

Your Chocolate Purchase Changes Lives

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With every action taken, there is a choice and the choices we make as consumers can reinforce our care and support for those who labor to provide us with the products we consume. Fair Trade enables businesses to demonstrate their belief in worker empowerment, social, and environmental sustainability. When you choose to purchase Fair Trade products, you endorse an economic system that provides opportunities for international farmers, artisans and workers to lift themselves out of poverty. The choice you make has a global impact – you are a participant in transforming the lives of farmers and artisans around the world.

Fair trade products are about paying a fair price for product's produced in developing countries. But more than that, fair trade means: no child labor; anyone involved with the products are fairly compensated, and receive a dependable source of income year after year; environmental stewardship, (materials are often made of recycled material or are organic); business development is encouraged; and farmer cooperatives are supported.

UCOP is making a positive difference through our involvement with the fair trade movement. The UCOP Bookstore offers fair trade products and celebrates World Fair Trade Day in May and World Fair Trade Month in October. Members of the Bookstore participate on the Overland Park Fair Trade Steering Committee and the church serves Shade Grown – Arbor Day coffee, which is fair trade and environmentally friendly.

You can be a part of the fair trade movement. As a conscious consumer, you can purchase fair trade products. There are currently twenty-four Overland Park retailers selling fair trade products. Providing fair trade coffee or tea at your workplace helps coffee co-ops in Africa build their businesses and improve their communities. The decision to buy fair trade chocolate ensures you are not purchasing from a company that uses child labor.

The Overland Park Fair Trade Steering Committee is campaigning to be the first Fair Trade Town in Kansas. The committee was established in 2010 and meets monthly at Ten Thousand Villages. The criteria to become a fair trade town, includes getting a commitment from community organizations (i.e. schools, places of worship, businesses, offices) to use or serve two fair trade products.

Fair Trade is associated with coffee, tea and chocolate. However, there is fair trade sugar, spices, nuts, wines and more. You can promote and support the movement by serving or using two fair trade products at your place of business or community organization. If the business/community organization is located in Overland Park, it will help the steering committee meet the criteria to have Overland Park declared a fair trade town.

And, finally, get involved. Help us educate kids or attend one of the steering committee meetings. To learn more go to: <http://fairtradeusa.org> or <http://fairtradecampaigns.org> . For more information about the Overland Park steering committee's campaign, send inquiries to fairtradeoverlandpark@gmail.com or stop in your [UCOP bookstore](#).