



Chattanooga Hospitality Association Our Soap is Making a Difference

A message from Dobbin Callahan, Skye Con

As many of you know, the lodging members of the Chattanooga Hospitality Association have been collecting and saving used guest-room soap to donate to the Global Soap Project. Derreck Kayanga, creator and director of the program, visited Chattanooga in the spring of 2010 and collected about 1500 pounds of used hotel soap. Since then, we made three rounds of collection and gathered about 3000 pounds more.

My wife and I had the true pleasure of representing GCHA by delivering this soap to Global Soap in Norcross, GA recently. Our delivery of the soap significantly eased the burden on Global Soap to make the pick-ups, but beyond that, it gave us the opportunity to see the operation first hand and to learn more about the program. We could not help but be moved by the experience.



When we arrived, we joined Derreck for a quick lunch. We heard more stories of his life in Uganda and his early experiences in America. I am not going to talk about those because I hope you have the opportunity to hear them from him first hand when he visits us again. (His last scheduled visit with us was interrupted when CNN "heisted" him at the last minute for a news story in Africa).

After lunch, we went back to his "factory" where about ten volunteers had assembled to process the soap. We unloaded my trailer up onto his factory floor. While he had perhaps 10,000 or so pounds already in inventory, as a courtesy to us so we could take pictures, they immediately began to process our soap. They keep the soap separated by brand so that the chemistries will remain compatible. The volunteers inspect each bar and remove contaminations.





The bars are then poured into the hopper of an extruder where they are converted into small chips called "spiders."



The "spiders" are then poured back into a hopper, a "die" is attached to the front of the extruder, and a continuous bar of soap is extruded. The die is heated to a high temperature to complete the sanitizing process.



The continuous bar is cut into personal size pieces which are boxed and made ready for delivery. When we asked about how the soap was delivered, we were told that the majority is taken by missionaries as they travel to Africa.

The soap goes to third world countries where a bar of soap, if available, would cost about a day's wages. Because of the absence of soap, ring worm is prevalent and children are dying from dysentery.

In addition to ours, Global Soap has supplies coming in from Texas, California (by air), and Minnesota (a man and a U-Haul) as well as other places, but it was clear that we have become a significant supplier.

I have spoken many times about how proud I am to be a part of our wonderful Hospitality association. To be at workshops and hear State officials brag over and over about the great work our group is doing is immensely satisfying, but I have never been more proud of our group than I was yesterday seeing our ton and a half of "used" soap being converted into a life-saving product for third-world countries.



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