

ROBERT LESTAK

B.A. POLITICAL SCIENCE '14

What do soap and lip balm have to do with helping people in developing countries?

For Robert Lestak, the answer is "everything."

His company, Wholly Hemp, manufactures natural skincare products and donates 25 percent of its profits to provide microloans for women in poverty-stricken countries such as Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and Uganda. To date, the company has supported 254 loans benefitting 1,270 people.

Lestak started Wholly Hemp in 2010, right after graduation from high school. He grew the company while attending CI and found tremendous synergy between the two activities. "I applied what I was learning about politics and social business directly to my work," he says. "I also developed a firebrand passion for helping unrepresented individuals, and I learned to question preconceived notions."

One of these notions is that one person can't make a difference.

"I look at what we've done so far, and I know that we assist about 30 additional people each month," says Lestak. "It's pretty powerful. We're proof that it *is* possible to change the world and to do it in a financially sustainable way."

An ardent supporter of the University, Lestak serves as a guest speaker for social business courses on campus and helps CI's award-winning Model United Nations Team prepare for upcoming conferences.

Wholly Hemp is based in Camarillo. To learn more about its mission, staff and product offerings, visit the company website.

"Since attending CI, I've become increasingly aware of my ability to encourage others, particularly those I work with, toward higher education," says Scott. "My example helps them realize the greater potential within their own lives."

Scott's travel schedule precludes his ability to attend most alumni events, which is something he regrets. "One of the things I miss most about CI is my interaction with the professors and other students," he says. "Time is a valuable asset. It's a gift I'd like to give to the college that gave me so much."

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