6. **Combat** HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases.
7. **Ensure** environmental sustainability.
8. **Develop** a global partnership for development.

A detailed list of indicators for each goal and a progress chart can be found at www.un.org.

Alternative Gifts fully supports the MDG

Nearly six years ago, at the United Nations Millennium Summit, the United States joined 188 other countries in setting the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). These are a set of measurable targets or indicators, with specific time expectations, to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, discrimination against women and environmental degradation. For example, the first goal is to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger – the target is to cut in half, by 2015, both the number of people whose income is less than \$1 a day and the proportion of people who suffer from chronic hunger.

A review of current and past Alternative Gift catalogs and Annual Reports provides evidence that the gifts you purchase directly serve the targets of the Millennium Goals. Each year AGI

authenticates and promotes specific projects that give attention to the marginalized, the poor, the hungry and the sick. AGI encourages donors to support projects that fight disease, illiteracy and that offer education and opportunity to women.

“Green Gifts” for the planet are included, responding to the earth’s increasing environmental degradation. In this 20th anniversary year, AGI has featured the theme of “Environmental Justice” in its catalog, offering shoppers the opportunity to select gifts that can help to rescue our planet.

Alternative Gifts International joins many international nongovernmental organizations in support of the Millennium Development Goals. We urge our donors to fully support and fund these global targets.

A step forward; AGI’s interagency Haiti project

To celebrate its 20th year and its support of the Millennium Development Goals, AGI has initiated a five-year, interagency project aimed at bringing environmental justice to Haiti. Twenty-five environmental and development agencies were invited to come to Wichita for a three day conference in February. Over 40 people attended including several delegates from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Hours were spent in discussion aimed at building a strategic plan to reach every department (or county) in Haiti with “green” education, tree planting, water development and community building. The one constant message every delegate expressed was: “Let us listen first to the voice of the Haitian people.” The delegates agreed to form a

working group, to set up a web site forum for information sharing, and to meet again in Haiti. The **vision statement** that has come out of this working group shows the delegates’ commitment to this huge undertaking and their love for the valiant people of Haiti:

In partnership with the Haitian people, recover and renew Haiti’s natural resources (land, water, trees, air) through environmental education, sustainable community development and reforestation.

AGI intends to help fund this project through its catalog for five years. The goal is to abolish poverty in Haiti through the building of a new environment. With hope, we work for a peaceful and prosperous land.



Denise Davis of American Friends Service Committee leads a session during AGI’s interagency Haiti conference. Twenty-five agencies agreed to form a working group to better serve the people of Haiti.

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Mission Statement

The global mission of AGI is to send authentic, life-giving gifts to a needy world — gifts that build a partnership with people in crisis and that protect and preserve the earth's endangered environment — to nourish and sustain a more equitable and peaceful global community.

AGI is a nonprofit, interfaith agency. AGI provides education for people of all ages about global needs and raises funds each year in its Alternative Gift Markets and from individual donors to respond to those needs. Designated grants then are sent to the established international projects of several reputable nonprofit agencies for relief and development.

An audited financial statement is available upon request.

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NGOs – a global force for good

A nongovernmental organization (NGO) is an establishment that is not part of a government, not founded by states, and so is typically independent of governmental directions, decisions and political considerations. The term is generally restricted to social, cultural, legal and environmental advocacy groups with not-for-profit, noncommercial goals. Typically an NGO receives its funding from private sources. NGOs working internationally are vital to the work of providing food security, clean water, health care, education and justice in the world's most troubled places.

It is the responsible NGO that will continue projects and programs regardless of the political climate, the degree of danger or the difficulty of the task. It is the NGO that will first determine the needs and desires of the people they seek to serve and then respond with appropriate programs.

As taxpayers, we may think that the foreign aid funds approved by our Senate and House of Representatives will be sufficient in areas of need. We may hear of what seems to be an astronomical figure approved for spending overseas. What we frequently do not learn is that the funding is not always available to those who need it most because of the political positions of the country's leaders. Or, the funding may not be specifically earmarked for programs that combat hunger, poverty and disease or that benefit the global environment.

In Haiti, in Central America, in Asia or eastern European countries, as examples, millions of dollars of aid sometimes go undelivered. But NGOs continue their work of building solar cookers, teaching about

clean water and soil erosion, planting trees, building and maintaining health clinics and schools, and maintaining a viable relationship with the people. In Kenya and other African countries, when the governments were struggling with civil war and internal corruption and refusing to acknowledge the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the NGOs were establishing test locations and health education, rescuing orphans and street children, and teaching village people how to care for their dying family members.

Although we may want to count on the government to share our wealth appropriately, there are always obstacles. This makes it even more important for individuals to support the credible nongovernmental organizations at work in the world – organizations such as those carefully chosen to be featured in each Alternative Gifts International catalog.

AGI and many NGOs work together

Over 100 nonprofit agencies have been credentialed, funded and publicized by AGI, their projects supported over 20 years. In its history, AGI has raised over \$18 million for the priority projects of these agencies. Often invisible to the public, these NGOs and the stories of their work have been reported to a growing number of national and international donors. These stories become an international curriculum for nourishing proactive global citizens. The first **interagency** project initiated by AGI, (i.e. helping several agencies to work together on a common issue) is described on page one, the Haiti project.

Peter F. Drucker, the “management guru” of the 20th century has stated: “*The 21st century will be the century of the social sector organization. The more economy, money and information become global, the more community will matter.*”

“*And only the social sector nonprofit organization performs in the community, exploits its opportunities, mobilizes its local resources, and solves its problems. The leadership, competence and management of the social sector nonprofit organization will thus largely determine the values, the vision, the cohesion and the performance of the 21st century society.*”



Dr. Dennis Labayen of Outreach International was facilitator of AGI's Haiti conference, held in Wichita in February.

Alternative Gift Markets: communities reach out to a troubled world

Creating and hosting an Alternative Gift Market is a task that both challenges and rewards. The Market builder's work requires energy and leadership to plan ahead. There are lots of ideas to incorporate, people to recruit, posters and shopping lists to prepare. At AGI headquarters, we are grateful to all the Market builders and workers and thank them on behalf of people in crisis and our endangered planet.

So far this year, 368 Markets were celebrated in 43 states. Catalog Markets were offered in Great Britain, Puerto Rico and Argentina. Markets happened in community centers and at churches, high schools, colleges and universities. To date, nearly \$950,000 has been remitted this year to AGI headquarters from the various markets. Although some markets have experienced the "donor fatigue" of a year

filled with natural disasters, overall market receipts have already exceeded those received by this same time last year.

Fifteen colleges, universities and high schools hosted Markets, bringing creative approaches to the educational benefits of learning about the projects and the people they serve. Many of those groups already have plans to grow the Market experience on their campus.



Alternative Gift Markets are as different as the regions of the country, each offering its own identity and creativity. They are testimony to the human spirit, willing to work together to benefit people from all around the world. One Market might feature handmade ornaments that reflect each project's theme. Another Market might have samples of food from the country that the project serves. Markets feature music and ethnic clothing, artwork and handcrafts, or carefully made displays that tell the story of the project.

"Gold Star" Markets

Here are some of the outstanding Markets held in the past year that involved the entire community:

- ★ Wichita City Wide Alternative Christmas Market (*Wichita, Kansas*)
- ★ Sioux Falls Alternative Gift Market (*Sioux Falls, South Dakota*)
- ★ Ames Area Alternative Gift Market (*Ames, Iowa*)
- ★ Alternative Gifts of Greater Washington, D.C. (*Washington, D.C.*)
- ★ Cache Valley Alternative Gift Market (*Logan, Utah*)

The lasting effect of the education, fellowship and advocacy as a result of the Markets is immeasurable and is as important as the dollars generated. Thanks to all the Market builders and shoppers who made these Markets a community success!

Good News for the Poor and the Planet; Success Stories from 04-05 Projects

Back to School/Iraq, a project of the Mennonite Central Committee, used your gifts to rebuild an entire vocational school in Baghdad, including 11 classrooms, five administrative rooms, two libraries and a sewing workshop, profiting 550 primary school girls. Also, 37 young women and mothers participated in sewing courses, allowing them to make clothing for their own children and generate income. Three other schools that serve more than 4,000 children received library materials, including reading books, Arabic and English literature, science, art and other teaching materials. Classrooms were equipped with shelves, desks and chairs.

Let Them Be Children/Uganda, a project of Holt International in partnership with Action for Children (AFC), put your gifts to good use serving hundreds of vulnerable children of Uganda, including many children orphaned by AIDS. AFC has established 28 Children's Brigades with 1,008 children actively involved. Overall, AFC programs are now helping to meet the needs of over 10,000 children and youth in approximately 3,000 families. Counseling was provided to 2,461 children; nutritional support supplied to 1,285 children; medical support to 1,409 children; and clothing and bedding to 3,002 children. Educational support included sending 14 children with

scholastic materials to secondary school. Ninety percent of the AFC children in the school's age bracket were reported to be attending school regularly. These vulnerable children benefited from a strengthened safety net, giving them permanency in their own communities.



"Let them be Children" / Uganda

Where needed most

You still have a few months to continue gift giving from the current *My Shopping List for the World*. AGI's projects will change on July 1, 2006, with the arrival of a new catalog. In the meantime, here are a few projects that would especially benefit from your attention right now:

Shelters for Survivors / USA: Give your hand to people escaping abuse and addiction with a gift of just \$20 which will provide 24 hours of support and shelter. (*Catalog pg. 3*)

The Cystic Fibrosis Challenge / Republic of Georgia: Give CF children a life extending gift for just \$25 and provide a share of medicine and therapy. (*Catalog pg. 6*)

Women & Disaster Preparedness / India: Your gift of only \$50 trains one self-help group in disaster preparedness that will save lives and property. (*Catalog pg. 12*)

Justice for a Future Citizen / USA: A gift of only \$10 can help with legal assistance to newly arrived immigrants working to build a better life. (*Catalog pg. 13*)

Disease Prevention for Youth with Disabilities / Vietnam: The high risk population of people with disabilities requires focused training concerning sexually transmitted infections – your gift of just \$75 trains one person with disabilities in STI prevention. (*Catalog pg. 30*)

Three gifts for YOU; In honor of AGI's friends

AGI will give to you in 2006 unique, empowering gifts:

1) A pathway to authentic philanthropy, enabling you to know for sure that your donated dollars are well spent and delivered.

2) A realistic opportunity to change our troubled planet, to make a world of difference right now! AND

3) Great satisfaction and joy because you participated in the best international

“extreme makeover” yet.

You honor AGI and its work for the poor and the planet in countless ways and give to us many gifts. When you become a FRIEND of AGI or a SUSTAINER / BUILDER each year, your extra gift enables us to plan for the future and extend our reach to the whole inhabited earth. Please send your response in the enclosed return envelope. Thank you for your partnership and for your continuing support.



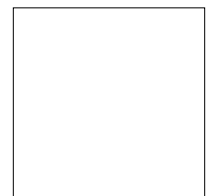
Haitian farmers plant trees to form an anti-erosion barrier. Alternative Gifts International and several nongovernmental organizations will partner with them to restore and renew Haiti's damaged environment. See page one of this newsletter for more details.

Alternative Gifts International



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