

CONTACT: _____ **Sept.**
2006

Tamara Stenn
Director
KUSIKUY Clothing Co.
311 Williams St.
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Toll free: 1-866-KUSIKUY (587-4589)
Tel: 802-254-4044 Fax: 802-254-8301
Cell: 802-579-3386

e-mail: tamara@kusikuy.com
Web: www.kusikuy.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Keeping it simple and sharing the wealth.

Brattleboro, VT - Some companies pride themselves on the dollars they earn, KUSIKUY uses a quality of living model instead. KUSIKUY Clothing Company staff live a simple, natural existence. Work schedules are non-existent. Tasks are discovered and completed within the rhythms of every day living, raising families, tending farms, enjoying life. There is no factory. The "office" is usually the ground outside where knitters informally congregate. Salaries are relatively flat with the highest paid being owner, Tamara Stenn, who earns just 15% more than the lowest paid USA employee.

"I don't see my job as being any more important than that of our customer service staff, in-country coordinators, or the knitters and herders themselves," explains Stenn. "In fact if anything, they are more important than me, so why should I earn more than them?"

Stenn finds herself motivated by Brazilian businessman, Ricardo Semler's "Democratic Industrialization" model where workers are encouraged to move around a loosely defined organization where everyone is able to participate in all levels of decision making. Ironically Semler is CEO of some of Brazil's largest, most successful companies employing more than 3,000 employees.

About 100 women knit for KUSIKUY.

"KUSIKUY knitters are some of the highest paid knitters in the country," explains Claudia Valdez, KUSIKUY in-country coordinator. "We treat the knitters well. We give them training, financing, and anything else they need to succeed. In return they produce the finest knits I have ever seen."

This is important in a country that has consistently ranked the poorest in the Americas for the last 10 years.

Stenn, like many of the knitters is a single mom. Much care is given to balancing work with children and there is never a KUSIKUY meeting without children present. Stenn's own children ages 2 and 5 are just as comfortable in Bolivia as they are in the USA and look forward to playing with the knitters' children in frequent visits to Bolivia. The average Bolivian family has five to nine children so moms and children are always consulted on the development of KUSIKUY's growing children's line of cuddly soft, easy care, durable knits.

“Our most successful children's line has been the eco woolens, soakers and shorties,” explains Stenn. “This was a real team effort!”

The woolens, soakers and woolen were originally designed by Stenn for cloth diapering moms who called in requests. KUSIKUY later consulted with Green Mountain Diapers to develop the soakers and Bolivian moms then improved the design on all three garments. Now these are enjoyed as both inner and outer wear by toddlers worldwide. Alpaca and llama are hollow fibers with a natural resin coating so they naturally shed water, retain heat, stay warm and fluffy even when wet, and resist odors. Perfect for use with diapering! Machine washable and naturally hypoallergenic, Eco Shorties retail for \$28, Eco Woolens retail for \$48 and the day/nighttime Eco Soakers are \$52. Expect at least two years of constant wear from each item.

Profits from KUSIKUY are reinvested into company infrastructure, donated to non profits focussing on fair trade and social development in the USA and Bolivia, and provide training and capacity building to knitters and their communities.

KUSIKUY is available online at www.kusikuy.com and retails at specialty boutiques across the country. Check www.kusikuy.com for the location nearest you.

###