



Alternative Gifts International

October-December 2008 Newsletter • www.alternativegifts.org • 800.842.2244

AGI Board Names New President:

Twenty-eight years after the first Alternative Gift Market was being planned, and 21 years after incorporation as a 501 (c) (3) organization, Harriet C Prichard's dream is still being carried on. However, Ms. Prichard will be channeling her energies to similar, but new challenges, and the AGI board of directors has named Lea McCloud, the previous AGI Director of Administration, as President.

Before joining AGI in 2006, McCloud served in various non-profit roles, often in faith-based organizations. Her career includes being a chaplain & PR Director in a Skilled Care Facility, Church Musician, Christian Education Director, Executive Director of the Kansas Region of the National Conference for Community & Justice (NCCJ), and Development Director for the Midway Kansas Chapter—American Red Cross.

Lea completed a Masters of Arts in Theology at McCormick Seminary in 2001, and has extensive experience in volunteer-based organizations. Currently she serves on the board (and has been recently cast in several plays) of the Wichita Community Theatre. She has three adult children and three grandchildren.



Lea McCloud – President, AGI

FILLING HARRIET'S SHOES...

By: Lea McCloud



I tend to do considerable reflective thinking about situations that I don't understand—or perhaps I think I understand, but wonder if there is a better way to approach them. I've been told that my comments often make others think; that is a real compliment for me. I hope you will indulge my tendency to ponder topics, and invite your comments in dialogue.

Now, as we begin this season and new phase of AGI, working to honor the vision of Harriet C. Prichard, we have big shoes to fill. Upon learning of my selection, an executive at one partner agency said, "I'm happy to see that you have a background in theological study and church relations." It is true, that aspect did provide a bond for Harriet and me. Understanding how *Alternative Gift Markets* were conceived and continue to grow through partnerships with faith-based and non-profit organizations is integral to understanding how AGI can do what it does. The collaborative efforts of like minds, willing hearts and eager hands create the synergy we need.

Today, my thoughts are about gifts. It seems gifts are usually given by one individual to another—not usually to help solve the problems of the world. The giver normally expects the recipient to be happy and express gratitude for the gift in some way... a simple smile, a hug, or sincere 'thank you' is often enough. What if you can't give the gift personally? You mail it (with a card). You send it through a friend or relative or, by using AGI, you trust that we will deliver the funds to the agencies where they can be transformed into the 'gifts' of hope and new life—practical goods and services for the people that need them. *Blessings & Peace!* —LM.

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**FREE
CALENDAR
POSTER!**

**Unfold this newsletter
to reveal a 3-month
AGI pledge calendar!**

What on Earth Are Millennium Goals?

What do the symbols on each monthly calendar represent? Three of the eight United Nations Millennium Development Goals (UNMDG), which AGI is highlighting in the annual catalog. For more information, see www.un.org/millennium goals.



October

We ask you to choose one or more projects that support the **Education goal**: to achieve universal primary education. Specifically, to make it possible for every person to have access to at least a 6th grade education. **Consider what might be achieved for the cost of one extra pair of shoes we purchase for a special school dance or play could do if it was instead sent to support Project 14, 19 or 31.**



November

As we celebrate the gathering of the harvest, good food & family, we suggest that you choose one or more projects that support the **Hunger/Poverty goal**: To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger—in the entire world. **Think what the cost of one extra bottle of wine or rich dessert for Thanksgiving might accomplish instead if you send it to support Project 6, 11 or 33.**



December

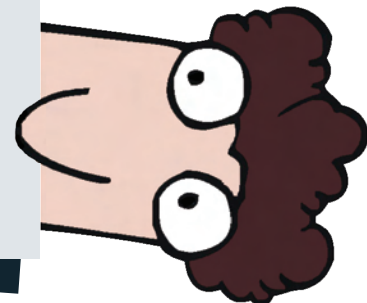
Since December 1 is World AIDS day, we suggest that this month of parties with co-workers, friends, family and faith celebrations also includes compassion through your support of the **Health goal**: to combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases. An AIDS diagnosis is no longer a death sentence for children in Asia and Africa because we can provide medication that can save lives. **Discuss with your colleagues what donating the cost of one office Christmas party to Project 4, 10 or 18 could do.**

WHAT WERE WE THINKING...?

New ideas. Efficiency of resources. Facilitating regular giving as a habit. Here you have a newsletter and a calendar—with no extra paper for an envelope. You not only receive a great poster to display for three months, you get a reminder of how nobody has to wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.

Visual images are powerful tools...we can tell stories so much easier with good photos than by words alone. We believe we have produced something usable for you that has several powerful reminders.

AGI facilitates *Gifts of Hope and New Life*. Each simple gift has the power to help children smile in the poorest of conditions. They can continue to smile because you made it possible for them to have a regular daily meal, access to education and basic health care.



Note: Return your special UNMDG pledge (below) to AGI. We can e-mail your receipt or return it with another order blank. Please call 800.842.2243 for recipient gift cards or other ordering information.

UPDATE on the COALITION

progress reported by the

Haitian National Coalition for the Environment

Konpay, a non-profit based in Jacmel, Haiti, has provided funds to act in the coordinating role with the Coalition, formed in July 2007. At that time, more than 60 participants from 36 organizations gathered together and reached consensus about the major focus of the coalition.

- Tree planting/reforestation with enhanced food security, concentrating on Haiti's 33 watersheds.
- Alternative energy and cooking methods.
- Awareness-raising and continuing education (in the form of a caravan).

A Coordinating Committee was elected and has met regularly.

- Meetings in each of Haiti's ten departments were scheduled and/or completed.
- Assembly of a national directory of organizations working on the Haitian environment.
- Web site was launched, acting as information clearinghouse for the Coalition.
- Grassroots partners planted 30,000 trees in 2007 and continue to increase their capacity to contribute to the reforestation of Haiti.

In June 2008, donations from the 2007-08 AGI catalog year were distributed to several agencies with featured projects. AGI continues to examine ways to provide strategic support of the Coalition which will promote development and independence.



AGI is in discussion with several of our partner agencies to consider collaborating on travel options they currently or planning special trips to visit AGI agency locations. Possible destinations we are considering for 2009 include:

Haiti/Dominican Republic. Designed for college students to help plant trees in conjunction with The Nature Conservancy.

Egypt. A trip currently planned by HANDS, AGI would join their trip that includes Cairo and Alexandria, and a cruise down the Nile to see several Development projects. More information is available at <http://www.handsalongthenile.org/program/Programs/itineraryFeb2009.doc>

Nepal. This trip is still in its developmental stages, but would involve working with volunteers and local community leaders.

If you are interested in traveling with AGI, please e-mail agi@alternativegifts.org or call 1.800.842.2243. Ask for Lea.

'Tis the Season

Here are some ideas of how our donors use AGI catalogs and materials to prepare for the holidays.

- Draw names at your office; give each employee a catalog or share a few catalogs.
- Hold a 'catalog' party; order the posters or the CD so you can print your own; have boxes wrapped as 'gifts' for decorations; discuss the kinds of gifts guests always hated to receive most, and then discuss how alternative gifts provide a better solution. Select your gifts. You could be a really popular host/ hostess if you coordinate the purchases together and send all the orders in to AGI. Order bulk cards, too, so they get all their gifts and cards at once!
- Let every adult child and grandchild select the gift they want in advance.
- Use gift certificates; recipients can receive the gift certificate by e-mail and select the project from the web site or we can send a card, paper gift certificate and catalog.
- Choose four projects or categories—one for each Sunday in Advent. Send a note home in advance with the children, collections for each day go to that project.
- Make a pledge for each of the twelve days of Christmas.
- A teacher buys cards & an insert for each student and gives a flat donation for a specific project.
- Retirement centers have catalogs available to their residents.
- Small businesses use AGI cards and gifts to thank their customers or clients.
- Teachers create a unit theme around a project and ask that all students donate the money they might spend on a gift for the teacher for the holiday. This could be the "Year of the Yak" in Tibet. Or the class could set a goal to purchase the chicken coop with hens for a school in Bolivia.
- One school collected money for a service project all year long, and at the end of the year, students voted for which AGI projects they wanted to fund.



do you facebook?

Become a member of AGI's group on facebook!

- Talk to Market Coordinators about how you can help improve your world!
- Share market and advertising tips that have helped you hold a successful market!
- Help AGI improve future market material by leaving posts with design ideas and feedback!
- Join a group dedicated to meeting the needs of people around the world!

Type 'Alternative Gifts International' in the search bar, then **JOIN GROUP!**

facebook.

Have you seen the **NEW** Children's Activity Book? Download a copy from our web site or call 800.842.2243 to request a master for your class!



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