

25th
ANNIVERSARY



WorldCrafts' First Artisan Group Thai Country Trim

In the 1980s, Betty Butcher, an American living in Thailand, sought out a new way to reach women in her community. She began asking the Father how to develop relationships with the women in her community. After much prayer, Betty was led to create a micro-business to help women earn enough money to care for their families.

Stepping out in obedience, Betty opened her home and began offering sewing lessons. Over time, as news spread about this opportunity to learn to sew, many different women gathered beneath Betty's stilt house where she taught them to create beautiful Christmas ornaments. While the women busied their hands with needles and thread, Betty reached out to their hearts with the message of eternal hope. Thai Country Trim was born.

Initially Betty and the women sold these ornaments to tourists. Later she contacted WMU and asked if it would be willing to help sell the ornaments in its publications. WMU said yes. After a trial period of selling Thai Country Trim ornaments as a special handcraft project, in 1996 WMU transitioned this cottage industry into a full-fledged fair-trade division, now known as WorldCrafts.

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Today WorldCrafts works with multiple artisan groups in many different countries. The eternal impact of WorldCrafts has been immeasurable for the families and communities touched by WorldCrafts orders. From victims of sex trafficking and human slavery in Asia and the United States to HIV-positive widows in East Africa, artisans around the world are being delivered from hopelessness and poverty. Kaye Miller, national WMU president emerita who grew up in Thailand and called Betty Butcher "Aunt Betty," said of WorldCrafts, "WorldCrafts has literally changed the lives of those involved—and those of the extended family . . . I have seen WorldCrafts keep a family alive—provide food and clothing. It has saved so many from utter poverty."

And what about Thai Country Trim? This group now employs artisans throughout the country of Thailand and remains WorldCrafts' oldest and largest artisan group. One artisan, Nongyao, works full time at Thai Country Trim. She started many years ago as a worker from home. She became a believer after hearing the good news in a gathering hosted by Thai Country Trim. Nongyao was in a tragic motorcycle accident a couple years ago that left her with several broken bones in her left leg. She was homebound for many months as she healed and is no longer able to walk normally. However, during her recovery, she was still able to work from home and is now back at the sewing center. She specializes in making the hair on the figurines from Thai Country Trim and made all the hair for the WorldCrafts Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon pieces. She thanks her Father for this work. As you purchase WorldCrafts products, you make an impact on the lives of women like Nongyao who are able to hear the good news and provide much-needed income to their families.

While the monetary rewards have been life-changing, it is the gift of eternal hope that keeps Thai Country Trim growing and thriving. Countless families and communities have been rescued and restored by one humble servant's willingness to obediently step out in faith. In the words of Cheryl Derbyshire, Thai Country Trim director, "Thai Country Trim ministry was born years ago with the faith of Betty and the hand of our God. No one else in the world produces hand-sewn products like ours. Still today our Nativity set is our number-one selling product. More than that, Thai Country Trim is now touching the lives of 300 women through a weekly program with words of eternal hope. One of the things I enjoy most about our long-term relationship (25 years) with WorldCrafts is the prayer coverage staff has always offered. I know when I have a critical issue who I can count on for diligent prayer. It's wonderful to have the orders that support the women's financial needs, but the added prayer coverage is quite honestly the greatest blessing."

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