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Happy Holidays,

What an amazing year we have had! I'm thrilled to share some exciting developments with you. I recently returned from Guatemala where many clients are preparing for the holiday season. *Handmade by Friendship Bridge*, our wholesale and retail business of clients' handmade products, has grown successfully this past year. It offers wonderful opportunities for our clients and shoppers. Be sure to go online at [www.handmadebyfriendshipbridge.org](http://www.handmadebyfriendshipbridge.org) to purchase meaningful gifts that make a global impact!

This year, we re-earned our 4-star-rating in Charity Navigator. We are also wrapping up our 2017-2019 strategic plan, *A Path for Every Client*. I am so proud of the organization's focus on our client-centered work and our commitment to positive and measurable impact. A recent study showed that from 2017-2019, 60% of our clients experienced an improvement in their standards of living, when the overall poverty rate in the country has increased year over year. Our studies also continue to find that the longer a client is in our program the better off she is, which is why it is critical we continue to enhance and improve our programs to provide the appropriate products and services for our clients.

Today, with nearly ten years of data collection and evidence of our programs' success, we are well positioned for the next phase of Friendship Bridge's work. We have a clear path forward as we finalize our 2020-2024 strategic plan, titled *Impact<sup>2</sup>*. To scale a more profound impact in the next five years, we will segment our clients into two categories: *Dreamers* (impoverished women building financial resilience) and *Entrepreneurs* (women providing employment and having a greater impact in their communities). Each category will have impactful and sustainable products and services tailored to the clients' level of development in order for her to become an agent of change in her life, her community, and in future generations. With this new plan, we will expand to new rural areas in the country, continue to cultivate and leverage relationships that align with our mission and strategies, and we will take advantage of technology to maximize social impact and operational efficiency. Lastly, we will continue to be a significant employer and *Great Place to Work* for nearly 200 employees. Stay tuned in the new year for specifics about this exciting new plan.

Nobel Prize Laureate Amartya Sen once said, "*Poverty leads to an intolerable waste of talent. Poverty is not just a lack of money; it is not having the capability to realize ones full potential as a human being.*" With our new plan, we will continue to work with our clients to reach their full potential and look for the impact on generations to come.

We are so grateful for your support of our work and our clients and hope that you have a very happy and healthy holiday season.

Happy Holidays,

Karen Larson  
President and CEO

P.S. Save the date for our In-Person Gala in Lakewood Colorado on May 1, 2020! Providing opportunities that empower women is certainly a reason to celebrate!