YES, YOU CAN STILL HOST A MARKET IN 2020!

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: MARIA JACOBIA

FEATURE STORY: WOMEN CLIMATE DEFENDERS
Dear Friends,

It’s an exciting time of year for us. Yes, I said exciting because, despite the challenges we’re all facing in this strange time, our team has come up with new and interesting ways to engage our supporters. In developing these new tools, our main focus was to equip market hosts with a safe model to follow and still make an impact (see page 6). For our donors, we continue to have the same level of service you are accustomed to, and giving you a variety of options to gift in a safe way online at www.alternativegifts.org, and our friendly staff are available to take gift orders by phone too.

The needs of those living in poverty are still very much a daily reality for them, and COVID-19 has exacerbated the challenges they face, so our team has lots of work ahead! Even when we shifted to work remotely as required, we have continued to work as a team to prepare our new catalog, which will be mailed to you within the next 2 weeks. We’re aware that this year presents all kinds of challenges, and we are relying on you for support to help us reach those in need. If you know someone who would appreciate receiving our catalog, or is interested in hosting a gift market (or virtual gift market), we want to hear from them! Just ask them to email me at surinder@alternativegifts.org. If there’s an opportunity to leave our catalog in a doctor’s office or other place where there’s a waiting area, we can send you catalogs to share. And lastly, while we’ve come up with some really creative ideas to share our work, but we certainly haven’t thought of everything. If you have anything you’d like to share with us, please contact me.

Thank you for sticking with us. We WILL get through this year together!

Be well,

Surinder
surinder@alternativegifts.org
316.269.0635
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Alternative Gifts: An Idea That Sparked Change!

From time to time, we receive calls from individuals asking if we are affiliated with larger organizations that do similar work and use the names, “Alternative Gift Markets,” “Alternative Christmas Markets,” or “Alternative Gifts”. We’ve come to expect this question because it’s exactly what our founder, Harriet Prichard intended: for alternative giving to become a movement, a model for others to emulate and spark change, for the sole purpose of giving hope to those suffering and to improve their lives.

Beginnings: In 1980, Harriett Prichard (then Director of Children’s Ministries in a California church) posed this simple question to her youth group: What can we do about global issues like poverty, injustice, hunger? It’s a question that sparked a grassroots movement to transform how we view gift-giving. The responses to this important question helped form a new, non-commercial way to give authentic gifts for Christmas, holiday celebrations and other special occasions. The Alternative Gift Market was born from this simple idea, and the very first Alternative Gift Catalog was launched!

Pasadena Presbyterian Church held the very first Alternative Gift Market. Children and adults sold goods for self-reliance and animals for those in developing countries. Greeting cards were inscribed with personalized messages, and the gifts purchased at the market were given to friends and relatives to inform them that an Alternative Gift was given in their honor.

Inspiring Change: This movement was so inspiring that other churches soon adopted the idea and wanted to host Alternative Markets. By 1981, five churches in the Pasadena area held markets, and each year the idea spread to many other churches, schools and community organizations. In 1986, Alternative Gifts International received a plaque from Heifer International in recognition for initiating Alternative Christmas Markets (see image). There have been nearly 880 markets held in 43 US states, and there have even been Alternative Gift Markets organized in England, Holland, Japan and Korea. While these markets were affiliated with Alternative Gifts International, many churches and communities host gift markets today that are not associated with us. The easiest way to determine if an Alternative Gift Market is associated with Alternative Gifts International, is by looking at the causes they are fundraising for. (Cont on page 5)
Alternative Gift Markets that are associated with Alternative Gifts International, include Causes that are from our Gifts Inspiring Change catalog. Today, our work remains a grassroots effort. We have a small team of five people at the AGI office, part-time, and volunteer. Ninety percent of each donated dollar goes directly to the causes featured in our annual gift catalog. We still rely on you, your communities, churches, and schools to help us restore lives one gift at a time.

So, if you’ve ever received a unique birthday or anniversary gift that gave a goat to a Haitian family, planted an orchard in Nepal, or if you’ve visited an Alternative Gift Market inside a church or community hall, you can thank Harriet Prichard for initiating the Alternative Gift movement!

Host A Gift Market

You can make an impact in your community and the world through an Alternative Gift Market.

Call 800-842-2243 for more information today!
YES, YOU CAN STILL HOST A MARKET IN 2020!

We're excited that many of you have asked how to safely host a Gift Market in 2020.

We've created several resource materials to guide you through hosting a market of some kind this year! These resources also include ideas on how to safely host an in-person gift market*. Each month we have met via Zoom video with our past market hosts. These meetings are held on the 3rd Friday of each month and the next session is October 16th, 2020 at 11 am CST. To attend the next meeting, email krystal@alternativegifts.org to get the link!

Here are a few ideas we've collectively come up with through these sessions:

- In-Person Market
- Drive-thru Market
- Direct Mail Market
- Express Market (catalog market)
- Self-Serve Catalog Market
- Online Market (Crowdfund)

*Click here to learn more about the markets

These are just a few options to help you as you plan your Market, but we are prioritizing safety first. Please visit our free resources (safety posters, guidelines, etc.) to aid in planning any in-person Markets, and we encourage wearing face masks, practicing physical distancing, using hand sanitizer, and limiting cash handling. Together we will get through this year and continue to help people become self-sufficient!

*Please also research and follow your state and county guidelines on in-person gatherings.
Schools in Haiti have previously shunned any classroom connection with agriculture learning themes. Beyond Borders is rethinking this approach, integrating agriculture into the classroom and teaching students critical-thinking skills that they can use to thrive and build better lives for themselves where they live, without having to migrate to the city. Students learn how to grow vegetables and fruit in their school gardens, which supply school lunch programs, boost school revenue, and provide a hands-on learning experience. Through school gardens, students learn agricultural science and mathematics, including techniques to improve yield and mitigate drought driven by climate change. When children learn these new skills they are able to thrive and build better lives for themselves.

“I never used to think about the importance of school gardens. This experience we’re having with our school garden has brought so many advantages. The garden helps the students make many discoveries about plants. They write a lot about what they’re observing in the garden. Also, the crops we harvest in the school garden are sold, and the profits supplement the school [operational budget].”

- Francilien Mathurin, Principal and Founder, Sous Kanaran School, Lagonav Island, Haiti

“I never knew the importance of school gardens, nor did I know how to cultivate a successful garden. Thanks to the teacher training program, I now do! I am so grateful to [Beyond Borders and MCLC] for all that they’ve done for me!”

- Leonald Thomas, Third Grade Teacher, Sous Kanaran School, Ansagalè, Lagonav Island, Haiti
Let's focus on what we CAN do!

Giving, in all its forms, has always been needed to support AGI’s nonprofit work. During these times of crisis, however, it is more vital than ever. It may look differently now than in previous years, but there are plenty of ways to make an impact amidst global and national catastrophes:

1. **Give an alternative gift:** Donate to a charitable cause in honor of someone for any gift-giving occasion. Click [here](#) to view your gifting options!

2. **Donate your time:** AGI needs volunteers (including remote volunteers), especially during the busy holiday season. Donating your time could be writing for our blog remotely, hosting a gift market or helping pack orders at the office. Email surinder@alternativegifts.org for more info.

3. **Start a Crowdfund:** Start an online fundraiser for any number of Causes that you have a passion for! Then use text, email, or social media to invite your family and friends to donate. Start by learning about our Causes, then register for your market. There are also free resources that can help you promote your crowdfund on the [Market Resources](#) page on our website.
Volunteer Spotlight: Maria Jacobia

This season’s Volunteer Spotlight focuses on one of the most selfless people we know: Maria Jacobia. Maria has been volunteering with us for many years, but she also volunteers with several other organizations. When asked about her passion and journey in service, this was her response:

M y love for community service started in a small Indiana college. From there, I went to Maryland to volunteer with “On Earth Peace,” a Church of the Brethren organization. Then I joined Brethren Volunteer Service and worked with Habitat for Humanity at their main Georgia office before transferring to Phoenix to work at a Food Bank. When I came to Wichita, I began volunteering with the local school district, where I still work to this day. I volunteer with local organizations in town as well as a hospice. The first time I was introduced to Alternative Gifts International was through its local gift market in November 2013. A friend asked me if I could help her by making bags for her event. I continued to help her for the next couple of years before I started volunteering with the main organization. I was initially offered a seasonal job to help AGI get through the market season, but my only concern was I didn’t have any experience or computer skills. Surinder took a chance on me and said that if I was willing to learn, she was willing to teach. In October, I celebrate my 4 year anniversary with Alternative Gifts International. During this time, I have learned many new skills. I have been part of the catalog selection process, and have helped with the markets across the country; in addition to helping at our local market. The most important reason I continue to volunteer/work with this organization is because I see how many lives we change worldwide. I value my time and it has to be for supporting worthwhile organizations. I feel a sense of purpose every day when I walk into our office. Anyone who is lucky enough to be a part of this organization understands how powerful the work is and that we are doing our part to help the world be a better place. We are changing the world one gift at a time, but we are giving a person something that no amount of money can do. We are giving them hope, dignity, and freedom. What could be a better reason to volunteer?
Veronika, a mother of five in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), has found renewal and restoration through her Plant With Purpose savings and loan group. In the DRC, almost three out of four people live below the poverty line in crushing circumstances. In Veronika’s own words, “Before joining the [savings] group, I was seen in our society as a cursed person and I had no hope.” In her savings group, Veronika grew in agency, took out a small loan, and learned to run her own business. “From my small fish and vegetable businesses, my life has completely changed. I can still smile, I can take credit for my increased income, my children have returned to school, and I know my own value and human dignity…” Your gift to Cause 27, will continue to empower more rural families.
Looking for some safe family fun during the holidays? AGI has created several games that are perfect to play with family and friends. (Click on the game's name to download!)

**AGI Jeopardy** is an interactive PowerPoint, in which you answer questions related to the charitable causes from our catalog. Learn as you play!

**AGI BINGO** is a fundraising tool, in which each number corresponds to a donation amount for a cause in the catalog. As you ask for donations to fill your bingo card, more impact is made.

**Who Wants To Be a Millionaire (AGI Style)** is a game in Google Slides, in which you answer increasingly-difficult questions to advance to higher reward levels. You can ask for donors to make contributions corresponding to each tier to help fundraise while you play.

**TABOO (AGI Edition)** is a fast-paced game in which players try to get others to guess a clue word (related to AGI and our causes) while not saying any of the related taboo words listed on the card.

We hope these inspire your families to discuss the importance of helping others during a commercially-focused time!
A participant from MADRE and Wangki Tangni’s Harvesting Hope program, which distributes seeds and technical support to local Indigenous women farmers and ensures the successful farming of crops using traditional methods, shared:

“We are from Kisalaya and we are women producers growing our own vegetables. Thanks to MADRE who gives us seeds, now we as women don’t need anything. We are able to work as men. As women, we work hard. Before this [Harvesting Hope], I didn’t have anything, but now I have my vegetables and I can have things. I’m thankful because now I’m able to have money to provide for my house. Just like me, other women can carry on despite the difficulties they face.”

A testimonial from MADRE’s partner, Dalia Association, who supports small-scale women farmers in Palestine to rehabilitate their farmlands that fall in the buffer zone and are continuously damaged during attacks. Women farmers participate in sustainable farming trainings with a local community farm and learn how to minimize the environmental impacts of farming and engage in chemical-free farming practices. One participant shared:

“The training was a beautiful experience for me. Not only did it expose me to a wide range of concepts within the world of sustainable agriculture, it allowed me to sense a connection with the land, the agricultural heritage of Palestine, and above all, with my Palestinian identity. Most importantly, it has given me a wide set of values and knowledge that will help me to embark on a journey of greening the urban spaces of Palestine.”
DOUBLE YOUR GIFT

When you purchase an alternative gift this season, ask your employer to match it! Simply ask your HR department for a gift match form and mail it to:

Alternative Gifts International
P.O. Box 3810
Wichita, KS 67201

Boost A Cause
Donate to Cause 29

AGI is inviting you to a ZOOM meeting:

TOPIC: PLANNING & HOSTING A GIFT MARKET IN 2020!

TIME: OCT 16, 2020 11:00 AM CST

MEETING ID: 898 9624 6219
PASSCODE: 711901

CLICK TO JOIN

Support AGI’s Mission
Your gift to Cause 30 will enable us to help more people in need.
LET’S MAKE A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Tell Your Friends About AGI
Start A Crowdfund
Host A Gift Market
Become An Ambassador
Partner With Us
Leave A Legacy Gift
Volunteer With Us
Donate