



PortPal© Sewing Blitz

A Multi-generational
Project

CALIFORNIA EASTERN
STAR - PATIENT COMFORT
PROGRAM

Patient Comfort Program

Mission

In 1957 our Past Grand Matron Marguerite Weisheimer wrote- " The members of the Order of the Eastern Star throughout the world support the fight against cancer in many ways. California Grand Chapter members have taken a decisive stand in an effort to alleviate the suffering of the victims of this dread disease." She continues to say "We thank the "Strong Minds, Great Hearts, True Faith and Ready Hands" which are making this work possible."

Times have changed but our mission has not, each "Patient Comfort Station" is individually run by members and volunteers. Each station is unique in what it makes, since each area is a little different in where they donate items, ie. hospitals, care facilities, individual patients, camps, etc. Even though each area is different, our goal is the same to provide comfort items free of charge to cancer patients.

Each item has a label on it saying "Made with Loving Hands by the Order of the Eastern Star", these items are made by dedicated members/volunteers who have worked for many years and many hours to make each cancer patient know that we care about them and are willing to help in any way we can to provide them with the "comfort items" they need.

The dedicated members working these programs give many hours of service. Donations fund the materials to make the many comfort items. New volunteers are always welcome. Click the Volunteer button to find a Patient Comfort Program near you. Donations are also always welcome.

PortPal© Sewing Blitz

EVENT SUMMARY – This project is designed to create an opportunity for chapters and members of our Masonic family to create and distribute PortPal© pillows to local doctor’s offices and cancer treatment centers and/or hospitals.

What level, and how many people are involved? This project can be multi-level and multi-generational; between our youth groups and our sage members. (Yes, the men and DeMolay boys are included!) People are needed to sew, stuff, iron, & package the pillows. There is a job for everyone and every skill level!

The instructions are set up to be printed and distributed to various teams. The project steps are flexible enough to accommodate the number of volunteers available for each event. They can also be used by individual seamstresses.

TARGET AUDIENCE – The target audience for PortPals© is for anyone who has a chemo port. Generally, this is anyone who’s had, or is having chemotherapy treatment, or any sort of chest surgery.

RESOURCES – If you would like additional help organizing your event, please contact Kathie Ketels-Lichtig kklichtig@gmail.com or Julie Willis willowjd@aol.com . You can access templates and more via our Google Drive.

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B9j4kcgZZQQPMDAtaTltd1ZR Uk0>

Project Overview

The Sewing Blitz started in 2015 with the members of Diablo Star Chapter in Orinda. Members got together to sew, and challenged ourselves to see how many heart (surgery)

pillows and PortPals we could produce in 4 hours. The final count was 130 pillows and 35 PortPals with 15 members and friends. It was awesome! The photos below show the fun and give you an idea of how to set up your space for production capacity and fellowship!





Task Overview

Secure the space. You need a location where your volunteers can get together to sew for a day. You will need sturdy tables to work on, and outlets to run sewing machines and irons.

Send out the invitations. Experienced sewers and novices alike, anyone who are willing to volunteer their time, hands, sewing machines, needles, and thread. Generally you want to allow 3-4 hours for sewing and set-up and clean-up time. Invite friends, members, prospects and the members of your local youth groups. This is a terrific opportunity to showcase the best of what Eastern Star has to offer.

Set up an event on your Chapter Facebook page. Invite members to share the event on their personal pages. Use FB to promote the event and engage your volunteers!

Snacks! People usually come when food is involved (especially teenagers!). Purchase snacks or invite participants to bring their favorite snacks to share. Keep the food well away from the work area!!

Secure supplies. Review the full set of instructions to insure you have everything you need before you start. Purchase supplies as noted in the instructions, or invite members/friends to donate what you need. You would be surprised at how willing people are to clean out their fabric (and other!) closets!!

Fabric required for the project as listed on the pattern (Typically 2 fat quarters can be used and cost
--

approximately \$1.50 each). Check with friends and family to see who has suitable fabric that needs a good home! Different patterns will appeal to different audiences. Remember Men, Women AND Children will benefit from your handiwork – consider fabric that will appeal to lots of different audiences.
Thread to match your fabrics, or neutral light/dark colors
Polyfill to stuff the pillows.
Sew-On Velcro to help the pillow attach to a seatbelt or car seat. Do NOT get the sticky/self-stick kind!!
Watch the sales at JoAnns or Michaels!
Zippered sandwich bags, Target is a great source!
Shopping/delivery bags
Avery (or similar) business cards
Ink Cartridges to print your insert cards

Volunteers to bring - Label your stuff!!

Sewing machine(s)
Ironing board/iron
Pins, thimbles, scissors
Music
Extension cords and power strips
Pens/pencils
Garbage cans/bags

Complete the prep work.

- If you want to jumpstart your sewing, pre-cut 2-3 dozen fabric squares and Velcro strips. This allows the sewers to jump right in!
- Print up the business card inserts
- Set a crazy ambitious goal for the day! We have limited experience with the numbers at this point, so we'd love to

hear how you do. You should be able to complete 2-3 dozen pieces per hour, with 4 volunteers.

Event Day. Set up your work space with tables designated as the various stations. Make the PortPals©. Clean up the mess. HAVE FUN!!

Set up the Room

Stations	Task(s)	Supplies	Tables/ Volunteers
Cutting	Cut fabric squares, 6" and 5"	Fabric, pattern scissors, garbage collection	1-2 Tables 2-4 volunteers
Ironing	Press fabric flat for cutting	Iron, board, extension cord, water for steam	0 Tables 1-2 volunteers
Sewing	Machine stitching for basic squares and once squares are stuffed	Sewing machines, extension cords, thread, scissors, Chairs for each sewer!	2 tables accommodate 4 machines – 2 each side.
Ironing	Press the turned PortPals©	Already set up	above
Trim & Turn	Snip the corners and turn inside out	Scissors, chopstick or other implement to square the corner	1 table 1-2 volunteers
Stuffing	Fill the pillows	Fiberfill stuffing, pins	1 table 2-3 volunteers
Sewing	Close up the stuffing "hole"	Already set up	1-2 volunteers based on production
Packaging	Quality check Pillow into the ziplock bag with an	Sandwich sized zip bag, insert cards, delivery bags	1 Table 1-2 volunteers

	insert card		
Runners	Help out as needed, run supplies, relieve @stations, help pick up trash, change the music, etc.		

Consider rotating, but it’s been our experience that nobody changes jobs for the day!!

Clean-up!

- Finished pillows to the delivery team(s)
- Kitchen
- All tables broken down/stowed, and equipment returned to rightful owners
- Trash out to the bins
- Lock up the building!

Distribute the finished products. Following your event, you will want to contact doctor’s offices, cancer treatment centers, chemo infusion centers, and/or hospitals in your community and the surrounding area. To find centers in your area Google “cancer treatment center, California”.

Ask if they would like to have a supply of PortPals© to give their patients. You may want to explain that they are handmade! Take samples! In our experience, no one has said no! Have a delivery bag ready with 1-2 dozen finished packets. Give the location your contact information so that they can order more! Get their contact info as well. * Be sure to keep a few handy for your chapter to give directly to friends and family.

Set the date for your next sewing blitz. And thank you for your gift of service!

Supplies Summary

To Purchase or have donated

Avery (or similar) pre-scored business cards

These will be used for inserts for the PortPal and for contacting your group for additional inventory.

You can also use colored card stock and a sharp cutter



Hypo-allergenic pillow stuffing

Check online or your local fabric store. You can often get these bags on sale!!



Velcro

This will be the costliest part of the project. Watch the sales at fabric/craft stores, or go online to get the best deals.



Fabric

Assorted colors and patterns to appeal to men, women and children. Matching or neutral colored thread



Pattern(s)

You will make a set of patterns for your group.

Adults

6" Square from card stock or lightweight cardboard

Children

5" Square from card stock or lightweight cardboard

Bags

Zippered close sandwich bags for the finished PortPal and insert card.



Bags

Bags to store/deliver the finished product. See notes below



Tools

Something to help push the corner out; quilting tool, chopstick, letter opener, etc.



Supplies/Space

Room to work!

Lodge dining rooms are perfect! Make sure the space is donated to manage costs!!

Make sure there are work tables and outlets for your equipment.

Inkjet printer

Someone needs to print the iron-on labels and the card inserts.



Cutting Tools

Fabric shears
Paper cutting tools



Sewing machine(s)

Half of the fun is to see the machines that members have! Nothing fancy needed, you are sewing straight seams.



Iron and Ironing board

Steam irons are ideal. If you don't have an ironing board, you can use thick bath towels on a hard, flat surface.



Sharpie marker



Ruler



Extension
cords/Power
Strips



Pre-Work Instructions – Packaging

Recommended supplies

- Inkjet printer
- Avery (or similar) pre-scored business cards OR colored cardstock and a sharp cutting device.
- Shopping bags

Print/Separate Inserts

This is a sample of the content. The attached MSWord file is formatted to print on the Avery product. Print out as many sheets as you need to insert 1 card into the final package with a PortPal. Separate into individual cards and hand off to the **Packaging crew**! Save what you don't use for your next event. Protect the extras in a zippered sandwich bag.



PROJECT_Pillow-PortPal Inserts.docx

Front



Made with love by the members and friends of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Back

PortPal Please accept our best wishes for a speedy recovery and continued good health. This little **PortPal** will become your new best friend!! When you are driving, place it over your port, puffy side to your heart and strap it to your seatbelt. You are safe with your seatbelt properly fastened and NO MORE CHAFING!! Please know that we are with you on this journey to vibrant health. When you are ready, keep the healing chain going, by passing it on to another person who may need it!!

Print/Separate Business Cards

You will also want to consider making business cards to be included with your delivery. This will allow the hospital or chemo infusion center to contact you in the future for additional inventory. You can use the same graphic as on the left and on the reverse side include your chapter/comfort station name, contact name, contact phone number and/or email. Insert or attach to, your shopping/delivery bags.



Chapter Name # _____ City _____

Contact Name: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Pillow Blitz Instructions – Cutting Crew

Recommended supplies

- Fabric and Velcro
- Pattern(s)
- Sharp cutting shears
- Room to work!

Fold the fabric as shown, or put 2 pieces of fabric, right sides together, so that you will have 2 matching pieces once you make the cut. Use the pattern as a guide.

- The 6" squares will ultimately be between 5" or 5 ½", finished, depending on your size of your seams. This is the perfect size for adults.
- The 5" squares will ultimately be between 4" or 4 ½", finished, depending on your size of your seams. This is the perfect size for children.

Cut your fabric! Make sure your fabric pieces are right sides together. Hand off to the **Marking Crew**.

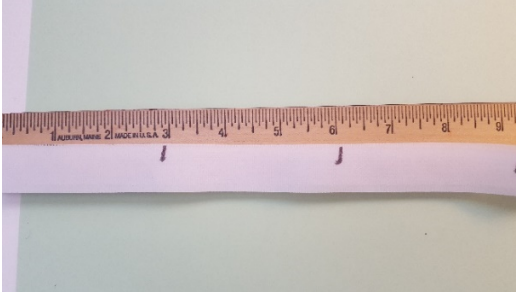
Fabric Sample



Velcro Sample

Measure out lengths of Velcro and cut. Hand off cut pieces to the **Marking Crew**.

- 4" lengths for Adult size
- 3" for Child Size



Pillow Blitz Instructions – Marking Crew

Recommended supplies

- Sharpie marker
- Rule

Separate the cut Velcro piece, then overlap the pieces as shown, so that it fits the fabric square, and insert between the right sides of your fabric squares. Cover with the 2nd piece of fabric, right sides together. (Figure 1). The Velcro will be ‘anchored’ when the stitching crew completes the stitching/seam work.

Lay the matching piece of fabric over the Velcro. Use a Sharpie Marker to make a 2” opening on the **wrong side** of a piece of the fabric as shown below (Figure 2).



Figure 1



Figure 2

Hand off to the **Stitching Crew**.

Pillow Blitz Instructions – Stitching Crew

Recommended supplies

- Sewing machine
- Matching or neutral colored thread

Stich from opening mark to opening mark – 3/8” seam allowance.
Remember to backstitch at each opening to secure the thread. Hand off
to the **Turning Crew**.



Pillow Blitz Instructions – Turning Crew

Recommended supplies

- Sharp scissors
- Something to help push the corner, quilting tool, chopstick, letter opener, etc.

Cut across each corner of the square. This will lessen the bulk when the piece is turned inside out.



Turn the squares inside out and use your tool to pull the corners “sharp”. Hand off to the **Ironing Crew**.

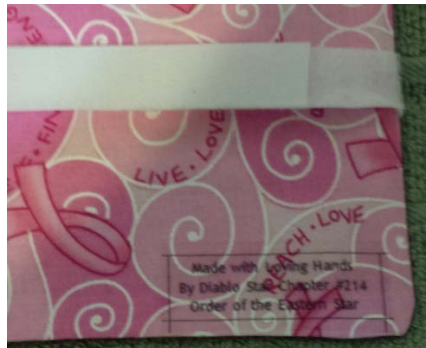


Pillow Blitz Instructions – Ironing Crew

Recommended supplies

- Iron – dry irons are recommended, but not necessary
- Ironing board or thick towels and a flat surface
- Extension cord

Pre-heat the iron, it should be pretty hot. Press the piece to remove any wrinkles and to heat up the fabric – do your best to make the seams sharp/flat. Ignore the label in this photo. Based on experience, we've eliminated the label on the PortPal©, too much trouble!! Hand off to the **Stuffing Crew**.



Pillow Blitz Instructions – Stuffing Crew

Recommended supplies

- Hypo-allergenic pillow stuffing
- Small hands

Add stuffing to the piece through the 2” opening, so that the pieces are pretty firm, but not overstuffed! Hand off to the **Stitching Crew**.



Pillow Blitz Instructions – Stitching Crew

Recommended supplies

- Sewing machine
- Matching or neutral colored thread

Stitching the opening and then adjust the stuffing so that it's pretty even. The stitching can be done by hand, if you have members that are confident with their fine stitching skills. You can also assign one of the sewing machines to complete this task by machine stitching right along the open edge. Clip all of the loose threads.

Hand off to the **Packing Crew**.



Pillow Blitz Instructions – Packing Crew

Recommended supplies

- Zippered sandwich bags
- Pre-printed insert cards
- Shopping/delivery bags/boxes



This is the final step in the process! You are the final stop and responsible for “quality assurance”! Take a quick look to make sure:

- The opening is securely stitched closed. Hand back to the appropriate crew to fix if needed.
- All seams are secure
- The Velcro “works”. The piece can be attached securely to a seatbelt.
- No loose threads hanging.

Once you are satisfied, put the finished piece into a zippered sandwich bag and add an insert card. Close the zipper seal and remove as much of the air in the bag as possible. This will allow you to stack more finished product into your final carrier.

Stack in the box/bag for delivery. Depending on the shopping bags you have, you will want to add 20 finished pieces to each delivery bag.

Consider the delivery packaging carefully! You will leave the bag/box behind. Make sure that the hospital or chemo infusion center has a way to get in touch with you to request additional PortPals. Consider attaching a sticker/logo and/or business card to the outside of the box.

Once this step is complete, you will pack the completed packages into the designated shopping bags. Hand off the completed bags to the **Delivery team** for final delivery to the community.



If you want to be “green” consider purchasing or making fabric/reusable shopping bags and contacting Mary Davis, Temple Chapter #513 to have the CA OES Patient Comfort Logo embroidered onto the delivery bag. Contact information is: email: mmsd47@gmail.com and phone: 916-725-0737

Costs to purchase the shopping bags and any customization are the responsibility of the chapter or comfort care station.

Shop online for the best deals! The colored shopping bags were found on 24hour Wristbands, an online resource that seems quite reasonable!
<https://24hourwristbands.com/shop/bags/totes/cotton-totes/large-grocery-tote-bags>

These are the embroidery logos available.

