

GIVE HOPE, DIGNITY AND INDEPENDENCE THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON

BY PATTI BOYLE

We live in a world where more than one billion people struggle to survive on less than \$1 a day and do not have access to clean, safe water. Almost 3 billion people lack simple forms of sanitation. Can you imagine a life where education is a luxury, medical care is a distant hope and daily functions are a struggle? Can you imagine a life without food for your children or the comfort of a simple roof over your head? Unfortunately, this is common in so many villages in developing countries because of the lack of a sustainable income.

The artisans from Original T-Bag Designs live in South Africa. Their homes are bits of tin and wood nailed together, and they have had no formal schooling. But what they do have is grit and imagination and a desire to make their families' lives better. They use recycled tea bags as their canvases—and they are painting themselves out of poverty. One of the artisans, Nomsa, recently earned enough money from painting tea bags to



move from an inadequate shack to a solid new house. Nomsa said, "The most wonderful thing in the world is hearing the rain on the roof and knowing that my children are warm and dry."

By supporting fair trade, you can make a difference in their lives. Fair Trade Practices create job opportunities that pay a fair wage for their work and provide income for essential needs. By creating a world marketplace for their handicrafts, it is easier to maintain a sustainable income, which creates funds to build a well, provide education or give access to medical care.

This holiday season and throughout the year, you can make a difference by making the choice to shop fair trade. Remember by simply buying gifts, jewelry and home accessories from a Fair Trade Store you can give hope and dignity. Fair trade creations can be found at Blue Summit, 4101 S. 120th Street in Omaha or at Ten Thousand Villages in the Haymarket, Lincoln NE.



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