

# Support sought for shoes that leave no footprint

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SOLE launches crowd funding campaign for carbon-negative footwear

Footwear specialist SOLE has joined forces with recycled cork producer ReCORK to launch a crowd funding Kickstarter (1) campaign to fund the world's first carbon-negative footwear.

The 30-day campaign starts on October 29, 2013 and aims to raise 150,000 USD through pledges to fund the moulds and first production run of the carbon-negative shoes. Carbon-negative processes go one step further than 'carbon neutral' activities. Rather than simply offsetting the carbon footprint, carbon-negative projects take more carbon out of the atmosphere than they generate thus give back to the environment.

SOLE - a Canadian manufacturer of Custom Footbeds (orthopaedic insoles) and footwear – is partnering with ReCORK - North America's largest natural cork recycling programme – to deliver this ambitious idea. They have worked closely together for four years during which time SOLE has used recycled cork in its products. Now they are taking the ultimate step together to create carbon-negative shoes.

"Making carbon negative footwear will be no small feat but we're ready to share our idea and prove its worth," says Mike Baker, Founder and CEO of SOLE. "We have completed an environmental assessment of our operational CO2 footprint from the initial cork collection to the production of the footwear. Added to the CO2 sink associated with our cork tree planting efforts, we have determined we are actually carbon-negative," says Baker.

In just four years, ReCORK has collected over 45 million corks from a network of 1800 partners including vineyards, restaurants, tasting rooms and wine retailers, not to mention some global businesses such as MGM and American Airlines. ReCORK promotes natural cork, advocates the greater use of cork as an alternative to petroleum-based materials and aims to recycle some of the 1.3 billion corks consumed in the US each year. In addition, it has also supported the planting of 8,000 new cork oak trees to date.

The joint SOLE/ReCORK project has significant scale and vision but for it to become a reality, they need the help of the community. "We are a relatively small, young business that needs help from like-minded individuals and investors to get this project off the ground," continues Baker. "I'm a great believer in Kickstarter crowd funding and really hope we can raise the capital we need to get our plans underway."

The Kickstarter campaign will fund two pieces of footwear. The Grace is a pretty and functional ballet flat for women and the Tour is a fashionable, casual everyday shoe for men. Each design includes a 100% recycled cork footbed that contours to the unique shape of each person's foot, and a 100% recycled cork midsole. Neither contains any direct petroleum-based material inputs.

The Kickstarter project, titled ReCORK: Imagine Carbon Negative Footwear launches on October 29, 2013 at <http://kck.st/19OB6bd> Donations large and small are welcomed and everyone who donates upwards of 99 USD will receive a pair of Grace and a pair of Tour shoes when they are produced (retail value 130 USD). But

don't hang about because SOLE and ReCORK only have until midnight on November 28, 2013 to raise the funds they need.

"I would urge people who share our environmental ideals to step up to the plate and donate what they can to secure the success of this pioneering project. By making a donation you can be part of our plans – and ultimate success," says Mike.

For more information see [recork.org/press](http://recork.org/press)

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Notes to editors

(1) Kickstarter is the world's largest crowd-funding platform. Its aim is to help bring creative projects to life by asking people to support great ideas by donating money to fund the idea. Since its launch in 2009, 5 million people have pledged \$838 million to fund 50,000 projects.

(2) SOLE is a Canadian company, established in 2001. SOLE's first mission was to create an affordable, customisable orthopaedic product that provided unflinching support and superior comfort. Achieving this, SOLE expanded its vision, incorporating the supportive platform of its Footbeds into a line of Custom Flip Flops and Footwear. Understanding that no two feet are alike, SOLE Flips and Footwear mould to the unique shape of each foot for a personalised fit that is truly unrivalled. See more at [yoursole.com](http://yoursole.com).

TWITTER: [@itsyoursole](https://twitter.com/itsyoursole) FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/itsyoursole](https://facebook.com/itsyoursole)

(3) ReCORK is sponsored by SOLE and is North America's largest natural cork recycling initiative. ReCORK gives wine corks new life in the form of footwear and other upcycled products. The ReCORK initiative is based in the US and has over 1800 collection partners. See more at [recork.org](http://recork.org). TWITTER: [@recork](https://twitter.com/recork) FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/recork](https://facebook.com/recork)