



SHOPPING

WITH JESSICA | jsedgwick@suntimes.com



TIPS FOR YOU

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FAIR IS FASHIONABLE



"We look how the workers are being treated," says Allison Havens of Greenheart Shop, 1911 W. Division. | AL PODGORSKI~SUN-TIMES

You don't have to trade in your ethics for great stuff in Chicago

For many people, the term "fair trade" is often synonymous with coffee. Or Chris Martin of Coldplay.

But Chicago is showing us that fashion is a huge part of fair trade as well.

Small, female-run businesses in Chicago have partnered with artisans in economically challenged countries such as Cambodia, India and Guatemala to make sure they work in safe and fair conditions and get a livable wage. The result is beautiful, fashion-forward and affordable clothing and accessories, and our money goes straight to the hardworking people who created it.

"My mission is to fight human trafficking," says Chicagoan Lia Valerio, founder of handbag company Malia Designs. Three years ago and fresh off a Peace Corps trip, Valerio chose to partner with artists in Cambodia to create funky handbags using unconventional materials. So when you buy one of the creations, you're supporting Valerio's effort to help disadvantaged women in Cambodia, many of whom are taken off the streets and employed at Malia Designs.

While the mission is important, Megy Karydes, owner of World Shoppe, which partners with artisans in South Africa, says the most impor-

CHICAGO AREA FAIR TRADE BOUTIQUES

Greenheart Shop: 1911 W. Division St.; (312) 264-1625; www.greenheartshop.com

The Fair Trader: 1623 E. 55th St.; (773) 966-5269; www.thefairtraderchicago.com

Global Handmade Hope: 428 W. Touhy Ave. in Park Ridge; (847) 720-4084; www.globalhandmadehope.com

Mustard Seed: 202 Westminster in Lake Forest; (847) 735-0211; www.mustardseedfairtrade.com

tant thing is putting out a product that is beautiful and fashionable enough to stand on its own.

"Most people are drawn to the product because it's pretty, and the fact that it's fair trade is gravy," says Karydes, "People say, 'Not only is this a cool thing, but it's giving back.'"

Luckily there are boutiques in Chicago to sell clothing that vendors such as Valerio and Karydes have worked so hard to bring to Chicago.

Greenheart Shop, 1911 W. Division, sells only fair trade and environmen-

tally friendly products, and everything from children's clothes to dresses to jewelry and accessories. "We are using the power of money to effect positive world change," Greenheart Shop co-manager Allison Havens says. "Getting people to realize how their purchases affect people around the planet."

While eco-fashion tends to be on the expensive side, the fair trade clothing at Greenheart is extremely affordable. Not much in the store is more than \$100.

Greenheart isn't the only place to score cute, affordable clothing with a mission behind it. Since Global Handmade Hope opened in December in Park Ridge, there are four boutiques in the Chicago area solely committed to selling fair trade products (see story at right).

Karydes, who started her Web site, World Shoppe, six years ago, says Chicago's fair trade community has really grown.

"When we started, there wasn't even one store in Chicago that supported fair trade. Now there are four that are completely dedicated to it. To see stores open in this economy, that is so great. The term is becoming more palatable for people to understand. It's not this crazy cult they see."

A MISSION MAKES A STATEMENT

Three Chicago-owned fair trade businesses you should know about:



MALIA DESIGNS

Partner: Cambodia (artisan shown above, left)

Mission: To fight human trafficking by employing disadvantaged women and donating part of the profits to organizations fighting child trafficking.

Fashion: Wallets and handbags made of recycled rice bags,



construction netting and silk.

Where to buy: Maliadesigns.com, Andersonville Galleria, 5247 N. Clark, Greenheart Shop and other local boutiques (check Web site).

Prices: Wallets run from \$5 to \$14; messenger bags, totes and handbags from \$13.50 to \$46.

MATA TRADERS

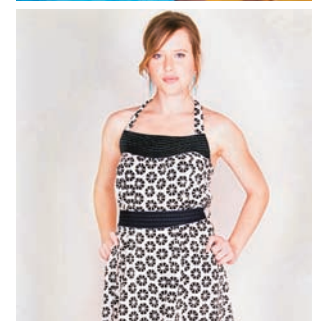
Partners: India and Nepal (artisan shown at right)

Mission: Providing income to women at poverty level, and helping combat child labor.

Fashion: Women's clothing and accessories; cute, whimsical dresses with bold prints and innovative designs. Sizes are XS to XL.

Where to buy: Matatraders.com, Andersonville Galleria, 5247 N. Clark, Greenheart Shop and several other local boutiques (check Web site).

Prices: Jewelry runs from \$10 to \$28; dresses, tops and skirts run from \$36 to \$68.



WORLD SHOPPE

Partner: South Africa (artisan shown at left)

Fashion: Line of necklaces, cuffs, bracelets and earrings made of copper and brass and semi-precious gemstones; made by 18 artisans from the Western Cape province of South Africa.

Where to buy: World-shoppe.com and other local boutiques (check Web site)

Prices: \$39.50 to \$79.50

Note: World-shoppe.com is also a fair trade e-boutique offering other fair trade products beyond its new South African line.