

## VIEW

JUNE 17, 2008

SUPPORTING THE TROOPS

## Sewn with love

*Sun City group modifies clothes for wounded vets*

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A group of women in the Sun City MacDonald Ranch Community are doing their part to help soldiers returning from combat zones overseas.

"The wounded coming in from Afghanistan or Iraq are not shot, they're blown apart," said Emilie Karczewski, founder of the Las Vegas Sew Girls.

The seamstresses and tailors spend two days a month altering clothing for the veterans. The Sew Girls add Velcro to pants, shirts and boxer shorts to make access for patients and doctors easier. They also make some clothes from scratch. Karczewski said many soldiers with prosthetics need pants with one leg larger than the other.



JENNA DOSCH/VIEW

Barbara Margolis refers to the tag inside the sweatshirt for instructions on how to modify it. This sweatshirt is being changed so that it opens easily on the side.

"They can't get in and out of a hospital gown," Karczewski said. "These clothes give them some dignity because a hospital gown is not dignified."

The 12-member group sews for Sew Much Comfort, a national organization,

which lets the local sew groups know what it needs and makes sure the clothes get to hospitals around the country.

The Sew Girls have completed and shipped almost 300 items of clothing since beginning the project in January. They also have raised and donated \$3,400.

"We couldn't do this without our sponsors," said



JENNA DOSCH/VIEW

Gisela Brenner of the Las Vegas Sew Girls modifies a sweatshirt by sewing Velcro onto the sleeves. The shirt will be donated to an injured veteran.

## ► SEW

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1AA

Gohannah Lockwood, a Sew Girls volunteer and quality-control coordinator.

Although Sew Much Comfort uses the donated funds to buy materials and supplies, which the local chapters use to make and alter the clothing, sometimes the individual groups need to buy fabric or T-shirts.

The Sew Girls biggest sponsors have been Atta Boy T-shirts, MC Plumbing, Jewish War Veterans and Fresh & Easy grocery stores, Karczewski said.

Lockwood said she spends about 30 hours a week at home preparing materials and washing and shipping the clothes.

"When Emilie asked me to help, I said, 'Absolutely,'" Lockwood said. "There's so little that we can do to support the guys over there. My heart just sunk."

The national group sent the Sew Girls a certificate of volunteer excellence and a letter stating that the chapter is one of the largest providing groups on a regular basis.

"We've just overwhelmed them with our success," Karczewski said.

Although a lot of the clothes made by the groups are worn in hospitals, injured veterans also need items they can wear during rehabilitation. Karczewski said they want the clothes to look normal, so if they put on a pair of altered pants and run to the store, no one would notice.

The Sew Girls also are not told who the clothes are for, so they try to make them as gender neutral as possible.

The Las Vegas Sew Girls is the only chapter of Sew Much Comfort in Nevada. Karczewski said she hopes other sewing groups will join their efforts.

"There's just an unbelievable need," Karczewski said. "And what could be a better cause?"

Donations of money, thread, needles and larger sized T-shirts are needed. Lockwood said darker colors that can be masculine or feminine are best, but black is hard on the sewers' eyes.

The Las Vegas Sew Girls meet the first and third Wednesday of each month at the Sun City MacDonald Ranch Community Center, 2020 Horizon Ridge Parkway. Sewers come and go as they please, but the group has the sew room from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

For information, call Lockwood at 260-1621 or e-mail [mojo2158@yahoo.com](mailto:mojo2158@yahoo.com).