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**'MEKONG BLUE' SILK SCARVES MAKE
U.S. DEBUT IN NASHVILLE**
***Elegant, Hand-woven Scarves Brought to America by Local Family and
Church to Help Women, Children of Cambodia***

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – (Oct. 10, 2009) – Just in time for fall, women in Middle Tennessee will be able to add a chic new accessory to their wardrobes while investing in the lives of women and children in Cambodia. Starting Monday, October 12, the award-winning Mekong Blue silk scarves will be available for purchase in Middle Tennessee.

Mekong Blue (www.BlueSilk.org) is a project of the Stung Treng Women's Development Center (SWDC), a not-for-profit organization in Cambodia. Since 2002, the women of the SWDC have hand-woven beautiful silk scarves as a way to overcome poverty and illiteracy, and build better lives for themselves and their children by learning a trade in a supportive and fair environment. The scarves have been recognized by the United Nations as a UNESCO award winner for their superior quality, originality and creativity.

Until now, Mekong Blue scarves have not been available in the United States, but are making their stateside debut thanks to one American family—with a strong Nashville presence—that was inspired by the story of the weavers. The close-knit family of aunts, uncles and cousins united around the mission of spreading the beauty of Mekong Blue and, in turn, supporting the women of Stung Treng. St. David's Episcopal Church of Nashville generously agreed to serve as the American sponsor for the project.

"After my cousin Jaquelin was introduced to Mekong Blue during her travels to Cambodia, I knew I had to work to raise awareness of this remarkable project and bring Mekong Blue Scarves to America," said the Rev. Ann Walling, former priest at St. David's and lead supporter of the project. "Not only are Mekong Blue Scarves absolutely stunning works of art, but the SWDC is truly changing the lives of women in Stung Treng by empowering and supporting them to live independently and break free from the cycle of poverty and illiteracy that is so prevalent in their region."

The 2010 Mekong Blue scarf collection is a selection of 12 silk scarves, each individually woven from 100% natural silk and hand-dyed in brilliant shades ranging from deep

scarlet to shimmering gold. The scarves are available for purchase at www.BlueSilk.org and range in price from \$45 to \$60 each. All proceeds from the sale of each Mekong Blue scarf go directly back to Cambodia to provide education, job training, meals, daycare and—ultimately--a better life for the women and families in Stung Treng.

The 2010 Mekong Blue scarf collection was officially unveiled at a fashion show at St. David's Episcopal Church on Saturday, Oct. 10. Chantha Nguon, founder of the SWDC, made her first trip to America for the launch party to give her first-hand account of how the Mekong Blue Scarf project is helping families in Stung Treng overcome the cultural challenges facing women across Cambodia.

Mekong Blue is extremely grateful to a number of Nashville businesses that have provided support to Saturday's event. Sponsors included Athens Distributing Company of Tennessee, Best Brands Incorporated, Citation Support, Inc., Constant Craving Caterers, Inc., Figlio Sound System, Horizon Wine and Spirits, LLC, Lipman Brothers, Inc. and True Blue Salon.

About the Stung Treng Women's Development Center (SWDC)

The Stung Treng Women's Development Center (SWDC) was founded in January 2001 as a Cambodian-based humanitarian organization dedicated to developing life skills that assist in breaking the cycle of poverty and illiteracy for vulnerable people, especially women, in Stung Treng Province. In 2003, the SWDC created the Mekong Blue Scarves Project, which today employs 65 women weavers to hand-craft silk scarves. Mekong Blue was developed to empower and support the women of the SWDC, while providing knowledge and skills with long-term benefits. One of the finest silk products in Cambodia, Mekong Blue scarves have been recognized by the United Nations as a UNESCO award winner for their superior quality, originality and creativity. For more information about the SWDC and Mekong Blue, please visit www.BlueSilk.org.

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