

Angela Lee '21 and Christina Lee '21: Empowering Entrepreneurs

BY LAURA KORS '21

When Angela Lee '21 read that the average age of human trafficking victims in the United States is 15, she and her twin sister, Christina Lee '21, decided to do something about it. To support survivors of human trafficking and at-risk individuals, they started Starling Box, a subscription box company working to help human trafficking survivors.

"It is depressing to realize that so many people our age are being abused and taken advantage of. It also helped us to see that this is our generation's fight and that it was our responsibility to do something about it," Angela Lee said.

Starting over the summer, Starling Box will send out boxes monthly to subscribers with products made by survivors of trafficking and at-risk individuals. Products include clothing, jewelry, candles and more. All profits will be given to charities that support human trafficking survivors.

"We have two ways that we work against [trafficking]. One is that we empower survivors by supporting fair employment and a fair paying job, and second is that we support charities like ZOE

international, which rescues children from trafficking and raises awareness," Christina Lee said.

By supporting business effort of survivors, Angela Lee said she hopes to encourage others to shift away from the abusive practices and common human trafficking involved in fast fashion and start to focus on finding ethically sourced clothing.

"We decided on a subscription box because it gives people an opportunity to discover new products that are made ethically and find amazing organizations working to fight trafficking," Angela Lee said.

Angela Lee also said that supporting businesses run by survivors can be an important means of prevention.

"We are hoping to give human trafficking survivors the economic means to escape the trafficking industry permanently and restore their dignity by helping them support themselves. We also want to support communities particularly vulnerable to trafficking to prevent them from being forced into unsafe conditions," Angela Lee said.

Over the last few months, the sisters obtained

an LLC permit to start their business. They also designed a logo and began marketing through social media to gain support. They created a website, as well as Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest accounts.

"[Starting a business taught us] organizational skills. We had to contact people and figure out how to negotiate with people and make deals," Christina Lee said.

Their friends said they support the initiative and are encouraged by the work they do.

"It's very empowering to see two girls creating a project support women who have gone through hardships in the world. It's really cool to see people trying to make a difference and putting their time and effort into a valuable cause," Samantha McLoughlin '21 said.

The sisters said they are hopeful for the future of the business and the changes it can create.

"We hope it is able to raise awareness for the cause and teach people about what human trafficking is because it is not talked about in mainstream media and encourage people to buy more ethically," Christina Lee said.

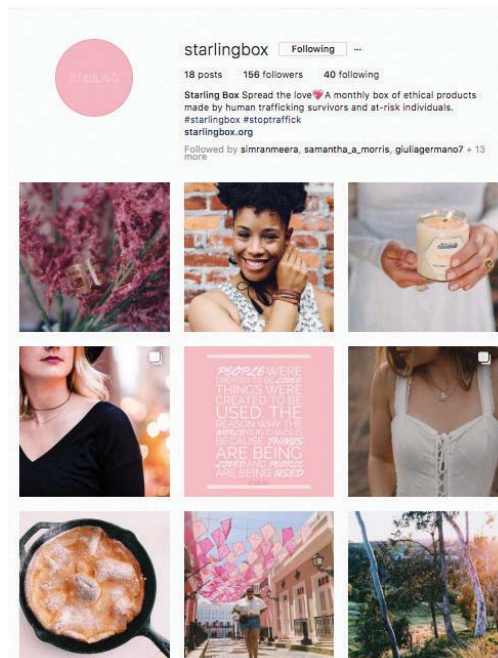


LAURA KORS '21/SPECTRUM
Angela Lee and Christina Lee pose for a photo.



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A subscriber wears a bracelet she received in a Starling Box.



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Starling Box maintains an active instagram to gain support.