



## APRIL NEWSLETTER

April 30, 2012

Today's topics:

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- With the help of many volunteers, we delivered just over 1,100 comfort scarves in April
- We have added 3 new shelters so now we serve 59
- Welcome to a new affiliate in N. CA
- Shelters love our comfort scarves
- Yarn companies continue generously supporting Handmade
- Individual donors contribute a lot
- Sponsor shipping yarn to a volunteer or scarves to a shelter
- Our affiliates are doing well
- We're making lightweight scarves for summer
- Several shelters requested baby blankets
- Several of our volunteers are successful abuse survivors
- Website update and improvement
- There is still too much domestic violence and too, too few comfort scarves

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*And now for the details:*

In April, we delivered over **1,100 comfort scarves in time for Mother's Day**. All of you worked so hard to achieve this goal. Boxes arrived on my doorstep every day. It was incredible. Getting them ready was a classic example of team work: yarn companies donated the yarn, kit makers made kits; volunteers knitted/crocheted the kits into comfort scarves; wrappers prepared the scarves for shipping; shipping volunteers packed them into boxes; Fed Ex, USPS, and a few driving volunteers delivered them. What a dedicated and huge group of participants! We have at least 50 volunteers, too many to list individually, here locally. I certainly recognize that Handmade would not have been able to do this without each and every one of you. Thank you all so much.



In April, we added 3 new shelters to our growing list of those receiving comfort scarves. They are: **Union Rescue Mission, WomenShelter of Long Beach** and **Berkeley Food and Housing Project**. Each new shelter has a good story to go with it. **Sheri Schrier**, founder of **Happy Hats for Kids in Hospitals**, is our great benefactor. Not only does she provide our kit makers with space in the Happy Hats warehouse to make kits, but she also mentors me in how to grow and improve Handmade. One of her suggestions was to donate to **Union Rescue Mission** in downtown Los Angeles. I thought URM provided services only for men, but it turns out they run 3 shelters just for women. They requested 250 scarves for these 3 shelters.

The second new shelter is **WomenShelter of Long Beach**. **Mary Barton** made the connection here. She is a committed volunteer to many organizations, not just to Handmade, where she is one of our wrappers, and as such received an award from the Sororoptimists of Long Beach. My husband attended the banquet and brought home the book that listed the honorees and donors. One of the pages featured **WomenShelter of Long Beach**. I couldn't believe that I had missed a nearby shelter so I called them immediately. They were very excited by my offer of comfort scarves and requested 100!



I met **Betty Feinstein**, leader of our new N. CA affiliate, at **Stitches West**. She works for Kaiser Permanente, in the Human Resources Service Center in Alameda, CA. She organized a group of employees who want to make comfort scarves. Since her office already works with the **Berkeley Food and Housing Project**, they will donate their scarves there, our third new shelter. We sent Betty's group 25 kits to help them get started.

As we increase the number of shelters we serve, I just have to hope that our volume of incoming scarves will keep up with the number of shelters we want to supply. Keep scarfing. Please!



Shelters love our scarves. Here are a few excerpts from the pile of thank you letters I receive from them.

**Richard Kravetz**, Executive Director of **DVS for Santa Barbara County**, writes: *"Thank you for your support! Your gift of 25 comfort scarves gives women and children a promise to fulfill a dream of a home and life without violence. . . . Thank you for being part of the solution."*

**Vivian Clecak**, Co-Founder and CEO of **Human Options** in Irvine, tells us: *"Thank you for investing in Human Options' vision of a world in which every family member is safe from emotional and physical abuse."*

**Karen Earl**, Executive Director of **Jenesse Center** in Los Angeles, says: *"Thank you for your continuing support of our program with your donation of 25 comfort scarves. We really appreciate your labor of love on behalf of our clients."*

**Denise Carillo**, Volunteer Program Coordinator at the **Long Beach Rescue Mission**, tells us: *"This is just a quick note, but it comes from my heart to yours. Thank you for your very kind donations. . . . Your generosity will make an immediate difference in the lives of families in Long Beach."*

**Jennifer Adams**, Executive Director of the **North County Women's Shelter** in Paso Robles, writes: *"thank you for the very generous donation of 10 handmade comfort scarves. . . . Thank you for your generosity and commitment to our cause. Together we can make a difference in our community."*

**Lynn Moriarty**, Executive Director of **Shelter from the Storm** in Palm Desert, tells us: *"Please know that the women in our shelter are most appreciative of your comfort scarves. . . . We appreciate your support of the work we do on behalf of the abused women and their children."*

**Rev. Andy Bales**, CEO of **Union Rescue Mission** in downtown Los Angeles, says: *"Your recent donation is a blessing that will help change the circumstances of those experiencing the pangs of homelessness. . . . Your donation demonstrates to our clients that their community is by their side willing to help them and bless their lives."*

**Kathryn Somma**, Development Associate at **WomenShelter of Long Beach**, called 10 minutes after my husband dropped off the box of 100 comfort scarves. She was ecstatic. She said her women will be

thrilled to receive our scarves, that they come to the shelter with nothing but their children and to receive such a beautiful personal gift will lift their spirits. She was so excited that she asked me to send her the Handmade logo so she could write about our contribution in her newsletter.

Finally, and much to my surprise, I received a note from **Mrs. Anunike**, Program Supervisor, the **The Community Stitching Post**, sponsored by the **Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction**. She thanked Handmade for sending yarn and other knitting supplies to her group so “*several hundred women here can give back to the community . . . by doing thousands upon thousands of hours of community service. . . . Our thanks to you for making it possible for us to mend hearts – one stitch at a time.*” Honestly, I can’t find a record of our sending materials to this group, but I can tell from the items mentioned in the letter that we did.

Comments like these are so motivating to me. I couldn’t have imagined the power of a handmade scarf before we started donating them. I never expected such an outcome. Every month I receive many notes. When I share them with you, I try to select different shelters each month, but the impact is always the same. We, who have so much, have the responsibility to help others, who have so little. And our contributions mean a lot to them. This is the reason I try to find new shelters and keep Handmade growing. The need is so great. Thank you all who share this vision and feel impelled to improve our community.



Once again, we received generous yarn donations in April. **Crystal Palace Yarns** sent 5 huge cases (around 100 pounds!) of their beautiful yarn, including lots of pink yarn which was great for Mother’s Day scarves. What would we do without Susan’s support! **Karabella Yarn** sent 10 balls of each of Zodiac and Merino Superwash. We appreciate, but as I mentioned above, we made and delivered more than 1,100 scarves this month so we really used up these donations. Right now, we’re pretty wiped out of yarn. We need more. We’re like the “Hungry Caterpillar.” We’re always hungry for more. **Without yarn, we cannot make scarves.**

Thanks always to our sponsor, **June Grossberg**, owner of **Concepts in Yarn**, who affords us space to meet every week in her shop. June has done this for Handmade since we began in October, 2008.



Many individuals answered my plea in last month’s Newsletter for cash donations to help defray the cost of shipping scarves for Mother’s Day. **Barbara Stutzman, Carolyn Mishima, Chris Needham, Judy Dabinett Urban, and Mary Barton** made exceptional donations. Judy made hers in honor of her husband, **Russ Urban**, who was killed in an airplane crash. My local branch of **Union Bank** even made a donation. Thank you so much **Sonia Jarvis-Ciuro**, branch manager, and **Juan Leon**, who put through all the paperwork. **Annette and Alexander Maass** (in Germany) and **Vicki and Warren Ringer** made their regular monthly donations, which we do not take for granted, even though they arrive automatically. And we made it. All the scarves are shipped! Thank you so much. Of course, we need this all again for May’s shipping. So please, please make a cash contribution in addition to all your other contributions to Handmade. You can donate through **PayPal**. There is a link on our website.



This month, I received a particularly moving letter from **Cori Rosman**. She is a **Court Appointed Special Advocate** in Placer County. She works with at risk kids, kids who have aged out of the foster care system, and families who are reunifying. She told me one of the girls she mentors is an avid knitter and is trying to reconnect with her mother. Cori hoped Handmade would send yarn to them as a project they could do together. Of course, there is no money for the shipping from the Court and I cannot cover the shipping myself.

In another email, **Stephanie Longoria** told me she works for **Crittenton Services for Children and Families** in Fullerton. **Crittenton** is a group home for teenage girls. Stephanie works in the recreation department and offered her group of girls as volunteer scarfers for Handmade. She says many of her girls know how to crochet, and would love to know that something they made was going to such a good cause. Again, there is no money for the shipping.



Every month I receive letters from women who want to make comfort scarves but cannot afford to make a donation to cover the cost of shipping free yarn to them. I have to refuse sending kits to these women because I just can't pay any more for shipping. These experiences made me think about how we could get yarn to these groups and people without incurring more costs for Handmade. Here are my thoughts. I hope several of Handmade's participants will want to sponsor some of these needy volunteers, to earmark their cash donation to cover the shipping of kits to someone who cannot pay for them herself. In like manner, a donor could earmark her donation to cover shipping finished scarves to a certain shelter. In general, a \$20 per month donation covers my sending a box of kits to a volunteer and the cost of her sending back the finished scarves. On average, it costs Handmade about \$10 to send a box of scarves to a shelter. It costs a lot more to ship 250 scarves, of course, but mostly we send the scarves 25 at a time. This would make your cash donation much more personal. I hope it sounds good to you because Handmade needs to receive more money. Thanks in advance if you want to do this.



Our affiliates continue doing well.

**Renee Hoffman** donated 20 comfort scarves to **Interval House** in Long Beach CA. Usually, Renee makes all the scarves herself, but this time volunteers from the **Slipt Stitchers of the El Segundo Knitting Guild** made them as well. So glad that Renee's group is growing.

**Vicki Ringer** donated 20 comfort scarves to **Haven Hills** in Canoga Park CA. Since Vicki plans a busy summer for herself, she has also donated scarves for May, June, and July. She really works ahead.

**Ann Miller** in Pueblo CO delivered 8 comfort scarves to the **YWCA** there and 9 to **Family Crisis Services** in Canon City. Her group is small, but active. They donate every month. Good job, Ann!

**Dr. Laura Guertin**, on the Brandywine campus of Penn State, delivered 89 comfort scarves to the **Domestic Violence Center of Chester County**. Faculty, staff, students and friends are members of her group. Handmade is really broadening its scope of activities.

**Barb Kochuba's** group, Comfort Scarves, donated almost 300 comfort scarves and other items to 7 shelters in Southeastern PA. Barbara has done a great job organizing in her community. She publishes a newsletter and is setting up her own website. And, I'm glad to say, we're still connected. She shared our suggestions and patterns for summer weight scarves with her group.



Many of Handmade's 59 shelters are in the California desert. Shelter directors have commented to me that while the women love to receive our scarves, sometimes they cannot wear them because it is too hot. They asked if we would make scarves that were more light weight so their clients could enjoy them to a fuller extent. That's not hard. We experimented more with the donated mohair I mentioned last month and adapted 3 patterns to using it with very light yarn. The results were excellent. We ended up making comfort scarves that weigh less than 2 ounces, are airy, with big spaces between the stitches. They float around the neck or shoulders. One of our volunteers and pattern testers asked why we had to confine these patterns to mohair, and really I don't know why we should. I think they will work with any mix of a sock yarn and a fingering yarn. You can find these patterns, still geared to mohair, on our website.



And, speaking of our website, I must give extra special thanks to **Lori Jeskey** and **Ann Nye** for bringing our website into 2012. They have updated everything and today, as I type the Newsletter, I believe Lori is putting our patterns, newly revised and edited by Ann, on to the website. **Linda Freige** tested several of the patterns and photographed the results so you will be able to see the stitches and the finished scarves. In like manner, **Nancy English** tried out a new crochet pattern, which we found on **Ravelry**, and adapted it for the size scarves we want. **Wendy Baumring** did the same for patterns she devised. As a result, you can pick from a good variety of patterns for lighter weight scarves to make for summer. Since it is hot here in S CA from July through October, we can use these patterns for a long time. We have adapted making our kits accordingly. These newly revised patterns are a major step forward for Handmade. Thank you so much **Ann, Linda, Lori, Nancy, and Wendy**.



We're always on the lookout for more ways to help abused women. On average, they arrive at the shelters with nothing but their 2 ½ children. Their rooms at the shelters are equipped with a twin bed for the mom, bunk beds for the 2 kids and a crib or bassinette for the baby or baby on its way. Occasionally we receive donations for the babies, which all the shelters want. Recently **Ann Nye** finished knitting a very beautiful crib blanket which someone donated before she could finish it. I sent an email to all the shelters asking who needed it. I warned that the first shelter to reply would get it and that there was only one available. So many shelters requested the blanket that I felt badly for those who wanted it but replied too late to be the winner. If any of you have spare baby blankets, we will love to distribute them.



Making comfort scarves for abused women is heartwarming work for us scarf makers. Why do we do this? Some of us love making the scarves, working with the beautiful yarns, seeing the stack of wrapped scarves. Others want to serve the community and make it a better place. In retirement homes, for some participants making scarves is a reason to live. Yes, there are many reasons people participate in Handmade. Some participants tell me they are abuse survivors who would have wanted to receive a scarf in their time of need; other abuse survivors want to connect with current abuse victims, as someone connected with them when they were in that position. People participate in Handmade for a variety of reasons, all of them good. Thank you so much.

Another reason to help abused women is that abuse is bad for them and their families. The statistics are dreadful. One of the shelters calls this situation "The painful truth."

- A woman in the US is **battered every nine seconds**

- Domestic violence in the US **kills ten women every day**
- Every year in the US, more women are injured by domestic violence than by rapes, muggings, and auto accidents combined
- If a woman attempts to leave her abusive environment, she increases her risk of being killed by 75%
- In 70% of the families where **the mother is abused, so are the children**
- One of every 6 pregnant women is beaten, making **domestic violence the leading cause of birth defects**



There you have it. No matter how many scarves we make and distribute, abuse seems to be growing. As I have said many times, I am proud of Handmade's growth, but I hate thinking of our success as due to someone else's misery. I wish that statistics showed a lessening in the demand, but instead they show that domestic violence is increasing. **Annette Kosker**, head of the **Glendale YMCA DV Project**, once wrote to me: "Unfortunately, the need for our Domestic Violence Service increases every year." Incredible, isn't it. It seems there really is too much domestic violence and too few comfort scarves, no matter how many we make. That doesn't mean our work is fruitless; it just means that every scarf we contribute is important, that we need to keep on making comfort scarves.

We hope to make and distribute at least 15,000 scarves in 2012. We're right on schedule to achieve this goal. We can't do it without each and every one of you. You make it all possible. Thanks so much.

Please mail scarves, yarn, or checks to:

Handmade Especially for You  
c/o Leslye Borden  
30065 Grandpoint Lane  
Rancho Palos Verdes CA 90275

Please use the [PayPal](#) link on our website at [www.handmadeespecially.org](http://www.handmadeespecially.org) if you want to donate \$\$\$\$.

Yarn companies; please ship your donations to:

Handmade Especially for You  
c/o Happy Hats for Kids  
923 Van Ness Ave  
Torrance CA 90501

Thanks in advance for your ongoing support.

*Leslye*

[www.handmadeespecially.org](http://www.handmadeespecially.org)

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