

We Serve...

Sew Much Comfort

by Sherryl L. Parks



Holly Teetzel has attended St. Peter's since 1978. She began singing in the choir in 1993 and is currently the volunteer Music Administrator, which means she catalogs the music and keeps the music library tidy. Five years ago she began a ministry with the Sew Much Comfort (SMC) organization and we asked her to tell us more about this worthwhile project.

What is Sew Much Comfort (SMC)?

Sew Much Comfort is a non-profit, volunteer organization that provides custom-made adaptive clothing, free of charge, to all wounded service members from current conflicts and from all branches of the military and

National Guard. SMC wishes to aide in their recovery, provide a tangible reminder of our gratitude for their sacrifice and give them an added measure of comfort, dignity and freedom as they recover from their injuries and return to everyday life. Adaptive clothing accommodates their medical devices and situations, provides ease of use, increases personal independence and minimizes the visual impact of their injuries.

How did you get started sewing for SMC?

I started sewing for SMC in 2007 after reading an article in the paper about it. I was deeply troubled by the war in Iraq and the fact that so many of the young soldiers were returning with devastating, life changing injuries. I had been wondering what, if anything, I could do to help out, so when I saw the article I thought, well - I can sew, perhaps this would be one small act to help ease the transition for these soldiers - not much, but it did make me feel I might be doing something to help.

How many garments do you sew per month? How much time does it take?

I sew about 20 or 25 garments – depending on the complexity of the adaptation. Easy items, like boxers take about ½ hour each and more complicated items like lined swim trunks with pockets take about an hour and a half or 2 hours each.

Have you ever met a veteran who uses these garments?

No, I've never met a vet who has or is using our garments. Actually, I've never met another seamstress, either – but recently communicated by e-mail with one of the other local women who sews for SMC. This is an anonymous sort of job – I have regular e-mail exchanges with my coordinator in Boulder, CO, but otherwise have no communication with other seamstresses. I do know that in some parts of the country where more people sew, there are groups of women who sew together.

I imagine that there is a great need for these garments as troops return home with injuries. What is the best way to help SMC?

The group buys new, already made clothing which the seamstresses adapt according to the instructions of SMC. Right now we have plenty of seamstresses, but the need is for monetary donations that will help to buy the clothing and supplies (bias tape, snaps, Velcro, etc.) and also help defray the cost of shipping. If you would like to do so, please contact me, Holly Teetzel at hdteetzel@yahoo.com.

Be sure to check out the website: www.sewmuchcomfort.org. It's a non-profit organization and donations are tax deductible.

