

a socially conscious handbag
business dedicated to
empowering women in
need at home and
abroad



maryann

our story

Ten years ago, in her two bedroom apartment with a student-model sewing machine, Maryann Wohlwend sowed the seeds for a small handbag business.

It wasn't long before her one-woman enterprise sprouted into a sought-after label, highly regarded throughout Northeast Ohio for its eclectic designs and quality construction. **Her one-of-a-kind handbags were featured in the Plain Dealer's fashion section, and were frequently showcased in trunk shows at Nordstrom, Cleveland. The whimsically embellished purses soon became known as "Maryann bags" among her clientele, who shopped at Deering Gallery (Beachwood Place), Lush Boutique in Legacy Village or Cleveland Museum of Art gift stores.**

On a Sunday afternoon in January 2007, the Kent State graduate (and now mother of two) was spiritually inspired to expand her business locally and globally, creating economic opportunities for women in need across the world.

In February, Maryann contacted Paul Wides, the Missions Director at Hudson Community Chapel, after the pastors shared a global vision for all members to “*multiply themselves*”, using personal gifts and talents to reach out to others. Around the same time, Lyndsey Farro, an accomplished jewelry artisan and Kent State Fashion Merchandising graduate contacted the church as well. Like Maryann, Lyndsey was seeking a purposeful career in Missions, utilizing her marketing background in hopes of making a positive difference in the lives of others. Lyndsey had been working at Neiman Marcus in Chicago, and building a vast network of connections when she decided to move back home to Cleveland.

At their initial meeting in April, Maryann and Lyndsey instantly realized that they complemented one another personally and professionally. The two began partnering their efforts to launch MaryannBags, Ltd. as a socially conscious company dedicated to empowering women in need at home and abroad.

Like a desert rose, the petals of MaryannBags, Ltd. began to blossom. Maryann and Lyndsey first partnered with a missionary named Dianne Amon (of Hudson), who contacted them on behalf of a group of women who had just been rescued from living under a bridge in the Philippines.

Inspired by the culture of the Philippines and giving thoughtful consideration to the sewing and painting skills of the women now living at the House of Transformation, Maryann designed her Fall 2007 Collection. By October, MaryannBags were being manufactured in Cagayun de Oro—“*The City of Golden Friendships*”.

“The handbags are a tool for the relationships and economic opportunities we sincerely hope to invest in at home and abroad,” says Maryann. Maryann and Lyndsey began to connect with the Philippine community in North East Ohio through Lutie Lee, who translated the first training video for MaryannBags, Ltd.

“Our philosophy is one of quality in every area of life—even in the minutest detail like cutting a thread at the end of a stitch or giving a kind word to the baristas at Starbucks (where they hold business meetings). We believe that quality in the details will yield a quality product in the end.” They both agree that the motivation for giving their best in life, truly, is for the glory of God and for the good of others.

The women who manufacture MaryannBags are personally encouraged and professionally empowered to raise their quality of life and even begin their own design businesses. Maryann and Lyndsey are committed to supporting these new ventures as the inspired women seek to sow more seeds of hope and...

bloom where you are planted