

# The Story of Thistle Farms

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*THISTLE FARMS is a non-profit business run by women who have survived violence, prostitution, and abuse. Thistle Farms products are hand-made by the very women they benefit. Into every product goes the belief that freedom starts with healing, and love can change lives.*



**THISTLE FARMS** began in 2001 as the cottage business of Magdalene, a two-year residential community founded by the Rev. Becca Stevens for women with a history of prostitution and drug addiction. By hand, the women create natural bath and body products that are as kind to the environment as they are to the body. All sales proceeds go back into supporting the residents of Magdalene. Through Thistle Farms, the women of Magdalene gain much-needed job skills and learn responsibility and cooperation. Into every product goes the belief that true freedom starts with healing and that love can change lives. Our dream is that people will come to see Thistle Farms as a humble but powerful business that is synonymous with women's freedom.

## WHY THE THISTLE?

Thistles grow on the streets and alleys where the women of Magdalene walked. Considered a weed, they have a deep tap root that can shoot through thick concrete and survive drought. And in spite of their prickly appearance, their royal and soft purple center makes the thistle a mysterious and gorgeous flower.

# About Magdalene

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## WHO WE ARE

Magdalene was founded not just to help a sub-culture of women, but to help change the larger culture itself. We stand in solidarity with women who are recovering from sexual abuse, violence, life on the streets, and who have paid dearly for a culture that buys and sells women like commodities. At no cost, we offer women a safe, disciplined, and compassionate community for two years, paid for by the gifts we receive from individuals and private grants. Magdalene stands as a witness to the truth that in the end, love is more powerful than all the forces that drive women to the streets.



## HOW IT WORKS

Women with a criminal history of prostitution and addiction are invited to stay up to two years in one of our homes rent free, in a community with other residents and no live-in staff. During their stay, we provide a plan that is individualized for each woman that includes medical care, therapy, opportunities for addiction recovery, education and employment. Presently we have 5 houses and also provide an emergency safe house for four women. Our program also involves returning to the streets where Nashville prostitutes frequent as part of our continued outreach.

## THE RESIDENTS

Between the Magdalene residents and the affiliates (those who live in their own housing and the women in safe housing), we provide services for 30-35 women at any given time. Over a hundred women have come and lived for two years in the past decade and through our safe house and outreach programs, we've reached hundreds. Since we've opened our doors, 75% of the women who stay after the introduction period of 30 days, complete the program and graduate. Magdalene residents have come to us from Tennessee, Georgia, Michigan, Virginia, Wisconsin, Miami, and Honduras. We get calls from as far away as Alaska regarding admittance to our program and our waiting list continues to grow.



## OTHER COMMUNITIES

Presently, there are programs in Charleston, Chattanooga and in North Carolina modeled after Magdalene. A women's group in Rwanda is currently working with us on recipes and various procedures for their women to begin a company in the summer of 2008.

# Our Products



## Room Spray

Refresh your favorite room with our all-natural room sprays, each with its own satisfying scent.

\$14.00



## Salt Scrub

Treat your skin to an all over renewing scrub. This all-natural formula uses sea salts and olive oil to exfoliate and moisturize your skin.

\$20.00



## Hand Lotion

Our lotion uses Vitamin E to nourish and soften dry skin. Your hands are capable of greatness. Treat them well.

\$16.00



## Candle

Our all-natural and alluringly fragrant candles brighten any home. We pour our candles with soy based ecowax to ensure the cleanest burn.

\$20.00



## Lip Balm

Our earth-friendly lip balms use shea butter and beeswax to protect your lips, almond oil to keep them silky smooth, and subtle scents to energize your senses.

\$3.50



## Body Balm

This body balm is a cure-all for rough hands, heels, and elbows. It uses olive and almond oils and shea butter to give you silky skin.

\$12.00

*Available scents: Lavender, Rose Grapefruit, Citrus Vanilla, Tuscan Earth, Tea Tree Mint & Unscented.*

THISTLE FARMS uses all natural ingredients and environmentally friendly practices whenever possible. Our products are made with the purest ingredients like cotton wicks, soybean-based ecowax, olive and coconut oils, sunflower seeds, and essential oils - we even have our own organic lavender field. Every product is hand-made by the Magdalene women to offer healing to the world.

# About Becca

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*I've come to believe that love is the most powerful force for social change in the world.*

**BECCA STEVENS** is an Episcopal Priest who serves as Chaplain of St. Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt University, a growing congregation of students, faculty and community members that see ecumenism and service as an integral part of their faith. In addition to founding Magdalene and Thistle Farms, Becca's leadership has helped establish a school in San Eduardo, Ecuador, a partnership with an AIDS hospice in Botswana and most recently, a Center for Contemplative Justice that houses a chapter of Mobile Loaves & Fishes, serving the homeless population in Nashville. To date, the Rev. Stevens has raised over \$9 million for the organizations she supports. Becca has won numerous awards such as the Frist Foundation's award for *Innovation in Action*, the Academy of Women in Achievement, the *Alumnus of the Year* from University of the South's School of Theology and *Tennessean of the Year* by The Tennessean. Becca has written three books for Abingdon Press. Her latest, *Hither and Yon: A Travel Guide for the Spiritual Journey*, released September 2007. For more info, visit [beccastevens.org](http://beccastevens.org).



## OUR GOALS

We want Thistle Farms to become a competitive national bath and body care company. As Magdalene receives no government funding, by expanding Thistle Farms we can employ more women, provide financial support to the Magdalene residential program, be a part of the national dialogue around issues of women's freedom, and help similar programs get on their feet. Currently there are groups from Sudan and Rwanda, as well as other states here, who want our expertise and access to financial resources to help them begin programs.

# Press & Contacts



*Magdalene's mission goes beyond helping the women. It is to change the culture so that prostitution is no longer acceptable... the program is having a ripple effect.*

**Christian Science Monitor**

*Magdalene Ministries is a two-year community program helping troubled women start over. It gives shelter; it helps them recover from sex abuse, violence, drugs, alcohol...all free...There is more than one way to stop crime and drug addiction.*

**CNN Headline News with Nancy Grace**

*Becca Stevens' ministry is extraordinary...*

**Governor Phil Bredesen, State of Tennessee**

*Magdalene has provided a safe haven for hundreds of women who have determined to rise out of the trap of prostitution and offered hope and help in their struggle to overcome addiction. I am a firm believer and staunch supporter of Magdalene.*  
**Ronal W. Serpas, Chief of Police, Metropolitan Nashville**

Thistle Farms & Magdalene have been featured on *CNN News, The Christian Science Monitor, CNN Headline News with Nancy Grace, Cosmopolitan.com, United Hemispheres Magazine, Health, The Dr. Keith Ablow Show, Southern Living, Naomi Judd's Morning Show* on Hallmark and *Rosie* among others.



## THISTLE FARMS

*love heals*

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