

UNUSUAL

HEROES

Socially Responsible Shopping Helps Artisans Worldwide

(NAPSA)—More and more consumers are shopping with purpose, which is helping artisans in poor countries earn a living.

The benefits of purchasing socially responsible goods are clear. Consumers buy hand-crafted, one-of-a-kind products from developing countries, with confidence that their purchase is helping others. Artisans create new employment opportunities for themselves and others to improve their living standards, support their families and keep their crafts alive.

For example, flooding in the central part of Chile has destroyed thousands of homes and washed away roads, but through employment with companies in the United States, artisans have been able to rebuild their lives much faster. Since last year, one online company has purchased crafts from individual or small business enterprises in Chile valued at more than \$20,000, which makes a significant contribution to the families who need it.

Since 2001, development expert, Marilyn Garson, has traveled to nine countries helping artisans, from Chile to Burma to Afghanistan. She said that nearly every one she's met has rated education as a priority in the pursuit of improved living conditions and prospects for their children.

"Success in selling our products means food, schooling, medicine and hope for dozens of families in Peru," said Rochelle Beck, importer of Peruvian jewelry. "The artisans I work with literally wept tears of joy and danced in the streets when they received a second order for their crafts."

The fall of 2002 marks the first-year anniversary of Overstock.com's Worldstock department, which was the brainchild of the company's CEO, Patrick Byrne. He holds a doctorate in philosophy with an emphasis on issues related to poverty and economic development.

"I have met many disadvantaged artisans in my life and



This Chilean potter is one of many artisans whose products are sold online, which helps support families and educate children around the world.

know that they are not seeking handouts, but instead want work, self-respect and the ability to earn a living," said Byrne.

Overstock.com provides the resources of a large retail business to artisans in the United States and developing countries to help them earn a living while crafting products at affordable prices for consumers. It features a variety of items, including forged steel and glass home décor accessories from India, painted kites from Bali, recycled copper vases from Nepal, handblown glasses from Mexico, alpaca blankets from Peru, as well as silver and beaded jewelry from various countries.

Customers praise the hand-crafted products as not only beautiful and unique, but also durable, functional and fun.

Since launching the socially responsible goods department last year, Overstock.com has purchased more than \$1.1 million of products from thousands of artisans in 40 countries.

To learn more about buying artisan crafts from developing countries and how every sale makes an impact, visit www.worldstock.com.