



News Release

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Acting Assistant U.S. Secretary of State visits Alaffia as products launch in 3,600 Walmart stores across the U.S.

Alaffia growth expected to add 60 jobs in Tumwater, Washington, thousands in West Africa, and increase funding for women's empowerment projects.

Tumwater, Wash. — Alaffia's women's empowerment programs will get a significant boost with a new relationship with Walmart, Alaffia's founders, Olowo-n'djo Tchala and Prairie Rose Hyde announced today. Alaffia body care products made their debut in Walmart retail stores earlier this month, and are being distributed to 3,600 locations around the U.S.

The new relationship was announced as Acting Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Donald Yamamoto visited Alaffia's headquarters in Tumwater, Washington, on March 20. He traveled to the company's headquarters to explore what Alaffia is doing to encourage trade and create jobs.

"Rose and I founded Alaffia to alleviate poverty and empower women and families in Africa and the U.S.," said Tchala. "This partnership with Walmart puts more of our fair-trade products in the homes of U.S. consumers. That means even more women and children will have access to education, medical care and the ability to be self-sufficient by working in Alaffia enterprises."

"Our products are handcrafted using unique West African traditions that retain the natural qualities of indigenous shea nuts, coconut oil and herbs," said Hyde, who has overseen the development of Alaffia product formulas. "This is all done with sustainable harvesting and fair trade practices that ensure people are paid fairly and treated ethically — a mandatory for us."

"Having these socially-responsible products in Walmart stores will help bring greater awareness to fair trade and women's empowerment issues, and we think that's great for everyone," said Hyde.

"Our customers have told us that second to price, where products are made influences their purchase decisions," said Cindi Marsiglio, vice president, U.S. manufacturing, Walmart. "We are focused on buying great quality products that create jobs in communities across the U.S. It makes sense for our customers, our communities and our company."

Based on data and analysis by Boston Consulting Group and published in Walmart's Policy Roadmap to Renew U.S. Manufacturing, it's estimated that 1 million new U.S. jobs will be created through Walmart's American Jobs Initiative, including direct manufacturing job growth of approximately 250,000, and indirect job growth of approximately 750,000 in the support and service sectors.

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Alaffia employees and contract “gatherers,” who are mostly women, number more than 14,000 in West Africa. They collect shea nuts, coconuts, herbs and grasses and — at Alaffia cooperatives in Togo, and Ghana — create shea butter, coconut oil, baskets and essence used in Alaffia products. These raw materials are then shipped to Alaffia’s headquarters and manufacturing plant in Tumwater where 145 people are employed. The materials are refined, packaged and prepared for distribution throughout the U.S. and 10 countries.

“We are very grateful to Walmart for making this opportunity available and to Ambassador Yamamoto for visiting our headquarters,” said Tchala. “This will positively impact our common mission to create opportunity and help relieve human suffering here and in my native country of Togo.”

[Alaffia](#) was founded in 2003 in the Olympia, Washington garage of husband and wife team, Olowo-n’djo Tchala and Prairie Rose Hyde. Today Alaffia employs 145 at its 100,000 sq. ft. Tumwater, Washington headquarters and more than 14,000 directly and indirectly in West Africa. Alaffia’s non-profit empowerment initiatives have resulted in 59,775 trees planted, 34,640 school supply recipients, 8,253 bikes distributed, 25,588 eyeglasses donated, 12 schools constructed and more than 4,832 babies safely delivered in West Africa. To learn more, visit [Alaffia.com](#).

Donald Y. Yamamoto serves as the Acting Assistant U.S. Secretary of State over the Bureau of African Affairs. To learn more about Ambassador Yamamoto, visit [here](#).