

When you have completed your shawl, please contact Sandra McConnell at (405) 271-1491, ext. 49180 to make arrangements for pickup. Or if you'd like, you may drop them off at the University of Oklahoma Fran and Earl Ziegler College of Nursing, Palliative Care Center, 1100 N. Stonewall, Oklahoma City, Okla., Room 367.

If you need more copies of this brochure, feel free to reproduce them or contact Sandra McConnell at (405) 271-1491, ext. 49180, or e-mail: [Sandra-McConnell@ouhsc.edu](mailto:Sandra-McConnell@ouhsc.edu).

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## SOONER PALLIATIVE CARE INSTITUTE



## THE JOAN E. MATZO COMFORT SHAWL PROJECT

Combining the love of knitting and crocheting into helpful work that reaches out to those in need of comfort and solace at times of loss or illness.

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fingers; who have seen, as I will see, the growth of the fabric; who have heard, as I will hear, the click of the needles.

My hands are instruments of love that have done mundane tasks, yet also create beauty and extend love. It is my hope that this yarn and these knitting needles will be filled with positive energy as I work and, in their simplicity, may they create a work of love, comfort and solace.

### **Thoughts at the Time of the Shawl's Presentation**

This is a shawl of comfort. Wrap it around you when you are sad, happy, needing comfort, cold, ill, worried, at peace, needing answers or socializing.

It brings the positive thoughts and intentions of the knitters/crocheters. Each time you wear this mantle, may you be cradled in hope, kept in joy, filled with peace, embraced with healing and wrapped in love.

### **More Intentional Options . . .**

#### **A Beginning Thought**

As I begin this work of love, I think of all those for whom I knit this shawl..

Those who are lonely and need to know they are loved . . .

Those who are ill and yearn for healing of body, mind and spirit . . .

Those who are grieving and welcome comforting words and actions . . .

Those who are celebrating newness of life and rejoice in the warmth and richness surrounding them.

May the love and peace be upon them and in each stitch of mine.

#### **An Ending Thought**

May this work which I now set aside continue to gather the love and energy I have poured out during this time of labor and love.

### **What's Involved**

Small groups come together to form knitting or crocheting bees. Others work on their own at home but in union with the groups preparing comfort shawls.

Positive thoughts and messages of healing are given to the individuals who will become the recipients of these shawls – whether their names are known beforehand or not.

When the shawl is ready, a special tag or card also is created to go with the shawl recipient.

Knitters/crocheters are given specific instructions or patterns for the fringed shawls. It costs, at most, \$15 to make a comfort shawl, and most knitters buy their own yarn. At knitting bees, coupons usually are exchanged, news about sales is shared and sometimes contributions are placed in a small fund for those who need help purchasing yarn.

### **Getting Started**

Find a convenient time and place for a small group to begin. Choose a couple of group leaders who can help lead the work sessions. It is all right to work on this project alone.

An explanation of the patterns and types of yarn is key to maintaining the purpose and integrity of this project

The shawls are given at times of loss or serious illness.

### **Crocheting Instructions**

Using crochet hook size M or N, chain 54 stitches (use more or fewer stitches in multiples of 3 for wider or narrower shawls).

- ♥ Chain 1, turn and single crochet in each of the spaces. At the end of the row, chain 3, turn and double crochet in top of each single crochet.
- ♥ Repeat this row 2 more times, then chain 1 and do 1 row of single crochet.
- ♥ At end of that row, chain 3 and turn.
- ♥ Do 3 rows of double crochet.
- ♥ Repeat pattern to end (1 row of single, 3 rows of double). End with 1 row of single chain stitches.

- ♥ Finish with fringe. NOTE: Crocheting typically uses more yarn than knitting, so you might have to adjust the width and size of hook or use another half-skein. It has been suggested that 7 skeins of the same dye lot be purchased; two shawls can be made, each using 3 ½ skeins.

### **Adding the Fringe**

Before you start to knit with the third skein of yarn, cut the fringe pieces that you will add on when the shawl is done. Generally speaking, there is one piece of fringe for each stitch that you cast on – for each end of the shawl.

To add the fringe, decide which side you consider “the back side.” Using a crochet hook, take a piece of fringe, fold it in half, put the crochet hook through a stitch at the bottom of the shawl and pull through the “loop” at the midpoint of the folded piece of fringe. Pull halfway, then catch the two cut ends of the fringe and pull them through the loop end and tighten. Once you have put on all of your fringe, you will want to lay the shawl on a flat surface, straighten out the fringe and snip ends that are too long.

If your yarn frays easily, you may knot the ends of the fringe. You may use a different type of yarn that is the same color as the shawl, or you may take several pieces of fringe and make them into a tassel by tying a knot with several pieces of fringe.

### **A Note About Colors**

You should choose colors that are pleasing to you, since you will be completing a labor of love. Remember that some shawls will be given to women and others to men. Some shawls’ colors will be appropriate for both men and women, and at other times you will choose colors that are appropriate specifically for a man or woman or child.

### **Shawl Instructions**

#### **Materials**

It is important that the fringed shawls be made of very soft yarns. At Wal-Mart, Michael’s, and Hobby Lobby you can find the following suggested yarns:

Lion Brand: “Homespun”

Bernat: “Boucle” “Mirage” or “Illusions”

Red-Heart: “Baby Clouds” and “Light-n-Lofty”

Make sure all the skeins have the same dye lot numbers. Be aware that Lion Brand Homespun yarn tends to unravel when cut. The fringe will need to be knotted at its ends for a more presentable look.

### **Amount of Yarn Needed**

Knitting: You will need approximately 3 skeins of yarn (555 yards) and cast on 54 or 57 stitches using size 11 or 13 needles. For larger shawls of 60-plus stitches you’ll need 740 yards.

For Crochet: 740 yards (3 1/2 skeins)

### **Before You Begin**

When you are ready to begin, we suggest that you think about the people for whom you are making the shawl. Usually, the recipient isn’t known at the time you are making the shawl, but positive thoughts of healing, good health and peace for the one who will eventually wear the shawl are recommended.

### **Knitting Directions**

Cast on 57 stitches, using size 11 or 13 needles. The pattern for the shawl is called a 3-stitch seed pattern. You will knit 3 stitches and then purl three stitches.

If you use 57 stitches, when you begin the next row, you will always start by knitting three stitches.

If you choose to use either 54 or 60 stitches, you will have to pay attention to the beginning of each row. (We ask that you always choose a multiple of three for the number of stitches in your shawl.) As you create your shawl, you are knitting a purl stitch and purling a knit stitch. This pattern will give you a “**popcorn**” type effect. If you knit a stitch that looks like a knit stitch and purl into a purl stitch, you will be creating ribbing and this will make the shawl very narrow, more like a scarf. **KNIT THE PURLS AND PURL THE KNITS!**

The normal length of the shawl measures from one wrist up the arm, over the back and down to the other wrist—approximately 60 inches without the fringe. Fringe is added to any length, from 3 to 8 inches.

## **Beginning to Knit Thought**

I light this candle as I begin this work of love. I think of all who have come before me; whose hands have been instruments of creation and beauty; who have used humble tools and homespun wool in order to provide cover and warmth for themselves and those whom they loved; who have felt, as I will feel, the yarn in their

Palliative care focuses on the relief of suffering and distress for people facing serious, life-threatening illness and to help them and their families to have the best possible quality of life. The origin of the word “palliative” is the Latin: *pallium* which means a cloak’. It is descriptive of actions that do not reverse the cause of discomfort, but to shield against its effect; not to bring about a complete cure, but to provide a shelter in which to find a greater measure of coping, comfort, and well-being.



**This project is  
dedicated to the  
memory of**

**Joan E. Matzo  
1942-2002**