

GOOD FORTUNE SOAP



A natural soap and body-care company with a heart for creating social change in Cleveland, Tennessee

by Jennifer Jack

From Good Fortune's website: The company offers a diverse body-care line online and in more than 25 states. The philanthropic focus of the brand is "to spread good fortune around the world." The goals are to mentor disadvantaged girls and women in an entrepreneur program, teach them life skills, and help them earn money for college, with an emphasis on leadership and giving back to the community.

Jennifer's Story

I worked in the corporate world for many years but was ready for a change. I longed for a different career, a lifestyle that fed my mind, body, and spirit while also providing a way to connect with and help others. While lying in bed, praying, and reading a book on soap making, I realized that my love of design, photography, and handcrafted things was my calling. With 110% enthusiasm, I followed the plan to start the business I felt inspired to create.

In May 2006, in Chattanooga, Good Fortune Soap was born. From day one I studied soap making, natural ingredients, and the natural products industry as a whole. The "fearless mad scientist" within that I had repressed since childhood took over as I experimented by making hundreds of batches of soap, scent combinations, shapes, colors, and more. Self taught, I perfected the process night and day while working full-time as a graphic designer.

After eight months in the lab, December 2006 marked Good Fortune's first big open house. In just two days, I sold hundreds of bars of soap and gift sets. Further, two Chattanooga-based gift shops placed orders, purchasing Good Fortune's entire collection of scents and gift sets. This success prepared me for the next step: going full-time with soap.

Most people knew I was clever but secretly thought I was crazy for following a divine inspiration to make soap. I knew that by traditional standards it was a risk to quit my job and that I would have to give up most luxuries, but I sensed that this plan would be realized. Life was just beginning. Without hesitation, I took the plunge, sold my house, quit my stable job, and took Good Fortune all the way.

Is Social Enterprise a Trend?

Absolutely. Especially with this economy, people are thinking more wisely about how they spend their money. People want to shop locally, buy sustainable products, and also help support a worthy cause. I am excited that "giving back" is becoming trendy because more people are thinking and acting more generously.

Accomplishments

I am proud of my two recent trips to Haiti. The excitement during all of my soap-making classes has been unmistakable. I taught more than 50 people to make natural glycerin soap during my first trip and was able to share my story about the inspiration to start the business. My translator, Filder, helped me explain the process of cutting, melting, and pouring soap. On my second trip, I worked with the nannies at Maison orphanage to gather rubble, grind it, and form it into beautiful necklaces. It was great to be able to encourage my students to develop rubble-wear, symbolically creating "beauty from ashes." Now the necklaces are available for purchase online to help rebuild lives in Haiti.

Goals

We recently relaunched our soap-making and green-clean classes. For those who cannot travel to our shop, we are considering offering a do-it-yourself green-clean kit that will offer instructions and ingredients for making green cleaners for the home that are much healthier than commercially available products for humans and the earth. It is exciting that this can be done affordably.

Parting Thoughts

Those who do not wish to start their own social entrepreneurship program might consider donating a portion of their profits to an existing program such as www.goodsearch.com, www.onepercentfortheplanet.org, or a local charity. One person can truly make a difference, so please stop thinking about it, and just do it!

**Jennifer Jack founded Good Fortune, a philanthropic soap-making business.*