

Ten Thousand Villages announces store closures

February 6, 2018

TORONTO, ONT.—After an in-depth review of profitability of Ten Thousand Villages stores across Canada, the board of MCC Canada, along with the Ten Thousand Villages advisory board, regretfully announce the closure of nine stores.

In early February, Ten Thousand Villages began the process of permanently closing stores in Calgary (Heritage), Saskatoon (2nd Ave.), St. Jacobs, Ont., Stratford, Ont., and Montreal, Que. (Monkland and St. Denis), having already shuttered Lethbridge, Alta., at the end of 2017. Along with these closures, the independently operated stores in Red Deer, Alta., and Windsor, Ont., will also close their doors.

“The retail industry in Canada continues to experience turmoil as consumer habits and patterns shift, resulting in financial pressures and closures,” says Ten Thousand Villages CEO Holly deGraaf. “Unfortunately, Ten Thousand Villages, MCC Canada’s fair trade social enterprise, has not been immune to these challenges.”

In the short term, Ten Thousand Villages will close unprofitable company-operated stores to reduce overall losses. Continued focus will be placed on the remaining stores to improve sales and streamline operations. Emphasis will also be given to wholesale and e-commerce channels. Products will still be available in the 25 remaining brick-and-mortar locations across Canada, as well as at tenthousandvillages.ca.

“We have communicated this news to all Ten Thousand Villages staff, and our priority will be to work out these closures with respect for our staff, volunteers and the communities they serve, as well as our artisan partners,” says deGraaf.

Started in 1946 by MCC, Ten Thousand Villages is North America’s oldest and largest fair trade organization, with stores throughout the U.S. and Canada. Ten Thousand Villages partners with independent, small-scale artisan groups, co-ops and workshops to bring their wares to North American markets. In 2017, Ten Thousand Villages provided sustainable livelihoods to more than 20,000 artisans from 27 countries through its direct, fair trade purchases of quality, handcrafted products.

“We recognize the impact of these difficult decisions on many individuals who work for and support the mission of Ten Thousand Villages,” says MCC Canada executive director Rick Cober Bauman.

“We are deeply concerned about the impact on artisans, some of whom will have reduced access to markets for their products. Artisans have been paid in full for the goods we have purchased from them, in keeping with fair trade principles.”

MCC Canada and Ten Thousand Villages ask for your continued support of Ten Thousand Villages storefront and online shops, and seek your prayers for wisdom and direction as they continue to navigate market challenges and future planning.

“There is a high commitment from the whole of MCC and Ten Thousand Villages to see this remarkable ministry of sustainable livelihoods thrive,” says Cober Bauman. “We commit to continued communication with our communities as we pursue this objective.”

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A joint MCC Canada and Ten Thousand Villages release. For more information about MCC, go to mcccanada.ca. For more information about Ten Thousand Villages, go to tenthousandvillages.ca.