

Oxfam Unwrapped

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A can of worms, a life jacket and a hygiene kit all seem unlikely gifts for a wish list. But for some, these practical gifts provide aid in a time of emergency or help in the transition out of poverty.

Oxfam, an international relief and development organization, creates lasting solutions to poverty, hunger and injustice. Through the *Oxfam Unwrapped* catalog, donors can purchase gifts that are put to use in more than 120 countries. Individuals can search this online catalog to learn about the value of agricultural and livestock gifts.

Items include beadwork whose handcrafting generates income for HIV-affected women, disaster warning systems to help communicate safe pathways, camels to provide transportation in extreme conditions, fair trade honey harvested by small-scale rural farmers, emergency toilets and seedlings to create a garden. Search by category (including "green" gifts, emergency essentials and furred and feathered) or price point (under \$25 USD to over \$500 USD) and you are bound to find a gift that knocks the holiday socks off of that oh-so-hard-to-shop-for person on your list.

Interested in giving but not quite sure to whom? Interested in volunteering but not quite sure where? UniversalGiving is an organization that provides an interactive network to connect individuals with projects that meet their interests, price range and availability.

Founded in June 2002, UniversalGiving is a social entrepreneurship nonprofit whose vision is to "create a world where giving and volunteering are a natural part of everyday life." The organization's Web site makes everyday giving easy. It allows users to search for organizations, projects, volunteer opportunities and gift packages by region and topic of interest. Categories range from health and education to microfinance, conflict resolution and technology. The organization also offers a service called "UniversalGiving Corporate," which matches corporations with both volunteer and donor activities.

Pamela Hawley, founder and CEO of UniversalGiving, says that the organization prides itself on evaluating the quality of the programs and organizations in its online network. "What we're really driving towards is getting as much money to the nonprofits, making it as quality as possible ... to integrate it in people's lives," she says.

UniversalGiving

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The Oxfam Unwrapped catalog shows a range of unconventional gifts. Photos | Courtesy of Oxfam Unwrapped

BELOW ARE STORIES FROM THREE ORGANIZATIONS FEATURED IN UNIVERSALGIVING'S DATABASE.



Flora Callisaya, 38, is a single mother to three boys. Barely able to sustain her family with her earnings, Flora went to Pro Mujer to get a loan and decided to join their savings program. Through these services, Flora has expanded her printing business and explored new enterprises. She and her family have taken advantage of Pro Mujer's health services and computer classes. Her savings have enabled her to buy her own land and build a house. Photo | Courtesy of Pro Mujer



Individuals participate in a basic computer training session offered by Develop Africa, Inc. in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Hands-on training sessions cover an introduction to computers, word processing and spreadsheets. Photo | Courtesy of Develop Africa, Inc.



Sports Gift donated soccer equipment to a community center in Juarez, Mexico to start a boy's team. The boys formed their own team and entered local competitions. Three months later, seeing how much fun the boys were having, the girls in the community requested soccer equipment to start a girl's team. Sports Gift donated the soccer equipment for the girls, and today both teams are thriving. Photo | Courtesy of Sports Gift



Develop Africa 1906 Knob Creek Road Suite 3 Johnson City, TN 37604

Dear Sylvester,

Thank you for your recent contribution to UniversalGiving's feature in NEED Magazine. I am enclosing a copy of the magazine for you- the feature looks great and so do the images you submitted!

We are very excited to showcase our nonprofit partners and truly demonstrate UniversalGiving's vision to create a world where giving and volunteering is a natural part of everyday life.

Develop Africa is an exceptional organization and we look forward to developing our relationship going into the future. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or requests! Thank you again for your contribution.

Sincerely,

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