

COPING WITH COVID-19

Gowns, Masks and Volunteers



MAPLES DONATIONS

Staff from The Maples Home for Seniors were pleased to receive the new gowns sewn by community member Peg Habsch (photo, left). The Maples purchased and supplied the kits to her. Peg spent approximately 20 hours sewing these gowns for the Home. Special thanks as well is extended to Elizabeth Halliday for her donation of gowns as well.

The Maples staff are also sporting their new caps and headbands graciously donated by volunteers from Grace United Church. These items are a much needed and appreciated necessity as there are buttons on both sides to loop their face mask elastics to prevent their ears from getting sore. Photo, right, RPN Taylor Donaldson models a colourful headband.



PHOTOS / CONTRIBUTED

A MOTHER'S DAY STORY

All it took was a request from a daughter to her mom!

It has been awhile since I have given you an update about the hospital Gown project. Some of you will have read the articles in the Tavistock Gazette a few weeks ago, one of which was titled "Grace Church Members Lead Local Gown Project". Starting with a request from my daughter Jenn Killing who works for PeopleCare Communities Inc., to her mom, Rev. Mary Boland, it has been publicized as a Grace project. I have talked to Brian about how that happened inadvertently but perhaps not surprisingly; my networks after all are through church connections. First of all the call went out to the Tavistock Ministerial and then to the Western Ontario Waterways Region network. That was all it took to galvanize over 200 ladies to set up their sewing machines to contribute to this project. Word spread from one church to another and now folks from many different denominations and communities are involved. It has truly been an incredible experience to work with these ladies. There have been many comments about their personal sense of achievement in doing something constructive against this COVID-9 Pandemic. It is a very worthwhile thing to do while we isolate and wait.

Truthfully the gown project was initiated by PeopleCare Communities Inc. who decided to invest in PPE supplies to protect their staff and residents when these items were not readily available.

PeopleCare purchased and provided all the gown kits. I recruited and coordinated the many volunteers who stepped forward to sew the gowns. Think of a still pool of water. A pebble drops into the middle of the pool. Ripples begin to spread, moving toward the outer edges of the pool. Another pebble drops. More ripples. Another pebble. Even more ripples. Eventually the pool is covered with ripples bouncing into one another, back and forth, up and down, side to side, edge to edge. That pebble was my daughter's phone call, and the 'water' is still rippling.

Several group leaders stepped forward to help organize volunteers in their area. Now my garage serves as an "in and out" store so to speak: as a storage space for supplies and where completed gowns are brought "in" and new supplies go "out."

Other needs have been added to the project; 800 scrub caps for the healthcare staff to protect their ears when they are wearing masks, and scrub bags in which to carry their soiled uniforms home. Most of the scrub caps were provided by another group of volunteers in Stratford, called CareMongers. They provided quite a few of the scrub bags as well.

Today May 8th, marks the day 5 weeks ago when my daughter Jenn called me and wondered whether I could find some volunteers to sew hospital gowns. It was in a call later that day that she mentioned they needed 3,000 gowns. Where does one start with a request like that? And of course, the church was my first response. This morning I sent out an update to

the sewists, saying that we are in the home stretch. I am happy to announce that today the last 10 gown kits went out to be sewn.

Amazing! All of that in 5 short weeks.

You may want to know more about how the gowns are being used.

3,000 gowns sounds like a lot, but the number was based on 3 gowns for the care of each resident – for staff and resident use. PeopleCare has 8 homes and almost 1000 residents.

As the completed gowns are returned to PeopleCare, they are laundered and distributed to the homes in amounts based upon the number of residents in each home.

The bags and caps are also laundered and distributed to the staff. Thanks to the CareMongers group in Stratford extra caps have been passed on to The Maples. Masks have also been passed on to both the PeopleCare and Maples homes in Tavistock, to be used as needed.

Six bags of fabric was donated by 2 ladies from Kitchener – a lot of that was and is being used for making scrub bags for the staff, and some of the larger pieces were used to make 10 gowns for The Maples Home here in Tavistock, and to make 10 gowns for the Medical Clinic.

This has been an incredibly rewarding project for the volunteers and myself – a way of giving back to the community in this time of pandemic. I feel blessed and grateful for the opportunity to have been involved.

– Rev. Mary Boland



Southwestern Ontario Fiddle & Stepdance Competition Cancelled

Unfortunately, it's time to announce the cancellation of the 2020 Southwestern Ontario Fiddle and Stepdance Competition. We held out with hopes that the situation may change in time to let us go through with the contest, but at this point that does not appear to be a reality. With the health and safety of our attendants, competitors, volunteers, committee and the town of Tavistock in mind, the contest will not go through this year.

That said, we hope everyone is keeping well and we look forward to seeing you July 2-3, 2021!

