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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Nonprofit Sells Guatemalan Artisan Goods to Empower Women Entrepreneurs

From its Lakewood office, Friendship Bridge strives to eliminate poverty in Guatemala

LAKESWOOD, COLORADO: [Friendship Bridge](#), a local nonprofit that creates opportunities for women in Guatemala to grow their businesses, has renovated a portion of their Lakewood office into a store selling authentic Guatemalan products, handmade by their artisan clients from rural areas of the country.

The in-office showroom includes a collection of handmade purses, scarves, home decor baskets, ornaments, and other gift items in rich colors and textiles. "Guatemala is well known for its vibrant colors and its very rich culture that started with Mayan civilization," said Maya Colop-Morales, manager of the artisan program, Handmade by Friendship Bridge®. "We see these colors in traditional clothing as well as in street art and paintings on town buildings."

Shoppers can also find [beaded jewelry](#) made by women like [Mirian](#), a Friendship Bridge client who lives in San Jorge la Laguna, Sololá, Guatemala, who hopes to someday buy a small house so her children can have their own room. "When I fulfill orders, I can buy notebooks for my children and also buy groceries for my home. The dreams that I have are for my business to grow, and to be able to help my family," said Mirian. "I want to give my children an education... because I didn't have the opportunity to study."

Helping artisans sell products is just one of many services that Friendship Bridge offers to help Guatemalan women entrepreneurs grow their businesses, support themselves, and thrive in their home country. Since 1998, the organization has offered small loans and business training to low-income women who would not qualify for traditional loans otherwise.



“One advanced training program that the artisans receive focuses on understanding international markets,” Colop-Morales explained. “As a class activity, they create two different shopper profiles, including a mood board with cutouts from international fashion magazines. This helps them design and produce for the buyer.”

Support Friendship Bridge’s women entrepreneurs by clicking “Shop” at www.friendshipbridge.org or by making an appointment to shop in person at the in-office showroom, 405 Urban St., Ste. 140, Lakewood, Colo., from 9 a.m. to noon, Monday through Thursday. Call 303-674-0717 or email info@friendshipbridge.org.

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