

# Scarves with Heart, for the Heart



Photo: Sam Ywells

The HeartScarves project collects scarves locally and distributes them to women with cardiac concerns.

Some are woven, some are knitted, some are crocheted. Many have fringe, dots or knots. Some are smooth and others are nubby. But they all have one thing in common: the color red.

“Red is a heart color,” says Marilyn Deak, coordinator of the local chapter of WomenHeart, a national organization for women with heart disease. Deak leads a WomenHeart support group, which meets monthly in south Carlsbad. “We chose red because it’s a symbol of vitality. There’s warmth to red. It’s like our lifeblood.”

The HeartScarves project collects scarves from local knitters, weavers and crocheters and distributes them to women with cardiac concerns.

Deak explains, “Our goal is to give a handmade red scarf to each woman with cardiac challenges and to outstanding people who are advancing the cause of women’s heart health.”

The scarves not only bring beauty and warmth to their recipients, but they also lend comfort and connection at a time when it is most needed.

“I was having dizziness, chest pain, shortness of breath and my heart was racing,” says Kim, a member of the WomenHeart group. “I went to the Scripps Green Urgent Care to find out what was going on.

On the way, I called Marilyn to let her know what was happening. An hour later, she showed up with a scarf and a hug and the well wishes of the entire support group. I wore the scarf for the next several days and felt deeply connected and supported by my heart sisters.”

Deak started the scarf project with a friend in the fall of 2005. “We wanted to have a way to reach out and say, ‘We care about you.’ When you’ve been in the hospital and you’re scared, you remember that experience clearly. It was our way of making sure women wouldn’t feel so alone.”

“First we were making all the scarves ourselves,” Deak says. “Then we realized that we needed help. Since I’m a weaver, I went to my weaving guild, Palomar Handweavers. Soon other organizations came on board to help. One of our biggest supporters is the Busy Needles, a knitter’s and crocheter’s group that meets at La Costa

Glen in Carlsbad.”

Finished scarves from the weavers are collected every November and exhibited through the month of December at the Rancho Buena Vista Adobe.

“The scarves are so beautiful,” Deak says. “Some of them are exquisite. It’s really exciting to see all the ways of interpreting red that are truly works of art.”

“Most of the people who make the scarves don’t get the chance to enjoy giving them,” Deak says. “So I want them to know that the scarves are received with joy. And there’s a real joy in making them. The artists try different patterns and have fun with red. People who work with fiber enjoy the process, but they need outlets for what they make. They feel good about doing something for someone else.”

WomenHeart is a nonprofit organization and welcomes contributions of scarves or donations for purchasing supplies. A gift card and label is attached to each scarf, along with a brochure to educate women about heart disease.

As the tag says, “Each scarf carries the love and care of your heart sisters and of the artist who made it. May this red scarf bring you comfort on your healing journey.”

Whether crimson or cherry or scarlet or wine, carmine or ruby or garnet or rose, cardinal, vermilion, claret or just plain red—HeartScarves combine art with plenty of heart.

Those wishing to make donations or attend a WomenHeart support group may contact Marilyn Deak at 760.438.5890 or [marilyndeak@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marilyndeak@sbcglobal.net) •



Photo: Lois Swagerty

The scarves are red to symbolize vitality.