

Join the Sustainers' Circle in 2011!

Becoming a Sustainers' Circle member is an easy, effective way to ensure that FINCA has a steady, reliable source of funding readily available to meet the needs of our Village Banking clients around the world. As a Sustainers' Circle member, you'll join thousands of others, worldwide, who support our work through automatic, monthly donations made directly through their checking or credit card accounts.

To join the Sustainers' Circle, simply decide on an amount you're comfortable contributing each month—\$10, \$25, \$50 or more—then either click on www.FINCA.org/donate and provide your information through our secure site; contact our DC office by phone, and provide credit card information to a staff member, who will handle the paperwork; or send a voided check to our DC office, and we'll make all the arrangements with your bank. Your account will be billed automatically on a monthly basis. Just "set it and forget it."

The impact can be immense because your donations multiply quickly:

- \$100 helps a woman in Haiti buy more chickens and increase her income ;
- \$250 enables a woman in Honduras to buy flour in bulk and supply a local restaurant with tortillas;
- \$500 allows a woman in Kyrgyzstan to start a small business, hire a neighbor and send her child back to school;
- \$1,000 gives five poor women the opportunity to start their own small businesses;
- \$2,500 provides first loans for 10-15 families, helping them achieve financial independence;
- \$5,000 can support a new Village Bank, allowing 15-20 families access to life-changing financial services.

In addition to providing FINCA clients with a sustainable source of loan capital, the Sustainers' Circle helps FINCA use its resources more efficiently by saving paper, postage and administrative costs. This ensures that a greater share of your contributions go directly into the hands of Village Banking clients, so they can work their way out of poverty in places like Haiti, Malawi and Tajikistan.

To join the Sustainers' Circle and help change the world, please visit www.FINCA.org/donate, or contact Laura Hagood at (202) 682-1510, x 250 or laura.hagood@FINCA.org. Thank you for your support!



FINCA Afghanistan client Sharifa

Photo by FINCA staff

FINCA Canada Event Supports Haitian Clients

Nearly 400 people attended FINCA Canada's second fundraiser held in Toronto, raising funds in support of FINCA Haiti clients as they recover from the devastating 2010 earthquake.

A 22-member event committee planned an evening which included musical entertainment, a silent auction of more than 60 unique products and services, and sales of the cookbook, *Cupcakes for Haiti*, created by Susana Molinolo, which directly benefits FINCA Canada.

FINCA President and CEO Rupert Scofield shared highlights of FINCA's 25-year history, and moving stories of clients' resilience, courage and success in breaking the cycle of poverty.

The celebration was co-chaired by FINCA supporter Michelle Levy, and FINCA Canada board members Linda Wolfond and Jacquie Green. It was sponsored by McCain Foods Ltd; other corporate contributors included Giesecke & Devrient, Wind Mobile, Air Canada, Urbnlili, Lolicakes, and Tracy Kay photography. To learn more, please visit www.FINCACanada.org.



Event co-chairs Jacquie Green, Michelle Levy and Linda Wolfond.

© Tracy Kay Photography

Natalie Portman shares how FINCA changes lives



Natalie Portman visits a FINCA Mexico client's pottery business

© Mark Abraham

You can view *FINCA Ambassador of Hope* Natalie Portman's specially-recorded video message, in which she discusses how FINCA helps impoverished mothers build businesses so they can improve the lives of their families and create a better future for their children. Visit the www.FINCA.org homepage, and click on the video in the lower right-hand corner.



Village Bank Notes

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FINCA Celebrates 25 Years of Creating Pathways Out of Poverty

Nearly 500 supporters and staff from across FINCA's global network—including the Regional Directors and the CEOs from each of our 21 programs around the world—recently gathered in New York to celebrate FINCA's quarter century of providing small loans and financial services to the world's poor. *Ambassador of Hope* Natalie Portman and long-time FINCA supporter Soledad Hurst, who serves on FINCA's Board of Directors and is the Chair of the Advisory Board, were honored for their tireless efforts to raise funds and generate awareness about village banking and the power of microfinance.

Two FINCA clients—Margarette Nivose from Haiti and Tamara Shekimbaeva from Kyrgyzstan—moved the crowd to a standing ovation and tears with their stories of how FINCA loans have helped them change their lives and provide a better future for their children. Also in attendance was FINCA Ecuador client Lidia Gonzalez.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton appeared through a specially-recorded video message to congratulate FINCA for its quarter-century of success, and to acknowledge the honorees for their dedication to creating a world without poverty.

Please visit www.FINCA.org/videos to see Secretary Clinton's video.

The celebration was co-chaired by FINCA supporters Veronique and Bob Pittman, and FINCA Advisory Board member Rosalie Swedlin and her husband Robert Cort. Corporate sponsors included Deltek, Dior Beauty, First Data and Sapient Nitro. Other corporate contributors included Credit Suisse, Deutsche Bank, Goldman Sachs, Cleary Gottlieb Steen & Hamilton LLC, Fox Searchlight and Moody's.

Visit www.FINCA.org/25thAnniversaryEvent to learn more and see additional photos of the evening.

Clockwise from top: FINCA Founder John Hatch and *Ambassador of Hope* Natalie Portman; John Hatch, Soledad Hurst, FINCA Chairman of the Board Bob Hatch and FINCA President and CEO Rupert Scofield; FINCA clients Margarette Nivose from Haiti, Tamara Shekimbaeva from Kyrgyzstan and Lidia Gonzalez from Ecuador; in addition to attending the celebration event, Board members, the CEOs of FINCA's 21 international programs, and some Headquarters staff came together to share best practices and collaborate about opportunities and challenges that lay ahead.



Photos © Getty Images



Photo by FINCA staff



Photo © Getty Images

News From The Field

Keeping Hope Alive for FINCA Haiti Clients

One year after the devastating earthquake that struck Haiti on January 12, 2010, its people still face enormous challenges. While recovery is slow and has been hampered by even more challenges including a cholera epidemic and heavy rains, FINCA Haiti has remained steadfast in its efforts to help our FINCA Haiti clients rebuild their lives and communities.

■ **FINCA is making a difference for more than 8,000 impoverished families across Haiti**, helping transform lives and creating opportunities for a better future. Ninety percent of FINCA Haiti's clients are women. Many are mothers of three to seven children who survive by selling food, charcoal or used clothing. For these women and their families, earning just \$1 per day more can result in better nutrition, improved housing, cleaner drinking water and sanitation, and increased likelihood of staying in school—the best way for children to break the cycle of poverty.

■ **FINCA has a long term commitment to Haiti:** FINCA has worked in Haiti since 1989, providing the entrepreneurial poor

with financial services to help them build small businesses, create jobs and work their way out of poverty. We have a long-term commitment to our clients in Haiti to help them rebuild their lives, one loan at a time, and provide a better future for their children. FINCA is there for the long haul, and we are investing in our operations in Haiti to improve service to our clients.

■ **FINCA is uniquely equipped to serve Haiti's rural communities:**

FINCA serves clients throughout Haiti's 10 provinces, including in rural areas, where it is often the only local provider of microfinance. Haiti's rural poor live in stark privation, with even more limited opportunities than urban dwellers. As families continue returning from devastated cities to their rural communities of origin, FINCA branches and staff are in position to help them re-establish their lives and livelihoods.

■ **FINCA will stand by our clients in Haiti:** Following the earthquake, FINCA Haiti staff met with our clients to assess its impact on their families and businesses. To help affected clients protect their remaining assets and restart their businesses without a debt burden, we forgave the loans of 4,500 clients who had suffered losses.

■ **FINCA provides a hand up, not a hand-out:** As Nicholas Kristof wrote in *The New York Times* on January 5, "Those nations that have managed to lift themselves out of poverty have done so mostly with trade, not aid—with giving people jobs and a ladder, not handouts and an elevator." FINCA's research suggests that 20-25% of our clients create at least one job for others. By promoting employment, microfinance is helping to rebuild Haiti, one job, one family, one community at a time.



FINCA Haiti clients Pascal Marie Carmel (above), and Margarette Nivose



Photo by FINCA staff

Photo by FINCA staff

Village Bank Notes

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Overcoming the Odds in Kyrgyzstan

Like million of her fellow citizens of Kyrgyzstan and other former Soviet republics, the collapse of the Communist system eventually impacted Tamara Shekimbaeva, when she lost her job as a weaver in an old carpet factory when it closed and all of its workers were laid off. The 1990s were a particularly desperate period for many people in Kyrgyzstan, as jobs became increasingly scarce. To make matters worse, her husband—realizing he would have to support the family on his own—abandoned Tamara and later divorced her.

Forced overnight to find a way to support herself and her 17-year old daughter, Tamara used what savings she had to rent a small shop in her hometown of Karabalta, where she sold detergent, plastic dishes and other household items. At first, she struggled to make enough income in the still unfamiliar world of the free market, but she was determined to provide her daughter with a good education. In 2000, she heard about FINCA, which had launched its program in Kyrgyzstan in 1995, and its commitment

to providing financial services to women like her, who were working hard to build small businesses to improve their families' living standards.

Tamara joined FINCA's "Marta" solidarity group in Karabalta and used her first loan of \$125 to expand her inventory of household items, providing more choices of products to her customers and higher profit margins for her shop. After several years of successful growth in her business—and her daughter's graduation from Bishkek University—Tamara organized her own solidarity group, named "Ms. Shekimbaeva" after her—and was elected chairwoman. Her loan sizes grew along with her business. She used her larger loans to finance the purchase of a small shop in the Karabalta market and began to sell women's clothing, a much more profitable line of business. Her most recent loan of \$1,500 has been invested in purchasing a wide range of clothing and



Photo by FINCA staff

FINCA Kyrgyzstan client Tamara Shekimbaeva, whose profitable business growth has changed her life and helped her put her daughter through college

accessories for her new shop.

Tamara says, "I have a lot of customers at my shop who are in a difficult situation. I try to help them as I can; I counsel them about FINCA loans, and help them create their own FINCA solidarity groups. Many of them have received FINCA loans on my recommendation, and have been able to start a new life as a result. I would not have this success without FINCA."

Bizarre Bazaar Builds Banks



Photos by Pat Bongiovanni

Above: The Bizarre Bazaar in action; the Bizarre Bazaar Bake Sale crew (right) rivals professional bakeries, with homemade cinnamon rolls right out of the oven.



The Northville First United Methodist Church in Northville, MI, has become one of the leading sponsors of FINCA's Village Banks, thanks to its annual "Bizarre Bazaar" fundraising event. Since 2008, when the Church chose FINCA as one of its "mission projects," it has sponsored a total of nine Village Banks in Afghanistan, Haiti, Jordan, Malawi, Tajikistan and Zambia, giving as many as 200 families an opportunity to escape poverty, by raising \$5,000 for each Village Bank!

Pat Bongiovanni, who has spearheaded the Church's efforts, said, "It really began as a personal quest of mine. I wanted to find a means to get capital directly into the hands of those who needed it the most. I wanted to do more than send a check off to a charity." With some research on microfinance, she realized that, "FINCA was truly the cream of the crop."

Pat enlisted the enthusiastic

support of other women at the Church, and the Bizarre Bazaar was born. It parallels FINCA's cause. "By inviting local entrepreneurs and artists with home-based businesses to join us, we give them a chance to grow their businesses in a low-cost, friendly venue." The Bazaar also features a pancake breakfast, homemade lunch, a bake sale and more. It has grown each year since 2008 and become a year-round project. As one committee member said, "Whenever I get tired, I think: somewhere out there, a woman is counting on me."

We at FINCA are very grateful for the generosity and hard work of so many people at the Northville First United Methodist Church, which is helping transform the lives of as many as 1,000 people living in poverty. We're also glad they have found the experience so rewarding. As Pat said, "We all feel blessed to have found a way to truly impact the lives of women and children – the poorest of the poor – and a way to work towards world peace, and we are so happy to share it!"

No matter how big or small your ideas, when you work together, it's easy to *Give a Little and Change a Lot!* For more information about Village Bank sponsorship, or to share your successes with us, please write info@FINCA.org or call Laura Hagood at (202) 682-1510, extension 250.