

Ann Becker

AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Global Giving Through Experiential Travel: Ann Becker's Annual *Wonderful Women* Trips to Costa Rica

Since 2006, Ann Becker has designed and led annual *Wonderful Women* trips to Costa Rica, merging her 25+ year consultancy in organizing successful and meaningful meetings with her long-standing interest in international development and sustainability. Organized in partnership with EcoTeach Expeditions, each trip is a carefully crafted itinerary of education, home stays, volunteer activities, and rest and relaxation. They provide in-depth, enriching and transformative experiences, and offer myriad opportunities for global awareness and international giving.

While each 10-12 day itinerary varies, sample activities include:

- Two-day/two-night home stays with Costa Rican families in a small rural community (included at the beginning of all trips);
- Half-day volunteer projects at a woman-owned recycling business and wildlife refuge center;
- Customized visits with one of Costa Rica's few remaining indigenous communities;
- Guided hikes and boat rides through some of the most biologically rich and diverse environments on Earth;
- A day at a rural coffee cooperative to learn about the business, social and political realities of fair trade coffee production and sales;
- Ocean swimming and snorkeling, and zip lining through the rain forest canopy.



Philanthropic activities include:

- Educating prospective donors through the home stays, information sessions, cross-cultural learning exchanges, and volunteer opportunities;
- Providing organizational consulting through participants' professional experiences;
- Utilizing Costa Rican-owned accommodations and locally-owned guide and other services;
- Donating supplies, purchasing local products, and financially contributing to local organizations;
- After returning home:
 - Collecting and shipping school supplies to a poor rural community;
 - Sponsoring the care of animals at the wildlife refuge;
 - Stimulating school projects and fundraising to study and protect the rain forest;
 - Talking up how international travel can support local economies, provide meaningful interactions with local people, and build awareness and a culture of global giving.