

Helping to Sell Handicrafts at Candra Days' Trunk Show

I was fortunate to get acquainted with Candra Day during the International Mountain Day celebration, which was held by the Utah International Mountain Forum (UIMF), our coalition of student clubs at Utah Valley University (UVU), on December 5, 6, 2013. I learned that Candra is the Founder and President of Vista 360°, a non-profit organization dedicated to facilitating cultural exchanges among mountain people around the world.



Candra Day, President of Vista 360°, WY and her trunk show advertisement in Salt Lake City

She was able to establish cultural exchange programs with Central Asia and Japan, and visited several nations in Central Asia, including Afghanistan with the American Cowboy Show and Rodeo exchange programs. She has worked as an arts manager, project director and nonprofit consultant since 1978, and has assisted numerous arts, education and civic organizations in strategic planning, program design, development and collaboration.

Candra is a wonderful woman who helps small businesses from developing mountainous countries. She buys handmade products from small business in Central Asia, including Kyrgyzstan and sells them in the United States, and by doing so she was able to help many women there.



Marie Poudiougou hanging Kyrgyz carpets on the wall (L) and helping Jesler Molina, President, UVU Model UN Club to find gifts for his parents (R)

When I agreed to help her to sell handicrafts after two days of our celebrations at UVU, I was surprised to see the variety of handmade products she brought to Utah to sell at one of the arts shops in Salt Lake City: traditional shoes, clothes, scarfs, warm hat for winter, and so many other items. She occasionally travels around the Rocky Mountains from city to city to sell her products.



Traditional Kyrgyz carpets from wool , “Shirdaks,” (left) and silk scarfs (right)

It is a blessing to be able to help others and do what you love to do at the same time. Candra is one of those people who are blessed with the willingness to help others. Through her enterprises she helps many women in Kyrgyzstan. At the beginning, Candra assisted them with starting their own small businesses, so that they can support themselves and their families. So by selling their products to Candra, those women are able to support their families. Then she started to advise them on how to improve the designs and shapes of the products with taking into account tastes of western customers.

Throughout the whole day on December 7, 2013, I helped Candra with her trunk show, arranging her products at the beginning at special stands. With the appearance of customers, I learned how to sell them. Everyone was happy, including Candra and I, and the customers who were looking for gifts for their loved ones for the coming Christmas.



Participants of the International Mountain Day celebration at UVU

purchased handicrafts at trunk show in Salt Lake City

The members of the Mountain Partnership, participants of the International Mountain Day celebrations at UVU were also visited to the trunk show and they purchased many gifts from Candra. It was a great celebration, which allowed all of us not only to gather together to discuss what we'll do next year, but also to help women from developing mountain nations to sustain themselves and their families.

I was happy to help Candra to pursue such a noble goal and to contribute to the success of the International Mountain Day celebration at Utah Valley University.

Marie Poudiougou, President of the Foreign Affairs club at UVU.