

MEDIA PLAYS “FAIR”

America’s First Fair Trade Town Hosts First Fair Trade Live Concert

By Lauren Avellino Turton

“When we arise in the morning... at the table we drink coffee which is provided for us by a South American, or tea by a Chinese, or cocoa by a West African... before we leave for our jobs we are already beholden to more than half the world.”

Those words were so eloquently spoken years ago by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. of the cultural and civil freedom that unites people across the globe. It is those words that have inspired Media, PA to become America’s First Fair Trade Town.

The Fair Trade movement looks to create the highest-quality products on the market while improving the quality of life for farmers and workers worldwide, ensuring they receive fair wages and work in an adequate environment. Media has dedicated itself to this cause, this renaissance of sorts, vowing to extend its sense of community beyond the limits of the small town. In an effort to bring greater visibility to this commitment, the town’s Fair Trade Committee will hold its first Fair Trade Live Concert in the heart of downtown Media on Sunday, September 14th from Noon to 7pm.

The free Live Concert will feature a diverse musical celebration, showcasing four continents across three stages. Multi-cultural performing artists from Asia, Africa, the Americas and Europe will share their talents with visitors.

The internationally-acclaimed African Children’s Choir, as seen on *American Idol*, *The Ellen Show* and performing with Mariah Carey and Sir Paul McCartney at *Live 8*, will headline the event. The African Children’s Choir has performed around the world, helping to raise money to build and staff schools in Africa, through their mission *Journey of Hope*.

The Live Concert line-up includes Ballet Folclorico Mexico – Hermanos Avila, a renowned troupe that performs traditional Mexican folklore dances, also a belly dancer, lion dances and Chinese opera, among a host of other performances.

There will also be a street fair, dubbed “Fair Fair,” where vendors representing various countries will serve up delectable foods and handmade crafts. Fair Trade experts will present an assortment of hands-on, educational activities for children and parents.

“The multicultural celebration,” says event co-chair, Mia Mendoza of Media’s Mendoza Group, “is designed to bring a greater awareness of Media’s commitment to Fair Trade, and most importantly, educate visitors about Fair Trade, and how even the smallest purchase can have positive effects around the world.”

The Fair Trade movement began in Europe and has since raised the standard of living for millions of people. It has helped ensure fair pay for farmers and workers, empowered women and sent children to schools rather than the fields and factories. The result is superior products and improved, eco-friendly farming, which then allows farmers to re-invest into their communities through improved health programs, road construction and building of new schools.

“It allows us to know where our products are coming from,” comments Drew Arata, owner of Earth & State and member of Media’s Fair Trade Committee. “Our goal is to help fuel the international economy, which will then help boost our own local economy. But it’s vital to never lose sight of business here at home. It’s a fulfilling cycle.”

Earth & State is one of dozens of local businesses participating in the Fair Trade Live Concert. Ten Thousand Villages, in business for more than 60 years, is one of America’s largest Fair Trade organizations. They have supported tens of thousands of artisans in more than 30 countries, and will be lending sponsorship to the Live Concert.

“We are very excited to be involved,” says Ten Thousand Villages’ Kristen Jenkins. “This is a fantastic opportunity to help empower and educate ... and help others realize what we are doing affects so many. Whether it’s a decorative napkin, a bracelet, a bowl, the smallest purchase helps.”

The outreach and interest from Media vendors is remarkable in Mia Mendoza’s mind. “Even the businesses that don’t currently carry Fair Trade products will sell them especially for that day. “ She goes on to say how impressed the Committee has been with the spirit of volunteerism across the board. “For example, Dan Brodeur of Brodeur’s on State will provide meals for the performers involved that day.”

Residents alike are humbled by the tremendous sense of unification within this small town. Lifelong Media resident, Tricia Palmer, says she is proud her hometown has realized such an accomplishment. The 30-something says she has made Fair Trade a part of her daily life.

“I purchase the best coffee every morning from the Coffee Club. The reason I choose to spend a little extra on my daily 20 oz. pleasure is one, for quality, and secondly, those few extra cents are ensuring that families are receiving fair prices for their products and the labor required to be able to produce.”

Palmer adds, “Environmentally friendly practices are a plus, to ensure a healthy place for us, as well as the rest of the world.”

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****SIDEBAR ARTICLE**

COMING IN FIRST:

HOW MEDIA, PA BECAME FAIR TRADE

Media, PA declared itself America’s First Fair Trade Town in July of 2006 by meeting the five requirements established by the British Fair Trade Federation. The American Fair Trade effort mirrors the highly successful movement which began in the United Kingdom when Garstang, a small town in Lancashire, England, was designated in 2000.

To be recognized as a Fair Trade Town in the U.S., Media had to meet the following goals, set forth by the Fair Trade Towns campaign.

First, the Media Borough Council passed a resolution supporting Fair Trade and committed to serve Fair Trade coffee and tea at its functions.

Second, Media promised a wide range of Fair Trade products would be available in its shops and restaurants.

Third, the use of Fair Trade products was guaranteed by a number of local organizations, including work places and community organizations.

Fourth, Media established a local campaign attracting media attention and popular support to promote Fair Trade products and initiatives.

And lastly, a local Fair Trade steering committee was formed that meets on a regular basis. The main goal of the committee is to increase awareness of the principles and practice of Fair Trade.

Media emerged as America's First Trade Town nearly a year before any other town. Brattleboro, VT, Milwaukee, WI and Amherst, MA followed respectively. There are currently dozens of other towns and cities striving for Fair Trade certification.

<http://www.fairtradetownsusa.org>