



Front Porch Residents Make a Difference in the World: One Stitch at a Time *Carlsbad By The Sea residents support Little Dresses for Africa*

The process can be quite simple. It can begin with a common pillow case. Add to that, dedicated ladies who, busy with their sewing machines, needles and thread, scissors and a lot of love, turn mountains of fabric into a heartfelt gift for little girls in Africa.

“I read about Little Dresses for Africa one day in a sewing magazine and was touched,” said Pat Killen, a Carlsbad By The Sea Retirement Community resident and organizer of a group of sewers and others at the community who, have made many dresses for the poor. “I’ve been a sewing all my life and I knew many other residents here who were sewers so I thought I would organize a group.”



Some members of the Carlsbad By The Sea Little Dresses for Africa sewing group with their creations.

Little dresses for Africa is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to provide relief to children in Central Africa, Haiti and other Third-world countries. People from all over the United States, as well as Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, join together to make little dresses out of simple patterns such as those already made into pillow cases. Little Dresses for Africa makes all the arrangements to get the dresses to the children, and distributes them through the orphanages, churches, and schools.

Working with Carlsbad By The Sea’s Wellbeing Director Megan Conway, Pat got the word out to fellow residents about this worthwhile cause. A year later about residents meet twice a week.

“I’ve been sewing my entire life,” said Carlsbad By The Sea Resident Joyce Harvey, who learned the skill from her grandmother, a professional seamstress. “But the beauty of this group is that not everyone needs to know how to sew. Some can help by measuring, or cutting patterns, ironing or choosing fabric. Others donate fabric or sewing tools. However you



Joyce Harvey sews a dress.

choose to participate it's appreciated." Carlsbad By The Sea Executive Director Joan Johnson has even donated her sewing machine for the group to use.

The Carlsbad By The Sea group has sent more than 200 dresses to 31 countries in Africa as well as to Honduras and Haiti. When the need arises, Little Dresses for Africa also sends dresses to the poor in Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, The Dominican Republic, The Philippines, Cambodia, South Dakota and the Appalachian Mountain regions of the U.S.

The work is relatively simple," Pat said. "We start with a variety of purchased and donated fabrics, which are cut into various sizes and sewn into a tube, like a pillow case. Armholes are cut and trimmed with bias tape which also serves as ties for over the shoulders. Elastic tape gathers the neckline. Dress sizes vary from 3 to 12. We're a creative group so we add pockets, fringe and other accents to make them pretty."



They meet twice a week and have fun not only making the dresses but catching up with each other's lives. "We sure get a real lift out of this," said Dorothy Howell who was busy picking out just the right pocket to accent a lime green dress. "The more we do it the more creative it seems we get. It's a real social activity so we all inspire each other."

"I made all my children's clothes," said resident Betty Roberts. "I just enjoy sewing doing this is a good way to relax and make a difference at the same time."

Pat says she hopes the group at Carlsbad By The Sea will inspire other Front Porch retirement communities to consider creating their own sewing groups for this worthwhile cause. For more information about Little Dresses for Africa, visit littledressesforafrica.org.

Editor's Note: If you have a story to share about pursuing your passion by helping others, please send it to communications@frontporch.net.

About Front Porch

Front Porch is one of the largest not-for-profit providers of retirement living communities in Southern California. Front Porch active adult and full-service retirement communities offer a full range of options from independent living to continuing care, along with specialized programs like memory support. With innovative communities and programs that meet the changing needs of people as they age, Front Porch communities represent a leading-edge approach to wellness in aging. Front Porch is comprised of 11 full-service retirement communities in California and two adult living communities: one in Louisiana and one in Florida. Of these, six are Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC). Front Porch, based in

Burbank, Calif. and founded in 1999, is a not-for-profit organization that gives back to its residents and the communities it serves.

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