

# THE VOLUNTEER *Connection*

## *Pearls Bring Hope*

**M**y Princess Pearls was launched over 18 months ago with the hope to be able to import genuine pearl jewelry here to America and become the best direct selling market to date. A few months after starting the company, owner, Wendy Bird, became aware of a need through her source in Asia that has completely consumed her. Her supplier in Asia has the gift of stringing and designing beautiful genuine pearl pieces. She has used this talent to help those in her village and in surrounding villages to improve their living conditions. Coming from her job as a manager of an architectural firm, Amara, her supplier, quit her job because as she says, "My salary was not enough to help my fellow countrymen who were starving". The women she employs to fill the pearl orders come from dire circumstances. One worker has a child with Down's Syndrome, another has a blind daughter, another is a single mother, and yet another has a husband who has been unable to find work for several years due to a heart attack that left him paralyzed. These women find joy and strength in their religious beliefs, but they lack adequate food, clothing, educational and religious supplies.

In July 2003, My Princess Pearls made it their cause to help change lives in this third world country with a commitment to begin sending humanitarian boxes to these people. Donations began on a neighborhood level and have quickly grown into a company effort. To date over 40 boxes, weighing in excess of 150 pounds each, have been shipped. These boxes have contained clothing, shoes, church clothes, food items, religious and scouting information along with toys, coats, rain gear, umbrellas, stuffed animals, coloring

books, pencils and pens, crayons, glue and all manner of education materials.

Recipients of this aid have been overjoyed. Emails expressing shock, joy, relief and gratitude have been sent. People in Utah County have been generous with their donations. A shipping company in Las Vegas has been found that will ship the boxes right to their doors helping to prevent items from being pilfered or 'lost'. Lives are being changed, and hope is being established. Currently, twelve families a month are being fed through orders from My Princess Pearls. Any customers who help with any humanitarian aid donations will receive 10% off any pearl order.

There are requests coming in for more specific things like food storage kits (they call them 36 hour kits due to the burden of trying to have 72 hour kit supplies). The goal for the year 2004 is to create and ship over 100 kits. As with all humanitarian aid, it is a struggle to come up with the finances in order to ship the items. Each box costs \$70 for unlimited weight of materials, and they are currently looking for a shipping sponsor to help with these expenses.

Asked to sum up her feelings, Wendy commented, "These people are amazing! Their skills are remarkable. Their circumstances are unfortunate. Their lives are a struggle, yet they are a blessed people. Their faith is strong. Every time we think that we should just 'walk-away', requests are sent, miracles transpire and we re-commit to this cause of changing lives! As I look at my daughter's closet and her choices of dresses to wear each Sunday, I am sadly aware of children going to church with a t-shirt, or staying home because they have inadequate clothing. That is what moves

me to continue. These are children who become overjoyed when a package arrives in case there might be a stuffed animal, a pack of Yu-Gi-Oh! cards, a notebook or even a used coloring book that they can claim. Christmas toys are unheard of. Food is more important. People work to eat, not to go to movies, or decorate their home or plan a vacation."

Living conditions are what they call 'squatters', houses on top of houses. They are usually a 10x8 living area with a dirt floor, corrugated metal roofs and a kitchen consisting of a propane two-burner camp stove. The shipping boxes are quickly taken home to become dressers and tables. Families are lucky to be able to feed their children once per day. They value education and would rather use money to send their children to school than to feed them for they know that if their child is educated, they will lead a better life. To help with this effort, My Princess Pearls is teaming up with Live to Learn Foundation to help supply educational materials to the Philippines for this coming school year. Through their Charity Dinner on Sept 7th, the hope is to sponsor ten children for the upcoming school year. Over 200 are on waiting lists.

For more information on how you can help with this humanitarian effort, please contact My Princess Pearls at:

- [wendy@myprincesspearls.com](mailto:wendy@myprincesspearls.com)
- [www.myprincesspearls.com](http://www.myprincesspearls.com)
- 801-635-6591





## Mediterranean Grilled Chicken Salad

2 servings

Preparation time: 45 minutes

Cooking time: 25 minutes

2/3 pound (2 medium) potatoes, cut into 3/4-inch cubes  
 4 ounces mushrooms, halved  
 4 ounces green beans, halved, and steamed until crisp-tender  
 2 (about 4 ounces each) boned and skinned chicken breasts  
 1/4 cup chopped red onion  
 Halved cherry tomatoes, for garnish

### Vinaigrette:

1/4 cup olive oil  
 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar  
 2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard  
 2 teaspoons minced fresh tarragon *or*  
 3/4 teaspoon dried tarragon  
 1 clove garlic, minced  
 1/4 teaspoon each sugar and salt  
 1/8 teaspoon pepper

In 1-quart saucepan over medium heat, cook potatoes, covered, in 2 inches boiling water until tender, about 15 minutes; drain. Meanwhile, make vinaigrette: In bowl whisk together all vinaigrette ingredients. Place potatoes, mushrooms and beans in separate piles in large shallow dish; drizzle with 1/3 cup of the vinaigrette to coat. Cover; let stand 15 minutes. Heat broiler. Meanwhile, in bowl add chicken to the remaining vinaigrette; cover and let stand 15 minutes. Remove chicken from vinaigrette (discard vinaigrette); broil 4 to 5 inches from heat source about 8 minutes until juices run clear when chicken is pierced, turning once. To serve, slice chicken breasts and arrange on plates with potatoes, mushrooms and beans, dividing equally. Sprinkle with onion and garnish with cherry tomatoes.

Calories: 522; Fat: 29 g;  
 Cholesterol: 66 mg; Sodium: 494 mg;  
 Carbohydrates: 39 g;  
 Fiber: 6 g; Protein: 33 g

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## Pearls Bring Hope (part 2)

My Princess Pearls began with the main purpose of importing pearls from overseas in order to help improve the living conditions of those in third world countries. Owner, Wendy Bird's passion is to help those in need. My Princess Pearls imports uniquely hand-crafted pearl items from a supplier named, Amara in Asia. Amara and the women she employs have rare talents in stringing, drilling, and creating jewelry pieces from the pearls of their country.

Amara and her employees are amazed by the generosity of so many people from so far away. She wrote in an email, "I don't know how we can ever thank you and all your friends who spend so much time and money to help us out here. We know that most of the items are NEW, such sacrifices are too much and we truly appreciate all that you have been doing for us."

Every 4-6 weeks My Princess Pearls ships boxes of supplies to the people in Amara's village. These boxes contain clothing, shoes, food items, toys, coats, rain gear, umbrellas, stuffed animals, coloring books, pencils, pens, crayons, glue and all manner of educational material. They have recently been receiving large boxes of donations from families and small neighborhood groups in Washington, Maryland and even Virginia.

The Bodine Family, from Lehi, compiled over 25 educational kits at their recent family reunion. The kits included notebooks, crayons, rulers, pencils, pens and glue sticks, and will greatly benefit the children overseas. The generosity of the Bodine family, and their willingness to teach their children and cousins the value of giving will literally change lives in third world countries.

For more information, or to find out how you can be a part of changing lives in third world countries, please call 801-635-6591, or email [wendy@myprincesspearls.com](mailto:wendy@myprincesspearls.com). You are also welcome to visit the website at [www.myprincesspearls.com](http://www.myprincesspearls.com). My Princess Pearls is currently applying for the 501c3 tax exempt status which will allow them to receive donations that will be tax free for businesses and individuals.



Some of the 100 plus families sort through much needed boxes filled with clothing, toys and food items.