

COSE

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10

AWARDS

2006

SALUTING SMALL BUSINESS



TEN THOUSAND  
VILLAGES®

TEN UNDER 10 WINNER

## Small Shop, Big Impact

Ten Thousand Villages helps revitalize a Cleveland neighborhood and the lives of poor artisans from around the world.

A little shop on Euclid Avenue isn't going to change the world, but its doing its part.

Ten Thousand Villages is a national chain of retail stores that features home décor items, ceramics, textiles, jewelry and handmade goods crafted by artisans in poverty-stricken areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Items are purchased from more than 100 artisan groups under the terms of the International Fair Trade Association, where the artisans are paid an adequate wage to live on while they produce their goods.

Cleveland's independently operated store is located in the recently rehabilitated Trinity Commons district, across from Cleveland State University on East 22nd Street and Euclid Avenue.

In February 2003, Rev. Tracey Lind, Dean of Trinity Cathedral, petitioned the owners of the Ten Thousand Villages chain in Penn-



sylvania to open a store in the redeveloping Trinity Commons district, which also includes a new coffee shop bistro.

Lind and the Trinity Commons board of directors hired Julie Verdon, a former buyer for the Cleveland Museum of Art Retail Stores, to be the store manager.

Verdon is the only full-time employee for Ten Thousand Villages, which relies on three part-time paid staff and 25 volunteers to run the store, which is open seven days a week.

Sales for the store have increased 10 percent per year since its opening two years ago.

"The university students and faculty love our store so much," Verdon says. "But we have so many different types of people who shop here from people who live in the area or who drive in from the suburbs."

—MORGAN LEWIS JR.

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