



EVA'S GOOD HEART PILLOWS

By Helen Chang

Each of Eva Maerz's rose-filled pillows is an ambassador of love.

And they have touched many people. The popular pillows have been given as gifts to lovers, spouses, mothers, daughters, friends, employees, and strangers, for occasions such as weddings, retirements, thank yous, recovery, stressful situations, and comforting the self. One man bought a pillow to carry in his sleeping bag while traveling the world. Another gave one as the final offering in a coffin.

Wherever they go, these gifts are reminders to open the heart. For Eva, they are a means of right livelihood; a way to make a living while encouraging people to remember love.

Each pillow comes with a note, bearing a message written by Eva's spiritual teacher, Lama Zopa Rinpoche: "Without a big good heart, life is suffering and boring. Having a good heart is feeling responsibility for the happiness of all universal beings. This is an exciting and happy life. Especially because it brings peace to the minds of every universal being. Let's do it now."

Based in Munich, Germany, Eva started making the pillows in 1982, as a way to work from home, while spreading the message of a good heart. She had previously worked as a healer and teacher of herbs, and knew the soothing effects of the rose. She had also recently returned from living in Kopan Monastery, Nepal, and wanted to share her spiritual teacher's work. And she needed to support two young children, who came to live with her when their mother, Eva's sister, died.

Her products sold out in the first year, and every year since. The income was enough to support her and the family. And now, 20 years later, it continues to support her and her partner, Alnis Grants, who is the director of FPMT's Aryatara Institut in Munich.

The heart-shaped pillows come in three sizes, ranging from \$15 to \$80 each. They are made with exquisite materials. The covers are cut from luxurious fabrics, such as silk, taffeta, and tapestry. The fillings are special Moroccan rose petals, whose scent lasts for many years. And each pillow is handmade by Eva.



An example of Eva's hearts

Other entrepreneurs have made imitations, but none have been successful. Some have even lost money. None used the genuine ingredients to fill the pillows, or exquisite fabrics to make its covers. And none have had the message or intention that Eva had for sharing love. "I put good wishes in it," she says.

Eva has thought about franchising the product, but says it would lose its special touch. She still sews each one, turning out about 200 pieces a year, and selling them herself at craft fairs. "It's a nice object, which is connecting people," she says, "Something easy to be happy. Like an offering." ❁



Eva and Alnis