

NAMP

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The Needle Arts Mentoring ProgramSM Leadership Guide

“Stitching Generations Together”TM



Written by Bonnie Lively and Marilyn North

The Needle Arts Mentoring Program is a project of the Helping Hands Foundation, Inc.,
a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization founded in October 1999



Mission Statement

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Needle Arts Mentoring ProgramSM

The Needle Arts Mentoring Program (NAMP) creates community partnerships that promote and encourage relationships between adults and youth, fostering curiosity, creativity and a feeling of achievement through the teaching of the needle arts.



*This book is dedicated to all the mentors
and other caring adults who touch children's lives.*

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Needle Arts Mentoring Program

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Forward By Bonnie Lively

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

Growing up in northern New York during the forties and fifties, I was fortunate to be surrounded by women of different ethnic backgrounds who were strong doers of the needle arts. Our family was part of a small community that returned year after year to the same spot in the Adirondacks. Knitting, crocheting and stitchery were common past-times. Still fresh in my mind are those women who took the time to teach me the needle arts. Not only did they share the activity, they also gave their time and attention as nurturing adults.

At the beginning of every summer, I would ask my mother to take me to the local yarn shop. The yarn and pattern choices were few and simple. Color was the only big decision. Next came sitting on the sandy lake front and, between the normal kid activities of swimming, canoeing, and hiking, we would cast on, and knit and purl until the stars came out. I will never forget this group of mentoring women who helped me through every dropped stitch and shaping question.

I had a variety of instructors. I know my mother did not teach me to knit, since she is of German descent and has always knit the Continental style while I have always knit the English throw method. I do have early memories of my maternal grandmother teaching me to crochet potholders as we sat in our glider on the front porch of our cabin. Of course, my mother did her share of giving instruction when summer ended and the knitting continued. Even through college, I was often knitting when I should have been studying.

As I look back on those years, I now realize what a gift I was given. During times of my life that have been extremely stressful, I gravitated to my knitting as a source of solace and comfort. It seemed like that strand of fiber flowing through my hand held some magical power that would solve my current difficulty. It would be wonderful if every child and adult possessed that ability to make the world go away once in awhile. Somehow, picking up needles and yarn, changing the focus of your attention to what is between your hands and eyes gives you a broader perspective on the challenges of life. It provides a healthy alternative activity to other less desirable escape mechanisms. What those women gave me, besides my craft, was a seed that is now growing into this

program. Our children need these coping skills and it is important for us to take the time to teach them.

However, it's not just the child who benefits from the Needle Arts Mentoring Program. Many adults are missing an opportunity to interact with children. When a match is made between child and adult, bonding takes place. When the program ends, adults miss "their" child and want to have the same child if possible when the program resumes. The children touch their hearts and fill a gap that they were not even aware they had.

Needle artists are givers and nurturers by nature. What other group of hobbyists has organizations that give handmade afghans to the homeless (Warm Up America*), make warm caps for cold children (Caps for Kids*) and give security blankets to seriously ill or traumatized children (Project Linus*)¹? All over the country, shops and consumers gather yarn, make items, collect finished goods and ship to these organizations to make a difference in our society. We would like to add the Needle Arts Mentoring Program to this list!

When one contemplates how knitting and other needle arts have been passed on from one generation to another, it causes us to think about the significant changes in our family sociology. Since the Renaissance, when knitting was a trade only done by men, the ancient craft has been taught by one elder to a younger, creating nurturing relationships between the young and the old. In recent times, we have lost the tradition of our elders being in close proximity to our youngsters. Families have been stretched the width and breadth of our world. Grandma lives across the country in a retirement home; Mom gets up and goes to work everyday; and our public school system is forced to give up the "frills" for reading, writing and arithmetic. Due to these changes in society and demographics, our crafts have lost the opportunity to be passed on and are in serious danger of becoming extinct. Sadly, not only could the needle arts disappear, but the opportunity for a magic relationship between young and old would also disappear.

This program is not just about learning the needle arts. It is also about sharing yourself with a child and enjoying an activity together. There is no more important role in our society today.

¹The Web sites for these organizations are: www.WarmUpAmerica.com, www.capsforkids.com and www.projectlinus.org.



History

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

In 1997, Marilyn North and Bonnie Lively developed a fiber arts program for at-risk students at Broadway Middle School in Seaside, Oregon. The success of this program prompted the Seaside High School Alternative program project. At that point, an after-school program was conceived using adults within the community. It soon became apparent that the program could have significant impact on creating a healthy alternative activity for kids. Marilyn and Bonnie believed this could be instrumental in preventing drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse, as well as providing an opportunity for a caring one-on-one relationship between youths and adults in a safe environment that is mutually beneficial.

Hawkins and Catalanos Research² clearly shows that young people are less likely to engage in risky behaviors when they are bonded to trusted adults and school. Mentoring programs promote positive relationships that encourage and recognize a young person's competence. They also promote positive behavior and a sense of personal success that builds a healthy foundation within the adolescent.

As an independent sales representative for national yarn companies and having been involved in the industry for nearly twenty years, Bonnie was aware of a diminishing consumer base and saw how this program could also play a role in the needlework industry as a boost to lagging sales nationwide. She had the opportunity to connect with people on the national level who would be key stakeholders in seeing this idea come to fruition. Bonnie's and Marilyn's relationship and mixture of backgrounds became the perfect combination in putting this program together. So many needs were being filled simultaneously, which is what makes this program so successful. This is where this book comes in. It is the piece of the puzzle that attempts to create the link between the original program and the creation of future programs throughout the nation.

Bonnie and Marilyn approached the industry for funding as a proposal to create future consumers, as well as business and community partnerships. Their efforts have been richly rewarded. They acknowledge the members of The National NeedleArts

² *Risk and Protective Factors, 1992. "Risk-Focused Prevention," University of Washington, School of Social Work, Social Development Research Group; Oregon State Department of Human Resources, Office of Drug & Alcohol Abuse Problems.*

Association (TNNA), TNNA's Yarn Group and The Craft Yarn Council of America for being willing and forward-thinking with their contributions of financial support for this program. In the summer of 2000, Helping Hands Foundation, Inc. received their non-profit status from the Federal Government to operate as a charitable and educational 501(c)(3) corporation.

In the Fall of 2002 we created the Needle Arts Mentoring Program (NAMP) as a project of the Helping Hands Foundation. NAMP is in the process of expanding its programs nationwide. As of May 2007, we had programs in place throughout 29 states with over 140 programs of volunteers touching the lives of over 3600 of children.



Making friends and learning are combined in NAMP programs.



Benefits

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

For Youths

- Develops focus and concentration
- Encourages following a process
- Builds self-esteem
- Improves math and reading skills
- Enhances critical thinking and problem solving
- Offers a vehicle for stress release and anger management
- Encourages creativity through portable alternative activity
- Provides healthy interpersonal relationships with adults
- Ensures tangible accomplishments with immediate results
- Teaches a practical, useful and fun activity
- Enhances hand/eye coordination, small motor skills, tactile energy, communication skills, self discipline and attention to detail

For Adults

- Opportunity to share traditions and pass on an ancient craft
- Enhances feelings of self-worth
- Contributes to society
- Develops nurturing through relationships of youth
- Provides opportunity for interaction between adults and youth in a relaxed group atmosphere



Getting Started

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

Beginning your own Needle Arts Mentoring Program in your community will be one of the most satisfying experiences you could give yourself. Once you establish your first program, watch what you have created and the interaction that happens between adult and child, you will know what I am talking about. I still get weepy when I walk into a school classroom or library and watch the activity. Not only will you be creating a gift between adult and child, but you are also giving your community a needed resource for creating a healthy alternative activity for children.

On the following pages, you will read about how easy it can be to set up your first program. Over the years, and through expansion to other school districts and groups, we have learned an incredible amount, including all the different resources that school systems and communities have available to organizations like ours. This makes your task much easier. We can assist those of you who want to be involved in setting up these programs in your own community without taking on a huge time commitment. We are here to support you. Most of our Volunteer Coordinators (VC) in other areas spend little more than an extra hour a week in addition to the time spent for the actual program session.

We are thrilled that this program has taken off so successfully with communities and kids. Now we need adults to take part and be willing to give of themselves to a child. Since the federal government is encouraging adults to take the time to spend with a child, this is the perfect vehicle to make that happen. It gives you a reason to be together. The child is getting a life-long coping skill; the community is getting a viable program; and you are getting a rewarding, fulfilling experience. You will make a difference in a child's life and in your community. Let's work together to create your very own Needle Arts Mentoring Program. You will be rewarded many times over.



Steps to Success

NAMP

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

Step 1: Publicizing the Program

NAMP has materials available that will help you gather mentors. A mentor recruiting flyer is available and can be tailored to suit your program. Our Web site provides information about HHF to those wishing to know more about it, and our office has a fact sheet that tells HHF's history and how it has developed over the years.

If you decide to design your own brochure, make sure it is simple, eye-catching and interesting to read. It must also include the NAMP logo, name, address and Web site address, in addition to listing our sponsors. We suggest placing the flyer in schools and local needlework and yarn shops as well as other highly visible locations around your community to recruit those interested in teaching the needle arts.

Knitting Rhymes

*In through the front door,
Once around the back,
Peek through the window,
Off jumps Jack.*

*In the house,
Around the house,
Through the house,
Out of the house.*

*Under the fence,
Catch the sheep.
Back we come,
Off we leap.*

Step 2: Administration

One person, the Volunteer Coordinator (VC), can administer a program quite easily, requiring a little extra time besides the time spent each week for actual program time with students. Once The Needle Arts Mentoring Program makes contact within your community, it takes very little effort to make the program happen. Often school systems have an individual, such as a counselor or a vice principal, who is interested in getting these activities going in their schools. In addition to before and after school programs, we have had success with NAMP in other venues such as libraries, youth groups, scout troops, homeschool groups and in classrooms as part of the curriculum.

Job Description for the Volunteer Coordinator

- Liaison with NAMP Executive Director
- Recruits and trains mentors with NAMP materials
- Monitors and distributes supplies
- Responsible for weekly sign-in sheets if required by the program

The biggest responsibilities for the VC will be gathering mentors and securing the location for the NAMP.

Step 3: Gathering Mentors

Encouraging others to become involved in NAMP is the nuts and bolts of this program. NAMP's primary focus is to create mentorships nationwide and we are always researching ways to attract mentors. We are here to help you.

Mentors are usually gathered one by one. It doesn't take a lot of mentors to begin a program. You may already belong to a group of needle artists who have decided to make this a community effort. Some other ideas for recruiting mentors are local churches, needle arts shops, senior centers, parents/grandparents/friends of the children who will be involved, or other teachers/staff members where the group will meet.

- *Important points to cover when talking with potential volunteers*

1. There is a low student to mentor ratio.

We strive to be a one-on-one mentoring program, but when mentors are slow to appear, we have started many programs with up to five students per mentor. The program can grow as you bring in more people. Please watch the ratio and keep it low, as it provides a nice interaction between kids and mentors. While one student is practicing the stitch, the mentor can give attention to another student. Our experience is that letting in too many kids with not enough mentors makes for general chaos. Be careful of this problem.

2. Volunteers are mentors, not just needle arts instructors.

Many potential volunteers are shy about teaching because they don't see themselves as skilled enough to be able to teach a group of students.

Let them know immediately that they will not be asked to teach a group. They may choose to only have one child. They will only need to stay one step ahead of that child's ability in order to be a successful teacher. Remember, these are beginning needle artists. There are always other mentors in the room to assist if they get stumped with a question.

3. The time commitment is approximately one hour a week in most programs.

4. They will enjoy giving and receiving simultaneously.

Helping them to recall their own learning to stitch experience with an older adult usually paints the picture quite nicely.

5. They will not be expected to be disciplinarians.

6. They will be working with various age groups.

We recommend 3rd through 12th graders although we have had successful programs that have been as young as kindergarten.



Non-English speaking students improve their language skills through interaction with their mentor.

7. Some programs require a background check.

Background checks are usually the responsibility of the program administration and are recommended to protect and maintain the integrity of the program. Schools have forms and this detail is handled during the mentor training session, if required.

- *What to consider before approaching potential mentors*

Consider Personalities

Include names on your list of people who have positive attitudes, but don't overlook the unlikely person who might not seem as comfortable around kids as you think; they can fool you sometimes. One volunteer jovially announced outright at our first session that she didn't understand why she agreed to do this since she didn't even like kids. However, she has turned out to be one of the best and most devoted mentors.

Consider Time Frames

Be flexible with the commitment. Let people be introduced gradually and allow them to have absences if necessary. Have backups for subbing. If you choose mentors from a seniors pool, remember many like to travel and have doctor appointments, etc., and they need to feel free to fulfill their regular obligations. It is important to have a specific program time frame, so that mentors (and students) don't feel over-committed. This is a crucial part of the puzzle in making the program work.

Consider Fears

Mentors may come with fears about working with children they do not know. That is why mentor training is a key component in this program and should be given a lot of attention (see Mentor Training, pg.17). Mentors need to realize they are not professional teachers or counselors and that they will not be left alone with these children. Programs need to be set up so there is lots of good help and support for them in working with the children and in the teaching of their craft. Be sensitive to their comfort level regarding working with more than one child.

- *Where to Look*

Knitting Guilds

Guilds are a great resource for mentors. Find out when their meetings are scheduled and be ready with a presentation to encourage them to be a part of this program. NAMP has materials ready to help you prepare.

Local Yarn Shops

Here is the best source of mentors. You probably already know your local shop owner. Ask them for their assistance to display a brochure near the cash register so that you can make contact with interested people from their customer base. Perhaps they have a group of knitters or classes that meet on a regular basis in the shop. The shop owner should be very receptive to this idea since part of the purpose of this program is to create more consumers. They are usually one-person operations with a very heavy workload so you need to make this as simple as possible for them.

Knitting Rhymes

To Knit

*In the front door,
Pick up your coat,
Out the front door,
Hop off the step.*

To Purl

*In the back door,
Pick up your shoes,
Out the back door,
Hop off the step.*

Senior Citizen Centers

Most communities have one of these. Seniors are usually looking for ways to be involved and they become excellent mentors. Centers often have many groups that meet regularly and they are happy to announce community efforts that are looking for volunteers.

Local Churches

Most churches involve themselves in worthy community efforts and are willing to let you say a few words to the congregation during services or put a message in the church bulletin.

Local Assisted Care Facilities

Many seniors who live independently may be a good source of mentors. Other ways to gather mentors are the newspaper classified ads, community calendar events, local radio station announcements, brochures or posters in public places, school notices sent to parents and faculty and asking mentors to invite their friends. NAMP has flyers available for placement throughout your community.

Step 4: Mentor Training

The mentor training begins the process of mutual support between mentors, working together as a congenial team, supporting each other. It is necessary because it builds confidence in mentors to overcome their anxiety about working with children. The training is a safe environment where mentors have the opportunity to discuss their concerns and brainstorm solutions. “Suppose they don’t like me...” is a feeling that is often voiced. Let the mentors know the children are lucky to have such dedicated, loving individuals working with them. The one-on-one experience is very valuable and to watch relationships grow is a joy. Magic does happen.

PART ONE

The NAMP Volunteer Coordinator usually runs this portion of the training. Take time in the beginning of the session to let each mentor introduce him or herself. Have everyone tell about how and when they came to be a needle artist and why they decided to become part of NAMP. Have a sign-in sheet for names addresses and phone numbers/e-mail so that accurate records can be maintained. Be sure to cover the following topics:

1. Time program will be held
2. Location, (library, cafeteria, school room, etc.)
3. Projects (hand out packet of supplies from Helping Hands Foundation)
4. How mentors are paired with their children
5. Where supplies are stored between sessions

In the beginning, it is advisable to have the same project for everyone. We traditionally use the simple bookmark pattern shown in the back of this book for knitting and crochet programs. Needlepoint and cross-stitch programs will use small kits. You may also want to talk about materials, such as yarn and needles, and the sequence of events for each session.



NAMP programs always have low mentor-student ratios to facilitate learning and encourage building relationships between mentors and students.

When children arrive at the program location, each child will receive a packet containing the following, depending upon the needle art they are learning: Knitting – about one ounce of yarn, needles and “How to Knit” book; Crochet - about one ounce of yarn, crochet hook and “How to Crochet” book; Cross-stitch – a cross-stitch kit complete with needle, fabric and fibers and a “How to Embroider (Includes Cross-stitch)” book; Needlepoint – a kit complete with painted canvas, needle, fibers and a “How to Needlepoint” book. These packets remain with the Volunteer Coordinator when the individual sessions end. Only when the program finishes will the child be able to take their project home. VC’s and mentors, or the children’s families, may be able to provide supplies to accommodate children who want to stitch between sessions. NAMP has designed a permission slip for parents to sign before tools are allowed to go home with students, which you will find at the back of this guide.

PART TWO

If required, a counselor/after-school coordinator who has more information about school policies and procedures should handle this portion. She/he should cover such issues as:

1. Background check forms
2. Typical behavior and developmental abilities of the age group.
3. Mentors' boundaries including explaining that disruptive behavior is not tolerated and that the school will provide guidance for handling problems.
4. Empower the mentors with some appropriate language to use when they feel the need. (Discipline has been a very minor problem in all of our programs. Children come to the program because they want to learn.)
5. Communicating a feeling of appreciation to the mentors for their time and role in a child's life.

Step 5: Recruiting Children

This has been the easiest portion of setting up programs. Most children are enthusiastic about learning these skills. The school professional, after-school coordinator or counselor handles this process for a school or after-school program. Some schools handpick the students and some let students sign up. Most schools have a list of activities they send home to parents with a permission slip. Any regular gathering of young people has the potential to become a NAMP.

This seems to be the appropriate time to bring up the subject of boys. We have found that approximately 30% of our participants are boys. As a matter of fact, we recently started a new program that is predominantly boys with only one girl! We hope our programs will encourage boys to participate. Explain that, historically, only men were allowed to knit during and prior to the Renaissance period since it was considered a man's trade, and that we want to encourage more boys to become needle artists. Getting boys to participate does not seem to be an issue.

Step 6: Gathering Supplies

The Helping Hands Foundation is happy to take on this responsibility for your initial supplies. We have been successful in getting in-kind donations from the needle

arts industry and we also have a small budget for these expenses. However, we do realize that mentors and volunteers also have materials they would like to donate. Here are some suggestions of what works best:

Needles and Hooks

HHF has a wide variety of plastic, wooden or bamboo knitting needles and crochet hooks. Metal needles are discouraged since schools usually have a problem

with seeing those as a potential weapon.

Yarn

Worsted weight or bulky; wool, or acrylic/wool blends work best because they are usually softer and easier to work with. When accepting donations avoid fine yarns, like fingering weights, normally used for baby knitting. Be specific about what is acceptable.



Boys are an important part of NAMP.



One-on-one time provides quiet interaction for both child and mentor.

Here is the dialogue NAMP has adapted when answering these questions in general:

We accept worsted weight yarns, wool or wool/acrylic blend, full skeins with labels (so we know washing instructions). We do not accept any partial skeins. This eliminates the problem of getting everyone's left over tangled skeins that have been left under grandma's bed for years. We suggest winding the yarn into one-ounce balls so each child gets enough to complete their first project.

Occasionally people approach the Helping Hands Foundation wishing to donate their yarn stashes. The Director keeps a list of NAMPs willing to accept such donations, and will have donors send their contributions directly to the recipient.

Other supplies provided by the Helping Hands Foundation, Inc.:

- Needlepoint kits with fibers, painted canvas and tapestry needle and cross-stitch kits with fabric, chart, floss and tapestry needle
- Plastic bags to hold projects (one for each child)
- "How to Crochet," "How to Embroider/Includes Cross-stitch," "How to Knit" or "How to Needlepoint" books (one for each child)

Suggested supplies to be provided by the Volunteer Coordinator, mentors or program:

- Sign-in sheets for mentors and students
- Name tags, if desired
- A large box to store the projects in during the week

Once your group has used the initial supplies provided by HHF, you will need to have the children purchase materials for future projects. The tools (knitting needles, crochet hooks and tapestry needles) and "How To" books are theirs to keep, to encourage them to continue engaging in the needle arts. Some groups have been able to arrange donations or discounts with local needle arts shops for subsequent supplies.



Logistics

NAMP

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

First Projects

NAMP encourages everyone in knitting and crochet programs to make the same first project. The knitted/crocheted bookmark (see appendix for pattern) seems to be the best first project. It can be done in knitting or crochet. It's easy, quick and gives instant gratification to both mentor and child. It is also adaptable to a wrist, neck or headband. It's a good vehicle to learn cast on, cast off, knits, purls and fringing. For cross-stitch and needlepoint programs, your first project will be a simple cross-stitch design or a hand painted needlepoint canvas.

After the bookmark we recommend having your knitting and crochet students make the sample squares (see appendix) in sequence since it steps them through the process of learning more pattern stitches. It is also encouraged that these squares be added together to make a group project that gets donated to a worthy cause of their choice on behalf of NAMP. This gives the students a feeling of community and helping others with their new-found talent.



NAMP students take pride in their quick success.

Other future projects may be bags, potholders, wash cloths, caps, backpacks, doll clothes and small animals. Large plastic canvas projects are another option. There are books and magazines available for these projects.

Time Line

This should be discussed prior to your mentor training and established with the program. We recommend a six to ten week program with a one-hour session once a week. This schedule seems to work well with most participants' commitment level. If you establish a doable time frame, you are more likely to have enthused and involved mentors and students. It is best to begin and end on an "up" mentality than to have it fizzle out.

Best times of the year for school programs are fall and winter quarters, because after Spring Break you run into conflicts with sports activities and more outdoor-oriented school programs. We have been most successful running six to ten week programs between late September and Thanksgiving; and late January to Spring Break. Starting new programs in the middle of the school year has been done but is not recommended. If you want to continue the program through other parts of the year, other options might be through local Parks and Recreation Districts, camps, churches, libraries or scout troops.

Location

If your NAMPS is connected to a school program, be flexible with the school officials and allow them to pick the space. A good location is usually the school library or cafeteria. Most schools are responsible for many activities and you will want the program to be accommodating. Other groups will need to arrange meeting space within their community.

Transportation

Students will probably need to provide their own transportation. This will depend on how each program is set up. This can present a problem for some students if there is no school system to address this. In the pilot program, the school system was not willing to provide a bus for the after-school program, and therefore, parents were responsible for arranging their child's transportation. It is not acceptable under any circumstances for

the program to get involved in providing transportation. Out of consideration for children's, you must be very careful concerning the liability factors.

On this same topic, this program does not encourage the exchange of telephone numbers, nor sanction the meeting between mentors and students between sessions. The legal ramifications in this regard could be significant. The program must maintain a neutral position with this issue and not encourage contact outside the program.

Snacks

If yours is an after-school program, the children will need sustenance to carry them through. In some cases, it will have been 11:30 or noon since they last had anything to eat. If the school has a funded after-school program and staff, the school may provide the snack. If not, the program should provide something they will look forward to about halfway through the session. Juice boxes, dried fruit, cookies or crackers are easy to store, serve and clean up. Keeping the portions small doesn't hurt their appetite before dinner. After all, don't we all remember coming home after school and reaching for the cookie jar and that glass of milk? The VC and mentors can provide snacks, parents can be asked to take turns providing for the group, or each participant can be responsible for his/her own snack needs.

Program Start-up

Plan to meet with your mentors fifteen minutes before the beginning of the first session. Take this time to answer last minute questions, allay anxiety and set the tone for a fun experience. Have them sign the Mentor Sign-in sheet, if you are using one.

When children arrive, give them each a packet as described in Gathering Supplies, have them sign a Student Sign-in sheet if used, and introduce them to a mentor. Keep placing children in a round-robin



The art of saying "Thank you" is part of the NAMP experience.

progression until all children are placed with a mentor. For the most part matching participants with mentors is a random process.

Closure

At the very end of the program, it's a good idea to have a celebration, which allows the children to thank their mentor with a small gift of appreciation. Invite the parents to come to the celebration, see their child's project and meet the mentor. The initial program established a ritual of buying an inexpensive outdoor plant that each child individually presents to the mentor while thanking him/her in front the group. Other ideas to incorporate might be to have special celebration treats and take pictures. This ritual adds a nice touch and teaches children the social grace of being thankful for what they have received from these adults. It also validates the adults with how special their involvement with this child has been. You need to constantly tell your mentors how much you appreciate them. Never overuse, ignore, or abuse their participation.

Publicity

Once the program is established and everything looks relatively successful, it's a good time to share this with the community by gaining publicity. This can be done by calling the local newspapers, radio and TV stations, and inviting your community editors to visit the program to photograph and interview students and mentors. Publicity will help gather future mentors and children, giving the program credibility within the community. This is an important component to insure the program's continuation and growth. HHF appreciates receiving copies of all published articles and photographs.





Conclusion By Cora Smith

NAMP

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

Participating as a mentor with The Needle Arts Mentoring Program is one of my favorite activities. I wasn't expecting it to be so satisfying on so many levels. When I first met Bonnie Lively at a social function, she mentioned she was a knitter, and since I am one also, we talked a bit about that and then she asked me if I'd like to join NAMP. I immediately said, "Yes," since it sounded like fun.

I've done it for two six-week courses now, and they were completely different. The first one I had three exuberant kids, two boys and a girl, and we mostly laughed. The second term I had two serious girls and we mostly knit. Both experiences were a joy.

Some days, after battling traffic, fretting over problems and trying to reorganize my schedule to get to the school on time, I would rush into the room, find my kids and start to work with them on their projects. And then, looking around at the peaceful scene of mentors with one or more children bent over their task and quietly talking, I would suddenly slow down, take a deep breath and remember how good life can be.

One of the best things about growing older is getting bored with your own stories and wanting to hear others'. I found that quality to serve me well as a mentor. It is a challenge to teach a child a skill without being overbearing, and I enjoyed watching and listening, trying to make sure I didn't "lose" them. One becomes aware of how full of life they are, how vulnerable and trusting. Like every human, there are hardships ahead for these children. You want to do something to ease their way, even if it is just an hour a week of being with an adult they can count on, who is mindful of their welfare. If they learn the needle arts and take it on as a lifetime practice, so much the better. To borrow a word from the TV program, "The Simpsons", I have found being a mentor to be an "embiggening" experience and so will you.



Knitting encourages focus and concentration.



Warm Up America! & NAMP: Working Together

Warm Up America! is a non-profit program started in the mid-1990s by noted knitting teacher and author Evie Rosen. Evie envisioned getting volunteers nationwide to knit and crochet afghans for people in need. To appeal to a large audience, she came up with the idea of having volunteers knit or crochet 7" by 9" sections and then having other volunteers join them together into colorful "patchwork" afghans.

It's a simple idea that caught on, especially among schoolteachers and student group leaders in churches, scouts and after school programs. To date, tens of thousands of afghans have been donated to people in need. And it's a perfect program to tie in to NAMP.

The basic Warm Up America! 7" by 9" section is a great first project for kids. It's not too big or too small and the process helps the child feel more

comfortable holding the needles or hooks and yarn. The best part is that this first project also will be put to good use. It will become an important part of a finished afghan, imperfections and all. It's never wasted.



The pleasure that the NAMP experience brings to both mentors and students is one of the reasons for its success.

Forty-nine sections (seven across and seven down) make a traditional Warm Up America! adult afghan. However, there is a need for baby blankets and smaller size afghans, which can be used as lap robes in nursing homes or on day beds. If you are mentoring a group of students, you may adjust the size of the sections.

When you are working with a group of children, they also can help choose the social service agency, nursing home, hospital, etc., to receive the afghan. In addition, they can be encouraged to involve their family members and friends in this project. In this way, they become the “teachers” at home or with their friends.

Warm Up America! is simply another vehicle to spread the fun of knitting and crocheting and involve the children you are teaching in a worthwhile charitable program.

At the Warm Up America! Web site (www.warmupamerica.com) there are basic stitch patterns, hints on joining sections and suggestions on how to complete different size afghans. Plus, regular news updates from groups and individuals involved in the program are featured at the Web site. We'd like to feature the children you teach at the Web site too. Please contact us with your stories and photos.

If you do not have access to the Internet, write to Warm Up America! 2500 Lowell Rd., Gastonia, NC 28054 for your free handout. And if you do not have enough sections to complete an entire afghan, you may send them to the Warm Up America! office.



Appendix: Patterns

NAMP

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

Simple Bookmark to Knit or Crochet

Materials

Size 7, 8, or 9 straight 10" knitting needles **or** size J crochet hook Approximately one ounce of worsted weight yarn

Knit Garter Stitch Instructions

Cast on 8 stitches (sts).

Knit every row for 46 rows or 6-8".

Bind off all stitches.

Cut 8 – 8" lengths of extra yarn for fringe.

Loop one strand through each stitch across one short edge. Trim ends.

Crochet Instructions

Chain (ch) 21 sts loosely.

*Turn, single crochet (sc) 20 across, ch 1 for turn st.

Repeat from * four times.

Follow fringe instructions for Knit Bookmark.



Knitted Afghan Squares

Materials

Size 7, 8, or 9 straight 10" knitting needles

Approximately 1.5 oz or 50 yards of worsted weight yarn for each square

Note: Size of squares is approximately 5" x 5".

Stockinette Square

Cast on 26 stitches.

Row 1-4: Knit (K) every row (Garter Stitch Border)

Row 5: K 3 stitches (sts), Purl (P) 20 sts, K 3 sts.

Row 6: K across

Repeat Rows 5 and 6 until piece measures approximately 5".

Repeat Rows 1-3 one time (Garter Stitch Border). Bind off.

Double Seed Stitch Square

Cast on 26 Sts.

Row 1-4: K every row for Garter Stitch Border.

Row 5-6: K 1, P1 across.

Row 7-8: P1, K1 across.

Repeat Rows 5-8 until piece measures approximately 5".

Repeat Rows 1-3. Bind off.

Basket Weave Square

Cast on 26 Sts.

Row 1-4: K every row for Garter Stitch Border.

Continue to K the first and last stitch of every row.

Row 5: K1, * K4, P4, repeat from * across, K last st.

Row 6-8: Repeat Row 5.

Row 9: K1, *P4, K4, repeat from * across, K last st.

Row 10-12: Repeat Row 9.

Continue to repeat Rows 5-12 until piece measures approximately 5"

Repeat Rows 1-3. Bind off.



Crochet Granny Square

Material

Size H or I crochet hook

Approximately 2 oz. worsted weight yarn

Ch 4. Join with sl st to form ring.

Abbreviations

ch: chain

dc: double crochet

beg: beginning

rep: repeat

sp: space

sl st: slip stitch

Round 1: Ch 6 (counts as 1 dc and 3 ch), [3 dc in ring, ch 3] 3 times, 2 dc in ring. sl st into 3rd of the beg ch-6.

Round 2: Sl st into next ch, ch 6 (counts as 1 dc and 3 ch), 3 dc into ch-3 sp, *ch 1, [3 dc, ch 3, 3 dc] into next ch- 3 sp for corner; rep from * twice, ch 1, 2 dc into same ch-3 sp as ch-6 at beg of round, sl st into 3rd of the beg ch-6 to complete 4th corner.

Round 3: Sl st into next ch, ch 6, (counts as 1 dc and 3 ch), 3 dc into ch-3 sp, *ch 1, 3 dc into next ch-3 sp, ch 1, ** [3 dc, ch3, 3 dc] into next ch-3 sp for corner; rep from * twice and then from * to ** again, 2 dc into same sp as beg ch-6, sl st into 3rd of ch-6 to complete 4th corner.

Round 4: Sl st into next ch, ch 6 (counts as 1 dc and 3 ch), 3 dc into same sp, *[ch 1, 3 dc into next ch-3 sp, ch 1] into each ch-3 sp to corner, [3 dc, ch 3, 3 dc] into corner ch-3 sp; rep from * twice, [ch 1, 3 dc into next ch-3 sp, ch 1] to beg, 2 dc into same sp as beg ch-6, sl st to 3rd of beg ch-6 to complete 4th corner.

Round 5: Rep Round 4.

These 5 rounds complete one Granny Square. Fasten off.



Donor Form

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

YES! I want to support the Needle Arts Mentoring Program with a monetary gift.

Name/ Company _____
Street Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Please check one:

- Individual \$1 to \$49
 Business \$50 to \$199
 Patron \$200 to \$499
 Underwriter* Over \$500

(*Underwriters receive a free listing on our website and a copy of all in-house publications and brochures. We attempt to list all underwriters in media publicity.)

Please contact us individually if you would like to make an in-kind donation of services or supplies. Thank you for supporting Helping Hands Foundation, Inc. and the Needle Arts Mentoring Program.

HELPING HANDS FOUNDATION, INC.

*1100-H Brandywine Blvd
Zanesville, OH 43701-7303
740-452-4541*

*www.NeedleArtsMentoring.org
helpinghands@offinger.com*

Helping Hands Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization as described by the Federal IRS Tax Code. All donations are tax deductible.



Volunteer Form

Needle Arts Mentoring Program

YES! I want to be a Needle Arts Mentor.

Name/ Company _____
Street Address _____
City, State, Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

I am interested in helping out in another capacity such as:

Return this form to the yarn shop, school or organization where you received it or send it directly to:

HELPING HANDS FOUNDATION, INC.

*1100-H Brandywine Blvd
Zanesville, OH 43701-7303
740-452-4541*

*www.NeedleArtsMentoring.org
helpinghands@offinger.com*



Dear Parent or Guardian,

Your son/daughter has expressed interest in participating in a needle arts program. The program is designed to have volunteers work with students teaching them needle arts.

Helping Hands Foundation, through its Needle Arts Mentoring Program^(SM), provides support in the form of free information, training materials and supplies. HHF does not conduct any programs itself, nor does HHF supervise or control the conduct of programs by others. HHF attempts to accommodate all requests for support and materials and does not require any pre-screening of, or background information on, requesting parties. HHF disclaims any warranty, express or implied, in connection with the Needle Arts Mentoring Program and is not responsible or liable for any injury to persons or property arising from or related to any program. We are excited about bringing this project to your community and hope that you will allow your child to participate by signing the permission slip below. If you have any questions, please feel free to call the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

When the program concludes, your child will be allowed to bring home the tools he/she used during NAMP sessions. Please realize that these tools can be potentially dangerous and should be kept away from smaller children or other members of the family who may not understand their proper use. If you agree to let your child bring home knitting needles, crochet hooks or a tapestry needle, you must be responsible for their proper use. Your signature below indicates that you understand this responsibility and permit your child to bring home this material.

Transportation for your child will not be provided by the program, therefore you will be responsible for your child's transportation home. Please return this form to one of our program volunteers.

Thank you,

The Needle Arts Mentoring Program

Please fill out form below, cut off and return to NAMP. Date _____

_____ has my permission to participate in the NAMP at
(Student's Name)

_____. I understand that my child will
(Name of Program)

bring needle art tools home at the end of the program. I give permission for my son/daughter to walk home. ___Yes___ No. I give Helping Hands Foundation permission to use my child's picture on the Web site and in other promotional material for publicity purposes only. No other uses of these photos will be allowed under any circumstances. ___ Yes ___ No

Parent/Guardian (please print) _____ Signature _____



The Needle Arts Mentoring ProgramSM

“Stitching Generations Together”TM

The Needle Arts Mentoring Program is a project of Helping Hands Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization founded in October 1999

For more information contact:

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