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GIFTS PRESENTED *by* FIRST LADY MICHELLE OBAMA
on the OCCASION OF THE 65TH ANNIVERSARY of the
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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The presentation of gifts to visiting foreign dignitaries is a time-honored tradition that helps transcend cultural barriers and offers a symbol of peace and friendship.

In honor of the 65th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly, First Lady Michelle Obama has assembled an assortment of gifts that reflect her past 20 months in the White House. The White House Kitchen Garden, which provides the Obama family and White House guests with delicious fresh produce, is the central theme behind this year's gift.





A special recipe of pickled, hand-picked ingredients from the White House Kitchen Garden, including sun gold tomatoes, okra, cucumbers, chocolate bell peppers, carrots, lemon verbena, and fresh herbs are presented in jars with the First Lady's signature. The jars are topped with original artwork done by California artists, Michael Cronan and Karin Hibma, who were inspired by a photo of Mrs. Obama tending to the garden with children and a wheelbarrow.

Chamomile seeds were harvested from the White House Kitchen Garden for the first time this year and are being shared by Mrs. Obama. Also included in the gift is an off-white clay Tea Canister hand-made by Virginia potter Catherine White, whose work is inspired by the varied landscapes of nature.

A three-wick soy candle is an original design from the Chesapeake Bay Candle company, based in Rockville, Maryland. The relief on the candle was inspired by a photograph of the frieze, an oak leaf and rose garland, which hangs above the North Portico of the White House. Our national tree and flower, the oak tree and rose, symbolize strength and compassion.



The candle is presented in a custom-made box in a brilliant shade of shimmering sky blue with a silver imprint of The White House on two sides, also designed by Chesapeake Bay Candle. Details on top of the box are taken from the frieze and the lid is secured by a caramel-colored band affixed to a decorative pewter medallion, an exact replica which is a part of the oak and rose garland on the candle. Each gift is presented inside a one-of-a-kind, hand woven basket made of Maplewood harvested in the Midwest by The Longaberger Company, which is a family-owned and operated American company that has been in business for over 100 years. Each basket is lined with a khaki canvas insert. A nickel tag is affixed to the outside of each bag and engraved with the words, "Made Exclusively for Michelle Obama."

FROM THE BASKET MAKERS

“We are honored to be invited by First Lady Michelle Obama to create a uniquely designed basket for this very special occasion,” said Tami Longaberger, CEO of the Longaberger Company. “As a family-owned, Ohio business we are very proud to provide this gift that reflects our American craftsmanship and heritage.”

FROM THE TEA CANISTER MAKER

“It was an honor to make tea canisters for the First Lady in a project that draws deserved attention to the local. I hope that the individual character of each canister speaks to the diversity of the guests as they experience the resonances of the handmade object,” said Catherine White.

FROM THE CANDLE MAKER

“It is a tremendous honor to be selected by First Lady Michelle Obama and her office to create a gift for her guests,” said Mei Xu, Creator and President of Chesapeake Bay Candle. “We sincerely hope the candle will be enjoyed by the first ladies and their families around the world and remind them of the genuine hospitality and warmth of our country and the American people. The candle also pays tribute to our First Lady’s love for nature and peace.”

FROM THE GRAPHIC DESIGNERS

“The excitement to work and collaborate on this project was indeed a pleasure and a privilege. Art, creativity, design, craftsmanship and attention to detail came thru every aspect of the process and we so enjoyed partaking in it, with the whole team. Being a part of something larger so much than oneself is always humbling and invigorating,” said Michael Patrick Cronan.

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(Official White House Photos by Chuck Kennedy)