

# South Bay nonprofit knits scarves for victims of violence

Posted: Sunday, January 3, 2016 4:40 pm

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<http://www.dailybreeze.com/social-affairs/20160103/south-bay-nonprofit-knits-scarves-for-victims-of-violence>



**Leslye Borden displays some of the handmade scarves she provides for shelters to comfort victims of domestic violence.**

When Leslye Borden's three granddaughters were small children, she would knit wardrobes for them.

But one day while visiting, she discovered a box full of her woven clothes.

"My heart was broken at what I saw, but it was my own fault," Borden said. "It was too much for little girls to handle, so I thought to myself, 'I better find someone who needs what I want to make.'"

Before long, Borden had founded Handmade Especially for You, a nonprofit knitting organization devoted to victims of domestic violence, which since 2009 has delivered more than 80,000 scarves to all the shelters for abused women in Southern California — from San Diego to San Luis Obispo. And, recently, the United Parcel Service gave Borden a shipping grant that will allow her nonprofit to deliver scarves to five shelters in Northern California.

Launching her own nonprofit didn't happen right away. Borden, a Rancho Palos Verdes resident, searched the Internet for knitting charities and found a plethora.

"During my research, I learned that women who are victims of domestic violence are the most under-represented and underserved demographic in our country," Borden said.

To find out where a shelter was located, she went to her local fire department to ask around but couldn't find any answers. Finally, she found Rainbow Services in San Pedro, a shelter offering assistance and support to women and families of domestic abuse.

"In October of 2008, I had a wonderful experience with a lady named Judy, who loved the scarves," Borden said. "She gave them the name of 'comfort scarves' because wearing them felt like a hug."

Borden then shared her experience with June Grossberg, the owner of Concepts in Yarn & Needlepoint, and soon after Borden founded Handmade Especially for You.

Shannon Minor remembers when she received a scarf.

"This gesture showed us that there were people outside of this room that knew what we were going through, and they cared so much that they wanted to make something special for us," Minor said. "It was validating and reassuring to hold the scarf and see the little card attached telling us that we mattered."

Susan Rosenberg, the public relations director for UPS, said Borden's story caught the attention of UPS last spring during the company's United Problem Solvers' campaign.

"She is a catalyst to bring people together — other senior knitters who might use their talents with purpose to provide personal handcrafted items and the deserving women who had made a first difficult step, and had little or no personal possessions," Rosenberg said. "The UPS Wishes Delivered program could solve her distribution needs, engage other knitters and connect with other shelters."

Borden laments that even though the knitted scarves help those in need, they won't solve the larger problem of violence against women and children.

"Here we are cheering about how many scarves we gave away, but really we should be crying when we think that this need is prevalent and growing in our society."

For more information, visit [www.handmadeespecially.org/](http://www.handmadeespecially.org/).