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Sewer's skills help soldiers

By Amelia Skimin
DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

The pants Rita Brey has sewn for Sew Much Comfort aren't like regular pants one might find in a store. Velcro replaces one of the side seams and — on the Velcro side — one leg is wider than the other.

The pants will eventually be worn by a soldier — injured in the line of duty and recovering at a military or VA hospital — in accordance with the goals of Sew Much Comfort.

Brey, a Deerfield Township resident and lifelong sewer, got involved with Sew Much Comfort after hearing the nonprofit organization's Michigan coordinator, Pat Quintero, address a sewing group.

"Pat is a very motivational person," Brey said.

Since January, Brey's made four pairs of pants. The pants are specially adapted to fit over medical devices and to allow medical personnel easy access to wounded areas. They're also easier to put on than regular garments, and offer wounded soldiers an alternative to hospital gowns during long recuperation periods.

Sew Much Comfort's line of patterns — developed with feedback from service members, and physical and occupational therapists — also include shirts and undergarments.

"Although some clothing designs may seem odd, they are necessary for the service members," states the group's Web site, www.sewmuchcomfort.org.

The garments are made by volunteers and are distributed to hospitals to be given to soldiers at no cost.

For Brey, making the clothing is "just an opportunity to return some goodness to the world."

"It makes you feel very good," she continued.

Touching others' lives is nothing new for Brey, though. She was a math teacher and administrator in the Detroit Public Schools for nearly 50 years before she retired. She and her husband, Raymond, have three grown children.

Since she started volunteering for Sew Much Comfort, she's gotten others involved as well. After telling her fellow members of the Howell American Sewing Guild about her project, the group decided to sew garments, too.

According to Brey, this reaction is not uncommon — as soon as you tell someone about the group, they want to get involved.

To give the sewers something to work with, donations of new large or extra-large boxer shorts and T-shirts may be dropped off at Hair Crew, 839 Latson Road, in Howell.

"All donations are appreciated," Brey said, adding that the group needs boxer shorts more than any other item.

Contact Daily Press & Argus reporter Amelia Skimin at (517) 552-2847 or at askimin@gan-nett.com.

Zoom Photo



Rita Brey and other members of Sew Much Comfort ha

Photo by ALAN WARD/DAILY PRESS & ARGUS

ABOUT RITA BREY

* **Occupation:** Retired teacher/administrator for Detroit Public Schools

* **Residence:** Deerfield Township

* **Family:** Husband, Raymond; children, Ann Janicki, Raymond Brey and Paul Brey

* **Sew Much Comfort:** For more information about Sew Much Comfort, visit www.sewmuchcomfort.org or contact Michigan coordinator Pat Quintero by e-mail at patquin@comcast.net, or by phone at (248) 546-0038.

SEW MUCH COMFORT

● On April 3, Sew Much Comfort is hosting a meeting about sewing

garments for injured soldiers. Contact Rita Brey at (517) 546-4733 or at

ritabrey@myvine.com.