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Bucks County carpet company offering tapestry to benefit charity

By Robert Strauss For The Inquirer

Bill and Winnifred Morrow, the fourth-generation sibling owners of Langhorne Carpet Co. in Pennel, Bucks County, were looking for a way to honor their forebears as the business - which calls the White House a client - approached its 80th anniversary.

The answer involved a young talent, a Pearl Buck book, and two Habitat for Humanity branches, one here and one in Japan.

"We have been in this area for a long time and wanted to find a way to give back - to affect the community in a positive way," said Bill Morrow.

So Langhorne teamed up with Alex Papachristidis, named last year as one of Elle Décor Magazine's top 25 young designers, to produce an unlimited run of tapestries christened "Tree of Life" that will be handwoven on Langhorne's looms. Proceeds from the \$150, 27-by-36-inch works of art, inspired by the 1948 children's book The Big Wave (about a Japanese tsunami and its aftermath), will benefit the local Habitat for Humanity chapter. That branch will then send some of its earnings to Habitat for Humanity in Japan to help rebuild after the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

Langhorne is one of the last two U.S. designers and manufacturers of what are known as Wilton weave carpets (the other is in Bloomsburg, Pa.). Wilton-loomed carpets, named after the English town where the looms originated more than 300 years ago, are pile carpets formed by inserting wires in pile warps on manually operated looms. Wilton carpets are thought to have more body and resilience than the more common tufted carpets.

As such, Langhorne has gotten many prestigious commissions. During the Reagan administration, Langhorne replaced carpet in the private presidential quarters. The company's carpets are in the House chamber in Independence Hall, duplicating what was there during the 18th century; the Virginia State Capitol; the Winterthur mansion in Wilmington; Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church on Sixth Street; and the American Philosophical Society.

But the company's main business is high-end design in private homes, usually through interior decorators. That is how Papachristidis, a New York-based decorator, got involved initially with Langhorne and eventually the tapestry project.



RAYMOND W. HOLMAN

At the Langhorne Carpet Co. mill in Bucks County where the tapestries are made are (from left) Mira Nakashima, Bill Morrow, Winnifred M. Morrow, Linda Andrews, and Dave Lesh. The "Tree of Life" tapestries are handwoven on Langhorne's looms.

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The tapestries are available starting this week.

"It was a great opportunity for us to give back to the community that has supported us for these 80 years," said Morrow.

For more information or to order a "Tree of Life" tapestry, go to www.habitatbucks.org/ or www.langhornecarpets.com.

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Looks like you can get them at www.habitatbucks.org/; it's written in small type at the bottom. They look gorgeous!
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