

# Unlocking the Power of Craft to Change Our World

## Our Impact 2021



# From our Founder

In 2006, at the age of 23, I founded Nest from a tiny desk in the corner of my bedroom. As I sat at that desk, putting pen to paper, outlining my concept for a way to bring economic independence to women through handcraft, I could have never imagined the day I would be sitting here—at a desk in my home office, putting pen to paper, writing the introduction to Nest’s 15<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Impact Report.

Reflecting on how this organization has grown and shifted over the last fifteen years, I am filled with gratitude and awe. Gratitude for everyone who believed in me and Nest throughout this journey, even when it was just an idea sketched out on paper. **And awe for how a simple belief in the power of handcraft has grown into an organization that impacts more than one million people across 120 countries, with an ever-expanding network of philanthropists, brands, and individuals all united in a mission to allow the handworker and creative economy everywhere to grow and thrive.**

As you page through this report, I hope you will feel stirred and inspired by what you read—it is truly a testament to what is possible when we come together to listen and identify challenges, conceive of innovative solutions, and collaborate to bring them to fruition. **With the support of our partners and a dedicated team committed to the organizational mission, Nest has grown to become the leading advocate of home-based makers, artisans, and handworkers around the world.**

As I reflect on the last 15 years, I cannot help but think it has all been building to now, a moment when so much of the world unexpectedly became homeworkers in the wake of Covid-19. I am proud of the way Nest pivoted to support the 1,624 artisan businesses in our network to ensure they can adapt and thrive in a post-Covid world, and the way we harnessed our unexpected reality to bring awareness to the presence and reality of homework in our supply chains. How we live, work and consume has transformed so profoundly over the past 18 months. And looking back at our accomplishments, Nest’s broad suite of programming—and more importantly our inherently creative spirit—will continue to play a pivotal role in supporting the artisan and handworker sector as they resiliently navigate uncharted waters and turn challenge into opportunity.

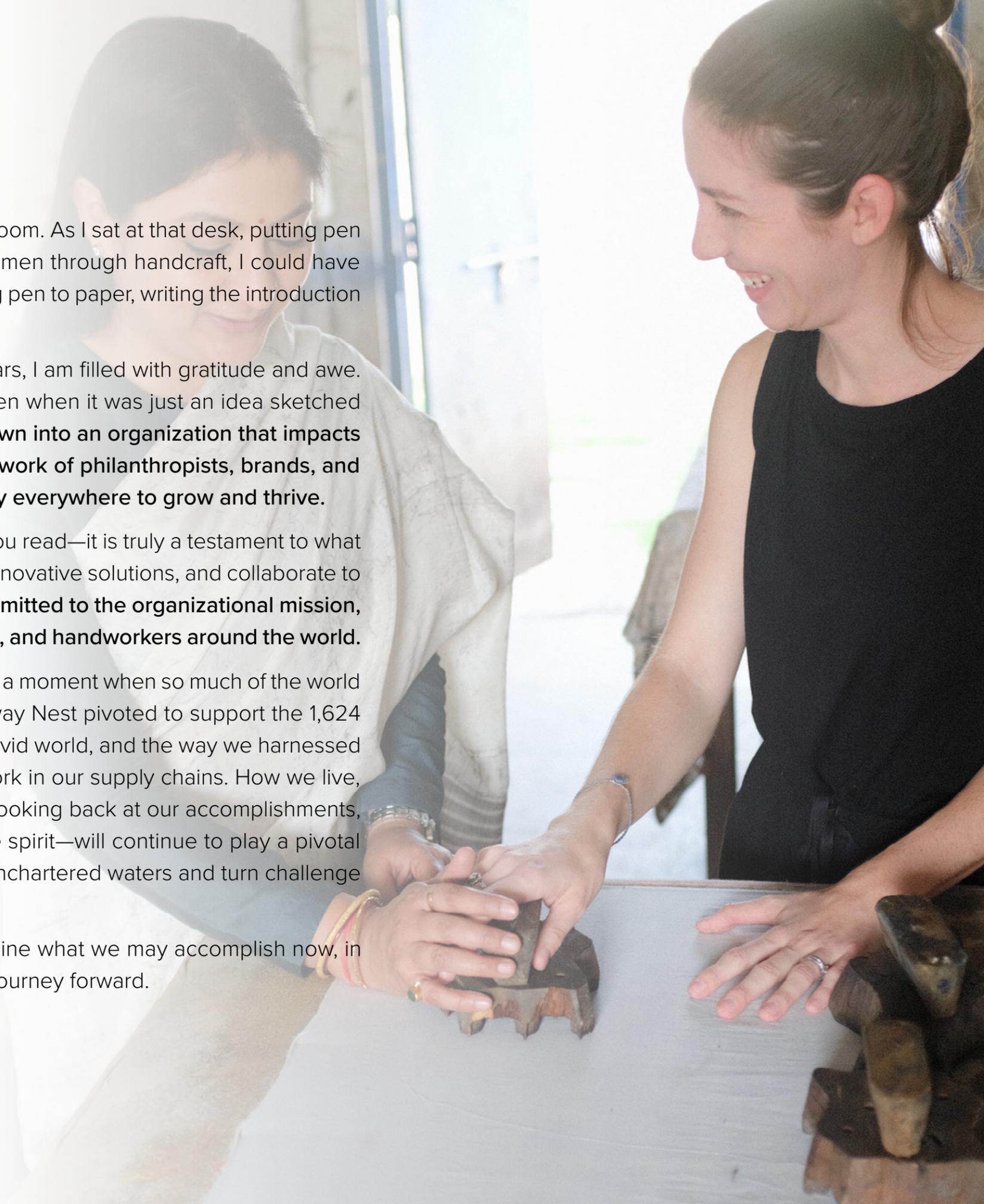
I cannot help but feel hopeful, inspired, and motivated to get to work as we imagine what we may accomplish now, in this important moment, and in the next fifteen years. I hope you will join us in our journey forward.

With gratitude,



*Rebecca van Bergen*

*Founder and Executive Director*



# 15 Years of Impact

2016

## ARTISAN ACCELERATOR LAUNCHES

The 360° program provides participating businesses with the targeted support and market linkages they need to become vital players in the world of home and fashion design.

2011

## PROVIDING ARTISANS WITH THE NESTS THEY NEED TO GROW

Alongside Maiyet, Nest constructs a new workshop for Anton and Benta, jewelry makers in Kenya who had been crafting luxury accessories in their home. At the same time, Nest commences construction of an atelier for Loom to Luxury—an organization reviving the storied craft of silk brocade weaving in Varanasi.

2008

## A NEW MODEL: MICROBARTERING

A few years after Mohammad Yunus won the Nobel Prize for his work in microcredit, Nest pioneers “microbartering” whereby women artisans receive loans which they can re-pay in the form of product.



2015

## LAUNCH OF THE ARTISAN AND MAKER GUILD

The first open access network of craft-based businesses, the Nest Guild provides free learning opportunities, mentorship and brand sourcing opportunities to artisan businesses around the world.



2009

## OUR FIRST BRAND PARTNERSHIP

Nest collaborates with American Eagle and FEED to source a bag from one of the first artisan collectives that Nest supported.



2006

## NEST'S FIRST TWIG

Founder Rebecca van Bergen receives seed funding from her alma mater, Washington University to launch Nest—a non-profit to support artisan women through capacity building and market access.

# 15 Years of Impact

2017

## THE NEST STANDARDS UNVEILED AT THE UN

The Standards, which become the backbone of Nest's Ethical Handcraft Program & the Nest Seal of Ethical Handcraft, are the first set of standards widely adopted to protect handworkers in informal supply chains.



2018

## BUILDING A MORE DIVERSE LOCAL MAKERS MOVEMENT

Nest launches its flagship domestic programming, Makers United, in Birmingham, Alabama to provide business training and market access opportunities to underserved BIPOC makers.

*Photo Credit: Tosha Gaines Photography*

2019

## WEAVING ATELIER FOR LOOM TO LUXURY OPENS

With the ongoing support of Nest over 9 years, Loom to Luxury's weaving atelier opens in Varanasi, India, to provide employment and protect the community's heritage weaving tradition.

*Photo Credit: Aleksandr Staprans and Rose Aschebrock*



2019

## NEST DIRECTLY REACHES A QUARTER MILLION HANDWORKERS

Nest has grown from reaching 1,433 artisans since the Guild's founding to supporting the growth and development of over 250,000 handworkers in 120+ countries, and 1 million+ beneficiaries.



2020

## NEST PIVOTS TO MEET A NEW MOMENT

As the world comes to a halt in the immediate aftermath of Covid-19, Nest supports 59 artisan businesses in the Nest Guild as they pivot to mask and PPE production. Within 60 days, Nest provides artisan businesses with \$618,000 in funding to produce 213,000 masks all of which are given to vulnerable populations around the world.

*Photo Courtesy of Custom Collaborative*



2021

## ADOPTING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO SUPPORT THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

In a world that has become even more digitally-connected, Nest partners with Etsy & Amazon Handmade to bridge the digital divide between the artisan sector globally and direct-to-consumer sales channels.

# Our Mission & Vision

LEARN MORE  
about our  
Theory of Change

**Nest is a non-profit 501(c)(3) supporting the responsible growth and creative engagement of the artisan & maker economy to build a world of greater gender equity and economic inclusion.** Through programs that support the wellbeing of artisans both in the United States and globally, Nest is bringing radical transparency and opportunity to the informal handworker economy.

For centuries, craftspeople and handworkers around the world have played critical roles in sustaining and reviving local creative economies, often working from homes and small workshops. Their work ranges from skilled craftsmanship to simple handwork tasks.

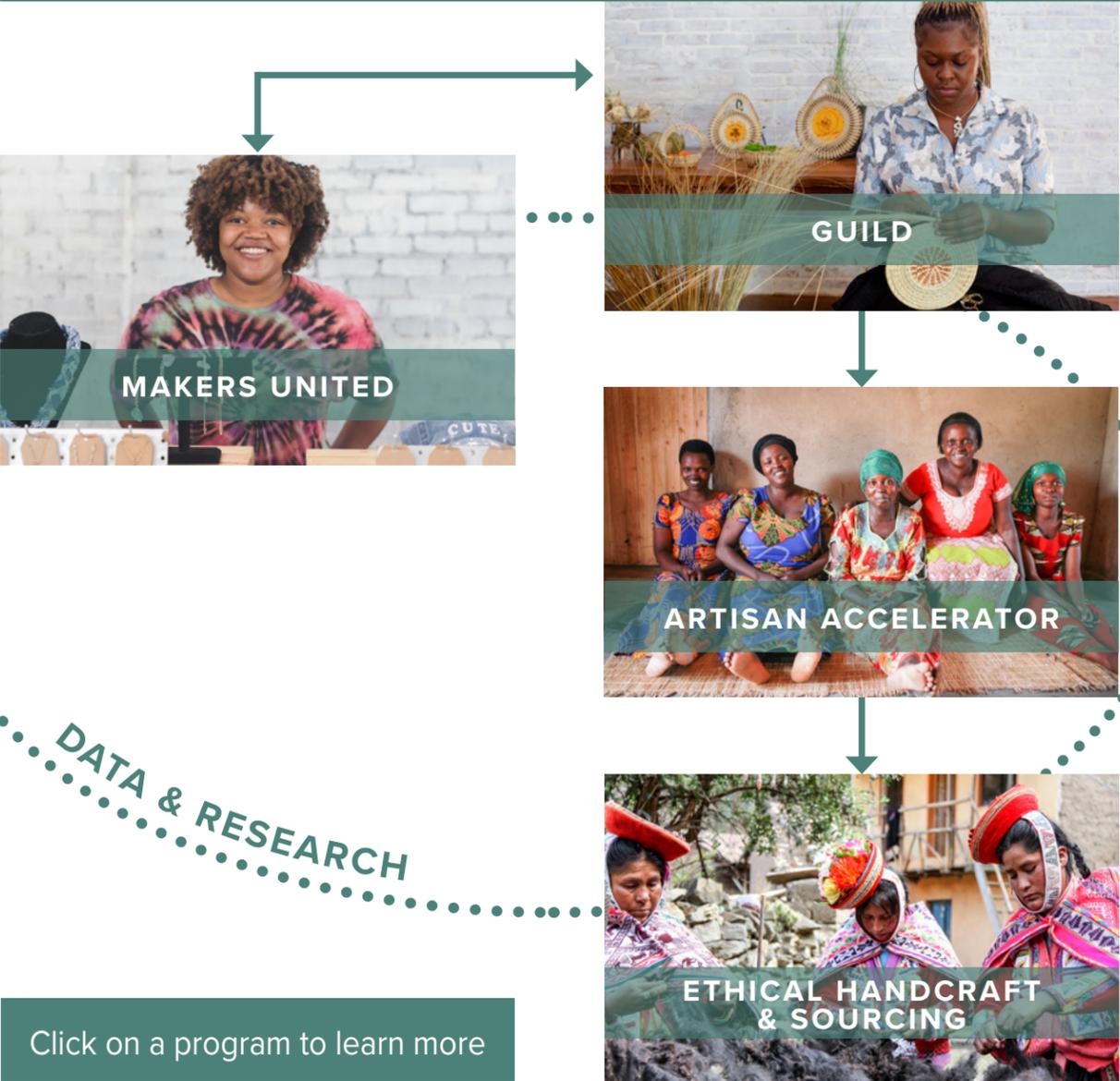
The scale of these informal workers is larger than many realize—the ILO estimates that upwards of 300 million people work from home, engaged primarily in handwork. Predominantly women, these workers are often unrecognized and the implementation of their social protections is the exception rather than the norm.

This is in spite of the fact that handworkers contribute over \$718BN in value to our global GDP and that when women work, they invest more than 90% of their earnings back into their families.

**Nest believes that when artisan businesses, brands and philanthropists come together, we can unlock the potential of the handworker economy to grow with economic dignity—enabling millions of individuals and their surrounding communities to thrive.**

Through a holistic suite of programming—from the open access tools provided to the Nest Artisan & Maker Guild through to our Ethical Handcraft program which ensures that tens of thousands of handworkers are afforded worker protections and fair wages—**Nest is unlocking the power of craft to change our world.**

## OUR CORE PROGRAMS



Click on a program to learn more

# Creating a Global Artisan Community

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE NEST ARTISAN & MAKER GUILD

84% growth  
in the Guild between  
2020 and 2021

The Guild is a growing network of global visionaries and creative entrepreneurs—business leaders who leverage their artistic spirit to improve their communities and challenge social norms. All resources offered to the Guild are free of charge—from online learning modules to mentorship with industry experts.

## ABOUT THE NEST GUILD

supporting **1,624**  
craft-based businesses  
across **120** countries

with **76%** being  
female-founded and  
employing an **88%**  
female workforce

directly reaching over  
**270,000** handworkers  
and indirectly impacting  
**1.2M** people



Photo Courtesy of Ranchlands

### RANCLANDS (COLORADO, USA)

*Qurate Fellowship Recipient, 2021*

“Nest’s support of our business has been instrumental in getting us to where we are today. Starting with an onsite design fellowship in 2017, our relationship was founded on our company’s need to define our bag aesthetic and production capacities. Over the years, we’ve had the pleasure of attending other Nest events all of which have been very impactful for us, including our most recent experience with a Qurate fellowship. **We came out of the two-week experience with a set of tools that we will use to grow our business to a level that we never thought possible.**”—Tess Leach, *Ranchlands*

“The digital marketing resources have been SO good. I’ve been signing up to lots of these kind of things, to try and learn as much as possible, and Nest resources really stand out as being the most tangibly useful I’ve come across.”

—Laura Rana, *Founder of Khushi Kantha*

## CASE STUDY: **qurate** OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH RETAIL GROUP™

Over the past three years, Nest has worked in partnership with the Qurate Retail Group to provide employees across the Qurate brands with the opportunity to lend their skills to women-owned businesses in the Guild.

**33**  
Qurate  
employees

**55**  
Guild  
businesses  
supported

**290**  
artisans  
directly  
impacted

BALLARD DESIGNS



FRONTGATE



Garnet Hill



# Spotlight

## DELIVERING RESPONSIVE & CREATIVE GUILD PROGRAMMING

In 2021—in direct response to data showing that one of Guild member’s **top areas of need was more training on financial planning**—Nest worked with our expert volunteers Lisa and George Grobar to develop and disseminate the Nest Financial Planning and Investment Strategies Series. This financial planning learning module was created entirely pro-bono by the Grobars.



LISA GROBAR



GEORGE GROBAR

Lisa Grobar, Ph.D., who has volunteered with Nest since 2016, is a Professor Emerita of Economics at California State University, Long Beach, and her husband George Grobar is the Chief Operating Officer of Penske Media Corporation, the 6th ranked internet media company in the United States and the parent company of Women’s Wear Daily. Their financial curriculum, informed by both their academic knowledge and professional experience, addresses the unique needs and challenges faced by small, craft-based businesses.

The creation of this scaleable curriculum to the Nest Guild came on the heels of the Grobars’ volunteer engagement with Guild members like Hacienda Crafts, a member of the 2018 Artisan Accelerator cohort. In 2019, they traveled to the Philippines to work hands-on with Hacienda’s leadership on creating systems for forecasting and cash flow management.

It was their on-site experiences which informed the rollout of the digital programming, which covered topics like basic financial management, income statements and financial projections—all in an accessible, modular format.

Given the quality of materials and breadth of opportunities available through the Guild, it is unsurprising that many new members cite a peer’s referral as their reason to join. Almost all of the network’s growth since 2013 has been organic—a testament to the value of the resources provided by our generous individual and corporate partners, like George and Lisa Grobar.

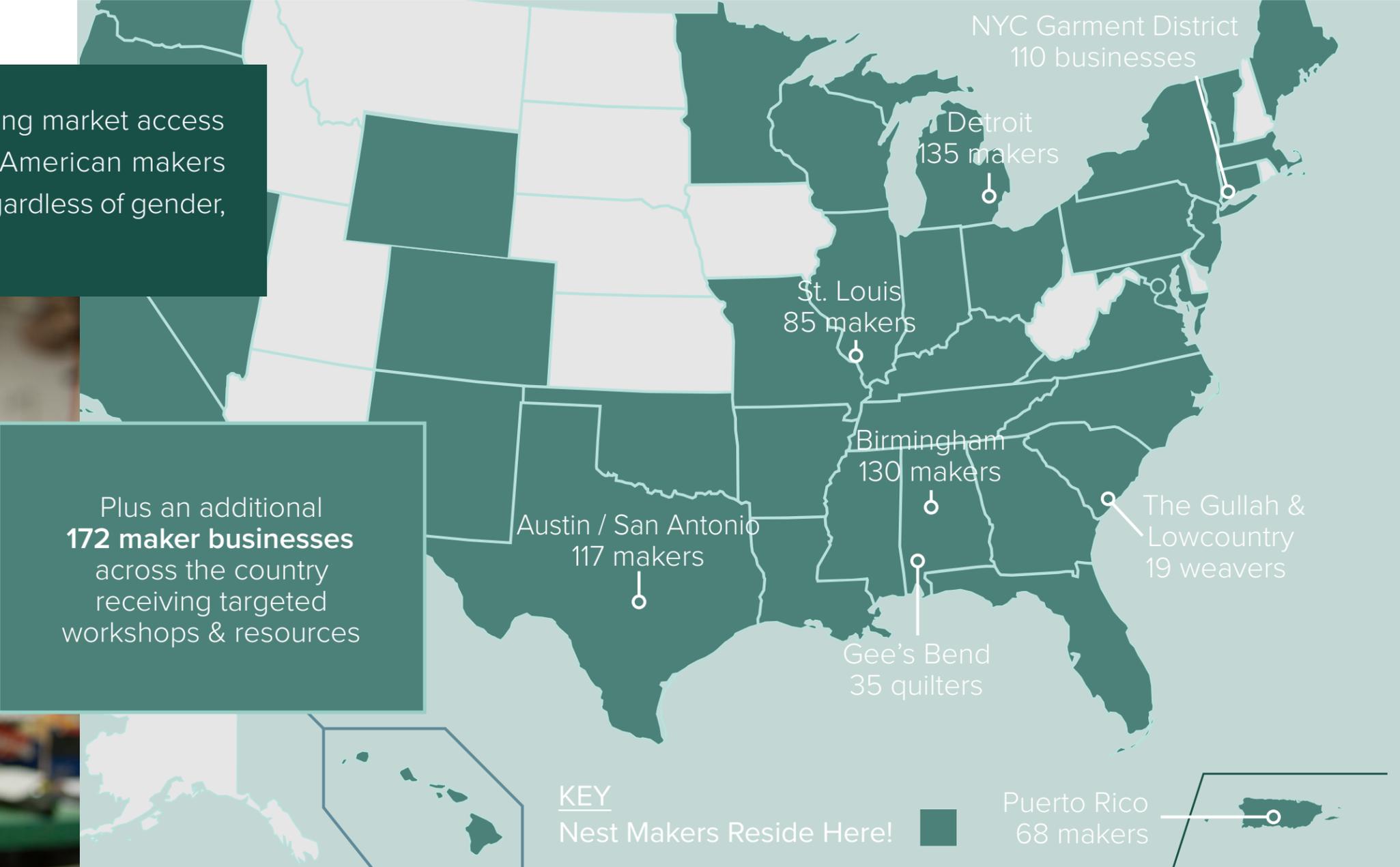
Photo Courtesy of Azizi Life, 2021 Artisan Accelerator



# A More Inclusive Makers Movement

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MAKERS UNITED

With a focus on elevating BIPOC makers and delivering market access solutions, Makers United ensures that the growing American makers movement is generating opportunity for all makers regardless of gender, race, economic means or ability.



### WORKSHOPS AND TARGETED RESOURCES DELIVERED TO:

**871**  
makers

**63%**  
female owned  
and led businesses

**70%**  
BIPOC owned  
and led businesses

Photo Credit: Kristen Blush Photography

2021

# Bridging the Digital Divide

FOR TWO OF AMERICA'S MOST STORIED CRAFT COMMUNITIES

LEARN MORE  
about our work in  
Gee's Bend & South  
Carolina's Lowcountry

In partnership with Etsy—and with the support of Bloomberg Philanthropies, Souls Grown Deep and philanthropists like Nancy Abbey—Nest is bringing heritage craft communities online. Our grassroots programming and technical training is co-designed with local community leadership. That paired with the prowess of Etsy's platform has led to profound impact for the quilters of Gee's Bend and the Gullah basket weavers of South Carolina's Lowcountry.



“Owning my own Etsy shop has allowed me to build my very own house. A house I own free and clear with no mortgage. Thank you, Nest, for sharing this opportunity with our community.”

—Mary Margaret Pettway,  
*Gee's Bend Quilter*

## 12 weavers and 18 quilters

selling online for the first time

## \$460,000 in total sales

all going directly to local artisans and their families

“Our continued partnership with Nest helps to amplify and pave a path to a new financial future for celebrated artisan communities, which drives our mission forward.”

—Dinah Jean, *Senior Manager of Social Innovation at Etsy*

# Spotlight

## LAYING THE FOUNDATION TO CREATE IMPACT FOR GEE'S BEND

While the quilters of Gee's Bend have produced countless patchwork masterpieces that have received global acclaim, the quilters have yet to reap the full economic benefit of their celebrated craft.

With generous support from Nancy Abbey, philanthropist and Nest Advisory Board member, we were able to kickstart comprehensive programming within the Bend. This programming provided resources and training in support of both the community's direct-to-consumer sales efforts as well as larger brand collaborations, a historical legacy in the Bend dating back to the 70's.

Thanks to the foundational support from donors like Nancy Abbey, Nest's programming in the Bend has grown from the launch of the Etsy shops in February 2021 to partnerships with acclaimed fashion houses such as Greg Lauren and House of Harlow.



"I have been an admirer of Gee's Bend quilts for over 30 years...It has been an honor for me to contribute to this Nest initiative in support of these artists and their work. The Gee's Bend quilters are overdue for the recognition they so obviously deserve and for support in building an infrastructure around a successful business commensurate with its value,"

—Nancy Abbey, on her commitment to support the launch of Nest's work in Gee's Bend



# Protecting Homeworkers

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ETHICAL HANDCRAFT

Since the launch of the Nest Standards at the UN, the Ethical Handcraft program has become the industry's standard bearer for ensuring the rights and protections of home-based artisans and handworkers everywhere.

WE HAVE WORKED WITH

**157** in **25**  
supply chains countries

ENSURING THE ETHICAL  
TREATMENT OF

**50,586**  
handworkers and  
homeworkers

"The Nest Ethical Handcraft Program is so important for All Across Africa's artisan ecosystem. The standards trainings continue to help improve our systems and processes for reaching and impacting artisans. It's real and authentic accountability that is unmatched and we're so proud to carry the Nest Seal of Ethical Handcraft on our products."

—Alicia Wallace, Chief Operating Officer, All Across Africa

## Program Impact

### SUPPORTING WOMEN

**80%** of women in the program reported that their income supports their children's formal education.



### SUPPORTING WAGES

Our work has resulted in a **100%** increase in the number of businesses that pay their workers at least a minimum wage.



### PRESERVING CRAFT

**86%** of those workers in the program would encourage the next generation to continue their craft—a **43%** increase from baseline.



THE NEST SEAL OF ETHICAL  
HANDCRAFT CAN BE FOUND AT:

**COST PLUS**  
**WORLD MARKET**

JAIPUR LIVING

**POTTERY  
BARN**

pottery barn kids

REJUVENATION



west elm

# Building a Better Industry, Together

HIGHLIGHTS FROM NEST SOURCING

SHOP  
handcrafted products  
from the Nest Artisan &  
Maker Guild here

In 2021, Nest has worked in partnership with 17 national brands to create economic opportunity for a world of artisans working from home. These partnerships have supported expanded market linkages for 138 artisan and maker businesses in the Nest Guild.

IN 2021, NEST ACHIEVED  
THE FOLLOWING IMPACT FOR  
ARTISAN BUSINESSES IN THE GUILD:

**70**

Guild members launched e-commerce and direct-to-consumer for the first time with Nest support

**141**

new products from Guild members made their way to national retail shelves

**\$2.35MN**

in revenues generated for Guild members as a result of Nest's sourcing initiatives

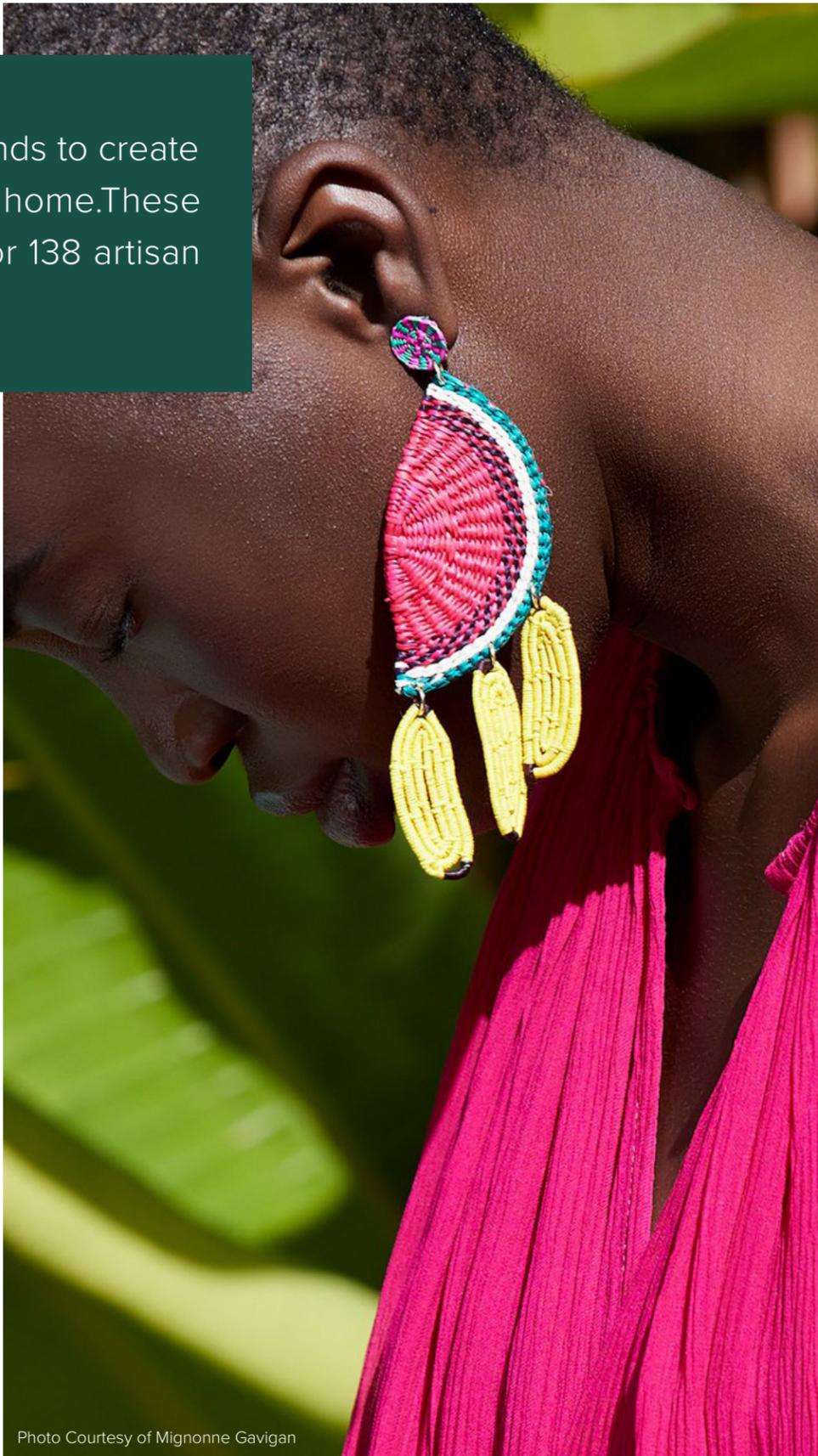


Photo Courtesy of Mignonne Gavigan



Photo Courtesy of Coquette's Armoire

“We grew from our collaboration with Mignonne Gavigan and are so grateful to Nest for connecting us! Our sales have gone down dramatically since Covid began, and this production gave women work for 2 months, working from home. This is a huge blessing in a time when we are not receiving many orders for export.”

—Cristina Hernandez, *Founder of Coquette's Armoire a Nest Artisan Guild Member connected to jewelry brand Mignonne Gavigan through Nest's sourcing services*

# Scaling Growth and Impact

HIGHLIGHTS FROM ARTISAN ACCELERATOR

Nest has emerged as a preeminent accelerator of artisan businesses, helping high-potential social enterprises around the world scale their financial growth and impact.

Each year, highly-promising businesses participate in an intensive curriculum bringing together mentorship, market linkages and a path to earn the Nest Seal.

TO DATE, WE HAVE  
WORKED WITH:

**78**

accelerator businesses

in **28** countries

REACHING

**34,912**

artisans



Photo Courtesy of Larone Crafts, 2020 Artisan Accelerator

“The Fellowship experience with Nest as an Artisan accelerator cohort member is game-changing! The access to expertise in particular aspects of the business that we were having trouble with allowed us to focus on solutions through re-education, discussion, and planning. The lessons are so numerous that I am still letting them marinate in my consciousness. For sure, these will influence the way I run my business and engage with customers and artisans alike in the next twenty years.”

—Jennifer Lo, *Managing Director of Larone Crafts*

## Program Impact

### INCREASING MARKET LINKAGES

Program participants received **\$1.45M** in new revenue in 2020 as a result of their participation in the program.

### DELIVERING TARGETED INDUSTRY EXPERTISE

Nest delivered pro-bono services and opportunities equivalent to **\$1.03M** to businesses in the program.

### SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS & ARTISANS

**82%** of Accelerator businesses are founded by women, and across their supply chains, **89%** of the artisans employed are women.

LEARN MORE  
about  
Artisan Accelerator

# Spotlight

## ARTISAN ACCELERATOR MEMBER INDEGO AFRICA LAUNCHES COLLABORATION WITH TORY BURCH

In a sector where millions of handworkers depend on piece-rate—rather than salaried—wages, the importance of providing sustained employment through ongoing orders is crucial to economic resilience in the artisan communities that Nest serves.

In May 2021, Tory Burch played a key role in supporting this fundamental aspect of Nest’s mission when they released a unique, handwoven market tote bag as part of its

Pre-Fall 2021 collection. The Reva Straw Tote Bag was created in collaboration with Indego Africa, a member of the Artisan Accelerator 2020 class, through a sourcing partnership established through Nest.

The Tory Burch order provided steady income over a period of 3 months for 30 Bolga weaver women. The one-of-a-kind basket tote was produced in the Bolga weaving style from the Bolgatanga region of Ghana.

“The Bolgatanga region in Ghana is predominantly rural and economically marginalized, with limited opportunities for women, so large orders, like the Tory Burch order, really help to provide more sustainable income for the artisans.” She continued, “It was also a great learning experience for our team and artisan partners...We are excited to continue our partnership with Tory Burch through new product development and production, as we believe that a commitment to sourcing from artisans and consistent orders provide the greatest impact for the women and their communities.”

—Sapna Shah, *Indego’s Director of Brand & Operating Strategy*



Photo Courtesy of Tory Burch

Photo Courtesy of Indego Africa, 2020 Artisan Accelerator



# Our Community

Nest’s work would not be possible without the support, counsel, and dedication of our Trustees, Boards, and Community.

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

- Jim Brigham
- Tracey Austin-Grooms
- Heather Bowman
- Carmen Busquets
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- Lauren Hurst
- Alison Sheehan
- Ann VonAllmen
- David VonAllmen



*“In late August 2012, my daughter Carlisle died from an accidental fall in New York City. A few days later my wife and I received a beautiful letter of condolence from Rebecca conveying how helpful Carlisle, with her positive spirit and energy, had been as a member of Nest’s Founding Board in its early days. Carlisle had told us about Nest, and we soon had a meeting with the Nest team. The clarity of Nest’s mission to improve the opportunities for home-based handworkers around the world impressed us, as did the effectiveness of their social and economic strategy. A month later Rebecca invited me to join the board and I immediately accepted. The next year, I was appointed as Board Chair and have been blessed to continue to serve in that position.”* —**Jim Brigham, Nest Board of Trustees**



*“From the moment I met Rebecca, I’ve been in awe of her vision and commitment. Nest has been instrumental in making handcraft a part of the vernacular, and Rebecca’s pioneering approach continues to touch the lives of countless artisans around the globe. I am proud to be among Nest’s early champions, and to continue to support its worthy mission. Bravo for 15 years!”* —**Lauren Hurst, Nest Founding Board**



*“Initially what attracted me to Nest was its empowerment of overlooked groups of women. I appreciated how Nest amplified their voices through the development of their enterprises. However, Nest has pushed the needle even further, through its programmatic work, by transforming how we all understand and value craft. This is seismic impact.”* —**Ashley Shaw-Scott Adjaye, Nest Advisory Board**



*“I am so proud to be a member of the Nest Junior Board. Nest’s partnerships with communities worldwide are prescient and necessary, and their empowerment of women artisans is exemplary. I am so looking forward to seeing the amazing things they do in years to come. Thank you for all your work, Nest!”* —**Preetha Nooyi, Nest Junior Board**

# Our Partners

## 2020 PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORTERS

\$1M+	\$500,000+	\$250,000+	
			

**\$100,000–\$249,000**

Alwaleed Philanthropies  
Imago Dei Fund

**\$50,000–\$99,000**

Cordes Foundation  
Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth  
Mastercard Foundation  
Same Sky Foundation Fund  
Swarovski Foundation

**\$25,000–\$49,000**

Nancy & Doug Abbey  
Anonymous  
Bravo Family Foundation  
Carmen Busquets  
Community Foundation for Greater Birmingham  
Nicole & Andrew Luck  
Jon & Julie Meyer  
Louise Parzick  
Sidhu-Singh Family Foundation

**\$10,000–\$24,999**

Pam Baer  
Jerry & Diane Cunningham  
Garment District Alliance  
Kathryn & Raymond Harbert  
James Hodge  
The Rumi Foundation  
Ellice Sperber  
David & Ann VonAllmen

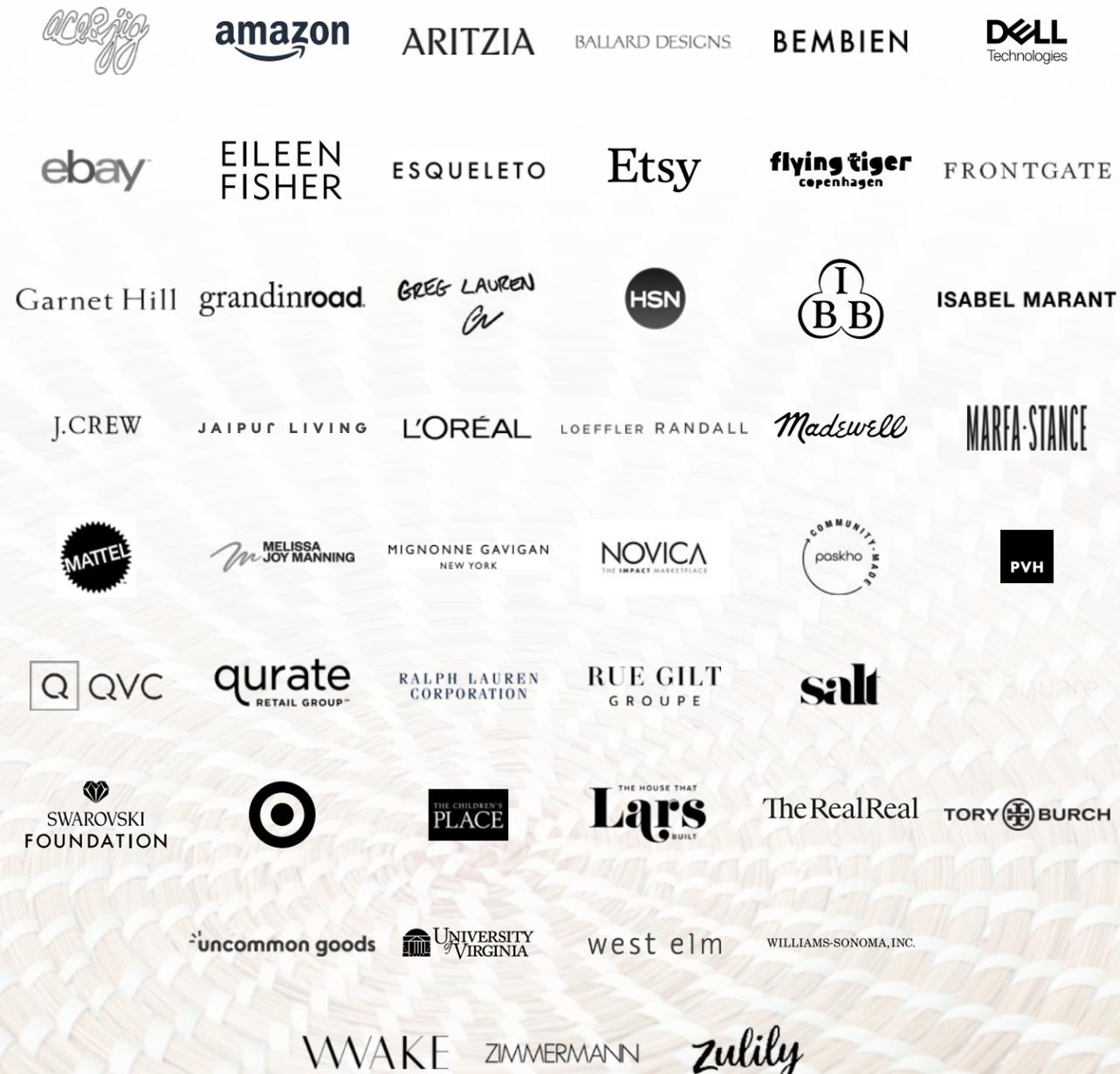
**\$5,000–\$9,999**

Bruce C. Abrams Foundation  
Suzy B. Boshwit  
Jane Ehinger  
Leah Friedman  
Carole Herman & Tom Brumfield  
Kastory Family Foundation  
Maxandra & Oliver Kramer  
Julie & Aaron Martin  
Rosemary Pritzker  
Shea Soucie

**\$1,000–\$4,999**

Anonymous  
The Benevity Community Impact Fund  
Xochiltzin Birch  
Phoebe Campbell  
Marina Cortbawi  
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Jeff Welsh

## 2020–2021 BRAND AND CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS



Nest is profoundly grateful for the pro bono legal support from Foley & Lardner



Photo Credit: Clay Enos in partnership with Bloomberg Philanthropies

# Our Financials

## IN 2020, WE RAISED

**\$5,054,472** Total Revenue

**\$4,000,776\*** from Philanthropy

**\$1,053,696** from Service Partnerships

\*Includes \$1M in rapid response fundraising to support Covid grants and immediate relief efforts detailed in our [2020 report](#)

## IN 2020, WE ALLOCATED

**\$2,176,902** to Ethical Handcraft Projects

**\$1,516,992** to Artisan Guild Programming

**\$559,668** to Operating Expenses

[Read our full financial report here](#)

## NET ASSETS

**2020: \$4,071,785**

**2019: \$3,270,876**



[CLICK HERE](#)

TO VISIT THE POWER OF CRAFT  
AND SUPPORT NEST'S MISSION

In celebration of 15 years, we've curated 15 artisan products, each handmade by a business in Nest's Artisan and Maker Guild. Each product showcases just a few of the ways craft has created real and lasting change for individuals, families and communities.

Thank you for your support—now and always.



MAKE A  
DONATION  
TO NEST



**NEST**  
buildanest.org

@buildanest

