

Get Knitting Franklin!

Keeping warm with the Knitting Grannies and Operation Cover Up

Button up, it's cold outside! But it's much colder if you are struggling to warmly clothe your children on a low income – or if you live in the sub zero winters of the Ukraine, Romania and Moldova. The warm hearts and warm hands of our very own knitting army are at work to spread warmth where it is needed this and every winter.

The Knitting Grannies are a group of Franklin women who for the past six years have been meeting twice a week between March and October to knit garments and rugs for Middlemore and Starship Hospital. As well as filling a need, the Knitting Grannies enjoy their social get-togethers and welcome new members. New arrivals in the district can find a whole set of instant friends while they produce knitted items that are gratefully received by the hospitals.

Knitting Grannie Joan Loader: "The ladies can knit anything they like, but baby clothes and rugs are in demand. Baby clothes are used to dress premature babies and garments go out with the social workers to families in need. We make half a dozen rugs each year for the geriatric unit at Pukekohe Hospital with crochet and peggy squares. We make lots of booties, especially if we hear of someone having triplets."

Joan thought of forming a group to knit for premature babies while she was visiting her baby grand daughter at Greenlane Hospital, knitting while she was there. "One of the staff said when they saw me coming in – 'It's the knitting granny!' And I thought what a great name! I had a bag of wool and asked friends to knit with me. It's grown from there. This year we have knitted 103 pairs of booties after just three meetings."

One member, who is in a retirement home, produces bags of knitted hats, while others arrive at meetings with bundles of beautifully crafted garments and rugs they have knitted or crocheted at home. Joan says "wool just arrives," including a whole trailer load headed for the dump from a house clearout. "Never throw wool away – we know what to do with it!" she says.

The grannies' skill with booties will be challenged this year – they are set on a mission to make 1000 pairs for a special art display at Franklin Art and Culture Centre in October, focused on listening to our children and called The March of the Children.

Founding members of the Knitting Grannies: Pauline Taylor, Aroha Stoupe, Joan Loader, Joan Lowe and Ngaira Brocas



Having a wonderful social time: June Smith, Dawn Stitchbury, Rosemary Hyland, Beris McDowall and Joyce Murphy



Knitting beautiful baby garments: Olive Rhodes, Erin Thomson and Marion Lewin

