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PAPER TO PEARLS ANNOUNCES FIRST AUSTRALIAN RETAILER

ALEXANDRIA, VA – Paper to Pearls has announced that the organization’s recycled paper bead jewelry has found its first retail outlet in Australia. Sankofa, owned and operated by Kym Pointon, is a fair trade emporium located in Melbourne.

Sankofa sells an array of quality, handmade ethically-traded products, including contemporary textiles, handcrafted baskets, homewares, jewelry, children’s clothing, toys and beads, as well as fair trade coffee and chocolate. Sankofa supports artisans in developing countries in creating sustainable businesses through ethical trading practices by offering their goods to a broader customer base.

“The Paper to Pearls jewelry has been a wonderful addition to Sankofa,” said Pointon. “It has attracted media attention from the local newspaper and a host of new shoppers to the store. But more importantly, as someone who is personally committed to fair trade principles, I am pleased not only to have these beautiful pieces in my shop, but also to support the healing and empowerment of women whose lives have been impacted by violence.”

Sankofa sources much of its inventory from members of fair trade organizations like African Home and Global Mamas. Some products, like coffee, tea, and chocolate, are fair trade certified and carry the certification of the Fair Trade Labelling Organisation. Often, the stores producers are recommended by members of other fair trade organizations. Sankofa is a member of the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand. Sankofa maintains an online presence at www.sankofa.com.au, as well as its retail store at 231 Gertrude Street.

“This retail partnership marks a significant milestone for Paper to Pearls,” said Barbara Moller, president and founder. “Gaining a foothold in country like Australia and a city like Melbourne opens many new doors for the work of our beaders. I am delighted that our inherently global story is becoming an increasingly global presence.”

About Paper to Pearls

An initiative of Voices for Global Change, Paper to Pearls works with women from internal refugee camps in northern Uganda to create jewelry by hand-rolling beads from recycled paper, which is then sold in the United States and throughout the world. On average, 85 percent of the sale price of each piece of jewelry directly benefits the beader through income and training. Since 2006, the program has grown to include nearly 125 women in nine beading cooperatives, allowing them to make approximately four times the national average wage. Concerned with empowerment and self-sufficiency, Paper to Pearls also provides women with the skills and confidence to take control of their own lives. For more information and to purchase jewelry items, visit www.papertopearls.org.

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