



MARCH 2012 NEWSLETTER

March 28, 2011

Oops! No Newsletter in February so this one will be jam packed with good news!

- ♥ We distributed just under 1,000 comfort scarves in February and just over 1,000 in March
- ♥ Shipping to over 50 shelters costs a lot more than shipping to 30 shelters
- ♥ The positive response of shelters to our scarves is heartwarming for us
- ♥ Yarn companies and individuals continue their generosity
- ♥ New pattern for light weight summer comfort scarves
- ♥ **Mother's Day** is on May 13, just around the corner

And now for the details:

Thanks to all of you kit makers, knitters, crocheters, and wrappers we were able to distribute almost 1,000 comfort scarves in February and just over 1,000 in March. Wow! Here's how we did it.

First, we have a fabulous group of scarfers. Knitters and crocheters in our own area and all throughout the US contributed scarves to our cause. Scarves waiting to be acknowledged filled my front hall. Scarves waiting to be wrapped filled the dining room. Scarves waiting to be shipped filled the guest bed room. Where ever you go in my house, you see yarn or scarves.

We need a big team to process all these scarves. And our wrapping team is growing. It includes **Ann Nye, Anita Stevens, Chris Fung, Chris Needham, Cindy Blausey, Evelyn Dow, Giuliana Torelli, Joan Condiotti, Kathy Allen, Linda Friege, Maria Cesca, Marilyn Hague, Mary Barton, Nancy English, Nannette Brill, and Paula Weiner**. 11-year old **Jessica Nye** participated in February. She had a week off school at that time and chose to spend some of her free time helping **Handmade**. She photographed the busy February wrappers (photos below). Both in February and in March, **Chris** and **Ann** packed boxes until all the scarves were wrapped. Then everyone else pitched in to pack scarves for the remaining shelters. What a group. You did a great job. Many thanks!!!!



We have more kit makers now too. We have two teams doing their best to keep up with requests for our magic balls of yarn. One team (**Barbara Klein, Eileen Yancone, Linda Friege, Lori Meepos, and Nancy English**) meets on Monday; the other (**Anita Stevens, Ann Nye, Cindy Blausey, and Joan Condiotti**) on Tuesday. Sometimes Tuesday participants come on Monday. Some members come every other week. Both teams want/need more members. Kit making isn't hard. Really, you don't even have to know how to knit to

help out. The current teams are doing a great job. They work under a lot of pressure given how many requests we have for kits. Thank you all!



The reason we need so many wrappers and kit makers is that we supply so many comfort scarves to so many shelters. In February, we provided 41 shelters with 962 scarves. This cost Handmade almost **\$700**. In March, we sent 1,050 scarves to 52 shelters. I haven't seen the bill yet, but I know it has to be more. Last year during this same period we provided scarves to only 33 shelters. On average, it cost around \$500 per month. Even without the huge increase in the price of gasoline, which has affected the cost of every method of shipping (USPS, UPS, and FedEx), Handmade's shipping costs had to go up. Serving 57 shelters as we do now means an almost 50% increase in the cost of getting the scarves to the shelters. At risk of sounding like a radio or TV station during one of their pledge drives, **I beg you to donate \$\$\$\$** to help us cover this huge increase in costs. **\$5, \$10, \$25 or more. Anything.** What would be best would be a regular commitment, like Annette Maass (from Germany) makes each month. So does Betty Watts from Lakewood. I will appreciate and so will all the abused women who receive our comfort scarves.



And so will directors at our numerous shelters. They send us many letters of appreciation. We cannot let them down by cutting back on the number of shelters we serve. The following excerpts are typical of what they say about the value of our comfort scarves at their shelters.

Luciann Maulhardt, Executive Director of **Casa Youth Shelter** in Los Alamitos, writes: *"We are honored to have your support once again this year. We are grateful that your continuing kindness to Casa Youth Shelter enables us to provide shelter and counseling to runaway, throwaway and abandoned youth . . . We could not do what we do without generous supporters like you."*

Luz Eva Hull, Client Advocate Assistant at **Center for Family Solutions** in El Centro, writes: *"We appreciate what you and your group are doing for our clients. Thank you for your support."*

Tracy Halstead, Director of **Haven House** in Pasadena, says: *"I would like to thank you for your generous donation of handmade scarves for our women. . . with the help of donations from supporters such as you we will continue to see improvements in the lives of the women and children who come to Haven House . . . on their way towards a life free of violence, alcoholism, and substance abuse."*

From **Melissa Pitts**, Director of Community Services at **House of Ruth** in Claremont, comes the following: *"Thank you on behalf of House of Ruth for the kind donation we received from you. We appreciate your commitment to the survivors of domestic violence. . . by working together we can help restore peace and safety to the lives of these victims."*

From **Margaret Bayston**, CEO/Executive Director of **Laura's House** in Ladera Ranch, comes this appreciation: *"You can feel assured knowing your gift (of comfort scarves) is going to make a difference in lives of individuals, families and children affected by domestic violence."*

Ben Schirmer, Executive Director of **Rainbow Services** in San Pedro, writes: *"I want to tell you how thankful I am for your donation. Your gift of handmade comfort scarves makes a real difference in the lives of the families here at Rainbow."*

Ronnie Root, Director of Programs at **Saint Clare's Home** in Escondido, writes: *"We thank you for your donation and hope you continue to help us restore hope in these delicate lives . . . Thank you for showing these fragile community members that you care!"*

Heather Finlay, CEO at **YWCA of San Diego**, writes: *"Thank you so much for your generous donation of handmade scarves to the YWCA of San Diego. Your contribution is greatly appreciated and we are honored to have your support. . . . Your support means that we can continue to provide healing, hope and a safe environment for women and families throughout San Diego County."*

Yes, the comments are similar, but I never get tired of reading them. Each month, I am so glad to know that our comfort scarves are still doing their job. I am sorry only that there is such an endless line of women and children who need them and that it costs so much to get the scarves to the shelters. Of course, we receive many more letters of appreciation than the ones I excerpted above. Here are more, including some letters from the women themselves.



As you must realize, Handmade wouldn't be able to supply yarn to all those who knit and crochet the scarves if it wasn't for generosity of our yarn donors. Due to the excellent contacts we made at **TNNA** and at **Stitches West**, February and March have been excellent months for donations. Many major yarn companies, including **Feza Yarns, Knit Collage, Knitting Fever, Lion Brand, Lorna's Laces, Malabrigo, Mountain Colors, Pagewood Farm, Plymouth Yarn, Prism Arts, Universal Yarn, and Westminster Fibers** made very generous donations.

In addition, smaller companies, such as **Anzula, Ellen's Half Pint, Just One More Row, Leilani Arts, Shelridge Farm, and Tess** donated to our scarf project. **Cathy**, the owner of **Twist**, a new yarn shop in Manhattan Beach, came up with a great marketing device that greatly benefitted Handmade as well as her bottom line. She encouraged all her customers to donate their stash to "charity" (that is, to Handmade) so they would have room for new yarn she hoped they would buy yarn from her. She called me to say she had several hundred skeins of yarn for me to collect if only I would come. Needless to say, when I arrived, I found more than several hundred skeins. The yarn so filled my car that the seatbelt buzzer on the passenger side rang all during my ride home! The Yarmobile lived up to its name.

Last week, **Dr. Virginia Gonzalez**, a San Pedro dentist, called. I remembered her because she donated yarn to Handmade way back in 2009,. She said she now had 4 huge bags of yarn for Handmade. My husband picked them up. In the bags was a wonderful group of really usable yarn. Every donation makes a big difference. Thank you so much.

I always say, "without yarn, we cannot make scarves" and I see how true that is every day. The new yarn goes out almost as fast as it comes in. The kit makers appreciate having a broad variety of the colors, textures, and combinations. The scarf makers love working on different yarns and yarn combinations. As a result, we never give two same scarves to any shelter. Each recipient really receives an individual and personal gift. However impressed you are by the long list of donors, don't ever think we don't need more yarn. We need a constant supply and we **never have enough**. Thank you, thank you, thank you to all our yarn donors. You make comfort scarves a reality.

Among the good stuff for us we received recently was lots and lots of beautiful and soft mohair. **Feza Yarn** donated a lot of it. Some was in the mountain of yarn from **Twist**. Dr. Gonzalez donated many balls of it as well. I had to figure out what to do with all of it.



A few summer's ago, I saw a lacey scarf pattern on **Knitting Daily** (Interweave Press). I adapted it to Handmade's style of scarfing and called it "**Summer Lace**." Over the weekend, I tried it using some of my new treasure trove of mohair. Just as beautiful as our original comfort scarves, these summer lace scarves are

also lightweight and feathery, really good for our warm climate. We will make lots of kits with it and hope you enjoy making the scarves. You can find the pattern on the Handmade website.



We have been revising the Handmade website www.handmadeespecially.org. Check it out. My husband, **Phil**, redid the home page so we can revise it every year. It used to be a PDF file which only he could work on. Now it's a Word document, open to revision. We added a "Volunteers" page, updated the recipient list, and included the logos of our major yarn donors on the sponsors and donors page. We plan to update all the patterns and add a few crochet patterns. **Ann Nye** pushed me to make these changes. **Lori Jeskey** actually made the changes. She is our volunteer webmaster. Every aspect of Handmade has a strong team behind it. Thank you all!!!!



Finally, **Mother's Day** is just around the corner, on May 13. We will need around 2,000 scarves for this special occasion. As I'm sure you noticed, some shelters want scarves every month; some want them quarterly (the reason we sent to 41 shelters in February and 52 shelters in March), and some want them for special occasions only. All want them for **Mother's Day** and **Christmas**. Even though I know you're all working as hard as you can, I hope you can do just a little more so we can get a comfort scarf to every abused mother who has sought protection in a shelter. You read the notes from the directors. You know they want the scarves for their women. They appreciate what we do. So we need a big push to get them scarves enough for **Mother's Day**. The time is short, but we're fast scarfers!



Every time I look back at where **Handmade** started in October, 2008 and see how far we've come in such a short time, I'm floored. I know we couldn't have achieved all this without all of you. We had a lot of other support along the way-- **June Grossberg**, the owner of **Concepts in Yarn** where our core group meets every Wednesday evening, all the yarn donors, all the cash donors, everyone. Your dedication and support are phenomenal and I think about what you do for Handmade all the time. Thank you so much. It's just that Handmade has grown so much, that we need **MORE** of everything.

So if you want to donate yarn or scarves, please send your contributions to:

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

If you want to donate cash, please send a check to the above address or donate through **PayPal**. You can access **PayPal** on our website: www.handmadeespecially.org

Thanks in advance. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Leslye

www.handmadeespecially.org

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