

BRANDON, MANITOBA

WWW.MARQUISPROJECT.COM

The Marquis Project

What could possibly connect Brandon, Manitoba with Tanzania? Well, there might be many things, but one concrete partnership is active through the work of The Marquis Project.

The Marquis Project is a community-based, non-profit, charitable non-governmental organization dedicated to working with partners in Canada and abroad to support and actively participate in sustainable projects and partnerships that improve the quality of life in small, rural communities in developing countries. It is also committed to building local awareness of international development issues through educating Manitobans about economic, political and social issues at both local and global levels.

The Marquis Project has ongoing partnerships with the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC) and with the Tanzanian Society for Agriculture Education and Extension (TSAEE) to offer numerous programs in rural communities near Mwanza, Tanzania. Their programs provide an inventory of clean energy technologies, more efficient cooking stoves, and solar drying technology avail-

able in both the Lake Zone and Western Zone of Tanzania. In keeping with the sustainable environmental themes of the projects, tree planting continues to be an ongoing program in Tanzania. An important component of their overseas development work is education, which ensures that the projects continue to sustain themselves over the years.

Established in 1979 by development activists in and around Brandon, the Marquis Project has been supported by the participation of individuals, families, congregations, schools and community organizations, and through the work of a dedicated vol- ➔



→ unteer board. Although Brandon is the province's second largest city, it has strong rural roots and is well-connected to surrounding farm communities, which resulted in the selection of this unique name with agrarian roots. The name "Marquis" (pronounced mar-kwiss) stems from a legendary high-protein and high-yield variety of hard wheat, which came from Eastern European and Indian genetic strains and was a successful type of wheat in Brandon in 1912 and spread around the world to feed millions of people.

Having grown from their humble beginnings as a small resource centre on world issues, they now deliver educational programs to Manitobans, partner with African communities in development projects, and operate a fair trade store in downtown Brandon called "Worldly Goods Shop." They hold an annual youth conference (YETII – Youth Educating Themselves on International Issues), and have developed and facilitate "The Fair Game®". This game is an education resource on international issues, and involves a series of short role-playing games that explore the costs and benefits of world trading systems. Marquis also connects with the media on important issues such as race, poverty, environment, and volunteerism. In addition, they organize educational film nights and

host speakers from around the world.

Worldly Goods Shop, their social enterprise initiative, seeks to support their overseas partners in attaining self-sufficiency by selling their crafts for a better return than they get from regular commercial outlets.

Crafters are located in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, El Salvador, Guatemala, Peru, Chile, Indonesia, India, Thailand, Mexico and Canada. Worldly Goods Shop also offers fair trade and certified organic coffees, teas, chocolate, sugar and hot chocolate, as well as locally-made, alternative and environmental products.

The contributions of the Marquis Project have been recognized through a number of provincial, regional and national awards. Creat-

ing local and international economic opportunities for people living in poverty and building awareness of local and international development issues, particularly with youth, is a critically important function in strengthening communities and reducing poverty around the world.

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CED is Community Economic Development

This profile is one of 100 stories of Manitoba communities working to build fairer and stronger local economies, reduce poverty, and revitalize neighbourhoods.

Not all of the initiatives use a fully comprehensive CED approach, but each represents an important component of a CED solution. Read all our profiles of CED at www.ccednet-rcdec.ca/CEDprofiles