

# BOULDER COUNTY BUSINESS REPORT

## **New store gives fair trade 'Momentum' in Boulder**

By Beth Edwards

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BOULDER - Kevin and Jenny Natapow had a dream of opening a fair-trade store for more than seven years.

Prior to coming to Boulder they had both been working in Nepal. Jenny was working for the Asia Foundation, an organization that helps to stop sex trafficking of women. Kevin was working for the U.N. as a translator for Tibetan refugees.

When they came back to the U.S. they wanted to continue to help the artists and groups they had seen living overseas in marginalized situations.

Momentum, a fair-trade store located at 1625 Pearl St. in Boulder, had its grand opening on June 30. The store offers goods from more than 50 countries. Some of the store's products come directly from the artists. Others come through fair-trade suppliers - members of the Fair Trade Federation in Washington, D.C.

The fair-trade pricing system enables workers to receive a livable income, which takes care of food, shelter, education and health care for their families.

According to Kevin, the living wage is the core of the fair-trade practice. "Buyers like us or wholesalers will often pay the artisan up front for the product so that they have no debt. We guarantee the market and give them the money up front so that they can invest in the product and support themselves while doing it."

Jenny estimates 30 percent to 35 percent of money made on products sold at Momentum returns to the artists. According to the Fair Trade Federation that number drops to less than 1 percent if the artist is selling through a regular retailer.

Among the many products you can find at Momentum are Sari blankets from India, handmade bags from Guatemala, batik soaps from Bali, cards and stationery from Sri Lanka, handmade pillows from Hungary, bamboo bowls from Vietnam, prayer-wheel earrings from Nepal and handmade knitted children's toys.

They also carry five different products made by 26 women in Zimbabwe who are mothers of disabled children.

"When a mother has a disabled child there she is supposed to get rid of it," Kevin said. "If she chooses not to, her husband will divorce her, the church will excommunicate her, and the community will kick her out. So this group of woman created a co-op and started making earrings and greeting cards from discarded bottle caps.

They also make embroidered aprons and bibs for children.

"That's one of the things our customers really appreciate. These products do have a story. People are starting to be able to see a connection between how they spend their money and who it benefits."

*For more information on the store, visit [www.ourmomentum.com](http://www.ourmomentum.com) or call 303-440-7744. Store hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Sundays from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and it's closed Mondays.*