



{ PHILANTHROPY }

## Good Design

### Fashion made designer

Donna Karan famous, but these days, she's just as passionate about philanthropy. Five years after launching the nonprofit **URBAN ZEN FOUNDATION**, Karan and her colleagues have implemented an impressive collection of programs to empower children, promote well-being and preserve cultures worldwide.

"The past is culture. The present is health care. And the future is education," she says. "It's mind, body and spirit. For me, that's really what Urban Zen is all about."

Helping residents of Haiti recover from the devastating 2010 earthquake is one priority for the foundation and for Karan, whose spring 2012 line featured patterns inspired by the country's artists. She sees great promise in the island's cultural community and aims to strengthen local economies by creating vocational opportunities and connecting craftspeople with new customers — including customers at Urban Zen stores in New York, Los Angeles and Sag Harbor, N.Y., where proceeds from apparel and home decor sales support the foundation.

"The culture is the real soul and

spirit of Haiti. I think that's why it's survived the way it has," Karan says.

Graduates of the Urban Zen Integrative Therapy Program, a course that seeks to change the health-care paradigm by integrating such practices as yoga, meditation and other alternative options with traditional health sciences, are also in Haiti to serve pediatric patients at St. Damien Hospital in Port-au-Prince. Karan became an advocate for holistic treatments more than a decade ago, as her husband, sculptor Stephan Weiss, battled lung cancer. Since his death, she's teamed up with Beth Israel Medical Center in New York and several other programs to introduce integrative therapies to patients and practitioners.

"The opportunity is about health care," Karan says. "Where can we find the care in health?"

Karan's latest project, a book showcasing her late husband's art, is due out this fall.

"If it weren't for my husband, I couldn't be the person I am today," she says. "The book shows the full collection of his work, the legacy of Urban Zen and how he inspired me to do the work that I do."

—RENEE BRINCKS