



DECEMBER NEWSLETTER

December 18, 2012

Today's Topics:

- ♥ We delivered 3,000 comfort scarves in December which made our 2012 total 12,000. Incredible, isn't it!
- ♥ Our donations reached 60 shelters: **ALL** the shelters in S. CA as well as those in Kern and SLO Counties
- ♥ Handmade's volunteers are outstanding
- ♥ The shelters appreciate comfort scarves
- ♥ News from our affiliates
- ♥ Domestic violence in the news: Kasandra Perkins and Jenni Rivera
- ♥ Looking back on 2012 and getting started on 2013

And now for the details:

We delivered 3,000 comfort scarves (as well numerous hats, slippers, youth blankets, and baby blankets) in December. Honestly, I wondered if we would be able to achieve our goal of 12,000 scarves made and delivered in 2012 given that we were totally out of scarves at the end of November. Scarves poured in from everywhere. We reached our goal. It wasn't easy, but we did it!



This photo shows me in the middle of shipping, a huge pile of wrapped scarves in the middle of the floor and me filling one of the boxes with a selection of scarves from the pile. We pack the boxes this way so every shelter receives scarves from many different makers.

The photo is misleading in that it only shows me. But not in the photo are many, many volunteers who make that huge pile of scarves possible. Some of the volunteers are our core group which meets every Wednesday evening at **Concepts in Yarn** in Torrance. Many in this group not only make scarves, but also make kits, wrap scarves, pack boxes, and support Handmade in all kinds of ways that don't show in

the finished scarf. This group includes, but is not limited to: **Ann Nye, Barbara Stach, Bea Abshear, Chris Fung, Emma Buechs, Ernestine Moran, Evelyn Dow, Hannelie Uys, Janet Schoenfeld, Judith Solomon, Karen Chan, Kathy Allen, Kelsey Fung, Maria Denzel, Nancy English, Patty Torrance, Sharon Solari, Su Wooley, Toshi Erickson and Yola Gerst.** Other outstanding local volunteers make kits and/or wrap finished scarves prior to shipping. They include: **Chris Needham, Giuliana Torelli, Lori Meepos, Mary Barton, Paula Weiner, the Prince Family, and Therese Shafer.** In addition to our **Concepts in Yarn** scarfers, several local groups make scarves for Handmade. They are: the **Knitting Club** at the **Culver City Senior Center**, the **Knitting Group at the Lawndale Ward of the LDS Church**, the **Mad Hatters**, and the **Presentation Learning Center.** Thanks to all these individuals and groups.

In addition to our local participants, we have many outstanding volunteers and donors throughout CA and the US. “You” know who you are, but I will list a few. These scarfers work on yarn or kits we send them: **Betty Watts** (Bellflower, CA), **Emily Gutierrez** (Carson, CA), **Judy Brown** (Carmichael, CA), **Dawn Upperman** (Merchantville, NJ), **Janet Deininger** (Bryan, TX), **Joanne Garlick** (Sunnyvale, CA), **Kate Whiting** (Jacksonville, FL), **Marlene Segal** (Henderson NV), **Sue Applebaum** (San Francisco, CA), **Thelma Lager** (Los Angeles, CA), and **Wendy Holton** (Baconton, GA). They not only make the scarves, but they donate \$\$\$ to cover the shipping of kits to them and pay for sending finished scarves back to Handmade. They are very generous with both their time and money.

Many individuals and groups make scarves using their own stash. A few of the individuals: **Bonnie Jacobs** (Burlington, NJ), **Cindy Gilkey** (Laguna Hills, CA), **Donna Moon** (Woodgate, NY), **Janet Walsh** (St. Peters, MO), **Lana Kapchinsky** (La Mesa, CA), **Lonna Webster** (Bonita, CA), and **Penny Ripley** (Oceanpark, WA). Among the groups: **AT&T Fiber to the World Yarn Clubs** in Atlanta, GA and Fresno, CA; **N.E.W.** Klamath Falls, OR, **Embroiderers’ Guild of America**, White Pine MI chapter.

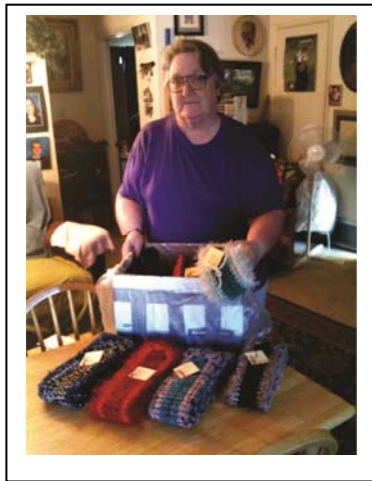
You can see, it takes a lot of people to make a pile of scarves like the one in the photo above. Thank you all. I need also to mention the support of **June Grossberg**, owner of [Concepts in Yarn](#), Handmade’s sponsor, and my mentor. From the start, June encouraged Handmade’s activities by offering us a meeting place at her shop. As Handmade grew, she provided bins so customers and scarfers could pick up kits (free yarn) and drop off finished scarves. June advises me on many subjects. This past autumn, we offered a few kits for making cowls instead of scarves. In the photo below, June and I are discussing several sample cowls on the table in front of us. June’s support and advice have been essential to Handmade’s success. Thank you, June.



Joanne Garlick is one of our most active long distance volunteers. She is an avid crocheter and has made scarves for Handmade almost since our inception. She lives in Sunnyvale, CA and is very dedicated to our project. I send her a huge box of yarn each month and in return she sends Handmade around 90 scarves each month. As I've gotten to know her over the years, I was fascinated to learn how and why she made so many scarves. As it happens, Joanne has a good story to tell. She taught herself to crochet when she was in her 20s and needed to make extra money to help her family. She bought afghans at thrift shops, washed them, then ripped them in order to have yarn to make items to sell. Her husband abused her, but the police wouldn't arrest him because she wasn't hurt enough for the DA to get a conviction against him. Things came to a head one evening early in the 1970s when he beat her up to the point of her almost passing out. She and her 5 children left.

Things weren't easy for them. At that time, there were no shelters to which they could flee. (In 1972, there was a shelter for abused women in Urbana IL. It took another 20 years before shelters started to pop up throughout the US.) Totally on her own, she worked several jobs and the kids collected newspapers and aluminum cans which they sold to recyclers to make ends meet. She attended Mission College and West Valley College, earning an associate's degree in hospitality management (1983) and a certificate for dietary services supervisor (1993) and landed a job as cook in the Children's Center of West Valley College. She saw an article about Handmade in **Talking Crochet** (Oct '09) and knew immediately that making scarves for Handmade was her way to give back. She told me "If only someone had wanted to help her" the way we now help abused women.

Retired from her work at the Children's Center, Joanne today crochets 6-8 hours a day, and not just for Handmade. She frequently "babysits" for grandchildren, many of whom are the children of students she met at the Children's Center. All of them call her "Grandma." She believes you can't leave a child alone in a room so she crochets while they play.



When a box of yarn arrives from Handmade, Joanne says the children cheer. "Now Grandma will have something to do!" She opens the box, dumps it out on her bed, and sorts everything by major color. Then she divides all the yarn into color coded zip lock bags. That way, all she has to do is pick up a bag and start crocheting. She uses novelty yarn for the edging. You can see her and some of her finished scarves in the photo below [Type a quote from the document or the summary of an interesting point. You can position the text box anywhere in the document. Use the Drawing Tools tab to change the formatting of the pull quote text box.]

Yes, Joanne is an incredible volunteer with an amazing story. But she is not alone. Handmade has many incredible volunteers, all of whom have amazing stories. Not all have abuse in their past, but their stories are valuable and important to us. If you have a story to share, I'd love to know it and include it in one of our next Newsletters.

All our volunteers are different, but here's what they have in common: They want to help abused women change their lives, they are willing to generously give their time (and sometimes their \$\$\$ as well), and they are dedicated to Handmade. They demonstrate these attributes in the beauty of their finished scarves, their attention to detail, and their determination to get their completed scarves to Handmade in time for important shipping deadlines. **Each contribution is important whether you send one scarf or ninety. We reach our goal one scarf at a time.** I appreciate each and every one of "You," no matter how many scarves or \$\$\$\$ or time or advice "You" contribute!



Shelters love our scarves. No surprise. They recognize the love and care that goes into the making of each and every one of them. I have lots of letters from our 60 shelters expressing their appreciation. Here are a few samples from directors of the shelters and from the women themselves.



Our affiliates are doing well. **Vicki Ringer**, organizer of our San Fernando Valley group, donated 80 scarves to **Haven Hills** in December. **Refugio Sanchez**, director of Haven Hills supplied her church with a list of items the women need. They will supply many as holiday gifts. Good job, Vicki!

Renee Hoffman donated 40 scarves to **Interval House** in Long Beach CA. Renee leads a small, but dedicated group of knitters which includes the Slipt Stitchers of the El Segundo Knitting Guild .

Ann Miller, in Pueblo CO, donated 7 scarves to **YWCA Crisis Shelter** there.

D'Ann Gayler, who led our Utah affiliate is moving to Nevada, where she's not sure if she'll be able to start another group. Any volunteers to pick up Utah or help her get started in Nevada?

Since October, 2010, **Barb Kochuba's** group in **Pittsburgh**, donated more than 2,600 comfort scarves and other items to shelters throughout Southwestern PA. She remarks again and again her amazement at the growth of her group, the need for scarves, and the generosity of her volunteers. Barb now has an active Facebook presence. Great progress, Barb.

Our affiliated groups have made and distributed lots of comfort scarves. When I say Handmade donated 12,000 comfort scarves in 2012, this does not include their scarves. Just think of what the total would be if it did.

In last year's December Newsletter, I did a rough estimate of the number of scarves we delivered since Handmade started at the end of October, 2008. That number was 31,800! Now, add the 12,000 we

delivered this year. Sit down. **Our grand total is: 43,800!** Remember, that doesn't include hats, blankets, or slippers. Let's keep going. It takes about 3 hours to make each scarf. 43,800 scarves represents more than **1,300,000 hours of knitting and crocheting**, not to mention the time it takes to make the kits, wrap the scarves and pack the boxes. Give yourselves a big pat on the back! "You" have done a great job! On the other hand, time for a little reality check while we're celebrating. Handmade donated almost 44,000 comfort scarves since October, 2008 **BUT** the Los Angeles Police Department, in 2010 alone, received **48,000 domestic violence complaints**. That's only from the women brave enough to make a complaint. Truly, we've barely scratched the surface of the need.



Domestic violence is one of the least discussed social issues in our society. As we saw in the case of San Francisco's Sheriff, Ross Mirkarimi, society doesn't think abuse of women is really that bad. The Sheriff was reinstated to his position because the Supervisors felt the abuse he administered to his wife wasn't that serious. If I were an abused woman in San Francisco, I'd think twice before reporting abuse to him or his department.

Let's look at two more cases. Kansas City linebacker **Jovan Belcher** fatally shot his girlfriend, 22-year old **Kasandra Perkins**. "Killing" his girlfriend was enough abuse for the police and press to take notice. Even so, the media mostly focused on the horror of his suicide, not on the fact that he had repeatedly abused Kasandra and then killed her.

The second is the case of **Jenni Rivera**, the banda singer killed in a plane crash. She was abused by her first husband, Jose Trinidad-Marin because she wanted to attend college and he wanted her to stay home and cook and clean. Even though she had 3 children with him, she was finally strong enough to divorce him. Such experiences in her youth informed her lyrics. She often sang about women who wouldn't let men exploit them. She was such a determined advocate for abused women that she was named spokeswoman for the **National Coalition Against Domestic Violence**. August 6 is Jenni Rivera Day in Los Angeles. She has done a lot to raise awareness about domestic violence. One of her most memorable lines is: "The number of times I have fallen down is the number of times I have gotten up." We at Handmade hope we encourage such spirit when we give our comfort scarves to abused women.



We accomplished a lot in 2012. We made 12,000 comfort scarves and delivered them 60 shelters in CA, and more if you count the donations of our affiliates in the rest of the US and Canada. Our operation has grown as well. We have more kit makers, more scarfers and more volunteers than we did at the end of 2011. What's next for Handmade?

Handmade is at a crossroads. We certainly are too big for us to continue our operations in my house, even though we have a place to store a lot of our yarn. But we are too small to win grants that will cover the cost of renting a real work place. Or we need some better grant writers than I have been. We may have some grant writing volunteers on the horizon. Here's hoping.

In like manner, we always need [\\$\\$\\$ donations](#). We need \$\$\$ not only to pay possible rent, but also to cover shipping, our biggest expense. Right now we pay about \$500 per month to ship our comfort scarves to 60 shelters in S CA. We do have the option of not sending scarves to so many shelters, or of sending them less often. We have stopped sending kits to would-be volunteers who cannot afford to

make a donation to cover the shipping of the free yarn. I always hoped for a patron who would take on that responsibility, but as of yet, no one has come forward. Making comfort scarves is such a positive experience for the scarfer, I wish we could supply all those who want it the yarn to make our scarves whether or not they can donate to cover the cost.

I love Handmade's success. Even its growing pains. I am thrilled that we have made and delivered so many comfort scarves. At the same time, I feel very sorry that there are so many abused women who need them. I do look forward to another year working with so many good people in all walks of life. There are many ways to help in the community. I'm glad that so many of you have chosen to support Handmade as your way to do good. I depend on you. And so do the abused women who receive the scarves that you make or make possible. Many thanks.

As usual, if you want to donate scarves, yarn, or a check, please mail to:

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

If you want to [donate \\$\\$\\$](#) via credit card, our site offers secure transactions through PayPal. There is a link on the Handmade website. www.handmadeespecially.org

Thanks in advance.

Leslye Borden, Founder
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