TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES
TEAM MEMBER TRAINING MANUAL

Welcome to Ten Thousand Villages, a store with a difference that you help create! You are important to us. We could not operate without people like you.

The material in this Volunteer Training Manual is designed to give you the foundation you need to perform your duties as a Ten Thousand Villages volunteer. The training process never really ends. There is always more to learn about the products, the craftspeople we work with, and the ways to better assist our customers. This is the beginning. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Again, welcome. Your time is appreciated and makes a difference in the lives of thousands of people around the world. Thank you for your interest and contribution.
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Part 1

INTRODUCTION TO TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES, USA
VISION AND MISSION

Vision

One day all artisans in the developing countries will earn a fair wage, be treated with dignity and respect and be able to live a life of quality.

Mission

*Ten Thousand Villages provides vital, fair income to people from developing countries by marketing their handicrafts and telling their stories in North America.*

Ten Thousand Villages operates as a business with a compassionate mission by maintaining integrity in our actions and relationships. We market quality products from diverse cultures around the world made by people that we know and care enough about to do business with in a manner that together we consider fair.

- We honor the value of seeking to bring justice and hope to the poor.
- We trade with artisan groups who pay fair wages and demonstrate concern for their members’ welfare.
- We provide consistent purchases, advances and prompt final payments to artisans.
- We increase market share in North America for fairly traded handicrafts.
- We market quality products that are crafted by underemployed artisans.
- We build sustainable operations using a variety of sales channels, including a network of stores with a common identity.
- We choose handicrafts that reflect and reinforce rich cultural traditions, that are environmentally sensitive, and which appeal to the North American consumer.
- We encourage North American customers to learn about Fair Trade and to appreciate artisans’ cultural heritage and life circumstances with joy and respect.
- We use resources carefully and value volunteers who work in our North American operations.
TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES QUICK FACTS

Our Business

· Ten Thousand Villages creates an international marketplace where the sustainable well-being of our suppliers in Africa, Asia and Latin America is just as important as that of our North American customers.

· Ten Thousand Villages works with more than 110 artisan groups in 32 countries, offering fair prices to artisans for their work and enabling them to provide for their basic needs and plan for their future.

Our Products

· With baskets, jewelry, textiles, musical instruments and home décor from 32 countries, Ten Thousand Villages offers consumers an unrivaled source of handcrafted items from talented artisans in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

· Ten Thousand Villages buyers carefully choose gift and home décor items that reflect and reinforce rich cultural traditions and that are environmentally sensitive.

· North American consumers discover artisans’ unique and high quality gift and home décor items in our network of nearly 170 stores.

Our Difference

· Ten Thousand Villages establishes long-term commitments with artisans, creating unique relationships where artisans and consumers connect and interact, learning more about their commonalities and cultures.

· Ten Thousand Villages encourages North American customers to learn about Fair Trade and to appreciate artisans’ cultural heritage and life circumstances with joy and respect.

· Ten Thousand Villages is a founding member of IFAT, the International Federation for Alternative Trade and a member of FTF, the Fair Trade Federation.

Store Structure

There are several different ways in which Ten Thousand Villages, USA reaches customers across the country.
· **E-commerce:** Through [www.tenthousandvillages.com](http://www.tenthousandvillages.com), customers are able to purchase from a limited selection of products online. These products are shipped directly to the customer. All e-commerce is handled directly by Ten Thousand Villages, USA. Stores do not have separate on-line sales.

· **Company Stores:** These Ten Thousand Villages stores are opened, managed, and governed directly from the Akron offices. All staff are hired and supervised by Akron. Typically, these stores have over 90% of their inventory from Ten Thousand Villages, leaving 10% for other vendors like Equal Exchange and Putumayo. The nearest company store is in Phoenix, AZ. Most are located on the East Coast.

· **Contract Stores:** These Ten Thousand Villages stores *contract* with the Akron offices as wholesale accounts. Contract stores are opened and governed by a *local* Board of Directors who follow Ten Thousand Villages, USA’s policies and procedures. Our store here in Pasadena is a Contract Store and is a nonprofit organization. Typically, Contract Stores agree to carry a certain percentage of products from Ten Thousand Villages, USA and in exchange get to use the name, resources, and support systems of Ten Thousand Villages, USA. Our contract is for 80% Ten Thousand Villages products and 20% from other vendors. Our store typically purchases only products from Fair Trade vendors who are members of IFAT, with the exception of domestic vendors such as Putumayo, and the Women’s Bean Project. We are proud to be the first, and currently the only, Ten Thousand Villages store in California.

· **Alliance Stores:** Partner stores also contract with Ten Thousand Villages, USA as wholesale accounts, but they do not carry enough Ten Thousand Villages products to carry the name. These stores may be privately owned or set up as local nonprofit organizations. Typically, Partner Stores make at least $20,000 in purchases from Ten Thousand Villages, USA. They still receive some resources and support from Ten Thousand Villages, USA but not at the same level as Contract Stores. Examples of nearby Partner Stores include World Handcrafts in Reedley, CA, and the Baksheesh store in Sonoma County.

· **Gift and Festival Sales:** Both Ten Thousand Villages, USA and associated stores participate in “Offsite Sales” to promote the organization, the products, and to reach a new set of potential customers. Some of these larger festival sales will order merchandise directly from Ten Thousand Villages USA. Many Ten Thousand Villages stores participate in festivals as well. For instance, the Pasadena Ten Thousand Villages store participates in festival sales at local churches and other organizations during the holiday.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES**

*How did Ten Thousand Villages get its start?*

Ten Thousand Villages started in 1946 when Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteer Edna Ruth
Byler traveled with her husband Joe Byler to visit the organization's sewing project in Puerto Rico. While there, she noticed the intricate embroidery done by the local women. Realizing that they had very few places to market their handicrafts, Edna Ruth purchased some embroidery pieces to sell at home in Lancaster County, PA. Soon, Edna Ruth expanded her selection and began traveling to area churches showing samples of embroidered table linens and taking orders.

In the 1970s, stores opened and began to sell handicrafts year round. Currently, there are nearly 170 stores in the United States and Canada selling Ten Thousand Villages products. International Gift Festivals and Sales, which are held in churches, schools and other locations for a short period of time, also provide an additional venue. Thousands of volunteers in Canada and the United States work with Ten Thousand Villages in their home communities. Ten Thousand Villages is a nonprofit program of MCC, the relief and development agency of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America.

**What does the name Ten Thousand Villages mean?**

Ten Thousand Villages believes that each village in the world represents a unique, distinctive group of people. Multiply the village idea by ten thousand and it represents the world our program is working to build. The idea for the name came from a quote from Mahatma Gandhi. He said, "I have believed and repeated times without number that India is not to be found in its few cities but in the 700,000 villages... We have hardly ever paused to inquire if these folks get sufficient food to eat and clothe themselves with."

**How does Ten Thousand Villages decide which groups to work with and what to buy?**

Ten Thousand Villages buys crafts from organizations working with craftspeople who are struggling to find markets for their products. Without marketing assistance many of these craftspeople have few or no opportunities for employment. Many of these organizations provide job training and development, moving artisans from unemployment to skilled employment.

Additionally, many of the organizations provide employment for those who are disadvantaged because of disability, gender or ethnicity. In some cases, the only other opportunity for income for the disadvantaged is begging. By visiting the groups from whom we buy, we are able to understand each other and work together toward the same goals. Field workers from MCC have been a valuable resource in recommending groups that need our assistance.

Ten Thousand Villages staff members work to ensure that the people who make the products we buy are paid fairly for their work. The situations in which these craftspeople live and work vary widely. We look for local comparisons to evaluate earnings. We seek out products made from materials and processes that do not threaten the environment. We monitor trends in North America to identify opportunities for the craftspeople and provide suggestions for handicrafts they could make using local materials and skills.

We recognize that many people around the world struggle to provide for their families and we are often
asked why we don't buy from a particular country or region of the world. Although we would like to work with everyone who contacts us, because of limited resources, we have decided to focus our efforts in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

**How can artisans connect with Ten Thousand Villages?**

Ten Thousand Villages is proud of the level of commitment we have with groups that currently supply us. Because of this, we are hesitant to begin relationships with new artisan contacts. Our buying budget is limited and delicately balanced between the needs of the artisans and the demands of the marketplace. We do not initiate new relationships that diminish our ability to sustain purchases with current suppliers.

Because of our commitment to the artisans already supplying products, it is unlikely we will place an order with an artisan group that sends unsolicited information. However, any group is welcome to send us a catalog and/or product information. We keep the information in our file for future opportunities. Because we have limited storage facilities, we ask that artisans do not send sample products.

**How does Ten Thousand Villages connect with artisans?**

Ten Thousand Villages makes it a priority to work with talented artisans with little access to markets for their handicrafts. We feel working with people we know and telling their stories is an important part of our mission. The following story from India is just one of many showing the difference the sale of Ten Thousand Villages handicrafts makes around the world.

India is the country from which Ten Thousand Villages purchases the most handicrafts. In 2005, we purchased more than $1.5 million in handicrafts from artisan groups in India.

Professional social worker Annie Joseph started the Ankur Kala artisan group in 1982 to help poor and destitute women become economically self-reliant and stand up for their rights with dignity. The center provides self-employment to these women by training and assisting them in producing and selling tailored articles, batik handicrafts and food products. They gear both the tailoring and catering units to the local market, while the batik unit, which employs 12 women, sells products abroad and in the local market. The group also emphasizes basic education including reading, writing and simple accounting, values, and business skills.

Ansari Khatoon is a member of the batik-making group who lives and works in Calcutta. Batik is a centuries-old textile dyeing technique in which artisans use wax resist to create intricate designs. Ansari, who enjoys her work very much, notes, "I like that everyone works together as one family. I hope that soon I will be able to teach less fortunate women the art of batik." Ankur Kala, which means "seedling of art," has brought together women who have no other means of support, teaching them skills to earn vital income. Their motto reflects their dedication: "Not by charity, nor by sympathy, but through our hard work and integrity we shall strive for our dignity."

When Ansari began work at age 16, she had very little education. As she learned to create beautiful batiks, the group also gave her the opportunity to learn to read and write. She has been chosen as one of
the young women in the cooperative to continue their education, enabling them to lead Ankur Kala in the coming years.

Ten Thousand Villages Buyer Naomi Beach recently visited with Ansari and the other members of the group and came away very impressed. She said, "Something that sets Ankur Kala apart from other similar projects I have seen is their focus on both the spiritual development of the women and personal relationships beyond their craft work. The group includes Christians, Muslims and Hindus; they all meet for prayers and meditation every morning, and once a month they meet with the "graduates" of the program for inspiration and sharing." She went on to say, "I was only there for a short time and yet I could sense this was a place with a very peaceful atmosphere. When it was time to evaluate samples, all the women sat together and participated in this process. This was very impressive to me — a perfect example of how these women are developing life skills beyond batiking skills."

Ten Thousand Villages currently carries several Ankur Kala products including beautiful batik headbands, a set of flower cards and batik scarves.

**How much money is sent back to the artisans?**

This frequently asked question has a strange answer, none! This is because the artisans are paid in full before their handicrafts arrive in North America. Ten Thousand Villages believes that the best way to operate is to send an advance of up to 50 percent of the agreed upon purchase price when an order is placed with an artisan group. This allows artisans to purchase raw materials without going into debt. Ten Thousand Villages pays the remainder of the price when the handicrafts leave port to head toward North America. While this means absorbing some shipping losses, Ten Thousand Villages feels we are better able to take these losses than the artisans in the developing world.

Working with artisans in this way also means that Ten Thousand Villages bears the burden of marketing the products. Artisans are not affected by future markdowns or discounts because they have been paid in full; additionally, they do not need to wait until the item sells in the store to receive payment.

**What is a fair wage?**

It is difficult to give a quick answer to this complex question because a fair wage in rural India is not necessarily a fair wage in urban El Salvador. In addition, Ten Thousand Villages does not pay wages to artisans. Instead, Ten Thousand Villages pays a fair price for completed handicrafts. In most cases, this is the price set by the craftspeople and the organization that provides export services for them. Discussions with artisans about the length of time it takes to complete a product, the number of artisans involved to create a product, the cost of local wages and the cost of local amenities help Ten Thousand Villages buyers determine a fair price in each situation.

Sometimes, if we find a price is too high for our market, we review the design of the product, making changes to increase the potential of the product selling in our market. On the other hand, if we find that a
price does not adequately compensate the artisan, we encourage them to re-evaluate their costs to determine if a higher price should be paid. In this way, Ten Thousand Villages’ buyers work together with artisans to determine a fair price for each item purchased.

**What does it mean to be a fair trader?**

Although we call ourselves fair traders, we do not want to assume that everyone else is an unfair trader. On the contrary, many companies pay a fair price to their suppliers. In some cases, commercial buyers work with and pay similar prices to the same artisan groups that supply Ten Thousand Villages.

What makes Ten Thousand Villages different, however, is the direct contact and relationships with actual craftspeople. Large commercial companies usually work with relatively large consolidators or middle companies that in turn sub-contract orders to smaller companies. Ten Thousand Villages usually buys from groups with little formal experience while commercial companies usually buy from well-organized companies that offer low prices and use assembly-line processes. When visiting artisan groups, Ten Thousand Villages buyers ask many questions concerning working conditions, pay rates and other benefits. Visits to artisans’ workplaces and homes are also important. We buy from people who need work, not necessarily the people who can do the work the most efficiently and at the least cost.

Second, large commercial companies usually pay via a letter-of-credit which generally means nothing is paid until after the importer receives the goods, inspects them and approves payment. This forces artisans to borrow money to finance handicraft production. Most artisans that we work with do not have the necessary collateral to borrow from official lending institutions. As a result, Ten Thousand Villages offers up to 50 percent of the payment when the order is placed. While some commercial companies do offer advance payments, orders are not always consistent or may only be one-time orders.

Third, Ten Thousand Villages is committed to maintaining relationships with artisans. Continuous, consistent orders from Ten Thousand Villages enable artisans to dream and hope for a better future. Often commercial companies will place a large, one-time order without a longer-term commitment.

Last, our initial purpose is very different: Ten Thousand Villages buys to provide work and income for unemployed or underemployed people; most big companies buy because they want to maximize profits so their workers and shareholders can earn a living and make a profit. We buy products in order to help artisans earn a decent and fair living. Ten Thousand Villages has developed a set of purchasing guidelines and follows the International Federation for Alternative Trade (IFAT) Code of Practice which can be found online at www.ifat.org.

**How does Ten Thousand Villages relate to other alternative trade organizations?**

Ten Thousand Villages is actively involved with many other like-minded groups. We maintain close contact with SERRV, an organization based in Madison, WI, with a mission similar to Ten Thousand Villages. Ten Thousand Villages is also a member of IFAT and the Fair Trade Federation (FTF) which
are both committed to the ideal that every worker should receive a fair wage for what they create. More information about FTF can be found at www.fairtrade federation.org.

**Does Ten Thousand Villages carry items from North America?**

We carry items made in North America only when we believe they will significantly enhance our sales of crafts from international partners. The mission of Ten Thousand Villages is to assist craftspeople in developing countries. Ten Thousand Villages parent organization, Mennonite Central Committee, has programs that focus on needs in North American communities.

**Where do volunteers come from?**

Ten Thousand Villages depends on volunteers to keep overhead expenses low. Volunteers are the backbone of our operations in the U.S. and Canadian warehouses. Volunteering at a store or International Gift Festival and Sale in your home community is also a key ingredient to making Ten Thousand Villages work.

**What is the relationship between the Mennonite Central Committee and Ten Thousand Villages?**

Ten Thousand Villages is the handicraft marketing program of Mennonite Central Committee. Although separately incorporated, Ten Thousand Villages is wholly-owned by MCC. Additionally, the Executive Director of MCC is a member of the Ten Thousand Villages Board of Directors. MCC is the relief and development organization of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America and has been helping others "In the name of Christ" for more than 75 years. In many countries where Ten Thousand Villages purchases handicrafts, we rely on MCC workers to be our eyes and ears. In some countries, MCC places volunteers who work as designers with artisan groups to develop new products using local materials. Ten Thousand Villages is responsible for its own financial and human resources.

**Where can I find Ten Thousand Villages handicrafts?**

Ten Thousand Villages items are available at nearly 170 stores in North America and Canada. For a complete listing of the stores in the United States, visit our web site at www.tenthousandvillages.org or call (717) 859-8100. In Canada, contact Ten Thousand Villages at (519) 662-1879. In addition, Ten Thousand Villages handicrafts are sold at nearly 175 small sales held in churches and schools across the U.S. For more information about these sales, contact our International Gift Festival and Sales Coordinator at (717) 859-8100.
Part 2

UNDERSTANDING FAIR TRADE

What Is Fair Trade?

Fair Trade is a trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency, and respect which aims at sustainable development for excluded and disadvantaged producers.

The Fair Trade movement has set the goal of improving the position of disadvantaged producers in developing countries. The World Fair Trade Organization has established certain criteria which have to be met to gain the right to use the Fair Trade label.

Fair Trade practices contribute to sustainable development by offering better trading conditions and securing the rights of marginalized producers and workers in various parts of the world.

Fair Trade Organizations

Fair Trade Organizations reduce the number of middlemen and keep overhead low. Through Fair Trade, artisans and farmers receive increased income to feed, clothe, shelter, educate, and provide health care for their families; access to loans to buy land, livestock, and materials; training and technical assistance; ownership of the means of production; and respect for their cultural traditions and native environments.

Key Principles of Fair Trade

Creating Opportunities for Economically Disadvantaged Producers: Fair Trade is a strategy for
poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Its purpose is to create opportunities for producers who have been economically disadvantaged or marginalized by the conventional trading system.

**Transparency and Accountability:** Fair Trade involves open and honest management and commercial relations that deal fairly and respectfully with trading partners.

**Capacity Building:** Fair Trade is a means to develop producer independence. Fair Trade relationships provide continuity, during which producers and their marketing organizations can improve their management skills and their access to new markets.

**Promoting Fair Trade:** Fair Trade Organizations raise awareness of Fair Trade and of the possibility for greater justice in the world through Fair Trade.

**Payment of a Fair Price:** A fair price in the regional or local context is one that has been agreed upon through dialogue and participation. It provides fair pay to the producers that covers not only the costs of production but enables production that is socially just and environmentally sound. Fair Traders ensure prompt payment to their partners and, whenever possible, help producers with access to pre-harvest or pre-production financing.

**Gender Equity:** Fair Trade means that the work of men and women are properly valued and rewarded. It takes into account the principle of equal pay for equal work by women and men. Women are always paid for their contribution to the production process and are empowered in their organizations.

**Working Conditions:** Fair Trade means a safe and healthy working environment for producers with clean water to drink, adequate sanitation, and access to essential medical support. Working hours are in line with the conditions established by law and ILO (International Labour Organization) standards. The organization raises awareness of health and safety issues on a regular basis.

**Rights of the Child:** Fair Trade supports the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as well as the laws and social norms in the local context. The production processes do not adversely affect the well-being, security, educational requirements, and need for play for all children.

**The Environment:** Fair Trade actively encourages better environmental practices and the application of environmentally responsible methods of production.

## The Pasadena Store's Trading Partners

Ten Thousand Villages in Pasadena is a part of the much larger Ten Thousand Villages, USA organization. As mentioned before, Pasadena is considered a Contract store and can make decisions about what organizations with which to trade. We currently purchase from the trading partners listed below. Each of them works to guarantee fair wages and good working conditions, provide technical assistance, care for the environment, and subscribe to the highest ethical standards. In the store, you will hear us refer to Fair Trade Organizations as vendors.

**Some of the Fair Trade Organizations used by the Pasadena Store are:**

- **Ten Thousand Villages.** our namesake, a program of Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches, is our primary craft supplier. Over 80% of our products are from Ten Thousand Villages. The
organization headquarters is in Akron, PA.

- **Thanksgiving Coffee/Mirembe Kawomera** Thanksgiving Coffee, based in Northern California, provides us with this unique coffee from a cooperative of farmers in Uganda called Mirembe Kawomera (“Delicious Peace”). Muslim, Jewish, and Christian farmers work together to grow coffee together and to brew peace in their region of the country.

- **SERRV International** works with thousands of small-scale artisans and farmers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and other developing countries. SERRV creates economic opportunities so these producers can support their families. Started over 55 years ago, SERRV is a program of the Church of the Brethren based in New Windsor, Maryland. Their website is [www.agreatergift.org](http://www.agreatergift.org)

- **Equal Exchange** is an independent alternative trade organization operating out of Canton, Massachusetts. Begun in 1986, the mission of Equal Exchange has been to build long-term fair trade relationships between farmers and consumers. Now they work with farmer co-ops around the world in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. In addition to coffee, they also supply fair trade teas and cocoa. Their website is [www.equalexchange.com](http://www.equalexchange.com)

- **Just Coffee** offers 100% shade-grown, organic, fair trade coffees, which are air-roasted in micro-batches of 68 pounds or less. They purchase coffee from democratically-organized cooperatives for a fair price. As fair trade coffee becomes available at more and more grocery store – we like that Just Coffee reminds consumers that fair trade is not just a market, but a movement. They also have really funky and fun packaging and names for their roasts. Their website is [www.justcoffee.coop](http://www.justcoffee.coop)

- **Women's Bean Project** is a unique job-training program that helps women break the cycle of poverty, abuse, and displacement. Based in Denver, Colorado, the Women's Bean Project works with women in several cities in the US. They produce our dried soup and salsa mixes packaged and signed by the women who made them. Their website is [www.womensbeanproject.com](http://www.womensbeanproject.com)

- **Putumayo World Music and Music Design** produce the international music sold in the store. Their website is [www.putumayo.com](http://www.putumayo.com)

We are always seeking to expand our selection of products, and to work with organizations that share our values and reflect our mission.
Part 3

VOLUNTEERING BASICS – THE IMPORTANCE OF VOLUNTEERS

As a volunteer, your help makes Ten Thousand Villages’ mission possible. We are glad you are with us and hope you enjoy and feel rewarded by your time at the store. We are always open to your suggestions and comments. We appreciate your time and effort!

Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

As a valuable resource to Ten Thousand Villages-Pasadena, volunteers have the right to be given meaningful assignments,

the right to be treated as equal co-workers,

the right to clear instruction and effective supervision,

the right to full involvement and participation, and

the right to recognition for work performed.

In return, volunteers should perform their duties to the best of their abilities and should observe the same standards and policies as paid employees.

The Pasadena Store

Pasadena Store History

In February 2005, a group of volunteers from a variety of different backgrounds and professions conceived a vision. The group envisioned opening a business that would be dedicated exclusively to providing relief and resource to the poorest communities around the world. Ten Thousand Villages emerged out of the hearts and convictions of a community dedicated to creating just and sustainable solutions to end poverty and exploitation.
In March 2006, after months of events and sales, Ten Thousand Villages reached its initial fundraising costs and began searching for a store front location. By May of 2006, Ten Thousand Villages secured the lease for the current property on South Lake Avenue, one of the premier retail areas in Los Angeles. With a team of over twenty people, we renovated the entire store and built all of the furniture used in the store. On July 14th, 2006, amid fanfare and celebration, Ten Thousand Villages opened its doors to the world forever.

**Board Of Directors**

The store is governed by a Board of Directors. The board is composed of individuals who live and work in Pasadena and the surrounding area. Up to 12 individuals serve on the Board for a three-year term. The Board is responsible for setting the policies and the direction of the organization. The Board hires the full-time Executive Director, who is responsible for the overall operation of the store.

**Staff**

Currently the staff consists of a full-time Executive Store Manager, a part-time Volunteer Coordinator, as well as two part-time Sales Associate. There is almost always at least one staff member working each shift. In some situations a lead volunteer may be scheduled in the store as the shift leader. The Executive Store Manager reports to the Board, and the rest of the paid staff report to the Store Manager. Often our paid staff began as volunteers, or former staff will continue on as volunteers after their time as a staff member.

**Volunteers**

We rely on volunteers for the rest of our staffing. Many of our volunteers started out as Ten Thousand Villages customers. They learned about our program, while shopping in our store and decided to join us in our efforts to help artisans and producers earn a living with dignity. The volunteer program is overseen by the Volunteer Coordinator, a committee comprised of Board members, other volunteers, and the Store Manager.

**Volunteering Basics**

**Volunteer Hours**

Volunteers are asked to work a minimum of four hours (1-2 shifts) per month. Of course, you are always welcome to work more hours if you would like. A shift is generally 2-4 hours. Although, many volunteer shifts are flexible depending on the position. Signing up for hours is done through our online Google calendar – that you will be invited to join when you become a volunteer. We encourage all volunteers to sign up for a regular shift. For example, some volunteers sign up for every other Thursday afternoon to come in to the store.

**Shift Accountability**
**When you arrive:** Please be on time for your scheduled shift. If the door is locked, you can call the store at 626-229-9892 to alert someone to your arrival. If you see someone upstairs, just knock on the door. Put your coat, purse, etc. in the locked cubby near the register (the keys are in the drawer next to the register) and retrieve your name badge from the bulletin board. Make sure you're ready to be the face of Ten Thousand Villages to our customers. Please report for work to the staff person who will set the priorities for the day.

**If you are going to be late:** The entire operation of the store depends completely on volunteers and staff. **We count on you.** We give you trust, respect, and responsibility. In return, we ask you to take your work commitment seriously. We expect you to make every reasonable effort to arrive for work each time you are scheduled. If you fail to arrive on time, someone else has to cover for you. Also, there might not be someone to cover for you. **Your reliability is important to others who work with you.**

If you are going to be late, call the store as soon as you know that you won't be in on time. Tell the staff person when you expect to arrive. In addition, if you need to leave early, inform a staff member as soon as you arrive. If you are going to miss a shift entirely, call the store and tell the staff person as soon as you know there is a problem, regardless of whether that is 2 minutes, 2 hours, or 2 weeks ahead of time. Besides calling, you can also go online to our Google calendar and change your availability on the volunteer calendar. When you double click on a shift, it will take you off of it. Never presume that someone will just know you are not coming.

If the store is closed or for some reason you are not needed for a shift, the manager or assistant manager will contact you as soon as possible.

**When you are ready to leave:** When your shift is over, tell a staff person that you are leaving. Leave your name badge in the designated area. Please sign up for another shift on the computer before you leave. If your schedule is flexible, let the staff know when you are willing to be on call.

**Cell phones**
Please do not use your cell phone while you are on the floor, especially while helping customers. We discourage the use of cell phones while you are volunteering. If you must take a call, please ask a fellow volunteer to cover for you, or a staff member. Step outside to take the call.

**Dress Code**

For the most part, what you wear is up to you, keeping in mind that you are representing the organization and so need to do so in a professional manner. Your clothing and grooming should not be offensive to our customer base.

**Shoes:**
- Shoes should be comfortable and conducive to standing and moving around on the sales floor.
- *Please avoid* sandals and any other open toed shoe that may be a hazard to your safety when working with products or unpacking boxes.

**Shirts/Tops:**
● Shirts/tops should appear neat and clean. You should wear shirts that allow you to reach for out-of-the-way products and that are weather appropriate.
● Please refrain from wearing clothing that features promotional writing other than the Ten Thousand Villages' logo or T-shirts with slogans or writing that may be offensive.
● Please avoid strapless or spaghetti strap shirts.

Pants/Skirts:
● Pants should appear neat and clean and allow for mobility including bending down or reaching to high places while on the sales floor. Denim is okay provided it is not run down or sloppy looking.
● Please avoid gym clothes such as gym shorts or warm-up pants.
● Please avoid skirts that are short enough to limit your mobility when working with inventory.

Miscellaneous:
● Facial piercings are fine. Piercings should be kept small and discreet.
● Tattoos should be covered if they contain images or language that may be offensive.
● When applicable you are encouraged to accessorize your outfit with scarves or jewelry from the store while you are on your shift. Please do not remove tags unless if you can replace them at the end of your shift. Please double check so that you do not end up wearing the merchandise out.

Breaks And Meals

We are flexible and expect most people to take a break during each shift. If you want a break period (15 minutes) during your shift, check with the manager or staff person for the best time. Please let her know before you leave the store to go on break. A staff person will often prompt you to take a break. However, if you have not had a break after 2.5 hours, feel free to let us know you need one!

Drinks: The store provides fair trade coffee for staff, volunteers, and customers to drink in the store. If you drink it regularly, feel free to use a mug from the cupboard upstairs or to bring your own. If you prefer to bring your own drink, that's fine. Do not set your drink on the registers or drink in the immediate areas of the register computers. Alcoholic beverages are prohibited except during approved in-store events.

Smoking: Ten Thousand Villages is a smoke-free environment.

Personnel Policies for the Pasadena Store

Even though you are a volunteer, Ten Thousand Villages Pasadena has developed personnel policies that apply to you as well. It is important that you understand what is expected of our “employees” in carrying out the organization’s objectives. It is also our intent for these policies to provide an understanding of roles and relationships and to facilitate communication between staff and management.

Professional Conduct

As a member of the Ten Thousand Villages of Pasadena team, you are expected to follow acceptable business principles in matters of conduct and exhibit a high degree of integrity at all times. This not only involves sincere respect for the rights and feelings of others, but also demands that you refrain from any behavior that might be harmful to you, your coworkers, your customers, or the public at large. Your
conduct reflects on all of us. You are, consequently, encouraged to observe the highest standards of professionalism at all times.

Part 4

GENERAL TRAINING

Our store is unusual in a number of ways. Perhaps the most obvious is that we are part of a non-profit organization with a special mission. Our products are unique; each one has its own story which our customers appreciate hearing from us.

SALES AND SERVICE STANDARDS

By now in your training process, you already know that customer service is our number one priority. Along with other stores in the Ten Thousand Villages network we hold to six Sales and Service Standards. The goal of these standards is to provide consistency and increase sales (and thus purchases from artisans) by enriching our customers’ in-store experience.

You will notice that we sometimes emphasize the language of increasing purchases over increasing sales – when really these two things are much the same. We find that this nuance emphasizes the fact that our role in supporting our partners around the world is to represent their work well and to sell as much of it as we can. More sales means more purchases from artisans, which translates into more money flowing through fair trade channels and into communities around the world.

These Sales and Service Standards are:

- **Wear your name tag:** Nametags help with visibility on the floor and let customers know who is working. Volunteers’ nametags help share the mission. Wearing nametags also helps with shoplifting deterrence.
**Greet each customer:** It is important to greet each customer upon entering the store. This is not to be confused with pouncing on the customer. The greeting should sound genuine. Please vary your remarks to make sure the greeting does not sound practiced or coached. If possible, please come out from behind the counter to say hello. Just let your customers know they are welcome and that you are available if they need help.

**Find out what the customer needs or wants:** Tune in to the customers’ needs or wants by paying attention to their comments or where they are looking. Be sensitive to browsers. Some people indicate by their body language that they just want to look. Always keep an eye on your customers and look for people with questions. You can make yourself available on the floor by dusting, refolding tablecloths, restocking or rearranging displays.

**Share the mission:** Is the customer a first time shopper? Are they visitors from another city? Are they surprised that our prices are so reasonable? Are they amazed at the craftsmanship? These are all opportunities for sharing our mission in a meaningful way. Be willing to share information about products of interest. The more you know about our products, the more you can share.

**Completing the sale:** Completing the sale means letting customers know about relevant items so that we can direct every possible purchase to our artisan partners. That can mean showing matching earrings for a necklace. Showing a card, or a gift bag to complete a gift. Or suggesting items that the customer may not have thought of, such as a brand new item in the store or a food item that they may have forgotten we had. Always be sensitive to the customer’s needs so your suggestion is appropriate and helpful.

**Thank The Customer For Coming In:** Whether they buy anything or not, customers should be thanked as they leave the store. It is always appropriate to say something like “come back again” or “see you next time.”

**CUSTOMER RELATIONS**

*Providing Good Customer Service*

*We aim to provide the best customer service of any retailer in our community.* Read that again -- the best customer service. This is very important to our customers and forms the basis for many of the things we do (or don't do).

Why? There are two basic reasons:

1. It's the golden rule -- we treat people the way we like to be treated.  
2. It's good business. People like to shop in a place that treats them especially well, and they tell all their friends about us. Also, people like to work in a place that treats them and others especially well.

Always start with a greeting and a smile. As each person enters the store, make eye contact, smile, and offer the customer a welcome. If you recognize someone as a regular customer, you may simply say
"hello" or "good to see you again." Use a person's name whenever you know it.

Engaging with customers: Unless you recognize the customer, it is always appropriate to ask if this is the first time in the store. If the answer is "yes," it gives you the opportunity to give a brief explanation of the mission of the store. Try to remember to let our customers know that we are non-profit. Pause to see if your explanation has brought any questions to mind that the customer would like answered. If no questions, let the customer know you are available, and allow her to browse. If someone has been in before, let her know about any new product, displays, or upcoming events in the store, and then let her know you're available to answer questions.

Put your H.E.A.R.T. into every interaction!

<H>ello
- Welcome the customer with a non business related greeting within 20 seconds and/or ten feet of entering the store; identifies you as a staff member
- Attitude: be self confident, use good eye contact, and proper voice projection; leave problems behind you as you approach the customer.
- Keep your eyes and ears open; be aware of who is being helped and who is not. Especially on high traffic days, feel comfortable passing customers to each other.
  - Remember, customers always come before tasks. If you need to focus on the task your assigned communicate this to the associate you are working with so customers always receive the best customer service.
- Re-greet and remain available to customers throughout their entire visit. In a small store like ours, it is likely that more than one of us will come within ten feet of a customer. It can be challenging to keep from sounding like robots. Consciously adjust your greeting based on where you encounter the customer.

<E>ngage & Educate
- Goal is to gain rapport with the customer.
- Tune the world out and people in.
  - Put aside your own concerns when making contact with customers.
- Put them at ease and make them feel important. See the customer as a person, not a dollar sign.
  - Wow, what a beautiful necklace you're wearing!
- Get them talking about themselves.
  - Where did you purchase it? Oh my, that must have been a fun trip. Do you go often?
- Hold eye contact and listen.
  - Observe the customer’s facial expressions, gestures, and body language.
  - Customers are unconsciously compelled to return to us the same attitudes and feelings that we give them.
- Start to share mission and product knowledge. Read your customer’s signals, do they want more or less than you are giving them?

<A>sk
- Start with asking “Have you been in the store before?”
- Follow up by asking appropriate questions that start with “Who,” “What,” “When,” “Where,” and “How” to identify the customer’s needs
  - How did you hear about us?
  - Who are you shopping for today?
○ What brings you into the store today?
○ What can I help you find today?
○ What (when) is the occasion?
○ Where else do you (have you) shopped with Ten Thousand Villages?
○ Where in your home will you hang it/place it?

<Recommend – use features & benefits
  ● Sell what we own first. If you cannot meet the customer’s needs with in store stock, use the Catalog to search all ACTIVE inventory.
  ● Explain the features and benefits of each item you suggest
    ○ A feature is a quality or characteristic of a product.
      ■ The “what” is something that makes the product unique.
    ○ A benefit is the positive result the customer receives when using the product.
      ■ Why the “what” is good and will increase the customer’s satisfaction
  ● Add on – what else does the customer need? IE: napkins and napkins rings to go with her new tablecloth or centerpiece for her dinner party, earrings to match her necklace, a purse to match her new scarf, greeting cards and wrapping paper for her gifts, a dowel for her new tapestry, etc.
  ● Close the sale – I’ll talk these to the register and print information on the artisans for you/your gift recipient.

<T>hank & Invite Back – be sincere!
  ● Did you ask them to sign up on the mailing list?
  ● Tell them about an upcoming event or promotion and give them a bag stuffer?
  ● Thank them for choosing fair trade?
  ● Ask them to come back soon with a SMILE!

Always be alert to how you can improve customers’ shopping experience at Ten Thousand Villages. If someone has a puzzled look, offer to answer questions. If their hands are full, offer a shopping basket or take the items to the checkout. As someone moves from department to department within the store, be ready to share product information as appropriate. Involve yourself in the customer’s shopping experience.

Small children: If customers have small children, offer to show them where our toy section is located. Sometimes parents do not want their kids to touch anything. The store policy is that children (and adults) are welcome to handle anything in the store. If customers want to be more restrictive with their children, that is their decision -- respect it.

Your first shifts: If you are new, it is important to remember that even though you and your coworkers know this, customers don’t necessarily know or remember it. They will expect you to be professional and competent, and so do we. Don’t let this frighten you. At first, you may know little about the store, the products, and the overall program. That’s okay. A smile and a positive attitude go a long way.

Once you become familiar with some of the store’s resources, you will become both more competent and comfortable with answering customer questions. Still, learning is ongoing. It is always better to ask a
coworker or to look something up than to guess or make up an answer. It's fine to tell the customer, "I don't know, but let's see if we can find out" (and then do so).

A few tips:
1. If a customer asks where something is, take the customer to the spot, instead of just pointing.

2. If someone asks for something we don't have in stock, offer to order it. **Special Order forms** are located in the front of the extra education cards box. You can check the “Village Elder” on the register to see if an item is in stock.

3. If someone asks for something we wouldn't have -- like a cutting board made by a craftsman in the US -- refer the customer to a store that carries it. Use this same approach for anything, even if it's our competition. Remember how you like to be treated when you're looking for something.

4. If someone's trying to decide if something will fit in a particular spot at home, offer to measure the item. Remind customers that everything is returnable within 60 days for full value as long as they have the receipt. Without a receipt, the customer receives a merchandise credit. If someone buys something, and finds that it doesn't fit, it can be returned or exchanged for another item. The same applies if someone's trying to coordinate colors or other criteria.

5. Don't stereotype. If someone wants help selecting a gift for a man, probe a little to find out what kinds of things he likes. Some men cook, or like wall hangings, or collect elephants, or enjoy toys, or are intrigued by unusual musical instruments, or like things of a particular color, or from a particular culture.

6. Our customer base includes people from many faiths and backgrounds. Remember to be culturally sensitive.

7. Some of our customers come from countries where our crafts come from. Some even have friends or relatives who are affiliated with a job creation program. We can learn from them about a particular product, material, or culture.

8. Remember to offer customers education cards which are located behind the gift card display.

**Avoid "No" Signs:** Look around the store, looking for the typical signs that you might expect to find in a store. You won't find any "Do not" or other negative signs in the store. We call these "No" signs, because they tell people things they cannot do.

We want to present a positive image. We want to provide fantastic customer service, so we never post a "No" sign, and we do not have any "No" policies. We encourage a woman to bring her ice cream cone into the store, if she's standing outside. We welcome a batch of teenage boys just as warmly as a 50-year old woman in an expensive suit. We encourage people to browse as long as they like. We like mothers to bring their children with them. We encourage people to pick up items, feel them, and handle them. If customers break something, we will NOT let them pay for it, even if they offer. (We break more
ourselves than customers do.) Everything we sell (except for sale items) is returnable. We accept personal checks. We do not have a minimum credit card charge or a fee for a bounced check. Anyone who asks is welcome to use the telephone. Anyone who asks for change gets it, whether it's a quarter for the meter or a roll of dimes for the store down the block (unless we simply don't have the change to give).

In short, it is our policy to go out of our way to be nice to people, to help them however we can.

**Conversations on the sales floor:** Always assume that everything you say on the sales floor can be heard by everyone else. Keep all your comments positive and inclusive. While you may not personally appreciate a specific product, someone else may find it the most beautiful item we carry. We also ask that you keep your voice down when having conversations with other volunteers and staff behind the register. Our goal is for customers to be able to focus on the music and their shopping.

**Because our goal is to offer the best customer service to every customer, it is important that we interact with our customers as much as possible -- in such a way that they feel cared for and comfortably paid attention to.** For this reason, we would prefer that workers do not congregate behind the counter areas and visit with each other. If there are customers in the store, please circulate on the sales floor. Be accessible to customers by walking around, making eye contact, and sharing product information. This makes it easier for the customer to ask questions. (If you remain behind the cash register, customers may feel like they'll bother you, if they come up to ask questions.)

**Even when performing your daily work duties, remember that the customer comes first, so look for and be aware of opportunities to offer information or assistance, or to say a friendly word to a customer.**

**Complaints:** If a customer has a problem with something, sympathize. If a customer finds a flaw or problem with an item on the sales floor, set it aside, and thank the customer for the help. You may not notice the flaw yourself. The manager will deal with the item later. If you receive any other type of complaint that you can't handle or are uncomfortable with, call the manager or another staff person to handle it.

**Safety Issues**

Jewelry is near the checkout counter, where we can easily help a customer make a selection, and at the same time keep an eye on what is being picked up. The most expensive pieces are in the jewelry cases, where we get them out for a customer. Again, this facilitates customer service, while discouraging theft. We try to arrange display fixtures for good visibility. We attempt to schedule staff so that there are enough sales clerks on the floor to give personal attention to the customer. Depending on the time of year and day of the week, this can range from one to six people.

**If you are the only one on the sales floor, always get someone to cover for you before you leave the floor, even to use the restroom. Please do not leave the sales floor unattended.** It's also important to let any of your partners on the sales floor know if you are leaving. They may neglect a customer at the jewelry counter, if they think that you are working closer to that area.
If you see someone put something in a purse or shopping bag, presume that individual intends to pay for it. Usually, customers just want their hands free to examine more things. Offer to "start a pile" at the checkout counter, or the use of a shopping basket. If someone is checking out, and does not bring out the item in the purse, ask, "Is that all?" DO NOT confront customers or accuse them of shoplifting. Let them go. After someone leaves, tell the manager what you saw.

Other Emergencies And First Aid Needs

Use common sense. If there's a fire, the alarm will go off. Someone should direct everyone out of the store, including yourself. (If the alarm is false, the manager will deal with it.)

For simple emergencies or volunteer needs, the store has a first aid kit. It is located in the break room downstairs. If you use the last of an item, please let the manager know so that the item can be replaced before it is needed again.

If you are downstairs, there is an emergency fire exit at the left rear of the large storeroom.

Use Of Restroom And Telephone By The Public

We are happy to allow anyone to sue our restroom as they have need. Please work with staff to keep our bathroom clean. If the bathroom needs maintenance attention (toilet paper out, overflowing toilet, etc.) let a staff member know. Anyone may make a phone call. If a customer wants to make a local phone call, offer to either place the call for them or allow them to dial it. If someone doesn't know the number, help find it. You can use web access to help.

People Selling Things

A variety of people come into the store wanting to sell something. The only person authorized to buy anything is the manager. Be polite and friendly. If the manager is in the store and available, tell her a salesperson wants to see her. Otherwise, tell the person the manager is not available, and offer to take a message. If the person wants to leave information or a packet for the manager, that's fine. Put the manager's name on it, and leave it in his office.

Part 5

VOLUNTEER POSITIONS
DETERMINING JOB AREAS

Volunteers are what make this store run efficiently. Each of our volunteers brings a special skill and talent to our organization. For example, some volunteers are extremely computer literate and therefore help us maintain our website and databases. Others are great at customer service and assist customers on the sales floor. We want to work with you to help you find the place in our organization that fits you the best.

Signing up for Shifts
For regular positions in the store – you will be able to sign up for shifts on our online volunteer calendar. This calendar requires a google account in order to access the calendar. A staff member will assist you with setting up access to the calendar – as well as showing you how to use it. Other special assignment shifts will be announced through an email, and then you will be scheduled based on your response.

Jobs

Sales Associate
Every volunteer begins with training on being a sales associate. Being on the floor and working with customers is at the heart of everything that we do. It is important then that all volunteers and staff learn customer service as their primary task in the store or representing the store off-site.
As a sales associate volunteer, the primary responsibility is assisting customers.

- **Greeter**
  1. Greeting customers as they enter and leave the store
  2. Answering product information questions
  3. Educating customers about Fair Trade and the store’s mission

- **Floater**
  1. Assisting customers with questions
  2. Helping to restock supplies (bags and boxes) in the register area
  3. Restocking and retrieving education cards and any other education material (using the computer)
  4. Assisting with jewelry sales

- **Register** (This is the final stage of training – and is optional depending on whether you decide to continue on as a sales associate)
  1. Ringing up sales (on the register)
  2. Working on offsite sales

Remember that when you have completed your daily responsibilities, if the sales floor is slow, ask a staff person for a project. They will be familiar with what needs to be done for the day. At times, there may also be special tasks you are asked to do right away. *Keep in mind, whatever you are doing, helping*
customers always comes first. If you are doing projects on the sales floor, please be cognizant of where
the customers are and be sensitive to their needs. Be willing to drop what you are doing to help the
customer. If business temporarily picks up, you may need to abandon a project momentarily so that a
customer can shop where you are working. This is very important – we do not want to discourage any
shopping.

Project Based Jobs
Some volunteers may begin as sales associates, but then to choose to continue on in a project based job.
These volunteers are still asked to maintain minimum hour requirements in order to stay a part of our
team. However, these jobs may take a different shape then being on the sales floor during their entire
shift. These positions are also reflective of tasks any volunteer may be asked to do when traffic is slow in
the store.

Merchandise
These volunteers are responsible for helping to unpack, price, and put out incoming inventory. This gives
you more product knowledge and familiarity with the store. A merchandise volunteer could be
responsible for doing any of the following:

● Unpacking
  1. Unpacking shipments and pricing products

● Visual Merchandising (VM)
  1. Monthly floor moves
  2. Annual store reset
  3. Special projects

● Damaged and Discontinued Room (D & D)
  1. Helping do repairs on damaged merchandise

● Inventory
  1. Restocking merchandise
  2. Doing manual counts of merchandise

When you are not serving a customer or unpacking a shipment, please use your time to prepare the store
for customers. There is a list of activities the weekly flow sheet to be completed. Once you have
completed the task, please place your initials and date on the sheet.