

WHAT IS A LIVING GIFT MARKET?

If you could have any gift you wished, what would it be? Peace on earth, an end to hunger, preservation of the environment, education for a child? These gifts are available to you—one small step at a time. Heifer Project International works toward dreams like these through people like you.

There comes a time when your mother has enough sweaters, your clients have more holiday food than they can eat, and your kids will just lose another toy in the shuffle. If you're



looking for a different way to honor the people close to you, consider joining with others to hold a Living Gift Market. It offers a meaningful gift-giving alternative, especially for Christmas.

A Living Gift Market is a chance for your group to reach out to people in need, both near and far. You can change the lives of people you will never meet, but who dream under the same stars you do. They dream of enough food, of a chance to support their families, of the opportunity to send their children to school. Meanwhile, you dream of less hustle and bustle, of a way to connect in the spirit of sharing.

A Living Gift Market “sells” food- and income-producing animals like goats, bees, chicks and heifers. The animals go to hungry, rural families working to improve their lives. HPI also provides technical training in care of the animals and in enhancing the environment.

Each Market gift gives over and over again. You honor a friend or loved one with an attractive card stating your gift. You empower an impoverished family with an animal and training in its care. That family shares its knowledge and the animal's first offspring with another family. And that family shares. And the next. And the next. In all this, you may find a gift as well—a gift of peace, a gift of time, a gift of gratitude that there is abundance to share.

Each Living Gift Market is different and reflects the personality of the organization that cares enough to take on the challenge. Although they contain common elements, Markets blossom with the creativity of their organizers. Through developing the Market, the members of your group will grow in awareness of the needs of the world's people and in the fellowship of meaningful work done by children, youth and adults together. That's the true measure of a Market's success. Beyond any dollar amount or tally of animals, there are the gifts of love and spirit that change the lives of both the receiver of a gift and its giver. We wish these gifts for you as you undertake your Living Gift Market project.

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO AN LGM

The basic model

The basic model of a Living Gift Market is an event of a few hours, a few days—or only 30 minutes! It's usually held in a large room, where each HPI animal is represented by a decorated booth. Shoppers visit booths to learn about each animal and fill out a shopping list with their choices. Many markets also offer HPI promotional merchandise for sale. Payment is made at a central point. For each animal purchased (\$10 or more) in the name of friends or family members, Heifer Project will provide a gift card for the giver to send.

Here are the steps to follow for a successful market:

Come together.

You need a team to plan a Living Gift Market. Assemble a planning group to make early decisions. This can be a small group if you like—you'll recruit more helpers along the way. Designate an enthusiastic chairperson. Be sure to get the approval of your governing body first.

Think about who will attend.

Some groups have Markets for their members only. Some groups band together to serve a larger audience. Some invite the whole community. Deciding who's coming will guide your next steps.

Set a date and time.

Give yourself plenty of time to get things together. Many Markets are held around holidays, like Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, Hanukkah or—most commonly—Christmas. After you've decided on a time of year, choose a date and time that will be convenient. Some communities hold a Market on Saturday, when people have free time. Some faith communities hold a Market after a worship service or fellowship event, so people don't have to make an extra trip. Whatever your planning group decides, put the date on your organization's master calendar right away. Make sure your organization's leadership approves the choice.

Choose a place.

The place you select will need to accommodate the number of people you expect. Allow plenty of space for exhibits, and room for people to circulate among them. A large room like a community center or fellowship hall works well. Consider issues of accessibility for persons with handicapping conditions, along with any restrictions on refreshments. If you plan to include live animals at your Market, make sure they're allowed in the facility.

Dream a little.

Now the fun begins! What's your vision? You'll find suggestions in this booklet, but they're only a starting place. This is the time to let your imagination run wild. One popular Market plan is to have a booth representing each animal that is available from HPI. (See the list on page 10.) Each booth can be put together by a different club, class or committee.

You might include other exhibits as well, like examples of sustainable farming, models of houses from HPI's Global Village or posters and literature on your denominational hunger program. Will you be selling HPI merchandise? Will you be including other agencies?



Choose a theme.

While you're dreaming, come up with a theme. It will be the foundation for your activities and the basis of your publicity efforts. Possible themes for alternative giving might include "Give the World a Present," "Simple Gifts" and "Hungry for Holiday Meaning." You may also want to set a goal for your Market (see page 28 for details on the \$5000 Heifer Project Gift Ark Challenge).

Talk about it — a lot!

Publicity is the key to success! People tend to shop early for holiday giving, so let them know you're planning a Market as soon as possible. Your publicity plan should focus on the audience you've selected. Make sure you explain the purpose of the Market, and let people know what they can expect. Your organization's newsletter or worship bulletin can be an effective internal communication tool. (See the sample insert on page 10.) Your club president or group leader can encourage participation in speeches or sermons. And don't overlook your local media. A news release (see page 8) to local newspapers and television stations should include a photo advisory of any activities with special visual appeal, such as live animals, visits from local celebrities or a costume parade. This may entice the media to send cameras to the event. Send your news release to local radio stations, too, and let them know what interesting sounds might be available to enhance the story—live animals or kids singing, for instance.

Recruit booth sponsors.

Each group—a committee, club, family or class—can exercise creativity in setting up its booth. A little friendly competition can be a boost here, and folks of all ages can have fun with this task. Decorate each booth with a large sign identifying the animal represented; include information about that animal and how it helps Heifer Project partners around the world. Make sure to include the cost of the animal in the display. (See pages 14 and 19-27 for animal information). Live animals are a big draw at the booths (your local 4-H Club or Future Farmers of America may be able to help), but large stuffed animals work well, and people in animal costumes add humor. Each booth should be staffed with people who can answer questions about the animal and how Heifer Project makes use of it. The staff may need to work in shifts to cover all the Market's hours. Reminders are helpful to make sure groups understand set-up times and staffing requirements.

Order gift cards, HPI informational resources, and merchandise.

Supply a gift card and envelope to everyone who purchases an HPI animal (gift of \$10 or more). Purchasers can send cards to the people they've honored with their gifts. Gift cards are free of charge from HPI, as is most promotional material. If you plan to sell HPI merchandise—t-shirts, mugs, greeting cards, books, tote bags—at your Market, order them well in advance. Plan carefully, since Heifer Project does not accept consignment orders or unsold merchandise returns. Or, you could purchase samples of merchandise and take orders from your shoppers for later delivery.

Recruit calligraphers.

Gift cards are even nicer when they're filled out in calligraphy or elegant handwriting. You'll need more than one person addressing cards, so schedule staff accordingly.

Make it fun!

A Living Gift Market is a celebration! Decorations, music and entertainers can add to the festive feel. With lots to do and see, people of all ages will have fun learning and laughing together. Consider showing the HPI video, *Legacy for Efraín*, (see ordering information on page 30) in a special viewing area during the Market. And don't forget to take pictures of all the action.



How about snacks?

Some groups sell refreshments, with proceeds going to Heifer Project. Cookies in animal shapes are popular with children—put brightly-colored frosting in easy-squeeze condiment bottles, and decorating cookies becomes as much fun as eating them! Other organizations plan a light meal after a meeting or worship service to draw folks to the Market.

Have help on hand.

Little Helpers can hand out shopping lists and pencils as people leave worship or enter the Market. Several grown-up or teen-aged Market Guides should be on hand to answer questions and give directions—have them wear nametags or animal masks to identify them as guides.

Keep a running total.

In a visible part of your Market, keep a running total of the animals sold. You might use a chalkboard to tally sales. Or, during the holiday season, an animal ornament can be added to a holiday tree for each gift received (see pages 12-13 for ornament cut-outs). Here's another chance to use your imagination! It's exciting to watch the gifts add up, especially if you're working toward an HPI Gift Ark (see page 28) or other goal.

Make payment easy.

Recruit cashiers for your Market. When shoppers have finished, they bring their completed shopping lists (see page 9) to the central purchasing point. For all animals purchased, each shopper writes one check, payable to the host organization. The shopping lists are important! After the calligrapher uses a paid shopper's list to fill out gift cards (one for each gift of \$10 or more), it should be returned to the cashiers to maintain records of which animals have been sold. For accounting purposes, cashiers must also keep a separate list of merchandise sold or ordered, so it's a good idea to display and sell merchandise in an area apart from the animal booths. (Read more about why this is necessary in "After the Market.") Some people will continue to purchase in the weeks after the Market, so designate an Extended Market Representative to receive those gifts and supply gift cards.

After the Market.

Use your shopping lists to produce a combined total of animals purchased by species, and write one check to Heifer Project International for all the animals. (Gifts to Heifer Project by individuals are tax deductible.) Write a separate check for any resources/merchandise ordered. Some church denominations allow congregations to receive credit on their benevolence budget allotment for hunger for money raised at the Market. If your Market occurs near the end of your fiscal year, make sure to send your check before that deadline to get current-year credit. Conclude by writing down your evaluation of the event, so future leaders can learn from your experience.

Tell the story.

After the success of your Market, you'll want to tell the story! You might choose to hold a special dedication of the gifts collected, say at an annual meeting or holiday worship service. It's especially nice to include children who helped, and a small animal can provide a dramatic representation of the gifts you've given. Your entire organization can use this as an opportunity to express gratitude for life's abundance and the sharing of love and resources. If local media have shown interest in your project, send a follow-up news release telling the results of your efforts. And make sure to let Heifer Project know your most creative ideas and their results.

If you are celebrating Advent/Christmas...

Celebrate the spirit of Christmas. Honor your friends by giving gifts in their name to people in need. Invite St. Nicholas (fourth-century Bishop of Myra) to visit your Market and tell how he gave gifts to the poor instead of the rich. Add a festive note with a roving band of carol singers and decorate an evergreen tree with HPI animal ornaments (p.12-13).



MARKET-ABLE IDEAS!



Mother's Day

What mother wouldn't love a cuddly critter, especially if she doesn't have to clean up after it? Mother's Day is an excellent Market opportunity, particularly if you have access to live animals. Young animals may be available to attend the Market with their animal moms, playing on the themes of Mother's Day and the birth of new opportunity for families across the world. You might arrange a special treat, such as the gift of a flower or an attractively served cup of tea, for moms who attend the Market. How about special prizes for moms who bring their moms?



Hanukkah Celebration

The Festival of Lights can shine hope into the darkness of poverty. Consider a Living Gift Market for Hanukkah and emphasize the role of women who are HPI project partners. You could feature eight HPI animals, one for each day of the celebration. Making beeswax candles would be a good activity, or you could give each market-goer a small candle with a written blessing to take home.



Independence Day

You can celebrate your liberty by giving economic freedom to a family mired in poverty. Animal gifts can provide not only food, but also extra income, which can allow children their first opportunity to attend school or see a doctor. HPI is particularly interested in empowering rural women, who provide 80 percent of the world's domestic food supply, to achieve the training and animals they need to help feed their families. Consider using President Franklin Roosevelt's four essential freedoms as a theme: freedom of speech and worship, freedom from want and fear.



Multi-agency Market

Your organization may work with a number of agencies that provide alternative gifts, allowing you to plan a Market that includes HPI and many others. You can include local hunger organizations and groups that sell handmade crafts from developing countries. Consider charging an admission of one can of food per person, and donate the goods to your local food pantry.

Crafty Creatures

Combine your Living Gift Market with an arts and crafts fair featuring the work of your members. Crafts depicting animals would be particularly appropriate. Proceeds can purchase more animals for Heifer Project partners.

Vacation Church School

Kids love to hear about animals. Use vacation church school to study hunger and how even the youngest participant can help, and decorate booths to be used in an upcoming Market. *Animal Crackers*, Heifer Project's hunger education curriculum for children, youth and adults, has lots of ideas (for ordering information, see page 30).

Youth Group Lock-In

"Counting Sheep" might be a good theme for this event. Youth can spend a fun night learning about hunger issues and Heifer Project, then brainstorm fundraising ideas. Or, plan "A Night in the Global Village" simulation experience. Use *Get Connected!* HPI's global awareness video, and *A Day in the Life* curriculum. (for ordering information, see page 30).



Quickmarket

No time for a major Market undertaking? Try a Quickmarket. Provide information in advance on alternative gifts, plus a shopping list (see page 9) to help people plan. Then set up a table in a high traffic area and, after a meeting or worship service, have calligraphers and cashiers on hand to make sales and fill out gift cards. No time for even a Quickmarket? Spread the word that individuals can order Online at www.heifer.org. Heifer Project will send gift cards (one for each \$10 purchase) for you to mail to your honorees. You could also send an electronic greeting.

Bazaar for the Senses

Some of us don't see livestock every day. A Bazaar for the Senses reminds us of the wonderful ways God's creatures enrich the lives of those who care for them. Honey to taste, wool to touch, a cowbell to jingle — these help Marketgoers understand the daily joys a gift of an animal can bring to a hungry family. This might be an occasion to bring family pets for a blessing of the animals ceremony.

Harvest Festival/Shavuot

When fresh fruits and vegetables are plentiful, it's a good time for a Market. Decorative baskets filled with nature's bounty and homemade breads and preserves might be sold or prepared for homebound members. Tuck in a gift card saying that an HPI animal or share of an animal is included in the gift.



THE BIBLE AND HUNGER

Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbor in your land." — *Deuteronomy 15:11*

You open your hand, satisfying the desire of every living thing. — *Psalms 145:16*

Those who are generous are blessed, for they share their bread with the poor. — *Proverbs 22:9*

I will feed them with justice. — *Ezekiel 34:16b*

"Feed my sheep." — *John 21:17b*

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. — *John 13:34a*

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. — *1 Corinthians 12: 7*

To find out more about how Heifer Project helps hungry people worldwide and to order free resources, visit HPI's Web site, www.heifer.org.

