Community Snapshot

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COMMUNITY SNAPSHOT

MAYA WORKS

Chicago, Illinois

MISSION

MayaWorks is a nonprofit social venture based in Chicago that creates a market for the handicrafts of Guatemalan women artisans. By using their traditional skills as a means of financial support, women become self-sufficient and develop confidence and hope for the future. MayaWorks pays artisans a fair wage, provides literacy and skills trainings, and access to microloans to expand their businesses.

At its core, MayaWorks is about creating work for women so that they can financially support their families and become fully contributing members of their communities.

MayaWorks products are sold primarily by a network of 150 U.S. volunteers who sell the artisans' fair trade products in their local communities. For U.S. women, reaching across borders to give a hand up to women in developing countries allows them to participate in economic justice on a global level. The hand-woven, beaded, and crocheted products are also distributed through wholesale and online retail channels.

PROGRAMS

Since its inception in the mid 1990's, MayaWorks has provided nearly $2,000,000 in earnings to over 125 artisans in Guatemala and $190,000 in support of charitable activities in artisans' local communities.

MayaWorks offers additional programs to support the economic development of indigenous women. Our microcredit program aids women in developing into entrepreneurs through microloans to start small businesses. Artisans have used these low interest loans to cultivate potatoes, strawberries, blackberries, raise bulls, pigs and chickens, purchase new equipment for looms as well as start a firewood business.

Our comprehensive education program that includes literacy classes, business administration and skills training as well as scholarships for artisans’ daughters provides women the skills they need to succeed in the workforce.

MayaWorks offers tours for interested participants to experience the culture and beauty of the Guatemalan highlands. These unique geo-tours offer a historical and present day perspective of Guatemala’s indigenous Maya people. Participants also experience colonial towns, ancient ruins, and local food with bilingual tour guides.

MayaWorks: www.mayaworks.org / www.mayaworks-chicago.blogspot.com
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LOGO (modified) and PHOTO: provided by Naomi Czerwinskyj

INTERWEAVING LIVES, DISCOVERING ONE WORLD

PARA CONTINUAR EL DÍALOGO