



## **Sew simple: Church women stitch hundreds of sun dresses for young Haitian girls**

Date: May 5, 2012 Edition(s): News & Record Page: C1 Section: Sports **Source:** KAYLA MCLAUGHLIN Orphan **girls in Haiti** will get new **dresses for** school, thanks to a local church and a lot of pillow cases. Philathea Missionary Circle at Providence Baptist Church is transforming 250 pillowcases into sun **dresses for** little **girls in Haiti**.

The missionary circle launched this project **in** October. Members got the idea from University Park Baptist Church **in** Charlotte, which sends a group to **Haiti** twice a year. The Providence group teamed up with University Park, which will deliver the **dresses in** person this summer.

"I felt that it was something that we could do, and I knew that Providence had the leadership to complete a project of this magnitude," said Connie Murray, Philathea project chairwoman. About 30 women sew **dresses for** this project. About half sew at the church, and half sew at home.

"The young and the old have been able to participate and it didn't matter what the skill level was, they were all a part of getting these 250 **dresses** made," said Mary Pendergrast, president of the missionary circle.

It takes about 45 minutes to make each **dress**. They use patterns to convert the pillowcases to **dresses** by cutting the sleeve, opening the top, ironing the fabric and then adding embellishments such as lace, bows, pockets and ribbon.

"I like this because you can be as creative as you want to be," said Alfreda Tarrant, a home sewer from another church. "I enjoy sewing, and what better way to put it to use than to make **dresses for** the children **in Haiti**?"

**The Missionary Circle teamed up with Bennett College and allowed students to earn community service hours for helping.**

"They have been a tremendous help because we could not sew until pillowcases were cut out," Pendergrast said. "We taught some **girls** how to sew, and they made **dresses**, as well." "I am happy to be able to participate," said Yvonne Thompson, a circle member. "You could not help but want to be involved **in** this project."

The women have received community support - monetary donations and supplies such as sewing machines, ironing boards, buttons, thread and pillowcases. They also have received donations from other churches and friends of church members from across the state and also Arkansas, New York, Virginia, Alabama and Georgia.

"It caught on so fast that supplies were here before we were ready to start, said Pendergrast. "It was moving faster than we ever imagined it would move."

The Julia Hyatt Missionary Circle at Providence also has joined the effort. Members contacted Hanes and received a donation of more than 250 pairs of panties from the company. Julia Hyatt also had the idea of placing a short prayer **in** pockets or pinned inside the **dresses**.

"This is to let them know that the blessings are coming and to reassure them that God will provide," said Janette Wood, a member of the Julia Hyatt circle.

The women hope to expand the project after July and make shorts **for boys in Haiti**.

"I'm hoping that this will be something that the Greensboro population would be interested **in** and will spark other missionary circles to get involved **in** projects of this nature," Murray said.

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Want to help?

The Philathea Missionary Circle at Providence Baptist Church has all it needs to make and deliver 250 pillowcase **dresses**, but other churches and nonprofits do similar projects. Little **Dresses for Africa** ([www.littledressesforafrica.org](http://www.littledressesforafrica.org)), provides relief to the children of Africa. Mail **dresses**, labeled by size, to Little **Dresses for Africa**, c/o Nancy's Notions, 333 Beichl Ave., Beaver Dam, WI 53916-0683.

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