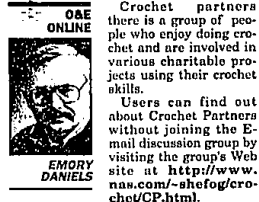


Charities use Web to reach out



O&E ONLINE
EMORY DANIELS

Crochet partners there is a group of people who enjoy doing crochet and are involved in various charitable projects using their crochet skills.

Users can find out about Crochet Partners without joining the E-mail discussion group by visiting the group's Web site at <http://www.nas.com/~shfeg/crochet/CP.html>.

Some partners do crocheting for Habitat for Humanity. There is a pattern for a door hanging available at a Web site that partners can download and follow. The group asks people to make the pattern and donate it to their local Habitat for Humanity. The finished product is then hung on the door of new homes built by Habitat just before the new owners move in.

One of the major charities the partners love to support is Project Linus. It's called Project Linus because Peanuts character Linus epitomizes the love of blankets. Project Linus started on Christmas Eve 1995 when an article appeared in Parade Magazine, "Joy to the World," by Eddie Adams. The article mentioned a little child getting through intensive chemotherapy who got through the treatments with help of a security blanket. After reading the article, Karen Loucks-Baker decided to provide homemade security blankets to Rocky Mountain Children's Cancer Center in Denver and Project Linus was born.

There is one Project Linus coordinator who tells participants what color scheme the current afghan is. Then several people make granny squares and mail them to the coordinator who then sews them all together and donates them to Warm-up America which in turn donates them to the homeless.

But most of Linus projects involve afghans for children. Linus is really quite a neat project because many people could not afford the time or money to donate an entire handmade afghan, but they can afford to do several granny squares.

I received an E-mail from Karen Loucks-Baker who is the founder and national coordinator of Project Linus. Loucks-Baker tells me that the project now has about 70 chapters which have delivered more than 2,500 security blankets to seriously ill children nationally.

Right now there are two Project Linus chapters in Michigan, one in Ann Arbor and the other in Grand Rapids with the possibility of a third chapter starting in Midland, Mich.

The Project Linus coordinator for Michigan is Amie Flexner of Ann Arbor. Onliners who are interested can contact Amie via E-mail at kittyctat@phoenix.org. Users also can learn more about Project Linus by visiting its national Web site at <http://members.nas.com/~shfeg/crochet/CP.html>.



Helping out: Crocheting Partners at <http://www.nas.com/~shfeg/crochet/CP.html> participates in several charity projects.

Amie shared with me an anecdote about a man in Reed City, Mich., who had read an article in Annie's Attic's newsletter about Project Linus. The gentleman from Reed City had neck injury which has affected the feeling and use of his arms for the last few years. To keep his arms from atrophying, he has crocheted afghans upon afghans, and given most of them away.

After learning about Project Linus, the Reed City resident donated several blankets which passed them on to the children at Mott's Children's Center. So it looks like Michigan's fourth Project Linus chapter might be in Reed City.

Another charity the Crochet Partners are involved in is Caps for Kids. This is a project where partners make caps for kids whose parents can't afford them - a contribution that is especially important during these winter months. (I am told there also is a group which does blankets for homeless animals, but I'm feeling a tug on my leg with that one.)

The layettes are heavily involved in Navy Relief and has recruited others to her cause. Anyone who contacts their local Naval office will be given enough yarn to make a baby layette. The volunteer then makes the layette and donates it to the U.S. Navy.

The layettes are given to young servicemen and servicewomen who are having a child and may not be able to afford much. I think Crochet Partners is a neat group which is doing a lot of positive

good using the Internet. So I've included a link to the group in the "fun places to go" area of my home page at <http://www.oonline.com/~emoryd/archive.html>.

MEL charities help
 The Crochet Partners, of course, is not the only group on the Internet supporting charity. Donna Wair, the librarian at Vanderbilt University, recommends onliners take a look at the Social Issues & Social Services section in the Michigan Electronic Library which can all be found in the Non-Profits section of the Social Issues collection. Go to <http://mel.lib.mil.us/social/SOC-noprofit.html>.

The Michigan Connet at this site has a listing of local charities and items they need for the poor during the holidays. When you reach Michigan Connet, connect as a guest and click the "You Can Make The Difference" button.

The MEL charity page links to groups which provide information on charities to help individuals make informed decisions when making charitable donations. Among the links are those to: Council of Michigan Foundations; National Charities Information Bureau; Guide Star Navigating the Charitable Universe; the National Center for NonProfit Boards; and the Philanthropic Advisory Service provided by the Better Business Bureau among several others.

(Emory Daniels may be reached via E-mail at emory@oonline.com. Past columns are archived on-line at <http://oonline.com/~emoryd/archive.html>.)

Worksmart from page B9

Worksmart programs more cost effective for everyone, said Dore.

The idea to establish dozens of locations that network with one another to meet clients needs originated at Worksmart's headquarters in Rochester, New York. They saw the debut of all 92 of their branch offices nationwide in September.

"They took 18 months to organize the idea and gather experienced management consultants interested in piloting their own Worksmart branches around the country," explained Dore.

Here in Michigan he and his partner Greg Moss' boast many years of experience in the consulting and management fields. The duo also has several small local consulting firms willing to provide trainers for programs should the need arise, said Dore.

"We own our branch but we are governed by Worksmart International in Rochester," added Dore.

The New York based Worksmart has a research and education group that designs four new programs for the branches to offer clients every quarter.

In addition to generic programs Worksmart provides opportunity for clients to have programs custom designed for their employees.

The format can be changed to suit the companies area of concern and to address specific issues they want to see their employees trained in, said Dore.

When 10 employees of Ross Controls in Troy recently took part in two separate Worksmart seminars Plant Manager Ernie Remondini was very impressed.

"The Ross staff members attended a two day program entitled Smart Talk that offers up tips on communication in the work place. A second program called Smart Solutions discussed problem solving issues."

"The seminars were very thorough with a lot of detail," said Remondini, who has attended lots of similar programs that weren't nearly as informa-

tive. "They exposed you to a lot more techniques and even though we may not use them all at least they were introduced to them."

The idea of having employees at another Ross plant in Georgia introduced to the same programs without the expense of sending a consultant to the location also impressed Remondini.

"One of the things we wanted to try was holding a program here and then having Worksmart's Atlanta location provide the same training to our plant in Georgia," he said. "We liked the fact that we knew it would be the same seminar with the same information and just a different person teaching it."

Arranging a duplicate program for Ross' sister plant is just what Worksmart is all about, said Dore. The needs of clients with multiple locations can be addressed during frequent conference calls held between all the Worksmart branches.

Owners of the offices nationwide often share strategies, assess how programs are going and consider what other things can be done to meet their clients needs, said Dore.

Currently busy working to get the word out about their new business, Dore said the next item on the Worksmart agenda is a globalization workshop for a client in January. The one day program will teach people how to deal with international business practices by telephone and computer.

Worksmart International eventually hopes to have 200 locations in the United States. In the meantime Dore is anxious to address the needs of his home state.

"There's tremendous potential for us here in the metro-Detroit area," said Dore. "We'd like to get the big three accounts of course and there are many three tier suppliers in this area that could service well. And I mention manufacturing companies but we aren't limited to that at all. Our programs are useful in service companies too."

Franklin from page B9

topics from counting money to understanding the Federal Reserve System to Customer Service. All positions in the new bank are filled by students who serve their fellow classmates each Tuesday and Thursday morning.

"It's wonderful for the students to directly apply their knowledge to a life skill as important as banking," Ms. London commented. "We are very excited to have a bank branch on campus. Franklin Bank has been wonderful to us."

Michigan National Bank began a branch at the school last year, but chose not to continue it. The school approached Franklin Bank earlier this year due to the bank's consistent involvement in the community.

Franklin Bank President, David Simon, has two children at Birmingham Covington School.

Representatives from Franklin Bank now oversee the branch operations each Tuesday and Thursday, but the students perform all the

tasks themselves. Students were required to apply for the positions and were interviewed as part of the learning process. Once selected, they received training in the specific skills necessary for their position.

Enthusiasm for the new branch remains strong. Students can open individual accounts, a service not provided by Michigan National, and can make deposits or withdrawals of any size. They even have their own ATM cards with Franklin Bank provides at no charge.

The students are currently preparing to take the branch to the next level of sophistication by setting up a software program to computerize the branch.

"There is an important link between what goes on in the schools and the community," commented Franklin Bank President David Simon. "Our new branch is an opportunity to get involved in a valuable learning center right on campus. It's one of the ways we can give back to the community."

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