

## Local sewing group comforts those in need with handcrafted goods

Written By DANIELLE WILLIAMS

For more than 10 years, a group called the Salvation Stitchers, run through the New Hope Community Church in Orangeville, has been quietly leaving a compassionate legacy. The Salvation Stitchers are committed to creating handcrafted goods that provide warmth, comfort, and hope to those who receive them.

The Salvation Stitchers started off as a group that taught sewing and evolved, around the same time they started, into crocheting and knitting as well.

Lynda Reed, a retiree and member of the Salvation Stitchers, said the group provides "a nice social event" and gives her the opportunity to be productive and help those in need, both in the community and around the world.

The group recently finished creating over 200 dresses and 100 pairs of shorts for people in need in the Philippines, as well as collected medical supplies, musical instruments, and flip-flops.

Working closely with the charity organization Sew on Fire, known for shipping "creative gift bags" nationwide and globally, the Salvation Stitchers continues to collaborate and support Sew on Fire with each project.

"I've made a couple hundred dresses sent to the Philippines, and now we're working on bags, so it's different all the time," said Sherly Walt, a member of the group.

Working entirely off of donated machinery, fabric, and materials since the beginning, the Salvation Stitchers have become a creative force, producing over 23,000 items to date. From delicate girls' dresses to sturdy backpacks and cozy quilts to essential medical supplies, this group tirelessly weaves a fabric of generosity.

The Salvation Stitchers are more than a crafting group; they are like a "family." Meeting every first and third Thursday of each month, this close-knit community creates a welcoming space for anyone passionate about making a difference.

During COVID-19, the Salvation Stitchers powered through the isolating times by continuing their work independently, still managing to create many items; one of the members had sewn over 100 bags.

Despite the challenges of the Covid-19 years, these dedicated crafters have continued to provide for those in need, showcasing the resilience of their spirit.

"People fall in love with this craft; it's very addictive. It's good for your heart to do things for other folks and know that we're reaching out to our community; we're reaching out all across Canada," said Betty McCutcheon, the founder of the Salvation Stitchers.

Cassandra Cardel, a recent addition to the Salvation Stitchers, after moving to Orangeville three years ago, stumbled on the group by accident and has been with them ever since.

Their impact extends to over 15 organizations, including Bethell Hospice, Choices for Youth Shelter, Operation Christmas Child, three local nursing homes, Alzheimer's Society of Dufferin County, breast cancer patients, the Orangeville Food Bank, chemotherapy treatment centres for hospitals across Ontario, SPCA, Feral Cat Rescue, and Cats Anonymous.

The Salvation Stitchers extend an open invitation to anyone with an interest in or skill in sewing, knitting, or crocheting.

?If you want to fill your heart with joy and feel like you're really accomplishing something for other people in the world, this is a good way to do it. If you have any interest in creative work, this is a great place to do it,? said Betty McCutcheon, with much enthusiasm, encouraging more people to join them in making a difference ? one stitch at a time.

The Salvation Stitchers would like to offer a big thank you to all those who donated fabric, notions, and machinery over the years. These donations enable the Salvation Stitchers to continue to provide people in need with warmth, comfort, and hope through handcrafted goods.