



# NORTHWEST FAIR TRADE COALITION

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Faith Organizations join with the Northwest Fair Trade Coalition to host a Fair Trade Holiday Market Series for ethical holiday shopping**

**Portland, OR (October 11, 2012)** – Northwest Fair Trade Coalition launches a series of fair trade holiday markets with Portland's top social justice congregations highlighting ethical and fairly traded products for the holidays. This year's expanded marketplace series will begin on November 18<sup>th</sup> and include three different markets throughout the month of November and December hosted by The First Unitarian Church, The First Presbyterian Church and the Portland Mennonite Church and sponsored by KBOO Community Radio.

The markets will feature unique, handcrafted, ethically sourced food and crafts from farmers and artisans around the world from some of Portland's most unique local businesses and organizations like *Tropical Salvage*, *Zimbabwe Artists Project* and *Awaz Voice for Empowerment*. Over ten organizations will offer beautiful, high quality, modern fashion accessories, apparel, natural kid's toys, home décor, woven textiles, baskets, bodycare and food items from countries such as India, Peru, South Africa, Thailand and Guatemala that have been produced according to fair trade principles and promote sustainable development for producers. Shoppers can enjoy handwoven silk and wool scarves that sustain craft traditions in the Himalayan Mountains, beaded jewelry that supports income generation for women in AIDs affected communities in South Africa and olive oil, coffee and chocolate from democratically organized cooperatives of small farmers free from exploitation and child labor.

The goal of the marketplace is to highlight local organizations dedicated to socially responsible trading practices and support them in their work in creating a conscious paradigm shift to a more equitable marketplace. Fair trade purchases ensure that producers receive fair wages, that communities and cultures are strengthened and producers take steps to preserve the environment. Participating in this movement empowers consumers to vote with their dollars and support just and sustainable trade worldwide.

*"The global fair trade movement began with the founding of Ten Thousand Villages more than 60 years ago through the visionary work of Edna Ruth Byler, a pioneering businesswoman and wife of a Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) administrator. Byler was struck by the overwhelming poverty she witnessed during a trip to Puerto Rico in 1946, where she was moved to take action. The seminal contribution of Byler ignited a global movement to eradicate poverty through market-based solutions."* Ten Thousand Villages

Rod Stafford, pastor at Portland Mennonite Church is glad to host the Holiday Market this year. *"We have supported the fair-trade movement for many years. By buying the gifts and crafts of these remarkable artisans from around the world, we're making real our Christmas wish of "peace on earth."*

The series is an expansion of the First Annual Fair Trade Holiday Marketplace that was first organized in 2010 at the First Unitarian Church by Economic Justice Action Group (EJAG) and members of the Northwest Fair Trade Coalition (NWFTC). Members Sarah Mitts of Awaz Voice for Empowerment and Margaret Zeps, former volunteer of the Ten Thousand Villages store in the Pearl, were part of the steering committee.

*"We needed a forum for small, local businesses and organizations representing fair trade producers to showcase their work in Portland, particularly during the busiest shopping time of the year. Global Exchange and Ten Thousand Villages, two of Portland's long time fair trade businesses, both shutdown within the last few years, due to the economic recession and frankly, not enough local community patronage. While fair trade food products like coffee and chocolate are bought regularly in local cooperative groceries, like Food Front Cooperative, textiles and home goods have struggled to be part of the everyday consciousness. The growing*

membership in our organization from innovative non profit groups, faith organizations and new businesses show the availability of high quality, environmentally sustainable products for everyday living." Sarah Mitts, Awaz Voice for Empowerment

This year's expanded series will coincide with the launch of Oregon's first ever Fair Trade Directory that will identify Portland and Oregon business and congregations offering ethically sourced, authentic fairly traded products.

Portland Fair Trade Holiday Marketplace is sponsored by Northwest Fair Trade Coalition, KBOO Community Radio, Economic Justice Action Group of the First Unitarian Church, Fair Trade Leadership Team of the Advocacy & Social Justice Committee of the First Presbyterian Church and Portland Mennonite Church.

*Food and drinks will be provided by Rafael Aviles from Equal Exchange, NWFTC Member. It is open to the public and there is no admission charge.*

**WHO:** Northwest Fair Trade Coalition, local fair trade businesses and economic justice organizations and congregations

**WHAT:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Portland Fair Trade Holiday Marketplace series

**WHEN:** **Sunday, November 18<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**  
First Unitarian Church, Buchan Building  
1011 SW 12<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR 97205

**Saturday, December 8<sup>th</sup> – 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
Portland Mennonite Church  
1312 SE 35<sup>th</sup> Ave., Portland, OR 97214

**Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup> – 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.**  
First Presbyterian Church, Geneva Hall (basement)  
1200 SW Alder St., Portland, Oregon 97205

#### **WHAT IS FAIR TRADE**

Fair Trade is a trading relationship, based on dialogue, transparency and respect, that seeks greater equity in international trade ensuring that people along the supply chain receive fair wages, that workers and communities are treated with dignity and producers take steps to preserve the environment. Increasingly, consumers in developed nations are applying their buying power to challenge the current system, demand supply-chain accountability and support businesses that enforce labor rights and environmental standards in international trade.

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#### **ABOUT NWFTC**

The Northwest Fair Trade Coalition is a membership organization composed of individuals, faith based and social justice groups and local and nation-wide sustainable businesses dedicated to promoting economic justice through international fair trade practices and supporting conscious consumption in our community.

To learn more about our work and to access the tools for how to Fair Trade your community, view our website.

[www.northwestfairtrade.wordpress.com](http://www.northwestfairtrade.wordpress.com)

