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**New Bamboo Handbags Blend Fashion, Philanthropy**  
*Chicago entrepreneurs put two & two together, start Five*

Chicago—What happens when you honeymoon in Bali and in addition to admiring its natural treasures, you see an opportunity to make money and a difference?

In the case of Christine Hutchison and her husband, Wells, the answer is Five Accessories, a handbag business that embodies both their entrepreneurial and philanthropic zeal.

Their Chicago-based enterprise taps into an accessories trend whose rising popularity is rivaled perhaps only by consumers' passion to do commerce with a cause.

"We saw a great business opportunity and we're looking for a way to give back," says Hutchison. "We put two and two together and started Five. This is a prime example of the whole being greater than the sum of its parts."

Made with natural bamboo wood, the handbags come in three styles: Half Moon, Night and Sand. Each showcases a solid wood handle, satin lining with pocket and a magnetic clasp.

Additional features are coming soon—beaded handles, as well as lining options that include pink, candy apple green and floral patterns. The handbags range from \$35 to \$55 on the Five Accessories' web site, [www.fiveaccessories.com](http://www.fiveaccessories.com). They are 6 to 7 inches high and 12 to 14 inches wide.

Five Accessories owes its infancy to an inspiring story shared by the Hutchisons' Balinese tour guide, I Made Kichen.

As Kichen spoke with the Hutchisons during a daylong tour of central Bali, he told them about J.J. and Pearl McRoberts, an American couple who befriended him nearly a half-century earlier, when he was 18.

After returning to their Texas home, the McRobertses helped transform Kichen's life by slipping a monthly five-dollar bill between a pair of carefully glued pages of Reader's Digest. They resorted to the clandestine technique for about a year, after money they had previously sent disappeared before getting into Kichen's hands.

The Hutchisons are applying the same principle to form the cornerstone of Five Accessories' business model. They have earmarked \$5 from the sale of every handbag for a foundation that benefits the people of Sayan, Bali, where the handbags are produced.

The business began taking shape when Kichen brought the Hutchisons to one particular shop as Christine sought gifts for friends and family. There she recognized the U.S. market potential of a trendy and stylish bamboo handbag.

She broached the idea to Kichen: "If we can find a market for these handbags in the States, would you like to get involved?"

Within a day they had begun developing a business partnership that has continued largely via e-mail. Kichen is overseeing the handbag manufacturing and helping with the foundation's mission.

He is excited not only about helping neighbors and friends, but also sharing the story of good karma that altered his life as a teen. The McRobertses' generosity helped enable Kichen to learn English, which eventually helped him send his children to college, to secure a better job and to raise a family.

Kichen is determined to make an even bigger impact on younger generations of Balinese.

The Hutchisons, meanwhile, are acutely aware of and grateful for their good fortune. They are amazed at the difference that a five-dollar bill can make in someone's life.

The first deposit of \$2,000 is scheduled to enter the foundation's account this month. The Hutchisons' goal over the next 18 months is to channel \$50,000 into the foundation from Five Accessories' sales.

The official launch of Five Accessories came at the March 30 Gen Art Show as part of an event called Shop Chicago.

For three months before the event, however, Christine received overwhelmingly enthusiastic raves from women who saw the totes and heard the storybook account of their arrival in the United States.

On numerous occasions, the attention-grabbing purses have prompted admiring women to buy Hutchison's personal handbag on the spot.

For more information about the handbags, as well as breath-taking images that the Hutchisons captured during their honeymoon, visit [www.fiveaccessories.com](http://www.fiveaccessories.com).

The Five Accessories line is also available in stores, including:

\*Koros Art and Style, 1019 W. Lake St., Chicago IL 60638. Phone: 312.738.0155. [www.korosartandstyle.com](http://www.korosartandstyle.com). Contact: Kristen Skordilis.

\*The Left Bank, 1155 W. Webster Ave., Chicago, IL 60614. Phone: 773.929.7422. [www.leftbankjewelry.com](http://www.leftbankjewelry.com). Contact: Susan Jablonski.

\*M. Boutique, 711 W. Armitage Ave., Chicago, IL 60614. Phone: 312.397.1390.

\*A Grande Mulher, at the Key West Hilton Resort and Marina, 241 Front Street, Key West, FL 33040 Phone: 305.295.8805. [www.agrandemulher.com](http://www.agrandemulher.com). Contact: Joanne LaLumiere.

\*D.I. Body & Boutique, 227 E. Davis Blvd., Tampa, FL. 33606. Phone: 813.258.3926. [www.dibodyboutique.com](http://www.dibodyboutique.com). Contact: Julie Tate.

\*Bloomsbury Loft, 30 W. Olentangy St., Powell, OH 43065. Phone: 614.781.9479. [www.bloomsburyloft.com](http://www.bloomsburyloft.com). Contact: Judith Mercado.