



Connecticut Affiliate
350 Church Street, Lobby Level, Hartford, CT 06103
860-728-4955, www.komennct.org

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Contact: Anne Giliberto

860-728-4955

860-878-7488 (cell)

Anne@komentct.org

The Fresh Faces of Knitting: West Hartford Youth Knit to Fight Breast Cancer

HARTFORD – May 30, 2008 – Knitting is not usually thought of as an activity for the young and fidgety - just don't tell that to the boys and girls at Sri Sathya Sai Sunday School of Prasanthi Center in West Hartford. In the short time since January of 2008, these children varying in age from nine to 14 have not only learned to knit, but are donating their creations to benefit the Connecticut Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®.

As part of a Sunday school service project, the children have graciously donated 18 handmade scarves, which will be added to many other knitted items to be sold at the Shop for the Cure boutique at the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure® on Saturday, June 7th at Bushnell Park in Hartford. The sale is part of a wider Komen Connecticut initiative known as Knit for the Cure, a charitable knitting campaign that relies on the talent, energy and generosity of local knitters to create cozy hats and comfort shawls for chemotherapy patients at local hospitals. These crafters have expanded their efforts to donate handmade scarves, hats, ponchos and slippers among other items, to be sold at Komen Connecticut's Race for the Cure.

Items the young knitters have created will be added to the stock available for sale on Race day. All proceeds support breast cancer research and treatment on both the local and national levels.

According to Anjali DeSai, the Sunday school teacher who organized the project, the children were really excited to learn a craft while also helping those in need. "The school is based on the five human values of Truth, Right Conduct, Peace, Love, and Non-Violence. This knitting project was all about teaching the children the value of serving someone else selflessly. We hope that this project will motivate them to help others throughout their lives," said DeSai.

As DeSai likes to say, "Practice makes perfect." Throughout the project, she encouraged the children to work on their knitting every day, and was amazed by their progress. "They would make mistakes, and then come back and fix them. They couldn't believe that they had done it all on their own."

In addition to the humanitarian value of the project, knitting on a daily basis has also helped the children make better use of their free time. Instead of watching excessive amounts of television or surfing the Internet, these children have found a way to spend more time with their families and bond over a worthy cause.

Although school let out two weeks ago, the children's work has just begun. DeSai says she hopes to make knitting an ongoing project for her Sunday school classes; "Komen will need more knitted goods for cancer patients, and we will make sure they get it."

The Connecticut Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure® began 15 years ago with the Komencon Race for the Cure®, celebrating breast cancer survivors and empowering women to take charge of their breast health. Each year, the Race continues to be Komen Connecticut's biggest fundraiser, and in 2008 Komen Connecticut granted \$715,000 to 28 local breast health organizations. Over the past 15 years, Susan G. Komen for the Cure has also granted over \$17 million to Connecticut based organizations to fund breast cancer research, treatment, outreach and education in our state. For more information go to komenct.org or call 860-728-5500.

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