

THISTLE FARMS

Natural body care products from the women of Magdalene

Thistle Farms is a social enterprise run by women who have survived lives of prostitution, trafficking, addiction and life on the streets. By hand the women create natural body care products that are as good for the body as they are for the earth. All proceeds support Thistle Farms and its two-year residential program, Magdalene. Into every product goes the belief that love is the most powerful force for change in the world.



our products



Thistle Farms uses all natural ingredients and earth-friendly practices. Our products are made with the premium ingredients like cotton wicks, soybean-based ecowax, olive and coconut oils, sunflower seeds, and essential oils. Every product is handmade by the women of Thistle Farms to offer healing to the world.



Magdalene and Thistle Farms stand as a witness to the truth that love is more powerful than all the forces that drive women to the streets.



why the thistle

Thistles grow in the streets and alleys where the women of Thistle Farms walked. Considered a weed, they have a deep tap root that can shoot through thick concrete and survive drought. And in spite of a thistle's prickly appearance, its royal, soft purple center makes it a mysterious and gorgeous flower. Being a Thistle Farmer means the world is our farm, and that there is no part of creation that has to be forgotten or condemned.

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magdalene

Magdalene, founded in 1997 by the Rev. Becca Stevens, is a residential program, for women with a criminal history of prostitution and addiction. For two years, we offer housing, food, medical and dental needs, therapy, education and job training, all free of charge. Our six homes function without 24-hour live-in staff, relying instead on residents to create a supportive community, maintain recovery, and share household tasks. Women come to Magdalene from prison, the streets and from across the country. Women range in age from 20-50, were sexually abused on average between 7-11 and

started using alcohol or drugs by 13. Most residents have been arrested approximately a hundred times, and have spent an average of 12 years on the street prostituting.

Magdalene provides services for approximately 30 women at any given time. In the past decade, over 150 women have come through our program and outreach services, and we have reached hundreds more. At any given time we have over a hundred women on our waiting list.

70% of the women who join Magdalene are clean and sober 2 1/2 years after beginning the program.

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thistle farms



Thistle Farms was started in 2001 as a social enterprise to provide employment for the women of Magdalene. Thistle Farms currently employs 32 Magdalene residents and graduates. While working at Thistle Farms, women learn valuable skills in manufacturing, packaging, marketing and sales and administration. In 2010, Thistle Farms moved into an 11,000 square foot sales and manufacturing facility. In this beautiful new building, Thistle Farms is committed to growing in order to employ more women and to help more women move from poverty to independence.

Magdalene and Thistle Farms receive no government funding but instead rely on individual gifts, private grants and the sale of Thistle Farms products.

becca stevens

The Reverend Becca Stevens is an Episcopal priest serving as Chaplain at St Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt University, and founder of Magdalene & Thistle Farms. Stevens is the author of eight books and has been featured on NPR, PBS, CNN, Huffington Post, Southern Living, Christian Century, and Victoria Magazine. She was named "Nashvillian of the Year" and "Tennessean of the Year" by the Nashville Scene and The Tennessean respectively. In 2010, she became the youngest and first female recipient of The University of the South's "Distinguished Alumnus" award. Most recently, Stevens was named by the White House as one of 15 "Champions of Change." She was named the 2011 Social Entrepreneur of the year in Nashville, TN and has received awards from the Frist Foundation and the Academy of Women of Achievement. To date, she has raised more than \$13 million for the organizations she supports. Stevens lives in Nashville with her husband, Grammy-winning songwriter Marcus Hummon, and their three sons.



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press

In Spring 2011, Magdalene/Thistle Farms was featured on one of the top news sites worldwide, *Huffington Post*, and in a series on National Public Radio's prestigious *All Things Considered*, *Morning Edition* and *Talk of the Nation* radio shows. Coming Fall/Winter 2011 will be a feature in a documentary series, *Turning Point*, on National Public Television. Additional press coverage includes features in the PBS *Religion & Ethics* series, *CNN Headline News with Nancy Grace*, *The Washington Times*, *Southern Living*, *Teen Vogue*, *Victoria Magazine*, *Publisher's Weekly*, *Cosmopolitan.com*, *Cooking with Paula Deen*, *MarieClaire.com*, *Health* and *The Christian Science Monitor*.



education

Due to regular requests to share the model of Magdalene/Thistle Farms with others, we now offer Education Workshops on a bi-monthly basis. In just 18 months we have hosted 300+ individuals and groups from over 90 cities, including Seattle, Memphis, Atlanta, Dayton, New York and London. Through Thistle Farms, we have worked with women's cooperatives in Rwanda, Ecuador, Kenya, Ghana and Thailand. We also speak at 200+ events yearly, including home parties, women's groups, professional events, church meetings and various retreats and conferences. The educational aspect of this work – sharing the lessons we have learned about how to bring women off the streets and help them to heal in community – is growing significantly.

stores

We are now have 200 retail partners nationwide, including 12 Whole Foods stores in the southeast. Products can also be purchased online at THISTLEFARMS.ORG.



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