

The Spirit of Giving

WORDS Kayla Dhall

During this holiday season, it's difficult not to spoil the many cherished people in your life with the most luxurious of gifts. A First White watch for him and an Alexander Gibbons Gold-tooled Show Boot for her - both extravagant gifts that mostly anyone would love. But beyond the exquisitely wrapped presents and the pomp and circumstance of the holiday festivities is a distant place where the basic needs for survival are nowhere to be found.

World Hunger and Poverty Facts 2010 indicate that 925 million people worldwide are dying due to hunger. A trend that is sure to continue if we as individuals are not willing to see beyond the obvious.

Something that is viewed insignificant to one may be a life line of hope and survival for another. To help us in our quest for the quintessential gift are a few companies who have truly redefined "giving" as we know it.

Heifer International is a global non-profit organization that strives to work with communities to end hunger and poverty through caring for the Earth. Heivoshen Farmer, Don West, was a milkman during the Spanish Civil War where he spent his time handing out cups of milk to hungry children in Spain, he made his first shipment of 37 calves for the malnourished in Puerto Rico. He then realized it was going to take much more than that to make a lasting difference and that is when his philanthropic organization began. To date 12 million families and 65 million people in over 125 countries have benefited from Heifer International. To encourage the gift of giving, each recipient must in turn donate female livestock to another less fortunate family. Gifts range from \$20 to \$10,000 and consist of sheep, water buffalos, goats, hoes and rabbits.

Another non-profit organization, Garden Harvest Inc. is a farm run by more than 5,000 full-time volunteers each season. Their mission is the alleviation of hunger and the improvement of nutrition for disadvantaged citizens worldwide. In 1994, Garden Harvest grew and donated produce in excess of \$25,000. Within only two years, donations soared enabling them to serve an additional 80,000 individuals. Donations range from as little as \$10 to as much as \$8,000 towards organic farming and the production of produce with options of donating, farmers purchasing food cards and equipment required for sustainable farming.

Giving transcends gender and age, as evidenced in Nobel Prize Winner, Craig Kielburger, who was only 12 years-old when he founded the organization Free the Children in 1995. It is the world's leading youth-driven charity and has over one million young people involved through 45 countries. To date, \$5 million have been donated towards the purchase of medical supplies for developing countries. The program has facilitated the construction of 650 schools and has provided 30,000 women with business and financial training sessions, sewing machines, and farming supplies. Free the Children offers donors choices that range from adopting a village, helping to build schools, providing school supplies, irrigation pumps or healthy lunch plans. All made possible with simple contributions, what a wonderful way to introduce the "gift of sustainable giving" to your own children or grandchildren.

In a world where many are accustomed to the finer things in life, it's easy to lose sight of the fact that basic necessities are not available to just anyone - and remember, in the time it takes to swipe a credit card, somewhere in the world a starving soul may take its last breath.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE ABOVE MENTIONED COMPANIES
 Heifer International: 410-243-3338 www.heifer.com Free the Children: 1-866-325-3894 www.free-the-children.com Garden Harvest: 800-422-0474 www.gardenharvest.com

HOME DÉCOR

SCHNECK
 Geometric Geometric LED Orb
www.schneck.com

WILLIAMS SONOMA
 Home Glass Cocktail Tray
www.williams-sonoma.com

TSUNAMI GLASSWORKS Home Soft Box Sculptures www.tsunamiglassworks.com

ALISA MELKA-TSIBORDEY
 Bride Cut Champagne Glasses
www.3year.com

NOVA
 Seltzer Bowl by Cafe Cora
www.novafurniture.com

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 Lattice Road Pattern Dinnerware
www.katespade.com

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