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GIVING BACK



MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Can sharing your soap or buying perfume help save a life? Will new eyebrows bring joy to a cancer patient? Can you give back by treating yourself to a facial or taking a fitness class with a flash mob?

BY MARYANN HAMMERS

LOCAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS COMPANIES, big and small, give back in innovative ways, like hosting fitness flash mobs, recycling used soap, and granting wishes.

“Much can be done if we all just chip in a little,” says Lenka Tinka, founder and owner of **Natura Culina** (naturaculina.com), a Santa Barbara natural soap and skin-care company. Tinka donates 70 percent of each sale of her Joyful Heart Orange Blossom Goat Milk Soap set to the **Joyful Heart Foundation** (joyfulheartfoundation.org), which helps victims of sexual assault, child abuse, and domestic violence. Three creamy, heart-shaped soaps come in a set (\$10) and are so pretty you’ll hate to use them. But Tinka says, please do: “They are so nice for the skin.” Or slip one in your lingerie drawer. “They will smell delicious.”

Throughout November, Tinka will also donate 10 percent of online sales (and gift baskets of Natura Culina products year-round) to her favorite local causes: **Teddy Bear Cancer Foundation** (teddybearcancerfoundation.org) for children with cancer and their families and **C.A.R.E.4Paws** (care4paws.org), which works to reduce pet overpopulation and keep animals out of shelters. “Natura Culina is a small company, but our heart is in the right place,” Tinka says.

COSMETIC CARE

After her mother developed breast cancer, Felicia Alva, owner of the Calabasas-based makeup studio **Flutter Beauty** (studioflutter.com), began volunteering for the **Look Good Feel Better program** (lookgoodfeelbetter.org) at Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center in Thousand Oaks. “I show women how to take care of their skin-care needs, such as excessive dryness,” she says of those undergoing chemotherapy and radiation. “Many of these women aren’t familiar with makeup but feel the need for it now. I love to make a difference in their lives at such a crucial time and see their confidence come shining through.”

During chemo, many women lose their hair, including lashes and brows. “Brows are such an important facial feature. They frame our face and help us express emotion,” Alva says. “I show the ladies how to create a brow with powder; then we feather in short, small strokes of brow pencil. I also invite them to my studio for a complimentary refresher Brows 101 course.”

Alva recently introduced Flutter Beauty, a cosmetic line that includes lipsticks, gloss, blush, and custom-blended foundation made from locally sourced ingredients.

Zorica Denton, owner of the natural skin-care line **Zorica of Malibu Skin Care** (zoricaofmalibu.com), will never forget the sleepless nights and worry when her son, then 3 years old, slipped into a coma. "I was living in London, and a flu epidemic was claiming lives of young children and older people," she says. "My son got it really bad. I spent every moment by his bedside."

Thankfully, her son recovered. Now Denton wants to do all she can for other ill children, so she donates 10 percent of sales from her natural, organic products (such as bodywash and lotion with a heavenly blend of French lavender and Egyptian rose geranium pure essential oils) and 20 percent of online sales of her new fragrance, Véra Essence (veraessence.com), to **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital** (stjude.org).

GRANTING WISHES

Bacara Resort & Spa (bacararesort.com) in Santa Barbara partners with the Santa Barbara-based **Dream Foundation** (dreamfoundation.org) to grant wishes and give joy to adults facing life-threatening illness. "Bacara has helped create relaxing, pampering spa vacations for dozens of Dream recipients and their families," says spokeswoman Anne Elcon.

Or as Dream recipient and cancer patient Allison Anderson puts it, "It's not just a trip, it's a little vacation from cancer."

On November 8, Bacara hosts the Dream Foundation's annual Celebration of Dreams gala, celebrating the organization's 20th anniversary. Tickets start at \$1,250; dreamfoundation.org/gala2014/.

Do you also dream of a spa getaway? Here's a reason to book one at Bacara: The resort donates 10 percent of the proceeds of its signature 80-minute Bacara Seacreation facial to **Gaviota Coast Conservancy** (gaviota.nationbuilder.com).

GET FIT TO HELP

Flash mobs, fitness, and fundraising align with **Fit 4 the Cause** (fit4thecause.org), a new Thousand Oaks-based nonprofit that raises money for local health-related causes through group exercise programs. Energetic, calorie-burning events pop up in malls, parks, parking lots, hotels, schools, and businesses, led by local fitness instructors and accompanied by live music or tunes provided by DJs.

"We raise money for organizations such as the Cancer Support Community, American Diabetes Association, National Multiple Sclerosis Society, and to individuals with health-related hardships," says Fit 4 the Cause founder Cindy Rakowitz, an Agoura Hills publicist and a certified group fitness instructor.

The next event is on November 8 at Garden of Yoga (gardenofyoga.com) in Woodland Hills. Proceeds go to the Alzheimer's Foundation of America.

REJUVENATION WITH A CONSCIENCE

Stay at the **Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach** (cpventura.com) for the ocean views, the central downtown location, the abundance of nearby restaurants, the easy beach access—and the soap. In fact, the tangy citrusy bars smell so good, you'll want to slip the partially used sliver into your luggage and take it home.

But please leave it behind because the hotel participates in the **Global Soap Project** (globalsoap.org), which sorts, purifies, processes, and molds leftover soap. The clean new bars are hand cut, packaged, shipped, and distributed to developing countries, where soap is in short supply and access to proper hygiene goes a long way in preventing diseases.

Love Organic Salon, Spa, and Yoga (loveorganicspa.com) in Simi Valley is a brand-new spa with a great big heart. Owner Klee Irwin explains that the spa was set up as a "benefit company"; that is, a for-profit, nonprofit hybrid. Though still in start-up mode, the spa plans to donate 50 percent of its net profits to various humanitarian and environmental charities. "Love Spa was conceptualized as an engine to pay it forward," Irwin says.

As another way to give back, Love will regularly host free workshops on parenting, living green, nutrition, meditation and other topics, Irwin says. As for the "organic" in Love's name: "We use organic products because they're better for you and better for the planet. I want our guests to experience beauty with a conscience." ♦



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