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## **Helping Hand Rewards Expands Program**

*Initiative assists non-profits in reaching the incentive market*

By Jeanie Casison

Companies with a conscience have more choice when it comes to incentive programs, thanks to the expansion of Helping Hand Rewards. Founded by Michael Arkes, CEO of Hinda Incentives in Chicago, the social purpose company helps not-for-profit organizations showcase their products to the consumer and incentive markets.

The Helping Hand Rewards network now includes Mercado Global, Greyston Bakery and The Enterprising Kitchen. The diverse selection of partners enables companies to align themselves with a number of worthy causes. For instance, Mercado Global in New Haven, Connecticut, is a fair trade organization that specializes in finding markets in the United States for traditional handicrafts made by women in the world's most rural and economically-disadvantaged areas. Sales from items such as jewelry and ceramics provide the female artisans with fair wages and investments in their children's education.

Greyston Bakery, the sole supplier of Ben & Jerry's, recently introduced brownie gift boxes with profits supporting Greyston Foundation community development initiatives including low-income housing, childcare, health services and technology education.

"A disadvantaged person needs an opportunity more than anything else," says Arkes. "And social enterprises are delivering these opportunities to people in need."

Arkes first launched the Helping Hands initiative through his work with The Enterprising Kitchen, a non-profit social enterprise in Chicago that produces soaps and spa products while offering support services and transitional employment to disadvantaged women. As a result of an increase in corporate sales in 2006, The Enterprising Kitchen was able to train 75 women compared to 35 in 2004.

Recently Arkes signed up Helping Hands as a member of The CRO ([www.TheCRO.com](http://www.TheCRO.com)), the only membership media platform for corporate responsibility practitioners, and the professional service providers that support them. More information is available on [www.helpinghandsrewards](http://www.helpinghandsrewards)