

Got room for dresses?

BY KAREN MCKINLEY
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If you are going to the Caribbean or Cuba, Erika Maki has a package for you.

The owner of A Spa For You is looking for vacationers who are willing to take a few wedding dresses to give to women trying to start a business through a Soroptomist International initiative.

"This helps women in developing nations become independent merchants," Maki said in an interview on Friday. "It has been a success so far and this year I already have several people willing to help me get these dresses to ladies who need them."

Vacationers asked to bring items to businesswomen

It's easy to participate. Maki said all people need to do is tell her when and where they are going. She will give them up to 10 dresses in a vacuum-sealed bag to take with them. Once they arrive at their destination they give the dresses to the women who requested them.

The purpose is two-fold. It helps women start their own businesses and become self-sufficient income earners. They use the dresses to start rental shops, who will make dresses available to brides and teenage girls for weddings and 15-

year birthdays.

"Women need these dresses, but often they can't afford to buy," Maki said. "They still want to look their best on their big days, so they are willing to spend a little more and rent a formal dress."

The average rental price for one of these dresses is \$50.

There have been plenty of donations, Maki said. Now all she needs are people willing to help her deliver them.

To find out more, contact Maki at 475-6977.