



FOR: Team Blonde Jewelry  
7324 W. Madison St.  
Forest Park, IL 60130

FROM: Falk Associates  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **TEAM BLONDE OFFERS**

## **PRODUCTS WITH A CONSCIENCE**

When you buy a Zulugrass necklace from Team Blonde Jewelry, located at 7324 W. Madison St. in Forest Park, IL, you're not just purchasing a lightweight, natural, versatile strand of color that looks wonderful with a variety of outfits. You're literally helping a Maasai tribeswoman from the drought-stricken Great Rift Valley of Kenya and Tanzania keep her family from starving.

Zulugrass necklaces, made available to the world's shoppers via artists Philip and Katy Leakey's Kenya-based firm, The Leakey Collection – a forward-thinking company dedicated to creating employment opportunities for rural Kenyans – are crafted by the Maasai women from dried, dyed blades of grass from their homeland, interspersed with Czech glass beads. Making and selling the Zulugrass necklaces allows these women to earn a living while holding onto their traditional lifestyles, and keeping their children by their sides; their husbands are, by necessity, hundreds of miles away grazing their herds in areas not as affected by the drought.

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**Zulugrass necklaces** comprise just one of the socially-conscious product lines now carried by Team Blonde Jewelry. Others include **soaps and bath salts from The Enterprising Kitchen**, a nonprofit corporation that employs welfare-to-work and formerly homeless women; **Warm Whiskers herbal neck and eye pillows from Kits 'N Kaboodle**, a company that hires the mentally challenged; and **handbags by Vy & Elle**, made from recycled vinyl billboards.

"It's a way to help others – to give back some of what we've received through the success of our jewelry company," says co-founder Jayne Ertel of Team Blonde's new direction. She credits her business partner Heidi Vance with being the driving force behind Team Blonde Jewelry's efforts to bring in socially conscious, eco-friendly items offered by the custom jewelry studio, ever since Team Blonde moved into roomier headquarters in Forest Park in fall 2005.

"Under Heidi's direction, we have long been recycling much more than we throw away," says Jayne. "We recycle at least three times more stuff than we throw out – and since there's no business recycling program in Forest Park, we take all our recyclables home from the store, and recycle them there."

In fact, it was Heidi's mother who first introduced the duo to the soaps and bath salts offered by The Enterprising Kitchen, a nonprofit corporation headquartered in Chicago's Uptown neighborhood, whose efforts help impoverished women get back on their feet. "That was six years ago," says Jayne. "We've wanted to add The Enterprising Kitchen's products and other socially conscious lines to our store ever since, but until we moved just recently, we simply didn't have the space."

## SOCIALLY CONSCIOUS TEAM BLONDE JEWELRY/Add One

Now, however, having moved from their previous 1,200-square-foot space to a two-story, 2,400-square foot location, Team Blonde Jewelry's owners have brought in dozens more new lines of merchandise – including the products-with-a-conscience. "And we've earmarked even more," says Jayne. "Some are made from recycled leather and rubber; some are purses and bags made from hemp. We're also looking to add recycled-metal picture frames. In general, we're always looking to carry cool stuff that has social impact."

When it comes down to it, says Jayne, helping take care of the world they live in "flows through everything Team Blonde does."

Ever since Heidi Vance and Jayne Ertel met in college in 1985, their friendship and passion for jewelry-making has blossomed. The result is Team Blonde Jewelry, a company that offers a collection of custom jewelry to reflect each client's individual style and beauty. Visit Team Blonde at 7324 W. Madison St. in Forest Park, Illinois, and witness the place that empowers its patrons with spirit and elegance by offering expressive jewelry with timeless beauty. Please feel free to call (877) Blonde2 with questions or visit our online catalogue, complete with photography, at [www.teamblonde.com](http://www.teamblonde.com).

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To learn more about the Team Blonde or to schedule an interview,  
call Falk Associates at 847.675.2580.