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CoordKnit Launches Knitting Bank for Charity Groups

ROCHESTER, New York—Food banks help nourish those in need. But Reenie Feingold of Rochester has decided to nourish folks in another way.

Feingold has announced that her knitting charity, CoordKnit™, will become a knitting bank to help others in the community receive the healing and transformative power of knitting.

Feingold originally created CoordKnit to help cancer patients at Lipson Cancer Center by providing knitting supplies, patterns and lessons to help alleviate and distract them during hours of chemotherapy and other treatments. But, through a variety of serendipitous circumstances, CoordKnit shifted direction and will also serve as a knitting bank for community charity yarn collection and redistribution.

“I want to facilitate the love of knitting,” says Feingold. “It’s so good for the spirit and the brain.”

How the Story Began

The tangled story of Coordknit’s™ new mission began at Rochester Regional Health System’s Lipson Cancer Center. The knitting program there was just getting off the ground when Feingold’s CoordKnit™ flyer caught the eye of Sheryl Zenzen, Superintendent of the Albion Correctional Facility, New York’s largest medium security female prison.

Zenzen contacted Feingold to offer her yarn that was donated to the facility, which runs three knitting programs for incarcerated women. Albion could not use the donation because of the type and color of the yarn.

“Unfortunately, I could not use this type of yarn for the Lipson project either,” said Feingold. “But I thought the Prayer Shawl Ministry at St. John’s Catholic Church might be able to use it.”

Feingold contacted Judy Knab and Lois Rixner, co-chairs of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, who gladly accepted the donation. “The Prayer Shawl Ministry is active in many churches of all denominations in our area and has distributed more than 2,300 shawls to those in need,” says Knab.

“The rituals around the shawls may vary, but the main theme remains the same: ‘God loves you and someone you don’t even know, has prayed for you.’”

Knab, in turn, donated some of the Prayer Shawl Ministry's extra yarn back to CoordKnit, which distributed the yarn back to Albion Correctional Facility. Feingold received an enthusiastic thank you note from the facility's chaplain, Christine Kesterson for her yarn donation.

Said Kesterson, "The knitting groups at Albion Correctional Facility donate all knitted projects to community charities and organizations that assist the marginalized and those in need. It makes a difference to the women incarcerated to be able to be useful and to contribute to the common good within our community. And, finally, the donation helps others to realize that prisoners are people, too, and that they can be compassionate and giving."

That's when a lightbulb went off in Feingold's brain: why not turn CoordKnit into a yarn bank for collecting and redistributing yarn and needles for knitting charities? "We're a tight knit community," she jokes.

While CoordKnit will continue to provide therapeutic organizations with guidance in establishing knitting programs for patients, it is now also functioning as a community knitting bank.

For more information about implementing a health-organization based knitting program or donating knitting supplies, visit the website www.CoordKnit.org.

About Reenie Feingold

A business developer and art director for over 40 years, Feingold is owner and president of StoreSMART.com and ScrapSMART.com. She is designer and author of sewing and quilting articles and projects, and has appeared on the PBS television program "Scrapbooking With Your Sewing Machine." Her products have been featured on QVC Crafting Weekend.

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