

# Werner Rey Sites Rwanda Widow Progress

*Macy's gets behind the effort to help Rwanda Women develop a market for their baskets.*

The genocide that occurred in Rwanda in 1994 may be forgotten by many, but it is still a struggle that the widows of Rwanda are facing every single day. These women will never forget the more than 100 days of torture and agony they endured but they are fighting for survival, trying to rebuild their lives as best as they can. The challenge of rebuilding is something these Rwandan women have accepted head on, but they cannot do it alone.

One company that is helping the widows is Macy's™ department store. They began selling baskets made by the Rwandan widows. What swayed the store into this business endeavor was more than just the plight of the widows and the horrible stories they had to tell, it was the prospect of contributing to their economy.

While it may have looked to some like charity, Macy's™ made it very clear that it was a charitable act on their part but it was not in fact charity. The baskets that they purchased had to meet and pass Macy's™ quality standards before any money changed hands. What Macy's™ and the Rwandan widows formed was a business partnership.

The money a Rwandan weaver makes from the sale of just one basket is enough to feed herself for a month. Children of weavers have shoes on their feet, clean clothes, and often more than one set of clothing. If this is possible from the sale of just one traditional sisal weaved basket imagine what would be possible if more than one department store formed this kind of a business relationship with the widows.

Some of us may not have come out of the genocide as strong, determined and willing to survive as these women did. The widows of Rwanda are proof that when faced with even the most horrendous of circumstance, it is possible to carry on and rebuild your life. These women not only deserve a better life but they have earned a better life, for themselves and for their children. Remember, sometimes it is the smallest of gestures that make the biggest difference.

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