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the launch of the Sanaa Collection

“If these are the colors with which we choose to fill our pallets, if these are the hues in which we choose to dip our brushes to touch our canvases, when whatever the final product might be, whatever the world may see on the canvases of our lives, in the end the result will be the same. It will be a masterpiece, and you will know without arrogance or embarrassment that your life was your greatest work of art and that against all odds, from your first breath to your last, you never relinquished your artisan soul,”

—The Artisan Soul

In April a team from Mercy House Global traveled to Kenya to introduce art to the girls in the maternity homes that are supported by Mercy House Global. The teen moms learned to draw and paint and it was stunning.

“I don’t say this lightly: it was the most profound trip I’ve ever had to Kenya. We celebrated the rescue of two more pregnant girls out of horrible trafficking situations, witnessed another miracle birth, experienced sheer joy and reminded each of our teen moms they are a masterpiece.” - Kristen Welch

Sanaa, is the word for art in Swahili and this past summer we introduced the art work that each girl created as part of a new line called the Sanaa Collection.
Rose was one of the first twelve pregnant teen moms rescued in Kenya by the work of Mercy House Global. I have known this beautiful kind and often quiet girl for years now. I watched her transform from a shy and unsure orphan to become a tender mother and confident young woman.

She transitioned back home with her son after she finished the residential program at the maternity homes several years ago and just began her last year of the sponsorship program at Mercy House Global. She fought hard to return to school and overcame the huge obstacles stacked against a teen mother. While she went to school every day, her extended family who agreed to provide a loving home for her, cared for her son.

Two years ago, we received a devastating call from Kenya about a tragic accident that happened while Rose was at school. Her 3-year-old son had been killed in a freak drowning while playing with cousins in front of the house in their rural village.

These were some of our darkest days.

We’ve had some hard seasons in the last 9 years, but nothing can compare to losing a child—a little boy who’s very life was a miracle and testimony to God’s redemption of man’s evil plan.

We questioned God. We cried. We wanted to quit. We made calls overseas. We prayed for and with sweet Rose. We did the only tangible thing we could from an ocean away—we gave her the highest honor in her country a mother can have when she loses a child: we provided a beautiful and memorable funeral for her precious son.

I struggled to understand why God allowed this little life to be lost when we were fighting so hard for these little families to thrive. Some questions don’t have answers, but God reminded me that sometimes He puts us in a place we don’t want to be because it’s the right place for him to reveal his glory. He uses our discomfort to forge something deep within us. I love how Ann Voskamp calls us the Esther Generation and I’ve discovered so much purpose in her words:

You’ve got to use the life you’ve been given to give others life. If your life isn’t about giving relief—you don’t get real life. What does it profit a man to gain the whole world but lose his own soul?

You have got to use your position inside the gate for those outside the gate—or you’re in the position of losing everything. There are a thousand ways to be the living dead.

If you have any food in your fridge, any clothes in your closet, any small roof, rented or owned, over your head, you are richer than 75% of the rest of the world. We are the Esthers living inside the palace.

If you have anything saved in the bank, any bills in your wallet, any spare change in a jar, you are one of the top 8% wealthiest people in the world. We are the Esther’s living inside the gate.

If you can read these words right now, you have a gift 3 billion people right now don’t; if your stomach isn’t twisted in hunger pangs, you have a gift that 1 billion people right now don’t; if you know Christ, you have a gift that untold millions right now don’t. We are the ones living inside the gate.


You are where you are for such a time as this—not to gain anything but to risk everything. You are where you are for such a time as this—not to make an impression but to make a difference.

Rose stayed with her extended family and in school with the help of grief counseling and a lot of love. And although she came back to the maternity home during school breaks for visits, I had only talked with her on the phone as we missed being at the same place at the same time for the last two years.

Until a couple of weeks ago. Rose returned for the Art Camp and we couldn’t wait to find a patch of grass to talk. I wanted to look her in the eyes and tell her how much I loved her, how heartbroken I was for her loss, how proud I was that she stayed in school and will be graduating soon.

But it’s what she wanted to say to me that broke me wide open, “Mom Kristen, I have wanted to thank you face-to-face for loving me and for giving my son the most beautiful funeral in my village. Everyone knew how loved and how special he was because of it. I am so grateful that you made his life possible. If it weren’t for his life, I wouldn’t have everlasting life. Because my pregnancy led me to Jesus.”

I’ve spent my entire life inside the palace gates living this “blessed” life with so much opportunity and provision. But I didn’t begin experiencing real life until I started giving my life away. The world is full of fragrant Roses who are waiting on people like us to offer them a chance at life.

When we use the life we’ve been given to give others life, we don’t have less. We have more.

In August, Mercy House Global met with 40 of our favorite world changers.

We gathered from different corners of the globe – Malaysia, Haiti, Bangladesh, Alabama, Ethiopia – representing a few dozen non-profits all working to provide dignified jobs in Jesus’ Name for one reason: to cheer each other on.

When Mercy House Global was founded in 2010, Kristen Welch, our founder, was deeply discouraged by the competitive environment and exclusive atmosphere she encountered trying to sell our very first Fair Trade product.

“I was so confused because I thought we had the same goal, but every event was lonely and difficult. So, I stopped attending conferences and setting up tables.”

I longed for community and collaboration. I dreamed of non-profits working together and sharing their secrets, divulging what worked and what didn’t. I hoped to one day have a community who carried the weight with me, leaders who didn’t see us as competition but as co-laborors… and friends who understood this beautiful truth: when we help one another, we help the disadvantaged and we glorify God.”

And that’s exactly what happened for the second time in August.

We laughed. We wept. We dreamed. We shared. We threw up our hands. We joined them. We shared our best-kept secrets, confessed our failures, laid down the heavy burden and shouldered it together. We prayed, we listened.

We cried for the poor of the world, for our families who have sacrificed, for our own brokenness. We wept for what we have missed and what we have gained and mostly for not always knowing the difference between the two.

We were reminded why we continually, constantly disadvantage ourselves for the disadvantaged. “I looked around the room at the mentors and heroes who have challenged and inspired me the past decade and I thanked God for bringing us together. We are stronger together.”

We gathered around tables and a video screen and listened to Mercy House Global Board member, Ann Voskamp address us with a holy commission to seek justice for the marginalized and oppressed. “What you’re doing isn’t about charity. It is about justice. Justice is our calling.”

And then she said these profound words that were both a holy reminder and gutsy challenge:

“The only way to reach the disadvantaged is to disadvantage ourselves which turns out to be to our advantage.”

From this gathering, a Facebook group of non-profit leaders was formed and together, we are working to empower women around the world.
Clarice lived in a shack at the bottom of the world’s largest slum for more than 30 years. She raised her family in very difficult circumstances and constantly did whatever she could to guarantee their survival. When one of her family members, a 12 year old, was brutalized and raped and became pregnant, she was devastated. How would she feed another mouth on their meager assistance?

How would this endless cycle of oppression and poverty end?

Our maternity homes in Kenya rescued that broken little girl and helped her become a mother more than 3 years ago and today she is thriving. And sweet Clarice who thought she would spend the rest of her life surviving, is now sitting at a loom 5 days a week in our Miujiza (miracle) artisan group. We have watched God take an impossible situation and do the miraculous.

Mercy House Global has partnered with Ann Voskamp to create and launch a fair trade curated collection of high-end heirloom gifts with two options: themed quarterly boxes that are delivered to your door and an online store—both are providing countless jobs in countries around the world.
2 years ago, I was just like every other teen girl. I loved fashion and cute clothes, and any extra money I had was spent on weekend shopping trips to the mall.

I would shop the sale racks at my favorite stores, like H&M, Forever 21, American Eagle, and Altar’d State. I found a coupon for everything, and when I got an item for less, it just sweetened the deal. Finding a five dollar t-shirt or ten dollar jeans made my day.

However, I had never stopped to think about what that five dollar t-shirt was costing someone else.

Although I was raised with a global mindset and missional view of the world because of my parent’s nonprofit Mercy House Global, no one had ever told me about the horrible practices that go on in the factories in many of the world’s largest fast fashion brands.

But when I was in Ethiopia on a Mercy House Global trip in 2016, my world was forever changed. In Ethiopia, my mom and I planned to meet and partner with a non-profit that employed women to sew clothes and school uniforms for kids. However, we were met with the shocking news that the organization was closing. The nonprofit’s founder explained to us that the women of his nonprofit couldn’t compete with the prices of a neighboring factory.

No one wanted to buy ethically made clothes when they could just as easily be made for cheaper by the factory next door. A factory owned by corrupt managers, who employed their garment workers with salaries of less than 20 cents an hour. And when the non-profit leader confronted the managers about their exploitative wages, the managers simply replied that they could lower the wages to 10 cents, and people would still line up for jobs. This factory was one of H&M’s largest suppliers.

“This information is as accurate as possible to my knowledge. Here, these wages are confirmed.

When I heard that news, I was shocked. On the way back from the meeting, I checked the tag of the shirt I was wearing. H&M. Made in Ethiopia.

I had heard that some brands like H&M and Forever 21 had been involved with sweatshop labor in the past, but I didn’t think it was a big deal. Not until I was in Ethiopia and saw for myself what was really going on. This H&M factory wasn’t one of a kind. What shocked me more than learning about this individual factory was learning that there are tens of thousands just like it.

You see, the problem with our fashion industry isn’t that people are supporting horrible labor practices, it’s that they don’t know they are supporting horrible labor practices.

(Horrible labor practices refer to things like paying your factory workers less than a living wage, forcing them to work in unsafe conditions, demanding extremely long hours, verbal and physical abuse, exploiting female workers for sex, discriminating against certain employees, and hiring children.)

Thinking about the people that had been paid 10 cents or less to make the t-shirt I was wearing made me sick. After my trip to Ethiopia, I had to find out more about these factories and where my clothes were made. Through my jet-lag filled nights I researched, and googled, spent countless hours combing through articles.

It was then that I stumbled upon www.fashionrevolution.org.

Fashion Revolution is a global movement to fight for a change in the current practices of our fashion industry. Every year, during the week of April 24th, Fashion Revolution campaigns to spread awareness and demand change. Why April 24th? Because that’s the
day that started this movement.

In 2013, a garment factory in Rana Plaza, Bangladesh collapsed, killing over 1,134. Over 2500 people were injured. The day before, workers had noticed cracks in the walls and foundations of the building, but factory managers ignored their complaints, and instead threatened to withhold their paychecks, and ordered them to return the next day. The day that changed 1,134 families forever.

For the next two weeks, people were pulled from the rubble, dead and alive. Among them, tags and fabric were found from the brands of the Children’s Place, Primark (a British brand), Joe Fresh (sold at JCPenney), Mango, and Walmart, and several other international retailers.

This horrific tragedy marked the deadliest structural failure accident in modern history, and also the deadliest garment-factory accident in history. But it also marked a turning point in the global fashion industry.

I’ve told you about all of the horrible labor practices that go on around the world, but what’s the alternative?

**HOW CAN WE AS CONSUMERS AVOID BRANDS THAT MANUFACTURE THEIR PRODUCTS IN FACTORIES THAT EXPLOIT WORKERS?**

**FIRST, YOU CAN DO YOUR RESEARCH.**

By reading this article and others like it, you are becoming an educated consumer. If you are this far, you are already breaking part of the cycle. Most people wouldn’t willingly support the labor practices I shared with you about, but most people simply and honestly don’t know where their clothes and other products are made. We see labels on everything, but what does that tell us?

“Made in China” doesn’t tell us if our shirt was made in a factory like the one in Ethiopia. It doesn’t tell us the name of the person who made it, or if they were paid a livable wage. As consumers, we have to look past the tag, and ask the hard questions.

- Where was my shirt made?
- Who made my shirt?
- Were they paid a livable wage?
- Were they exploited in any way?
- Was my shirt made in an environmentally conscious way?

When we buy our products, these are the questions we need to ask ourselves. It’s up to us to do the research and find out if the brands we love are committed to honoring fair labor practices.

**SECOND, YOU CAN SUPPORT THE BRANDS THAT ARE COMMITTED TO HONORING FAIR LABOR PRACTICES.**

Look for brands that certify their products are “ethically made,” “fair trade,” or “made in the USA.” Companies and brands that label their products as ethically made are certifying that they honor fair and safe labor practices, and that they are conscious of the environment. These companies either regularly visit and have close relationships with the factories they work with, or they work directly with their artisans and producers.

Fair trade certified brands ensure that their products are made in safe conditions, by workers who are paid a livable wage, and work fair hours.

Products that are made in the USA are also a great alternative to unethical brands. In the USA, we have labor laws that protect our producers and factory workers from the exploitation other workers around the world face. Auditors and inspectors regularly visit factories in the USA to maintain that they comply with fair labor practices and the laws of this country, and the minimum wage law ensures that people earn living wages.
THIRD, YOU CAN CHANGE THE WAY YOU CONSUME.

As consumers, we are used to a capitalistic economy that caters to our every want and need. Fashion and market trends change with the click of a button or snap of your fingers. Things leave the market just as fast as they enter.

On average, a fashion garment is worn only 4 times before it gets thrown away. Often, we don’t shop looking for items that will last. We buy what is currently trendy and cute now, and don’t stop to think about the way we will feel about the item in a few months.

In order for our current fashion industry to change, we as consumers have to change. We have to move away from fast fashion and towards slow, conscious fashion.

Slow fashion is all about making the most of what we have, and getting as much use out of the products we buy. Slow fashion means buying a pair of ethically and well-made jeans that cost $60 instead of three pairs of unethically and cheaply made $20 jeans.

With slow fashion, we have to surrender the mindset that we need more, and instead buy less and buy better.

Slow fashion forces us to shift our style and mindset from fast and trendy to slow and classic. It’s a shift we must make in order to create a true change in the way we purchase.

Slow fashion also pushes us to make buying new products our last resort. It’s best to first use what you have, then borrow or swap with someone else.

As consumers we have an obligation and duty to put the pressure on brands and companies to create better labor practices and to ensure the safety of their workers.

If not us, then who? If not now, then when? No one else is going to hold these brands accountable, but as their customers, we have the power to demand change.

If we choose not to buy from brands that aren’t willing to make a change in their supply chain, than we are showing them that a change needs to take place in order for customers to buy from them.

WHEN YOU ARE ABOUT TO BUY AN ITEM OF CLOTHING, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS

Am I only buying this because it is in fashion or trendy now?
Will I like this item one year from now?
Will this item become a staple piece in my closet?
Is this item ethically and consciously made?
Is this item well-crafted and made to last?

It shouldn’t be enough that an item of clothing is beautifully made. It needs to also be crafted by hands that aren’t being abused or exploited.

It shouldn’t be enough that an item of clothing is on sale or has a reasonable price. It also needs to be made by someone who is being paid a livable and fair wage.

It shouldn’t be enough that an item of clothing is cute and stylish. It needs to be made by someone who isn’t a child laborer.

These are the requirements we need to hold brands accountable to, and it’s up to us as consumers to make our requirements known.

Brands have the power and resources and money to change the way their goods are supplied.

It is up to us to demand that change. It is up to us become more educated consumers, and to learn about the brands we are buying from. It is up to us to change the way we think about fashion and consumption. It is up to us to buy better, and to support brands that are making an effort towards ethical and fair fashion.
In January this year, we launched our first wholesale line at NYNOW in New York, NY from our very own Mercy House artisan groups. Besides our groups in Kenya (which include Have Hope, Street Hope, Miujiza Textiles & Ceramics and Friends of Mercy), we also represented a few other groups that we helped begin in Ukraine, Ethiopia and Azerbaijan.

For more than a year, we’ve worked very hard with these groups to create trendy, quality handmade items. The products were received well and we are committed to growing our wholesale presence so we can provide sustainable dignified work. We have doubled our wholesale presence across the USA with these efforts and we are excited to see where God will take us.
WHERE WE WORK

- Swaziland
- The Philippines
- Peru
- Cambodia
- Kenya
- Haiti
- Bangladesh
- Ukraine
- Bangladesh
- Nepal
- India
- Zambia
- Uganda
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- Jordan
- Cost
Artisan Impact

Shipped approximately 200,000 packages from our Magnolia, Texas warehouse.

Purchased approximately $3,000,000 in fair trade product, providing countless jobs to women around the world.

Created 10 artisan groups in 4 countries that make custom product exclusively for Mercy House Global to sell. In most of these groups, money saving clubs have begun and artisans are being trained to use their proceeds from the product as seed money to begin their own businesses.

What Mercy House Global Has Done Since 2014 Through Fair Trade Friday
**Highlights from 2018**

- **JAN**
  - Launched the Mercy House Global wholesale line in NYC

- **MAR**
  - Hosted our first Art Camp in Kenya

- **APR**
  - We raised over $82,000 for 9 nonprofits on the annual “She Is Priceless” giving day

- **MAY**
  - Product Symposium held with other non profits

- **JUN**
  - We hosted our third annual Gala at the Barn

- **JUL**
  - Launched “The Grace Case Crafted Home” with Ann Voskamp

- **AUG**
  - We held our 3rd annual holiday market at the Big Red Barn

- **SEP**
OUR MISSION

Rescue a girl.
Empower a family.
Redeem a generation.

our vision

Mercy House exists to engage, empower and disciple women around the globe in Jesus’ name. Engage those with resources to say yes to the plight of women in poverty. Empower women and teenage mothers around the world through partnerships and sustainable fair trade product development. Disciple women to be lifelong followers of Jesus Christ.
There are few things our family enjoys more than being in the mountains. The beautiful views, the fresh air and the majesty of God’s creation are truly breath taking. It’s exhilarating to stand on top of a mountain, but quite a different story when an immovable mountain stands in your path.

Mercy House Global has faced multiple mountains in our short history: from rescuing girls from unspeakable situations, providing dignified jobs among the unskilled and uneducated poor, and convincing broken girls that they are loved beyond imagination.

An ancient proverb asks, “How do you move a mountain? One spoonful of dirt at a time.” You have partnered with us every step of the way, spoons in hand. God continually reminds us that doing hard things is worth the cost. He reminds us in the smile of a newborn baby, the tears of a grandmother accepting Christ and the joy of dancing teenage mothers welcoming a girl into Rehema House.

We are so grateful for you and your faithful prayers, purchases, donations and support. Together we celebrate on the mountain tops and lock arms over what God has done. Together, we will conquer the next peak because we were meant to move mountains.

Kristen + Terrell Welch
## Financial Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributions</td>
<td>$882,758</td>
<td>$582,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gross Profit Artisan Sales</td>
<td>$1,395,489</td>
<td>$1,149,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,272,247</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,731,752</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Services</td>
<td>$2,037,107</td>
<td>$1,530,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management and General</td>
<td>$131,489</td>
<td>$67,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>$31,106</td>
<td>$14,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Expenses</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,199,702</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,612,913</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Change in Net Assets</strong></td>
<td>$72,544</td>
<td>$118,939</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets Beginning of Year</td>
<td>$481,345</td>
<td>$362,406</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets End of Year</td>
<td>$533,889</td>
<td>$481,345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*all financial data taken from Form 990 and CPA prepared compilation for 1/1/17 – 12/31/17. 2018 Financial statements are not available until filed with the IRS five months after the end of the calendar year.

2017 Form 990 is available upon request at info@mercyhouseglobal.org