

Silicon Valley Parents Develop GigatonGifts Website to Fight Open-fire Cooking and Deforestation

Smoke From Fires Kills Over 2 Million Annually

MENLO PARK, CA – GigatonGifts was launched in December of 2013 by a group of Silicon Valley parents concerned about the planet they will leave to their children. They identified open-fire cooking as an often overlooked source of many critical, interrelated planetary problems.

Worldwide, almost 3 billion people cook or eat meals cooked over wood or charcoal fires. The soot from these fires causes respiratory ailments that kill 2 to 4 million people a year, most of them women and children. The reliance on wood and charcoal for cooking has created areas of severe deforestation in over 50 countries. Deforestation directly causes or amplifies a host of acute problems, including both drought and flooding, top-soil erosion, extreme poverty (a critical driver of human trafficking), famine and climate change.

Through the GigatonGifts website (www.GigatonGifts.org), customers can purchase trees for reforestation projects in severely deforested areas of Africa and Haiti, as well as fuel-efficient, clean-burning stoves to replace the health-damaging wood and charcoal stoves commonly used by families in these areas. GigatonGifts has partnered with the Eden Reforestation Projects which has planted over 65 million trees since 2005. GigatonGifts is committed to reversing deforestation and its accompanying problems, both by replanting devastated forests and by reducing the demand for wood-based fuel. The goal is to fund the planting of one billion trees and eliminate the use of open fires for meal preparation.

GigatonGifts is staffed entirely by volunteers. Co-Founder and Executive Director Elton Sherwin worked for 15 years as a venture capitalist and is an authority on the economics of climate change. In 2010 he authored *Addicted to Energy*. Co-Founder Craig Wesley has an extensive executive-level background in entrepreneurial, early stage, and Fortune 100 companies.

“You can plant 50 Mangroves in Madagascar for \$9,” said Elton Sherwin, Executive Director of The Carbon Zero Institute. “The stories behind these projects are fascinating. Each gift comes with an interesting description that can be given to the gift recipient.”

GigatonGifts is the first project of the Carbon Zero Institute (CZI). The CZI Board of Directors consists of prominent entrepreneurs and academics, including Stanford University President Emeritus, Donald Kennedy; Jon Foster, CFO of LS9; Lisa Van Dusen, Director of Partner Engagement and External Relations, SV2 (Silicon Valley Social Venture Fund); and Marion O’Leary, internationally-recognized authority on the use of isotopes for studies in chemistry and biology. The Carbon Zero Institute is sponsored by the Center for Energy Efficiency and Renewable Technologies, (www.CEERT.org).


More information about GigatonGifts can be found at our website, www.GigatonGifts.org.

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Typical Product Page



25 Trees in Ethiopia
\$6.00

Country: Ethiopia

Over the last century, many parts of Ethiopia have been almost completely deforested as trees have been cut for firewood. Without their forest habitat, the animals leave. Often, the land erodes and the topsoil disappears, making farming nearly impossible. Once lushly forested areas turn to desert.

The Eden Projects has successfully planted more than 65 million trees in Africa. By hiring locals to plant, nurture and protect trees, Eden is restoring lost forests and providing people with much-needed income.

For only a few dollars more than a birthday card, this is the perfect small gift.

[Stories and printable cards](#)

Typical Product Story

A Gift of a Village Solar Stove

Traditionally, the people of Madagascar have cooked their meals over charcoal fires, with grave consequences for their health, environment and economic well-being.

Charcoal fires produce several health-damaging pollutants, including small soot particles that lodge deep in the lungs. Worldwide, over 2 million people a year die prematurely from respiratory illnesses from cooking fires; these illnesses are a leading cause of death among children under 5.



Charcoal is made from wood, and the demand for it has led to large-scale deforestation. More than 90% of Madagascar's original forests have been cut down. The mangrove forests that once stabilized the coast and provided critical habitat for hundreds of species of fish, birds, reptiles, insects—some found nowhere else on earth—have been decimated, leaving the island vulnerable to cyclones and flooding.

Once healthy fisheries have collapsed, and food insecurity is common.

Using charcoal also creates an economic burden. Many families in Madagascar spend 25% of their income on charcoal, money that might otherwise be spent on food, medicine, or education.

Solar stoves offer a much-needed alternative to charcoal fires. These sturdy, non-polluting stoves generate temperatures up to 650 degrees Fahrenheit and can cook rice in 15 to 20 minutes. Every meal prepared using one of these stoves helps reduce deforestation and air pollution, while also saving money for families.

The stoves—which are assembled by local labor in Madagascar—are usually shared by ten or more families. This Gigaton Gift buys a stove for a village or school.

GigatonGifts.org

Gifts that help people and planet

Almost 3 *Billion* People
Use Polluting, Inefficient
Stoves and Open Fires to
Cook Their Food



Over 2 Million Die Each
Year from Inhaling the
Smoke



Non-polluting Solar
Stoves Cook Rice in 20
Minutes

