

Sand and Sea ***Creating for Charity – October 8, 2016***

There are countless opportunities for charitable knitting and crochet -- so many, in fact, that it's impossible to list them all! While charity crafting can be rewarding, think carefully about the needs of the organization. This will help assure that the project is genuinely useful- and therefore that much more appreciated.

- If you don't have the time – monetary donations to cover mailing/distribution costs.
- Some orgs want donations of yarn. Some local yarn shops also take donations of yarn and pass them along to women's shelters to teach knitting / crochet.
- Crocheting and knitting for charity is also a great time to learn a new skill. Find a pattern that challenges you, or interests you or a color you wouldn't wear but would like to knit!
- You may contribute on a national or local level.
- If the organizations provided in the information don't resonate, a google search will turn up many other opportunities.
- Charities, hospitals, homeless shelters, and disaster and poverty relief groups typically welcome donations of knit or crocheted items. Consider that not all of our projects will be needed by every organization
- Check out the organization that interests you. Contact the organization or a representative directly before you start working.
- For the most part, though, following a few basic guidelines will ensure that your charity project is useful and welcome

Guidelines for making and donating:

- When knitting charity items remember to take pride in your work. Don't donate something you'd be embarrassed to wear or give to a friend.
- Following the guidelines of the charity is crucial. Some charities only accept new items. Some do not want wool, or only washable fibers, etc. These guidelines have been created for a reason. Most charities are run by volunteers. Don't create more work for them by not following the guidelines.
- Consider the colors you use for making the items. Soft or bright, fun colors for children's items -- attractive colors for adults.
- Make sure your items are clean before donating. If you have animals or you smoke, check that they don't smell or are covered in animal hair and that the charity will accept them – even laundered. These smells can be fatal to newborns and preemies and uncomfortable for people with allergies.

Preemie projects – Many hospitals report an urgent need for blankets, clothes, and hats for premature infants. Parents may have difficulty finding clothing small enough for their tiny child, and many hospitals rely on donations from knitters and crocheters to fill this gap. Guidelines for preemie knitting are usually specific. Because the little ones are fragile, here are some guidelines provided by NICU nurses:

- Make it small. It is nearly impossible to overstate how tiny some of the recipients are. Hats could be small enough to fit over a plum. Blankets may be as small as 12 inches (30 cm) square. A range of sizes are needed, but when in doubt, go smaller. A premature infant's tiny size is only emphasized in a too-big garment.
- Make it washable. Nurses can't worry that a garment will shrink or felt in the wash. Also, some preemies may be sensitive to natural fibers, so stick to synthetics like acrylic.
- Make it soft. Infants have delicate skin, and premature infants doubly so. Test your yarn by rubbing it across the inside of your wrist -- if it feels the least bit scratchy, save it for another project.
- Make it interesting. Even the youngest babies notice and respond to variations in color and texture. Avoid patterns with holes for little fingers to get tangled in, and stay away from colors like green and yellow, which can make babies look jaundiced.

Shelter projects - Homeless shelters need warm clothing for their clients, but they also often need washcloths and other sanitary items. When making items for shelter guests, follow a few simple rules to make sure your projects remain useful.

- Make it washable. The person who gets your donation will probably not be able to "hand wash, dry flat". Use yarn that's machine washable and dryable; acrylic is the obvious choice. Washcloths, are best in basic dishcloth cotton.

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For socks, superwash wool (reinforced with nylon) is acceptable. Never use cotton for garments, since it quickly absorbs moisture and becomes cold.

- Focus on extremities. Hats, gloves, and socks are desperately needed items, since the extremities are prone to frostbite.

Global projects - range from comfort dolls for AIDS orphans to sweaters for penguins caught in oil slicks. The projects are as diverse as the people whose needs they meet. Before you take up yarn, though, think through your project carefully. Sometimes global projects are time sensitive and needed for only a short while such as sweaters for penguins caught in oils slicks.

- Follow the rules. Many organizations ask for particular colors, patterns, or yarns. Remember that the organization knows best what colors are appropriate for the culture and what fibers are warm enough for the climate. Check the organization's website for their guidelines, or contact the charity directly.
- Examine your priorities. Shipping isn't cheap, and some items can be more easily purchased locally. We all like to think that the love put into our projects makes them more special, but sometimes the practical value counts as much as the thought. Consider whether the organization can do more with the cash you spent on your yarn and postage than with the hat you shipped express to central Asia. As a general rule, save your knitting and crocheting for items that can't be easily purchased, like those adorable penguin sweaters.

Yarn Guidelines (be sure to check with individual organizations for recommendations):

Plain, basic yarns are usually best such as Lily Kitchen Cotton, Berroco Comfort, Plymouth Baby Boutique, Sirdar Snuggly, Caron Simply Soft, Lion Cotton Ease, Lion Microspun, TLC Cotton Plus and TLC Cotton Amor, Red Heart Supersaver. These yarns are easy to wash, and can easily be made into all of the types of suggested patterns. Before you choose your yarn, think about how the item will be used. Hats for cancer patients or babies should be made of softer material, while you might want to make hats and blankets for a children's program or a homeless shelter out of something longer-wearing like Super Saver.

Ravelry Patterns:

Search by pattern type, free, if for child or adult, etc.

#s from Ravelry for free patterns:

Hats: 27,800 / 17,600 are knitting. 8,500 are for adults – the rest are for preemies through teens.

Scarves: 23,265 / 16742 are knitting.

Blankets: 11,740 / 4,787 are knitting. 1,900 for babies but they range from Premie through teens.

Squares for washcloths or afghans: 5,408 / 3,800 for knitting

Books: (check your local library!)

Knitting for Peace: Make the World a Better Place One Stitch at a Time – Betty Christensen

Knit Along with Debbie Macomber - A Charity Guide for Knitters (Leisure Arts #4803): 14 Featured Charities & Projects For Each! – Debbie Macomber

Knitting to Share: 25 Projects to Show You Care – Gerald Alt

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| <i>Organization</i> | <i>Purpose/Mission</i> | <i>Additional Info</i> |
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| Yarn Angels South Bay http://yarnangels.wixsite.com/yarnangelsouthbay | We are a group of volunteers who crochet, knit, quilt, and sew items (not for profit, non-denominational) that are requested and used by a number of local charities | We currently support Casa del Los Angelitos; Cheer for Children; Harbor Interfaith Services; Northeast Community Clinic; Rainbow Services, Veterans Affairs Hospital sin Long Beach and West LA. |
| Hand Made Especially For You http://www.handmadeespecially.org/ http://www.ravelry.com/groups/handmade-especially-for-you | Handmade Especially for You is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt non-profit charity that organizes knitters and crocheters to make handmade comfort scarves for abused women. | Please send your finished scarves to: Handmade Especially for You c/o Leslye Borden 30065 Grandpoint Lane Rancho Palos Verdes CA 90275 |
| Knots of Love www.knots-of-love.org | Based in Newport Beach, Knots of Love was founded in 2007. Its mission is to provide knitted and crocheted hats to men, women and children experiencing the effects of cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. | Please make hats with these acceptable yarns: Berroco Comfort, Plymouth Baby Boutique, Sirdar Snuggly, Caron Simply Soft, Lion Cotton Ease, Lion Microspun, TLC Cotton Plus and TLC Cotton Amor |
| Project Linus http://www.projectlinus.org/ http://www.ravelry.com/groups/project-linus | Non-profit organization, providing homemade blankets to children in need. | Provide new handmade blankets and afghans – knitted, crocheted, quilted, fleece sewn, etc. Patterns and guidelines on web site |
| Warm Up America http://www.warmupamerica.org/ http://www.ravelry.com/groups/warm-up-america | Warm Up America was established in 1991 and distributes warm afghans, caps and other items to tens of thousands of people. | The website provides knit and crochet patterns or you can improvise and design your own WUA blocks are a great opportunity to learn how to knit or crochet as well as practice new stitches! |
| Mother Bear Project: http://www.motherbearproject.org/ http://www.ravelry.com/groups/mother-bear-project | Mother Bear Project is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing comfort and hope to children, primarily those affected by HIV/AIDS in emerging nations, by giving them a gift of love in the form of hand-knit and crocheted bears | You can knit bears, sponsor bears, donate money to help defray shipping costs, etc. Pattern is purchased for a \$5 donation. |
| Halos of Hope – Chemo Hats For more information, visit our website at www.halosofhope.org . http://www.ravelry.com/groups/halos-of-hope | Halos of Hope (tm) is 501 c3 approved charity. We are an organization committed to providing in-need cancer patients with crafted hats donated by caring volunteers. | We support over 450 cancer centers in the United States, focusing our efforts on those who serve the underinsured or uninsured. |
| Knitted Knockers http://www.knittedknockersusa.org/ http://www.ravelry.com/groups/knitted-knockers | Knitted Knockers Charities is a nationwide non-profit public charity (501 (c) (3)) that provides Free Knitted Knockers to women who have had a mastectomy | Since starting in 2010, our goal has been to make mastectomy patients aware of options for prosthetic breasts, provide free patterns to make knitted knockers and to coordinate the distribution of free knockers to anyone needing them. |

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Additional Organizations:

- [Red Scarf Project](#) -- Provides knit and crocheted red scarves in a care package to college students who have aged out of the foster care system. **Make:** Red (any shade) knit or crocheted scarves 60" long x 5-8" wide (items accepted Sept 1-Dec 15 annually)
- [Binky Patrol](#) -- Provides handmade blankets to children with chronic & terminal illnesses and those who are in foster care or experiencing trauma. **Make:** Handmade blankets
- [Hat Box Foundation](#) -- Provides knit and crochet hats in individual "hat boxes" to cancer treatment centers. **Make:** Knit or crochet hats in soft yarn
- [Binky Patrol](#) -- Provides handmade blankets to children with chronic & terminal illnesses and those who are in foster care or experiencing trauma. **Make:** Handmade blankets
- [Care Wear](#) -- Resources for volunteers to make items for local neonatal intensive care units. **Make:** Premie and full-term hats and booties, small blankets
- [Christmas at Sea](#) -- Provides handknit items to mariners working on boats away from their families. **Make:** Patterns provided by the group for items such as hats, scarves, and socks
- [Crochet for Cancer](#) -- Provides crochet hats and other items to cancer centers across the US. **Make:** Crochet hats, scarves, blankets, and prayer shawls in soft yarn
- [Feel Better Friends](#) -- Handmade dolls custom made to match a child with an illness or disability, complete with wigs, leg braces, glasses, etc. **Make:** Doll matching a child in need (contact organization to get started)
- [Hat Box Foundation](#) -- Provides knit and crochet hats in individual "hat boxes" to cancer treatment centers. **Make:** Knit or crochet hats in soft yarn
- [Prayer Shawl Ministry](#) -- Resources for making and distributing prayer shawls. **Make:** Knit or crocheted prayer shawl
- afghans for Afghans is a humanitarian and educational people-to-people project that sends hand-knit and crocheted blankets and sweaters, vests, hats, mittens, and socks to the beleaguered people of Afghanistan. This grassroots effort is inspired by Red Cross volunteers who made afghans, socks, slippers, and other items for soldiers and refugees during World Wars I and II and other times of crisis and need. <http://www.afghansforafghans.org/>

This summary barely scratches the surface! Always check organizations on line and confirm they are still in operation, that contact and mailing information is up to day and that they still need the listed items. Needs change over time and some organization run 'campaigns' during certain times of the year for very specific items to fill current needs.

Ravelry Resources:

- Chemo Cap Library: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/chemo-cap-pattern-library>
 - The goal of this group is to provide a resource library and database of hat patterns that are suitable for chemo caps.
- Halos of Hope – Chemo Hats: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/halos-of-hope>
- Mother Bear Project: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/mother-bear-project>
- Knitted Knockers: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/knitted-knockers>
- Handmade Especially For You (local): <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/handmade-especially-for-you>
- Bundles of Joy : <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/bundles-of-joy>
 - Do you sew? Crochet? Knit? We have babies and older children too. Items are donated to the Pine Ridge Reservation.

Warm Up America: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/warm-up-america>

Project Linus: <http://www.ravelry.com/groups/project-linus>

Pattern Resources:

- Most organizations web sites have patterns – usually free for items that will be helpful to them based on their guidelines.
- Ravelry is a good source for free hat, scarf, and blanket patterns.
- Resource for crafting info and patterns: Craft Yarn Council <http://www.craftyarnCouncil.com/>