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## **The awesome reach of a YARN!**

Diane is a mother and grandmother many times over. But that doesn't stop her from widening her social circle in her own city, across the country and beyond. So many people in search of better living. Especially these days in the Jubilee Year that celebrates families and seniors!

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We're in Newmarket, Ontario. Since 2018, YARNS has been making little

ones: hundreds of knitted or crocheted dolls and objects that relieve, console, support and gladden the hearts of so many people alone or in need. Dozens of friends, gathered around their knitting needles or crochet hooks, rallying to the most varied causes.

And in 2025, YARNS is taking off...

According to the dictionary, the term yarn means used for knitting, weaving or sewing.

We've turned it into a human YARN by adding an **S**: **YARNS: You Are Really Necessary Seniors**. A human thread, for human causes, uniting and reuniting seniors every week. Seniors who get together for a bit of socializing and friendship. And this fits with the other sense given by the Cambridge Dictionary: *to tell a story, usually a long one with a lot of excitement or interest, or to have a chat.*

## **The birth of YARNS**

I started by contacting a community Facebook group interested in knitting hats for premature babies at their local hospital. Since then, YARNS has grown into a group of close friends who support retirement homes, shelters and hospices, and people who just need something to make them smile.

Any woman can join us and leave her loneliness behind. She doesn't even need to knit or crochet. She's welcome.

## **One initiative after another**

Recent initiatives: the making of memorial angels for hospices; mittens and other warm clothing for the homeless; blankets, hats and toys for premature babies; shawls for people in hospices and nursing homes.

Another local cause: “Fill a Purse for a Sister”: handbags filled with basic necessities donated to women's shelters. Meetings are held in the city to prepare the bags and drop them off, giving a chance to meet the recipients.

And how about bombarding a local park bridge with multicoloured thread to raise awareness about of deafness and blindness in Canada!

## **Objects and friendships**

Materials are provided by the community. Soliciting donations of wool from the community: a great way to meet new people. Many first-time wool donors end up joining the group. The group inflates...

YARNS helps to weave yarn, wool and... strong friendships within the group. Family bereavement, major surgeries, the need to be listened to or to talk. Whatever. Conversations

are also fueled by TED talks, short videos, and sometimes conferences that spark new ideas.

## **Izzy dolls**

Recently, a representative from Health Partners International (HPIC) came to thank YARNS for donating Izzy dolls. These dolls complete the packaging for the humanitarian medical kits that HPIC sends to war-torn countries and disaster areas. They distribute the dolls to children and bring back their smiles.

The Izzy dolls were created in memory of Master Corporal Mark "Izzy" Isfeld, a Canadian peacekeeper killed in Croatia in 1994. His mother, Carol, began knitting small dolls for her son to distribute to children in conflict zones. After Isfeld's death in a mine explosion, his unit continued the tradition, calling the dolls "Izzy dolls". The Izzy doll became a symbol of Canada's peacekeeping efforts.

## **All in all...**

Strong bonds have been forged over the seven years we've been together. All the women admit that YARNS is an essential part of their week, a moment they don't want to miss.

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